

SAINT JEROME

COMMENTARY ON
HABAKKUK

Commentariorum in Abacuc

SABBATISMUS

Saint Jerome (347–420)

Commentariorum in Abacuc · Commentary on Habakkuk

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TWO BOOKS OF COMMENTARIES ON THE
 PROPHET HABAKKUK, BY SAINT EUSEBIUS
 HIERONYMUS, PRESBYTER OF STRIDON,
 TO CHROMATIUS. (C)

PROLOGUE.

First, Chromatius, most learned of bishops, it is fitting for us to know that the name of the prophet Ambacum is read corruptly among the Greeks and Latins, who among the Hebrews is called Abacuc, and is interpreted as "embrace": or, so that we may translate it more significantly into Greek, *περίληψις*, that is, "embracing." Then, where the Septuagint translators and Symmachus and Theodotion have interpreted *λῆμμα*, that is, "assumption," in Hebrew it is written MASSA (), which Aquila translates as "burden" (*pondus*): about which we have disputed more fully in the prophet Nahum. Now, Massa is never placed in the title unless what is seen is grave and full of weight and labor. Hence it is necessary that the present prophecy have a certain austerity, so that just as in Nahum the burden, which was seen against Nineveh, the city of the Assyrians, was heavy, so also in this one it may be asked for whom the burden is that is revealed to the prophet's sight. Now, there are four prophets in the volume of the twelve prophets, of whom three have at the beginning the title *λῆμμα*, that is, "burden": Nahum, Habakkuk, and Malachi. Furthermore, Zechariah, in the middle and near the end, places two titles of this kind, of which one is: "The burden of the word of

the Lord in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus is its resting place" (Zech. 9:1); the other at the end, "The burden of the word of the Lord upon Israel" (Ibid. 11:1). Concerning Nahum, a book has already been published at your request; concerning Zechariah and Malachi, it will be discussed if life permits. Now we have Habakkuk in hand, who is called "embracing" either because he is beloved of the Lord, or because he enters into a contest and struggle, and (so to speak) an embrace with God, he has obtained the name of one who embraces, that is, one who wrestles. For no one has dared with so bold a voice to provoke God to a debate about justice and to say to Him: "Why in human affairs, and in the governance (*πολιτεία*) of this world, does such great iniquity prevail?" "I will cry out to you, suffering violence, and you will not save?" "Why have you shown me iniquity and to see trouble?" "The law is torn, and judgment does not come to its end: because the impious prevails against the just, therefore perverse judgment goes forth" (Hab. 1:2). Do you see that it is a rash voice and, in a way, that of a blasphemer, to thus provoke one's Creator to judgment; and for the fragile vessel to dispute against the potter (Isa. 45, Jer. 18, and Rom. 9), why it was made thus or thus? And this must also be noted, that the "assumption" or "burden," which we have already said are heavy things, is the prophet's vision, and contrary to the perverse dogma of Montanus, he understands what he sees: he neither speaks as one mad, nor in the manner of frenzied women does he produce a

sound without sense. Whence also the Apostle commands that if, while others are prophesying, a revelation is made to another, those who were speaking before should be silent (2 Cor. 14:33). And immediately: "For God," he says, "is not a God of dissension, but of peace." From this it is understood that when someone willingly keeps silent and gives another the opportunity to speak, he has the power both to speak and to be silent when he wishes. But he who speaks in ecstasy, that is, unwillingly, has it not in his power either to be silent or to speak. Learn this also (since you once violently demanded of me that I interpret the history for you, as certain steps and a ladder for one striving for higher things), that the prophecy is against Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Chaldeans: so that just as the prior prophet Nahum, whom Habakkuk follows, had a prophecy against Nineveh and the Assyrians, who laid waste the ten tribes which were called Israel, so Habakkuk has a prophecy against Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar, by whom Judah and Jerusalem and the temple were overthrown. And that you may know that Habakkuk lived at that time when the two tribes which were called Judah had already been led into captivity, Daniel can teach you, to whom in the lions' den Habakkuk is sent with a meal (Dan. 17): although this very story is not read among the Hebrews. Therefore, whether one accepts that Scripture or does not accept it, either way it is in our favor: for either one accepts it, and the book of Habakkuk is composed after the event; or one does not accept

it, and as a prophet he writes what he knows is to come.

BOOK ONE.

CHAPTER I. Verses 1, 2.

How long, O Lord, shall I cry, and you will not hear? Shall I cry out to you suffering violence, and you will not save? Why have you shown me iniquity and grief [Vulgate: labor], to see plunder and injustice against me?

LXX: How long, O Lord, shall I cry, and you will not hear? Shall I cry out to you suffering violence, and you will not save? Why have you shown me toils and sorrows, to see misery and impiety?

Meanwhile, according to the letter, the prophet complains against God, why Nebuchadnezzar is devastating the temple and Judah: why Jerusalem, once the city of the Lord, is being destroyed. Why does the people cry out, and is not heard? Why does it cry out to the Lord, oppressed by the Chaldeans, and is not saved? Why has even the prophet himself, or the people in whose person he now speaks, lived for this and been brought to this point, that he should see the iniquity of his enemies and his own labor? Why does injustice prevail against him? And he says this out of anguish of mind, not knowing that gold is refined in the fire, and that the three young men came out of the furnace purer than they entered (Dan. III).

But we can also understand it more generally, that the prophet, seeing from the perspective of human impatience that sinners abound and possess riches in the world, that their sons are like a new planting in their youth, and their daughters adorned like the similitude of a temple, their storehouses full, overflowing from one to another, their sheep fruitful and multiplying in their paths, and the other things which are more fully written in the one hundred and forty-third psalm, bursts forth into a complaining and sorrowful voice.

Why do you look upon the scornful, and are silent, while the wicked tramples upon one more just than himself: and you make men like the fish of the sea, and like reptiles that have no leader?

We read something similar also in the seventy-second psalm: "But my feet were almost moved; my steps had well-nigh slipped" (Psalm 72:2), and the rest.

And again in the same psalm: "And is there knowledge in the most High?" "For behold the sinners, and they that abound in the world have obtained riches," and the rest, up to "my hands."

But they say these things, not knowing the unsearchable judgments of God (Rom. XI), and the depth of the riches of His wisdom and knowledge, because God does not see as man sees. Man regards only present things: God knows future and eternal things (I Reg. 18).

And it is as if a sick person, burning with fevers, should ask for cold water, and say to the physician: "I suffer violence, I am tormented, I

am burning, I am fainting: how long, O physician, shall I cry, and you will not hear?" And the most wise and most merciful physician should answer him: "I know at what time I ought to give what you ask: I do not show mercy now, because this mercy is cruelty, and your will asks for something against yourself."

So also our Lord God, knowing the weights and measures of His own mercy, sometimes does not hear the one who cries out, in order to test him, and to provoke him more to ask, and to make him more just and pure, as if refined by fire.

Understanding this, the apostle, according to the mercy he obtained from the Lord, says: "Let us not faint in tribulations" (Eph. 3:13); and he blesses God at all times (Psalm 33); and he knows that "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22). And he glories in labor and sorrow. And with Jeremiah he says: "I will call upon tribulation and misery." So that just as another man calls upon God, so the holy man and unconquered warrior, to exercise and test himself, desires tribulation and misery to come.

(Verses 3, 4) And judgment and strife have become more powerful: because of this the law is torn, and judgment does not reach its end: because the wicked man prevails against the just, therefore perverse judgment goes forth. LXX: Judgment is made against me, and the judge accepts [bribes]: therefore the law is torn, and judgment does not reach its end: because the wicked man prevails against the just, therefore perverse judgment goes forth. Still the prophet

or the people speaks to the Lord, that judgment has been passed against them not by truth, but by power, and that it has upheld nothing of law and justice. Whence also the judgment itself did not have its proper end. For the end of judgment is to judge justly. And why he dares to say this, he shows in what follows, saying: Because the impious Nebuchadnezzar prevailed against the just Judah (4 Kings 22), and this is the reason why he said that judgment did not reach its end; because it is iniquitous and perverse that the just king Josiah should be slain by the king of Egypt (4 Kings 23); that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah should be servants (Daniel 3); and that the Babylonian emperor should rule, and that Belshazzar should drink from the vessels of God among his harlots and concubines (Daniel 5). The prophet says these things about the state of his own times (for we are following, since you once wished it, even the baseness of history). Moreover, according to the LXX, it is the common complaint of the saints to God why an unjust judgment is made against them, and why they shed innocent blood in persecutions: and if at any time they stand before the tribunal of secular judgment, the judge, having accepted bribes, condemns the innocent and frees the guilty. This indeed can be said not only of secular judges, but sometimes also of the princes of the Churches, that on account of bribes they tear the law, and do not bring judgment to its end, and the wicked man prevails against the just: and in judgment the sin of the rich man is defended more than

the truth of the poor man. Whence there is the complaint that perverse judgment goes forth: but we ought not to be disturbed by this inequality of things, seeing that even at the beginning of the world the just Abel was killed by the impious Cain (Genesis 4), and afterwards, with Jacob in exile, Esau reigned in his father's house (Genesis 28), and the Egyptians afflicted the sons of Israel with mud and brick: and the Lord, against whom the complaint is now directed, is crucified by the Jews (John 19), and Barabbas the robber is chosen (John 18). The day would fail me if I wished to enumerate the ways in which in this world, with the wicked prevailing, the just are oppressed.

(Verse 5.) Look among the nations and see, and be astonished and amazed, for a work has been done in your days, which no one will believe when it is told. LXX: Behold, you scoffers, and look, and wonder marvelously and perish: for I work a work in your days, which you will not believe, if anyone should declare it. Symmachus, for that which we said: "for a work has been done in your days," translated it as, "for a work will be done in your days"; the rest is similar. Again, at the beginning of the chapter, where in Hebrew it is written RAU BAGGOIM, and we have translated it, "look among the nations," and the LXX put, "behold, you scoffers"—except for Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, who agree with our interpretation—in a certain anonymous (*anonymē*) edition I found "you will see slanderers," and in another, likewise without the author's name, "you will see those who turn

away." Therefore, in response to the previous complaints of the prophet who was pleading and saying, "How long, O Lord, shall I cry, and you will not hear?" and the rest up to the end of this introduction, the voice of the Lord responding is brought in, so that this iniquity which he thinks happens in Israel alone, he may perceive among the nations; and that to the Chaldeans, not as the prophet thought, were only Judah and Jerusalem handed over, but all the surrounding nations; and that he [the Chaldean] would be so powerful, and would fall afterwards, that if anyone were to foretell what is to come, it would seem incredible on account of the greatness of the matter. But this also which the LXX and the other interpreters have published: "Behold, you scoffers," or "you will see slanderers" and "those who turn away," is consistent with the sense of this passage, and by this very speech they are convicted of audacity and contempt for the Lord. It was in their person that the prophet had cried out, asking why they dared to despise the majesty of God, and to speak rashly, and, as much as in them lies, to slander God's providence, and to turn away from the Lord, accusing Him of iniquity. You will see the scoffers, therefore, and then you will be astonished, and you will count your entire complaint as nothing, when you have perceived me acting in your days; lest perhaps you should say: "What does the future have to do with us?" A work that will be so great, and will overwhelm all your pleading, that if anyone were now to foretell that it will happen, you would not easily lend it

credence. But what this work is, is shown in the following passages.

(Verse 6 seqq.) For behold, I will raise up the Chaldeans, a bitter and swift nation, walking upon the breadth of the earth, to possess the tents that are not their own: it is horrible and terrible: from itself its judgment, and its burden shall go forth. Its horses are lighter than leopards, and swifter than evening wolves, and its horsemen shall be spread abroad: for its horsemen shall come from afar: they shall fly like an eagle hastening to eat: they shall all come for prey, their face a burning wind: and it shall gather captivity as the sand, and it shall triumph over kings, and tyrants shall be its ridicule: it shall laugh at every fortress, and it shall cast up a mound, and shall take it: then its spirit shall be changed, and it shall pass over and fall: this is its strength of its god.

LXX: For behold, I will raise up the Chaldeans, a bitter and swift nation, which walks upon the breadth of the earth, to possess the tents that are not its own: it is terrible and illustrious: from itself its judgment shall be, and its assumption shall go forth from itself: And its horses shall leap beyond leopards, and they shall be swifter than the wolves of Arabia, and its horsemen shall ride, and they shall come with a rush from afar: and they shall fly like an eagle ready to eat, a consummation shall come upon the impious who resist their faces from the opposite side, and it shall gather captivity as the sand: and it shall delight in kings, and tyrants shall be its playthings: and it shall mock every fortress, and shall cast up a

mound, and shall obtain it: then it will change its spirit, and will pass over, and will be propitiated: this is the strength of my God.

What I had said to you: 'Look among the nations, and see, and be astonished, and be amazed: for a work shall be done in your days, which no one will believe when it is told,' this is what the following discourse describes: Behold, I will raise up Nebuchadnezzar, and the Chaldeans, a most warlike and swift nation, to whose strength and audacity in battle almost all the Greeks who wrote barbarian histories are witnesses. This nation is not content with its own borders, but running hither and thither, it roams over the breadth of the earth. And this is its work, not to till the earth with the ploughshare; but to live by plunder and the sword, and to possess cities not its own: before it lays a hand, before it rushes to war, it carries terror in its countenance. As for what it says: 'From itself its judgment and its burden shall go forth,' for which Symmachus interpreted: 'it shall judge for itself, and by its own decree it shall go forth,' it is to be understood either in this way, that it will appoint princes from its own people, and its power and its sword will not have the retainers of other nations, or certainly that as it has done, so it will be done to it, and it will be laid waste just as it has laid waste.

The horses also and the horsemen, who will come from afar, will be so swift for pursuing and laying waste to all things, that they will surpass leopards and evening wolves. For wolves are said to be fiercer near nightfall, and incited

to madness by a whole day's hunger. The horse-men, therefore, will fly not to fight, because no one will resist; but to run about like an eagle, to which all among the birds are subject, hastening to devour. And just as at the blast of a burning wind all green things wither, so at their sight all things will be laid waste, and so great will be the number of captives and of plunder, that by hyperbole (ὕπερβολήν), it can even be compared to the sand.

He also, that is, Nebuchadnezzar, will reign over the whole world, and triumphing over kings before his chariot, he will hold them in derision, and will count them among his delights: and he will be of such great power and pride that he will strive to overcome nature, and to capture the most fortified cities with the strength of his army. For he will come to Tyre, and having cast a mound into the sea, he will make a peninsula out of an island, and the land will provide an entrance into the city amidst the waves of the sea. For which reason also he will laugh at every fortress, and will cast up a mound, and will take it, that is, the fortress, or Tyre; which indeed is clearly shown in Ezekiel, where it is said: 'Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has subjected his army to a great work against Tyre. Every head is bald, and every shoulder is peeled, and no wages were given to him, and to his army against Tyre, for the work in which he served against it' (Ezek. 29:19). But when he has cast up the mound, and nothing has stood in the way of his strength, then his spirit will be changed into pride: and believing

himself to be a god, he will set up a golden image in Babylon, which he will compel all nations to worship. When he has done this, he will pass into the form of a beast, and afterwards he will fall: for which Aquila and Symmachus translated καὶ πλημμελήσει, that is, 'and he will sin': Holy Scripture having this custom, that it puts VASAM (), that is, 'he will sin,' for that which is, 'he will cease to be' what he was. We also have something similar in the idiom of our own language, when we say: 'The army was beaten (vapulavit),' for that which is, 'it was slain and cut down': And, 'the vineyard and the field have sinned (peccavit),' for that which is, 'the vintage and the crops did not have a yield.'

But what is said at the end of the chapter: 'This is its strength of its god,' is to be read ironically (εἰρωνικῶς), so that the sense is: This is the strength of it, which Bel its god gave to it. To whose worship he compelled all nations by a most savage command, even through Scripture and the threat of death. This is according to the Hebrew: now let us come to the LXX, so that, having set forth the individual sentences, we may adapt the allegorical interpretation.

'Behold, I will raise up the Chaldeans, a bitter and swift nation, which walks upon the breadth of the earth, to possess the tents that are not its own.' God threatens against those who despise and slander His providence that He will raise up the Chaldeans, which is interpreted as 'like demons' (quasi daemonia); signifying either the most wicked angels, who minister to His fury and

wrath, and to the tribulation which He inflicts upon sinners: or the souls of the most wicked men, through whom He torments those who deserve it.

But these Chaldeans are a bitter and swift nation, not sparing and quickly fulfilling what has been commanded them. And it walks upon the breadth of the earth. For 'broad and spacious is the way that leads to death' [Matt. 7:13]: through which also that rich man in the Gospel walked, who shone in purple (Luke 16), and those of whom it is said: 'Who sleep upon beds of ivory, and abound in delights on their couches. Who eat the fatted calves from the herds, and drink filtered wine, and are anointed with the first ointments' (Amos 6:4): who, because they walk on the broad way, are called the breadth of the earth, which is trodden by the footsteps of the Chaldeans.

For they were unwilling to walk through the narrow and constricted way, which leads to life, and through which Paul walked, glorifying God in tribulation and distress (I Cor. 6:12). But the Chaldeans walk upon the breadth of the earth, to possess tents not their own. For every rational soul, although through its own vice and fault it has become a lodging for the Chaldeans, is nevertheless by nature a tabernacle of God. And although in the Gospel the most wicked demon says: 'I will return to my house from which I came out' (Matt. 12:44), he is not to be believed; for indeed no rational creature was made for this, to be a dwelling place of a demon.

It follows: 'It is terrible and illustrious: from itself its judgment shall be, and its assumption shall go forth from it.' The Chaldean is terrible on account of the many and various punishments it inflicts on the contemptuous; illustrious, because it assumes for itself the glory of divinity. And through its oracles and false responses, and cures of diseases which it itself had inflicted, it seems illustrious to the ignorant and to those who despise God. For the judgment and punishment of the one who despises will be from it, that is, from himself, or from the Chaldean. For they themselves, according to the apostle, will be handed over for punishment, that they may learn not to blaspheme (I Tim. 1): from which he who has done penance, and has been converted to God, will go forth, when previously he was held in its hands, and was the Chaldean's assumption. If ever we see someone who has served the devil for a long time, and afterwards has been converted to God, let us say of him: 'And his assumption has gone forth from it.'

For whoever have done penance, and have abandoned the demons, to whom they previously offered their backs for riding like horses; and with the speed of leopards and evening wolves have cast off and thrown down their horsemen, and with an empty and light back have come to carry Him who, meek and poor, ascended upon the colt of an ass (John 12), these, as if hastening from afar, and not content with running and rushing, will take flight, and will come

like an eagle, to feed on the flesh of the Word of God, and to satisfy the hunger of so long a time.

For in that which is said, καὶ ἐξιππάζονται οἱ ἱππεῖς αὐτοῦ, and which the LXX translated: 'And its horsemen shall be ridden,' Symmachus, according to the sense we have set forth above, interpreted, 'its horsemen shall be poured out,' that is, they shall fall and be dashed to the ground. But the wolves of Arabia, that is, of the evening and of the West, are rightly called these, whose most wicked way of life has set, and who, previously established in darkness, leave the evening with their whole course, and when they have left it, and have flown, ready to eat the flesh of the Word of God, then the consummation will come upon the impious, that is, upon the Chaldeans who were resisting the faces of the penitents, lest they should return to their Lord.

Wherefore, the consummation will come upon the impious, resisting their faces from the opposite side. But when they have been consummated, and the captivity has been snatched from their hands, then the divine word will gather the Chaldean captivity as the sand, and will delight in kings, and tyrants will be its playthings, seeing the once most powerful devil, and his kingdoms (which, showing also to the Savior, he said (Matt. 4:9): 'All these things I will give you, if, falling down, you will adore me') destroyed by its advent; for it is the delight of prudence, and the pleasure of wisdom, when foolishness is destroyed, and the once-powerful might of tyrants,

having been overcome and cast down, is turned into derision.

For not only was the dragon formed to be played with by the Lord, who is the beginning of his creation, made a plaything for the angels. Nor will God give him alone, like a sparrow to a little child; but if any other be cruel and of a tyrannical mind, he will be handed over to the Word of God for derision.

And it says, 'it will mock every fortress.' And what other fortress is there, but that of which the Apostle speaks: 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God' (II Cor. 10:4, 5). If, therefore, there should be any fortifications, whether in discourses, which promise that they have a height and magnitude contrary to the truth, or in all glory and riches and strength, which is praised in the world, all will be destroyed, and the Word of God will mock every fortress. And it will cast up a mound, and will obtain it by a mound, and by the earthly things which it brings forth, convicting it of fragility in those things in which it previously seemed to itself to have some strength.

But when this has been completed, then the spirit will be converted, and it will by no means punish as it had punished before, but passing through, it will pray for the sinners, and will reconcile them to their former Lord: in all of which is shown the strength of our God, who has accomplished such great things.

You see how rugged these places are, and contrary to the historical truth. And how those things which we have interpreted literally concerning the Chaldeans, now according to tropology seem to sound of clemency and the liberty of those who have escaped from the hands of the Chaldeans. History is strict, and has no faculty for wandering. Tropology is free, and circumscribed only by these laws, that it follow the piety of the understanding and the context of the discourse, and not be violent in joining things that are very contrary to each other.

(Verse 12.) Are you not from the beginning, O Lord my God, my Holy One? and we shall not die? O Lord, you have appointed him for judgment, and you have established him, the strong one, to correct? LXX: Are you not from the beginning, O Lord my God, my Holy One? and we shall not die? O Lord, you have appointed him for judgment [Another reading: in judgment]: and he has formed me, that I may argue in his discipline. Symmachus more clearly: Are you not from the beginning, O Lord my God, my Holy One, so that we might not die? O Lord, you have appointed him to judge, you have established him, the strong one, to correct. To the prophet's complaint, saying: 'How long, O Lord, shall I cry, and you will not hear?' God had responded, saying: 'Look among the nations and see:' and after the preface, he had added: 600 'Behold, I will raise up the Chaldeans, a bitter and swift nation.' And with the whole description completed, whether of Nebuchadnezzar or of the devil, he mentions at

the end: 'Then his spirit shall be changed, and he shall pass over, and shall fall, this is his strength of his God.'

Hearing and understanding this—that Nebuchadnezzar is given power against Judah, or the devil against believers, in order to correct them, and that after the correction he himself will also be punished in the end—the prophet responded to the Lord: 'Are you then, O Lord my God, my Holy One (and he says this with the affection of one who is flattering and penitent), you who created us from the beginning? by whose mercy we subsist to this day?'

'For I did not know that our adversaries had such power, nor did I know that Nebuchadnezzar, or the devil of this world, had received power over all nations. Therefore, as far as his strength is concerned, none of us can resist him. But as for your mercy, all that we live is yours, in that we have not been killed by him and led to the works of death. For you, O Lord, have appointed him for judgment, so that he himself might be the enemy and the avenger, and that through him you might correct whoever has sinned against you.'

But since we have once interpreted the Chaldeans as demons, and Nebuchadnezzar as their king, the devil, we ought to briefly touch upon the description of the devil and his power, so that the prophet may rightly say: 'O Lord, you have appointed him for judgment, and you have established him, the strong one, to correct.'

A nation of demons is raised up against the unbelieving and the scornful, bitter for punish-

ing, and present everywhere. It also walks over the whole breadth of the earth, to possess men in whom Christ ought to have dwelt. It is horrible and terrible, and can with difficulty be overcome by anyone, nor is it broken before it comes to its consummation, weighed down by the magnitude of its sins and the weight of its iniquity.

Its horses and horsemen, in the likeness of leopards and wolves, will always thirst for blood, and will desire prey; they will feign absence, and when they are not expected, they will quickly come from afar. They will fly like an eagle, which, exalting its flight, wishes to place its nest among the stars of heaven, and always hastens to its prey. And in Ezekiel, he is described under the figure of Nebuchadnezzar and the king of Egypt concerning the devil.

601 There is none of the demons who spares: all will come hastening to the prey: before their face is a burning wind: whatever they have looked upon, whatever has met their gaze, they will desire to burn and to destroy. But the king will be most powerful in the midst of the captives, and he will receive their number like the sand of the sea from his attendants on this side and that, and he himself will triumph over kings, and tyrants will be his mockery. For he will deceive many saints by his tripping them up, and those who seemed to themselves most powerful, and to exercise tyranny against demons and to cast them out of possessed bodies, he will subject to his servitude and hold up to ridicule.

He, most strong, having gathered his band and assembled an army of the lost, will laugh at every fortification, and whatever is strong, he will strive to overthrow. For he will carry up a rampart, that is, he will surround it with earthly works: and when the earth has been heaped up, he will easily capture every fortification.

After so great a victory, his spirit will be changed, and his mouth will pass even to heaven, and making himself God, he will begin to blaspheme his Creator. When he has done this, he will fall, and his ruin will show how strong his divinity was, and the pretense of the idols under whose images he subjugated men to his own worship.

Hearing, therefore, these things—that the king of this world is so great and of such a kind that he gathers captives like the sand of the sea, and triumphs over kings, and tyrants are his mockery, and he laughs at every fortification, and first carries up a rampart and then captures it; and is of such pride that he dares to resist his Creator and make himself as a god—he who before spoke boldly to the Lord and had recalled that he, or his people, or those in whose person he was complaining, were just, now breaks forth into words of flattery and says: 'Are you then from the beginning, O Lord my God, my Holy One? and that we do not die, nor are captured by so great an enemy, is of your clemency. For you, O Lord, have established him as a butcher; and you have made him strong, so that either no one or a rare one can resist his strength.'

Furthermore, according to the LXX, this which is said at the end: 602 'And he has formed me, that I might argue in his discipline,' can be referred to the person of the prophet, so that the sense is: 'But I have for this reason been inspired as a prophet, that I might rebuke the delinquent and teach the discipline of the Lord.' Some think it is said of the Lord, who was for that reason formed by the Father and assumed a body, that he might instruct men in the doctrine of God the Father. But how discordant this is from the preceding context and the whole tenor of the passage, will be a matter not so much for my judgment as for the reader's.

(Verses 13, 14.) Your eyes are pure, so that you do not see [alt. they do not see] evil, and you cannot look upon iniquity. Why do you not look upon those who act unjustly, and are silent when the impious devours one more just than himself: and will you make men like the fish of the sea, and like a reptile that has no ruler? LXX: A pure eye, that it may not see evils: and you will not be able to look upon sorrow. Why do you look upon scorners, will you be silent when the impious has devoured one more just than himself? And you will make men like the fish of the sea, and like reptiles that have no leader.

Jeremiah says something similar to God: You are just, O Lord, I confess: yet I will speak judgments to you: Why is it that the way of the wicked prospers, all who transgress and sin abound? You have planted them and they have taken root, they have begotten sons, and have borne fruit: you are

near to their mouth, and far from their kidneys (Jer. 12:1-2). Therefore Habakkuk also, with the same sentiment, says: "Your eyes, O Lord, are pure; and I know that you do not willingly look upon what is evil and unjust, nor can anyone doubt your justice." Nevertheless, why do you suffer the Babylonians to be tossed about with such cruelty, and the just Israel to be oppressed by the impious Nebuchadnezzar: not that he who is oppressed is perfectly just [alt. is perfect], but that he is more just than the one oppressing him. And just as fish that have no ruler, and irrational beasts, and the multitude of reptiles without providence, are subject to the stronger, and whoever has more strength dominates the other: so among men, a rational animal created in your likeness, neither reason nor merit will prevail, but bodily strength and irrational force.

But if we wish to understand this in a general sense, concerning providence, with the prophet asking: Why does the devil have so much power in the world, and while God reigns, another exercises tyranny? The sense will be of this kind, and this exposition will be joined with the preceding ones: I know, O Lord my God, my Holy One, that with you providing and defending, we do not die; and I know that for this reason you have placed an adversary, so that with him as an executioner, you might correct and not kill sinners. I know that nothing unjust pleases you, and that your eyes are pure from all iniquity, nor can you see the sorrows of those who are subject to injustice. Nevertheless, I cannot find

the reason why the unjust Cain kills the just Abel (Gen. 4), and you are silent. Why, when the sea monster rages and devours all, not only are the smaller fish devoured, but even your own Jonah is devoured (Jonah 2)? Why does the impious conquer, and the just is conquered? Nor do I say this as if I knew anyone to be justified in your sight, and to be without sin, or as if I were ignorant of human fragility; but in the way that Sodom and Gomorrah are just in comparison with Jerusalem. And the Publican in the Gospel, by comparison with the Pharisee, is made more just (Luke 18): so also he who is oppressed by the devil is indeed a sinner, but he is more just than the one oppressing him. Why, therefore, is there no measure, nor weight, so that if a just person is once oppressed and subjected, he is subjected not to an impious person, but to one more just than himself?

Shall I say that anything happens without you, and that, you being unwilling, the impious can have so much power? to think this is blasphemous. Since, therefore, you are the ruler and Lord of the universe, it is necessary that you cause what cannot happen without you. And he says these things not because the prophet himself thinks this way, as I have testified above, but because he expresses human impatience in his own person: just as we frequently see the Apostle adopt the various opinions of men in himself, and now say: "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, 604 and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23). And as if he were

a beginner: "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended: for we know in part, and we prophesy in part" (Phil. 3:13). And again, as if he were perfect: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded" (1 Cor. 13:9), since it is certainly not characteristic of one and the same person to say that he knows in part and that he is perfect. And lest perhaps you think this is not an Apostolic custom, but an argument of our own, he himself says to the Corinthians: "Now these things, brethren, I have applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you might learn in us" (1 Cor. 4:6).

Otherwise, how can God treat men like the fish of the sea, and like reptiles that have no ruler: when the angels of each one daily see the face of the Father who is in heaven (Matt. 18): and the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them (Ps. 33). Therefore, just as God's providence runs through men even as individuals, so in the other animals we can understand a general dispensation and order, and the course of things. For example, how the multitude of fish is born and lives in the waters, how reptiles and quadrupeds arise on the earth, and with what foods they are nourished. But it is absurd to lower the majesty of God to this, that He should know at every moment how many gnats are born, or how many die, what is the multitude of bedbugs and fleas and flies on the earth, how many fish swim in the water, and which of the smaller ones ought to fall prey to the larger. Let us not be such foolish flatterers of God

that, while we drag His power down even to the lowest things, we become injurious to ourselves, saying that the providence for rational beings is the same as for irrational ones. From which that apocryphal book is to be condemned for its foolishness, in which it is written that a certain angel named Tyri presides over reptiles: 605 and in this likeness, that specific angels are assigned for the custody of fish, trees, and all beasts.

(Verses 15 ff.) He has lifted up everything with a hook, he has drawn it in his dragnet, and gathered it in his net: over this he will rejoice and exult. Therefore he will offer sacrifice to his dragnet, and burn incense to his net, because by them his portion is made fat, and his food choice: for this reason, therefore, he spreads his dragnet, and he never ceases to slay the nations [Vulgate: spares]. LXX: He has lifted up the whole catch with a hook, and has drawn him in with his net, and gathered him in his dragnets: for this reason he will rejoice and be glad: therefore he will sacrifice [Another reading: sacrificed] to his dragnet, and burn incense to his net, because by them he has fattened his portion, and his food is choice: therefore he spreads his net, and never ceases to slay the nations.

Because he had named fishes above, saying: "And you will make men like the fish of the sea, and like the creeping thing," which is more significantly called in Hebrew REMES, that is, κινούμενον (kinoumenon), namely, everything that can be moved, for that reason he preserves the metaphor (*metaphoran*) of fish in the rest,

so that just as a fisherman casts a hook, and a net, and a dragnet, so that what the hook could not, the net might catch, and what escaped the net might be surrounded by the wider dragnets: so also the king of Babylon laid waste to all things, and made the entire human race his prey (Dan. III). Furthermore, what he says: "He will rejoice and be glad, and he will sacrifice to his dragnet, and offer incense to his net," signifies the idol that he made in the plain of Dura [Another reading: Duram] and the image of Bel, to which, as if to a great dragnet, he sacrificed the fattest victims, compelling all the nations he had conquered to its worship. Indeed, believing himself to have been fattened by them, that is, by his idols, and to have his portion, that is, all riches, he subjugated to his empire even princes and kings as if they were great fish, which he calls choice food. And because he was once sated by a most abundant catch, and filled his dragnet, that is, his army, for that reason he does not cease to slay the nations, that is, to always fight and to slaughter.

Furthermore, according to the Septuagint, the impious devil (who oppresses the just man, and holds men like the fish of the sea, and lays waste to all things like reptiles that have no leader) cast his hook, contrary to that hook by which the first fish was caught by the apostle Peter, in whose mouth a stater was found (Matt. XVII). And Adam clung to his hook, and he drew him out of paradise with his net: and he covered him with his dragnets, with various and manifold deceits and tricks. For this reason he will rejoice, and

will consider his snares to be more than the commandment of the Lord. And he will sacrifice not to the hook (which is understood as a perverse word, and still established in the beginning), but to his net, because in it he caught the fattest victims. And: "By one man many were made sinners" (Rom. V, 19), and "in Adam we all died" (I Cor. XV), and thereafter all the saints were likewise cast out of paradise with him. Whence also his foods are choice: so that, according to the Psalmist: "He may seek his food from God" (Ps. CIII, 21), wishing to subvert the prophets and apostles. And because he first deceived man, he does not cease to slay the entire human race daily.

But it can also be understood of the perverse and manifold doctrine of heretics, that they too with their hook, and their net, and their dragnets catch very many fish, and seize many reptiles, and for that reason rejoice, and adore their own speech, by which they were able to deceive and persuade, as if it were God, and they worship it, they despoil it: they serve with all art that by which they know so many victims have been slain by them, and so many of the powerful and holy have been deceived, whom Scripture now names a fat portion and choice food. Therefore, in the likeness of beasts, which having once tasted blood always thirst for it, they spread their net, and this is their whole endeavor, that they may slay not a few, as in the beginning, but more. He who has seen such a multitude of heresies and perverse doctrines caught by the devil's hook, net, and dragnets, does not doubt the slaughter

of many nations: and yet, the end of their catch is destruction.

(Chapter II, Verse 1) I will stand upon my watch, and fix my step upon the fortification, and I will watch to see what shall be said to me, and what I may answer to him that argues with me.

The Septuagint: I will stand upon my watch, and I will go up upon the rock, and I will watch to see what he will speak in [or: to] me, and what I may answer to my reproof.

Symmachus has rendered it more clearly: As a watchman I will stand upon the watchtower, and I will stand as one enclosed, and I will watch to see what shall be said to me, and what I may answer, and I will contradict him that argues against me.

For "fortification" and "rock," in place of which Symmachus has translated "enclosed," in the Hebrew is found MASUR (מָצוּר), which Theodotion translated as *gyrum* (circle), and Aquila and the fifth edition as *circinum* (compass/enclosure).

To the first complaint, the Lord had responded: "Look among the nations, and see, and be astonished, and wonder."

In response to this, the prophet, as if repenting of his former statement, had indeed tempered his question, saying: "O Lord my God, my holy one, and we shall not die" (Above I, 12).

But nevertheless, with veneration and praise of God, he had inquired of Him: "Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you know not how to look upon iniquity" (Ibid., 13). Why do you not

look upon those who act unjustly, and remain silent when the wicked devours one more just than himself? And what this devouring of the just consisted of, he detailed in parts: that men would become like the fish of the sea, and like reptiles. And that all would be dragged to destruction by his hook, and by his dragnet, and by his net, and there would be no end to their slaughter.

Therefore, because he is a prophet, and for that reason he asks, and says that he doubts, so that what is answered to him may be answered to all, he says: "I will stand," he says, "in my watch-tower," that is, on the height of my prophecy, "and I will see what follows after the captivity of the people, and the overthrow of the city and the temple." Or certainly thus: I will guard my heart with all diligence, and I will stand upon Christ the rock. And I will hedge myself in with this circle (gyro) and enclosure (circino) as with a wall, lest the roaring lion be able to break in upon me, and I will see what God may answer me after my second question: and after He has answered me, and has reproved me for having complained wrongly, what I too ought to answer Him. Moreover, he elegantly and with wonderful insight describes human impatience, which we are always accustomed to have in disputes: that before anyone answers us from the opposing side, and before we know on what point he has refuted us, we prepare to respond. From this it is shown that the response is not one of reason, but of contention. For if it were a matter of reason, one ought to have awaited the answer, and thus

see whether one should respond, or agree with a reasonable response.

But this too must be noted from what he had said, "That I may see what he will speak in me," that the prophetic Vision and the word of God do not come to the prophets from without, but respond from within and to the inner man. Hence also Zechariah: "And the angel," he says, "who spoke in me" (Zech. I, 9). And in the Psalms: "I will hear what the Lord will speak in me" (Psalm LXXXIV, 9).

(Verses 2 ff.) And the Lord answered me, and said: Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he that readeth it may run over it. For the vision is yet for a time, and it shall appear at the end, and shall not lie: if it make delay, wait for it: for it shall surely come, and it shall not be late. Behold, he that is unbelieving, his soul shall not be right in himself. But the just shall live in his faith.

Septuagint: And the Lord answered me, and said: Write the vision, and plainly on a boxwood tablet [Alt. on boxwood] that he who reads it may pursue it: for the vision is yet for a time, and it will arise at the end, and not in vain. If it should fail, wait for it, for it shall surely come, and it shall not be late: if he should draw back, he will not be pleasing to my soul. But the just shall live by my faith.

For 'tables' and 'boxwood,' which in Hebrew is called ALLUOTH [Alt. LUTH] (), Symmachus has translated as 'pages.' And where the Septuagint put: 'But the just shall live by my faith,'

all others have translated equally, 'he shall live by his faith.' Finally, Symmachus, interpreting more significantly, says: 'But the just shall live by his own proper faith,' which in Greek is said, ὁ δίκαιος τῇ ἑαυτοῦ πίστει ζήσεται: for BAEMU-NATHO (), which is interpreted 'in his faith,' if it had the letter JOD and not VAU at the end, as the Septuagint thought, and were read BAEMU-NATHI (), they would have correctly translated, 'in my faith.' But now the similarity of the letters VAU and JOD, which differ from each other only in size, was the cause of the error. Why this was said, the following discussion will cover.

According to the promise which is made to the holy man in Isaiah, saying: 'While you are still speaking, I will say, 'Here I am"' (Isaiah 65:24), so now too the Lord answered the prophet, and commanded that he write the vision, and arrange [Alt. direct] it upon tables, that is, that he write it more clearly. But I think those tables are the ones of which the Apostle also speaks to the Corinthians: 'You are our letter, written in our hearts, which is known and read by all men: being made manifest that you are the letter of Christ, ministered [Alt. manifested] by us, and written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart' (II Corinthians 3:2-3). And Solomon also signifies something similar in Proverbs, saying: 'Write it upon the breadth of your heart' (Proverbs 3:3).

Moreover, he is ordered to write more plainly, so that the reader may be able to run, and his

speed and desire to read may be held back by no impediment. And He commands this because the vision is still far off, and for an appointed time. And when the end of things has arrived, then he too will come, and the prophecy will be proven true, completed in deed. But if by chance, due to your desire, O reader, and the ardor of seeing the vision, what has been promised should seem to you to delay a little, do not despair of its coming; but wait patiently: for you have me, who promise you and say: 'It shall surely come, and it shall not be late.'

But if anyone is incredulous of this my promise, 610 and while I am saying, 'it shall surely come, and it shall not be late,' he should begin to doubt, and to waver silently within himself, thinking that what is delayed for a time will not come; this one will be displeasing to my soul, according to that passage: 'Your new moons and your sabbaths my soul hates' (Isaiah 1:13). But that God said 'his soul,' we ought to understand as 'mind' and 'thought,' so that the meaning is: it will be displeasing to my sense. And just as he who, when I promise, doubts that what I pledge will come, will be displeasing; so the just man who has believed my promise will live in his faith.

With these lines, as it were, the picture of this chapter has been sketched. But what he says is of this kind, provided that we also mix in the translation of the Septuagint. Write in your heart, and just as little children who receive the first elements of letters, practice curved strokes and a trembling hand on a boxwood tablet, and

become accustomed to writing correctly through practice; so you also, who have spoken in the person of the doubting people, write what I say on the tables of your heart and on the boxwood of your breast.

For it is a vision that is promised and ordered to be described, and to be written more clearly, so that it may be enveloped by no cloud, and obscured by no enigmatic ambiguities: let a manifest hope have a manifest promise. This, however, O prophet, I command, not because you do not know (for you would not be a prophet if you were ignorant), but so that what you have written more clearly, the reader may be able to read and run through without impediment and difficulty; which the Septuagint translated: ὅπως διώκη ὁ ἀναγινώσκων, that is, 'that he who reads may pursue'; according to that sense which is written to Timothy: 'Pursue justice, and piety and faith, charity, patience, meekness' (I Timothy 6:11). And to the Romans: 'Pursuing hospitality' (Romans 12:13). And to the Corinthians: 'Pursue charity' (I Corinthians 14:1).

But the vision itself of which I said to you: 'write the vision, and make it plain on a boxwood tablet, that he who reads may pursue it,' is still for an appointed time, of which the Savior says: 'In an acceptable time [Alt. accepted] I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you' (Isaiah 49:8). And it will arise at the consummation of the world, and at the last hour of the day, of which John also speaks: 'Little children, it is now the last hour' (I John 2:18). And it will not

come in vain: for it will save many, and with the remnant of the Israelite people 611 it will gather a multitude of nations.

But if it should withdraw itself a little, and to your wishes, O reader, who are ordered to read on the boxwood tablet and on the tables which the prophet described, the vision should begin to come more slowly, wait for it: for it shall surely come, and it shall not be late. But if your faith should doubt, and you should think that what I pledge will not happen, you will have for a great punishment that you will be displeasing to my soul. But the just man who believes my words, and does not doubt those things which I promise, will have as a reward eternal life.

Nor should you immediately argue, either in your being destroyed or in his being given life, that there is with me an acceptance of persons, because he himself is the cause of his own life-giving, who lives by his faith: just as you, because you withdrew yourself and were unwilling to believe, were displeasing to my soul. But manifestly in these things there is a prophecy of the advent of Christ. Whence also the proposed question is solved, that until he comes, iniquity will dominate in the world, and judgment will not reach its end: and the true Nebuchadnezzar will capture men in his net and dragnet like little fish, and the rational [Alt. reasonable] animal like a reptile, having no leader.

Furthermore, as to what we have interpreted for 'vision,' 'for the vision is yet far off: and if it make delay, wait for it,' that is, the vision (visum):

let no one, deceived by error, think that for 'vision' (visione), which is of the feminine gender, I have put visum, which is of the masculine gender and is less used in Latin. Indeed, HAZON (), which Aquila interprets as ὁραματισμὸν, is called visus in Hebrew, of the masculine gender, and to the end, under the same gender of vision, that is, visus, the masculine declension is preserved. The Septuagint, however, saying, 'write the vision (visionem)': and afterwards, 'if it should fail, wait for him (eum): for it shall surely come, and it shall not be late: if he should withdraw himself, he will not be pleasing to my soul in him (eo),' first interpreted 'vision' with the feminine gender, which in Hebrew, as we have said, is masculine. Then, according to the Hebrew gender, where it is declined as masculine, 'wait for him (eum),' and 'it will not be pleasing to my soul in him (eo),' they also declined it with the masculine gender. Whereas 612 they ought, according to what they first interpreted as 'vision' (visionem), to have also put the feminine gender of vision in the remaining parts, so that they would say, 'wait for her (eam): for it shall surely come: but if it should withdraw itself, it will not be pleasing to my soul in her (ea),' that is, 'in the vision.' This is so that we might not seem to be silent about what we knew.

For the rest, I am not ignorant that according to their interpretation it can also be understood thus: Write the vision in which Christ is promised again, and in your prophecy, either on a boxwood tablet, or on tables, or, as Symmachus translated,

on pages, weave this discourse: that at the appointed time, and at the consummation of the world, my Son will come, who will save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and will also couple other sheep with the ancient sheep, and making one flock, will join the two staffs, which Ezekiel, that is, the 'power of God,' holds associated and cohering to each other in his prophetic hand (Ezekiel 37). But if Christ should withdraw himself a little, O prophet, or you, O people (in whose person my prophet also seemed to doubt), and should seem to delay, wait for him, for he shall surely come, and shall not be late; and the rest which we have already explained above.

Furthermore, as to why the Apostle rather used the testimony of the Septuagint when writing to the Romans: 'But the just shall live by my faith' (Romans 1:17), and not that which is in the Hebrew, the reason is clear. For he was writing to the Romans, who did not know the Hebrew Scriptures: nor was he concerned about the words, since the sense was secure, and the present discussion would suffer no harm from it. Otherwise, wherever the sense is different, and it is written one way in the Hebrew and another in the Septuagint, note that he uses those testimonies which he had learned from Gamaliel, the doctor of the law.

(Verse 5 ff.) And as wine deceives the drinker, so will be the proud man, and he will not be adorned, who has enlarged his soul as if it were the underworld, and he himself is like death, and is not fulfilled. And he will gather to himself all

nations, and he will heap up to himself all peoples. Will not all these take up a parable against him, and a speech of his riddles, and it will be said: Woe to him who multiplies what is not his! For how long does he weigh himself down with thick clay? Will not those who bite you suddenly rise up, and those who tear you be roused, and you will be as plunder for them? 613 Because you have despoiled many nations, all who are left of the peoples will despoil you, because of the blood of man, and the iniquity of the land, of the city, and of all who dwell in it.

LXX: But he who is arrogant and a scorner, a proud man, brings nothing to completion; who has enlarged his soul like the underworld, and he, like death, is not fulfilled. And he will gather to himself all nations, and will take to himself all peoples. Will not all these take up a parable against him, and a proposition for his tale, and say: Woe to him who multiplies for himself what is not his! For how long does he heavily weigh down his own yoke, for those who bite him will suddenly rise up, and your ambushers will awaken, and you will be as plunder for them? Because you have despoiled many nations, all the remaining peoples will despoil you, because of the blood of men and the impieties of the land, and of the city, and of all its inhabitants.

While these things are promised again concerning the advent of Christ, or, as it pleases some, concerning the end of the vision and the completion of God's help—for he who believes it will come shall live by his faith, but he who

is unbelieving will be displeasing to the Lord's soul—Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, will be deceived by his own pride. And just as wine acts against the one who drinks it, and after he has risen, neither his foot nor his mind performs its function, and all joy and mental exhilaration turns to ruin, so the proud man will not be adorned, nor will he bring his will to completion; and according to Symmachus, *οὐκ εὐπορήσει*, that is, he will be in want of all things. He who, like death and the underworld, is not sated with the slain, and subjugating all nations and all peoples to his empire, did not consider an end to his avarice. When he has been inebriated with the cup of the Lord, and put to sleep by the unmixed chalice, will not all speak of him by comparison, a *πρόβλημα*? Woe to him who, devastating the whole world, is not sated with plunder, nor ceases to despoil the already naked, and rages only for this, that he may devour, and weighs himself down with the burden of iniquity and spoils as with a most heavy yoke. And at the same time, consider how elegantly he has called multiplied riches "thick clay."

Will not the Medes and Persians suddenly rise up, who, destroying the empire of the Babylonians, will first bite him, and afterwards tear him to pieces, and Nebuchadnezzar will become plunder for them, and the devastator of the whole world will be despoiled by the remaining peoples who were able to escape his hand and cruelty? 614 This, however, will happen to him on account of the blood of man, that is, of Judah, and

the iniquity of the land, namely Israel, and of the city, doubtless Jerusalem, signifying the people in general and all who dwell in it.

Let us also discuss the Septuagint. All that we have said about Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar can be referred to this world and to the devil, who, truly arrogant and proud, and believing himself to be something, will bring [or: brings] nothing to completion. Indeed, his effort and all his labor will come to ruin; he who, in the likeness of the underworld and of death, is not sated with the slain, and rejoices in the deception of all nations, and gathers peoples to himself. When they see him cast into the Abyss and delivered to Tartarus, seeing that what they had read in the prophets parabolically and *αἰνιγματωδῶς* (enigmatically) has been fulfilled, and interpreting it concerning him, they will recall with one voice: Woe to the devil, who multiplied for himself what was not his. Woe to the partridge, which gathered what it did not hatch. "For how long?" This is the voice either of those who rebuke or of those who point to the day of judgment. And weighing down his yoke with infinite weight. And beautifully, because he is arrogant and proud (for pride is properly shown in the stretching of the neck and the raising of the nape), the yoke is most heavy, so that it may bend what had been erect.

And this will happen because those who bite him will suddenly rise up, either the angels, with whom the devil will be handed over for punishment, or those who had been tempted by him,

afterwards doing penance; and converted to the standards of Christ, they will bite him, according to what is said elsewhere: "Your men of peace have laid snares for you" (Jer. 28). Finally, it follows: "And your ambushers will awaken," that is, you will be subject to the snares of those whom you had previously put to sleep, whom you had inebriated, who are devastating your kingdom and gathering those who were captives into the troops of Christ. For you have plundered many nations, and you have despoiled the Jewish people of the adornment and garments which I had given them; 615 therefore all the remaining peoples, who have not submitted [or: submitted] their neck to your empire, will despoil you and make you naked. Because you too have killed very many nations, and have shed their blood. But also the impiety of the land, that is, of Judea, and of the city of Jerusalem, and of all its inhabitants (who said against their Creator: "Crucify, crucify him; his blood be upon us and upon our children" [John 19:6]), will return upon your head, and will be the causes of your despoliation.

Moreover, this same thing can be interpreted concerning the Antichrist, who will be so arrogant and proud that he will sit in the temple of God, making himself God. And, like the underworld and death, he will kill so many and gather them to himself that, if it were possible, he would deceive even the elect of God (Mark 13). He will also gather to himself all nations, and will lead all peoples into his error. When they later see him slain by the spirit of Christ's mouth, they will

understand that the things which were foretold about him are true, and they will say all that follows, with the same understanding with which we have expounded concerning the devil.

As for what he says, "all the remaining peoples will despoil you because of the blood of men, and the impiety of the land, and of the city, and of all who dwell in it," let us understand the remaining peoples to be the holy ones who did not serve the Antichrist, by whom the impious one will be despoiled on account of the impiety he practiced throughout the whole earth, and the devastation of the city of the Church, and the persecution of all who dwelt in it. For so great a devastation and so great an impiety at the end of things, with the Antichrist raging, will spread through the Churches, and with the iniquity of many having multiplied, charity will grow so cold (Matt. 24), that the Lord, who knows the secrets of the heart and is not ignorant of what is to come, will have said: "Do you think, when the Son of Man comes, he will find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

We can also, according to the apostle John (who writes: "As you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, so now there are many Antichrists" (1 John 2:18), "by which we know that it is the last hour"), call all heretics and every perverse dogma of those who arrogate knowledge to themselves and despise the simplicity of the Church, who bring nothing to completion but delight in the deaths of many, arrogant and proud, and adapt the entire content of the chapter to their understanding: who truly multiply

for themselves what is not theirs, and gathering for themselves, as it were, a most heavy clay and a ponderous yoke by which they are dragged to punishment, despoil many nations, and shed the blood of men, and practice impiety against the Church and all its inhabitants. 616 But the remaining people, namely the men of the Church, who have not been deceived by their error, will suddenly rise up, and will awaken as if from a deep sleep, and will bite them, and will lay snares for them, and will have them as prey.

Some think that what is said, "Woe to him who multiplies for himself what is not his," etc., can be taken to refer to the rich, who extend the boundaries of their possessions, and thinking that things which are not man's belong to man, they gather them for themselves, by which they will suddenly be abandoned. But that earthly possession does not belong to man, that is, to a rational animal, the Lord also demonstrates, saying: "If you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" (Luke 16). And they expound the entire text of the chapter concerning this person. But I do not know if they can preserve the order of the prophetic question and solution.

(Verse 9.) Woe to him that gathers an evil covetousness for his house: that his nest may be on high, and he may think himself delivered from the hand of evil: you have devised confusion for your house: you have cut down many peoples, and your soul has sinned. For the stone from the wall shall cry out, and the wood that is

between the joints of the buildings shall answer. LXX: O you who multiply evil covetousness for your house, to set your nest on high, and to be rescued from the hand of the wicked, you have devised confusion for your house: you have consumed many peoples: and your soul has sinned; for which reason the stone from the wall shall cry out, and the beetle from the wood shall speak these things.

The discourse is still directed to him who heaps up evils for himself, and does not understand that the multitude of riches is the cause of the ruin of his house; and at the same time he is accused of pride through a metaphor, because in the likeness of birds he has placed his nest on high, and thought he was rescued from the hand of evil, that is, that he would never come into the power of the enemy: which counsel of pride and arrogant thought had ignominy as its end. You have killed many peoples, and in killing others you have raged against your own soul, and you have reveled in such great [or: to such a degree] cruelty that, if it can be said, the stones of the city and the timbers of the walls which you have overthrown cry out your ferocity.

The Lord in the Gospel said something similar against the Pharisees who were objecting, asking why he did not rebuke the children acclaiming him: Hosanna in the highest to the son of David, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest. Have you not read, he said, that it is written (Psalm 8:3): Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings you have

perfected praise? And if these should be silent, the stones will cry out (Matthew 21:9, 16). For although many think it should be understood thus: if the Jews are silent, the multitude of the Gentiles will confess me; yet this is the more explicit and truer understanding: even if men were silent [or: are silent], and an envious tongue does not speak of the multitude of my signs, yet the stones themselves, and the foundations of the walls, and the structure of the ramparts could resound my greatness.

To make this more significant, let us also put forth examples from secular literature. Crispus (Sallust) speaks in his histories: "The Saguntines, renowned for their faith and hardships above mortals, with greater zeal than resources, since among them [or: whom] even then the half-ruined walls, unroofed houses, and scorched temple walls showed the Punic hands." Tully says something similar to Caesar in his speech for Marcellus: "The walls, by the god of truth! (as it seems to me) of this senate-house are eager to give you thanks, because in a short time that authority will be in these seats of its ancestors and its own."

Furthermore, what we have translated as: And the wood that is between the joints of the buildings shall answer, for which the Septuagint put: And the beetle from the wood shall speak these things, Symmachus, in his usual manner, translated more clearly, καὶ συνδεσμὸς οἰκοδομῆς ξύλινος ἀποφθέγξεται αὐτά, that is, and the wooden joint of the building will

declare them. Theodotion also, καὶ συνδεσμὸς ξύλου φθέγγεται αὐτά; and likewise the fifth edition, καὶ συνδεσμὸς ξύλου φθέγγεται αὐτά; which interpretations themselves also agree with Symmachus's and our interpretation; for what in the Hebrew language is called CHAPHIS, signifies a piece of wood that is placed in the middle of the structure to hold the walls together; and among the Greeks it is commonly called ἱμάντωσις.

This, therefore, according to history, is what the prophetic discourse signifies: the stones of the walls which were destroyed by you, and their burnt timbers will resound your cruelty.

I have found, besides the five editions, that is, of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint, Theodotion, and the fifth, in the twelve prophets also two other editions, in one of which is written: For the stone from [or: in] the wall will cry out like a worm speaking in the wood; and in the other: For the stone from the wall will cry out, and the σκώληξ from the wood will speak these things. But Aquila also put something other than what we have said, καὶ μάζα, that is, and a lump from the wood will answer.

What the interpretation of these means, we will say in the exposition of the Septuagint translators, in which for woe, O is placed, and the discourse is directed either to the devil or the Antichrist, or to heretics, who multiply evil covetousness for themselves. Now, covetousness is called evil in distinction from good, so that there may be a good covetousness of the ecclesiastical teacher, who is never satisfied with the multitude

of his followers, and the more disciples he has, the more he is stirred to the study of doctrine. Woe, therefore, to him who multiplies for himself the worst covetousness, so as to gather perverse conventicles for his house, and to place his nest on high, that he may be rescued from the hand of the wicked. For the devil and the Antichrist and heretics promise that those who accept their dogma will possess the kingdoms of heaven in the celestial realms, and will not feel the fires of Gehenna. And when they have promised these things, their counsel will not be able to come to perfection: but it will be a counsel of confusion and ignominy for their house [or: to their house], after the end of things itself has shown that what had been promised was false, when [or: then] it will be proven to be a counsel of confusion, not of salvation.

This teacher of perversity, as we have said, has consumed many peoples, and the more he had in his company, the more he sinned against his own soul. Finally, the stones of his Church, and the *κάνθαρος*, that is, the beetle from the wood, will cry out against the covetousness of the proud one, because he has deceived all nations by his persuasion.

We can understand the stones as the dull hearts of those who believe heretical doctrines, and the beetle from the wood as the perverse teachers themselves, who for the sake of shameful gain, taking up the preaching of the cross, speak from the belly. For their god is their belly, and they do all things for the sake of food, which

is reduced to dung (because the beetle or cantharus is a worm of dung); and they take up the cross for this reason only, that they may teach the avarice and pride of their master the devil with a viper's mouth.

If ever you see any heretic, speaking as if of hidden and secret mysteries against the Church, and preferring the house of the devil to the house of Christ, say: The stone from the wall cries out, and the beetle from the wood speaks.

I have read in a certain volume that the beetle is understood to refer to heretics because they have dogmas comparable to dung. Whence also the Apostle says that he considered the error of the old doctrine as scybala, that is, as dung (Philippians 3). Not that the Old Law, as the Manichees think, is counted as dung in comparison with the Gospel (which is impious to say, since both Testaments are of the one God), but that the doctrines of the Pharisees, and the precepts of men, and the Deuteriosis (δευτερώσεις) of the Jews are called dung by the Apostle.

I know that one of the brethren understood the stone that cried from the wall to be the Lord Savior, and the beetle speaking from the wood to be the thief who blasphemed the Lord: which, although it can be understood piously, yet I do not find how it can be fitted with the entire context of the prophecy. There are some who think that the beetle speaking from the wood can also be referred to the person of the Savior, which appears to be impious from the very order of the discourse. For the beetle from the wood will

speaking these things is not understood in a good sense, but in a bad one, that is, it will speak of the worst covetousness of him who multiplies it against his own house, and the confusion of the devil, and the other things which have preceded concerning his iniquity and crime.

As for what Aquila says, and a lump from the wood will answer, we refer lump to that sense which the Lord put in the Gospel: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (Matthew 16:11). And when the apostles were in doubt, and could not know what it was, the Evangelist interpreted it, saying: But he had spoken to them of the doctrine of the Pharisees. Rightly, therefore, does the doctrine of heretics speak from the wood: for they cannot persuade otherwise, unless they set the glory of the wood before their own perversity.

And also that which we had said: For the stone from the wall will cry out, like a worm speaking in the wood [or: speaks], or the stone from the wall will cry out, and the σκώληξ from the wood will speak these things, some of our own say that the worm speaking in the wood is he who says in the psalm: But I am a worm and not a man (Ps. 21:7); and they refer the vocal bird to the person of the same one, who says: I have become like a lonely sparrow on the housetop (Ps. 101:8), and other similar things.

(Verses 12 ff.) Woe to him who builds a city with blood, and prepares a town with iniquity: are not these things from the Lord of hosts? For the peoples will labor for much fire, and the nations for nothing, and they will fail: because the

earth will be filled, that they may know the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

LXX: Woe to him who builds a city with blood, and prepares a town with iniquities: are not these things from the Lord Almighty? And many peoples have failed in the fire, and many nations have been straitened: because the earth will be filled that it may know the glory of the Lord, as water to cover the seas.

No one doubts that, according to the letter, the prophetic discourse is still speaking against Nebuchadnezzar; and it laments him for building Babylon with blood, and for constructing its walls upon the ruins and deaths of many. Because he did this to the city which he had built with blood, he then hears what things are inflicted by the Lord. For it follows: "Are not these things from the Lord of hosts?" that is, the things that are said. "The peoples will labor for much fire, and the nations for nothing," that is, with Babylon burned, the peoples will labor in vain, and strive for nothing, and the peoples of the Chaldean nation will fail. "Because the earth will be filled that it may know the glory of the Lord," that is, when Babylon has been overthrown, the power of God's might will be made manifest to all, "as the waters cover the sea": thus the glory of the Lord will fill the whole earth, just as the waters cover the bed and bottom of the sea. These things, as we have said, are according to the letter.

Furthermore, it is clear that the devil, and the Antichrist, and the perverse doctrine of heretics

build a city with blood—that is, their own Church on the destruction of those whom they have deceived—and prepare a city with iniquities, speaking iniquity against God, and setting their mouth in the highest. When they have done this, it is manifestly shown that they build the city with blood from their own resources, and prepare it with iniquities. For it follows: "Are not these things from the Lord Almighty?" that is, such a building is not from the Lord of Sabaoth, whom the LXX have now translated as "Almighty." For many peoples will fail, and although infinite nations are led into their error, yet they will either grow weary, which is better signified by *oligopsychēsan* (ὀλιγοψύχησαν), or they will certainly be constrained into a narrow space, and will not be able to be compared to the multitude of the Church. Indeed, with those failing in the fire (which is understood either as being consumed by the fire of their prince, the devil, or certainly being kindled by the fire of the Lord, of which He says: "I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what I will is that it be kindled" (Luke 12:49), and being drawn back from their former course, and doing penance, and deserting the path they had begun, which is the meaning of *oligopsychia* (ὀλιγοψυχία)), the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord, when at the preaching of the apostles their sound will have gone out into the whole world, "as the waters cover the sea" (Psalm 18), that is, so that the waters of the Lord may cover all the saltiness and bitterness of the age, which the earth had drunk

while the devil rained from above; and they may cause the place of the sea and of its former bitterness not to appear. Whence it is also said in the psalm, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Psalm 31:1).

Moreover (although it does not fit the order of the reading, nor does it pertain to the present text of Scripture), it can also be understood of Jerusalem, a city full of the blood of the prophets, of which Scripture records (Matthew 23) that the blood of the saints overflowed in it from gate to gate. And which says at the Lord's passion: "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Ibid., 27:25). And to which God speaks in Isaiah: "When you lift up your hands to me, I will not hear you: for your hands are full of blood" (Isaiah 1:15). This city was built on iniquities: in which, according to the same prophet, justice slept. Nor is its building from the Lord of Sabaoth. Whence many peoples failed in the fire: and many nations grew weary at that time when it was surrounded by the armies of Vespasian and Titus, and those coming for the solemn day of Passover were shut up in the city as in a prison: and they failed from famine and want, and the siege of Hadrian brought them to utter ruin [alt. reading: obsidium]. But with the city of blood overthrown, and the city of iniquities, and the peoples consumed by fire, and the nations that had come to their aid scattered here and there, and letting their weary hands fall, the whole earth was filled with the glory of Christ, and as if with waters, so the whole world was covered with his sermons and doctrine.

(Verses 15 ff.)

Woe to him who gives drink to his friend, sending his gall and making him drunk, that he may look upon his nakedness. He is filled with ignominy instead of glory: drink, you also, and be lulled to sleep. The cup of the right hand of the Lord will surround you, and a vomit of ignominy will be upon your glory: because the iniquity of Lebanon will cover you, and the devastation of the beasts [Vulgate: animals] will terrify them, because of the blood of men and the iniquity of the land, and of the city, and of all [Another reading: men] who dwell in it. The Septuagint: Woe to him who gives his neighbor to drink with a turbid subversion, and makes him drunk, that he may look into their caves: drink your fill of ignominy from glory, you also, and be shaken. The cup of the right hand of the Lord has surrounded you, and ignominy is gathered upon your glory: because the impiety of Lebanon will cover you, and the misery of the beasts will terrify you: on account of the blood of men, and the impieties of the land and of the city, and of all who dwell in it. For “turbid subversion,” Symmachus translated, καὶ ἀφῳὼν ἀκρίτως τὸν θυμὸν ἑαυτοῦ, that is, *and sending forth his fury without judgment*. Theodotion, ἀπὸ χύσεώς σου, which is translated *from your pouring out*. The fifth edition, ἐξ ἀπροσδοκήτου ἀνατροπῆς τῆς ὀργῆς σου, which means, *from the unexpected subversion of your anger*. Aquila, ἐξ ἐπιτρίψεως χόλου σου, which we can render, *from the emission of your fury*. In another

edition I found, οὐαὶ τῷ ποτίζοντι τὸν ἑταῖρον αὐτοῦ ἀέλλην πετομένην, which in our language sounds like this: *Woe to him who gives his friend to drink a flying whirlwind*. And elsewhere I have read it translated: *Woe to him who gives his neighbor to drink* ἔκστασιν ὀχλουμένην, that is, *a troubled madness*.

This is so that it might be known with how much variation the Hebrew word MASPHA (), which the Septuagint translated as *subversion*, is at odds among all the editions. Therefore, the invective is still against Nebuchadnezzar, because, having forgotten his own condition, and as if ignorant that he was a man, he gave gall and bitterness to another man to drink. We can, however, understand him to be either the king of Judea, or generally all men whom he made drunk with evils, so that he might see the nakedness of Zedekiah and of all the captives. For this, Symmachus and the fifth edition interpreted, *that he might see their ignominies*. But these things are said through the metaphor of a drunken man, disgraced by nakedness, because Nebuchadnezzar made all drunk with the cup of his fury, and saw them all despoiled and captive, and those who were once glorious were reduced to the ultimate servitude: for this is what he says: *He is filled with ignominy instead of glory*, so that it is understood of the friend, and neighbor, or partner in the kingdom, who drinks your cup, O Nebuchadnezzar. Therefore, because you have made many drunk, you too drink from the cup of the Lord and be lulled to sleep: you

will be surrounded by the punishments of the Lord's right hand, and with the ignominy of your vomit you will disgorge all that you had swallowed, and from sublime glory you will be brought down to the ultimate evils. *Because the iniquity of Lebanon will cover you*; your pride, he says, and the overthrow of the temple, and the plunder of the sanctuary will lay you waste and desolate. And because he had once named Mount Lebanon, under the same figure of speech he compares the victims and sacrifices, or certainly the multitude of peoples that was slain in Jerusalem, to animals or beasts, saying: *And the devastation of the animals will crush you*. But you will suffer all this because you have laid waste Judah, subverted the promised land, and the city of Jerusalem and all its inhabitants.

I visited a certain one of the Hebrews in Lydda, who was considered wise among them and was called a *deuterotes* (*δευτερωτης*), who told a tale of this sort: Zedekiah, he said, having been blinded by King Nebuchadnezzar in Riblah, that is, Antioch, and mocked in various ways, was led to Babylon (4 Kings 25; Jer. 39). There, when Nebuchadnezzar was celebrating a banquet one day, he ordered a potion to be given to him, which, once drunk, would loosen the drinker's bowels into a flux; and being suddenly brought in before the faces of the banqueters, and compelled by the force of his bowels, he was polluted with excrement, and this is what Scripture now says here: *Woe to him who gives drink to his friend, sending his gall and making him drunk, that

he may look upon his nakedness, and ignominy instead of glory*: that is, that he who had been a most powerful king was brought by him to such a disgrace. Hence God also threatens him that he himself will drink such a potion, and will suffer all the things that Zedekiah suffered.

You recognize how ridiculous this is, even without my saying so. For if what follows: *Drink, you also, and be lulled to sleep, and the cup of the right hand of the Lord will surround you, and a vomit of ignominy will be upon your glory*, they do not understand of the cup, but of the evils that Nebuchadnezzar is to drink, then that cup with which Zedekiah was given to drink must also be understood as evils, not, as they wish, a purgative (*καθαρτικόν*). But if they say it truly happened, and such a potion was mixed, as I related above, then this cup which Nebuchadnezzar is to drink must also be considered full of a purgative, so that God Sabaoth and the Lord Almighty, for the great vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar, should give him a purgative to drink, and make him be polluted with his own excrement. This against the Jewish tradition.

But let us come to the spiritual understanding. Woe to you, O devil, or Antichrist, or perverse dogma of the heretics, who with your doctrines and turbid potion make drunk [Another reading: *making drunk and subverting and you give*] the peoples of the deceived, and you subvert their prior faith, giving them a potion, not from Siloam, not from the Jordan, not from the springs of Israel, but from the torrent of Kidron, and

from the river of Egypt, of which Jeremiah says: *What have you to do with the way of Egypt, to drink the water of Geon* (Jer. 2:18)? For which in Hebrew is written SIOR (), that is, *turbid* and *muddy*: for although the rivers of Egypt are believed to issue from the paradise of the Scriptures, yet because they are trampled by the feet of Pharaoh, they have lost their splendor, and, violated by the mud of Egypt, have been turned into torrents, from which the saint, because he escaped, rejoices, saying: *Our soul has passed through a torrent* (Ps. 123:5).

And if anyone should oppose the torrent of Cherith, from which Elijah drank (3 Kings 17), and another torrent, from which the Lord drank on the way (for thus it is written: *He shall drink of the torrent in the way* [Ps. 109:7]), this must be said: that whoever has been in Egypt, and on the way of this world, although he be Moses and Aaron, although he be Jeremiah and Elijah, it is nevertheless necessary for him to drink of the temptations of Egypt and of the wilderness, whence also the word of the Lord, who for this reason had assumed flesh, that he might drink from the torrent, considering his own majesty, said: *Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me* (Matt. 26:39). Again, seeing that he was in Egypt, and that the waters could not be cleansed unless he himself drank, he said: *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will*.

These things are said because the devil, with subversion and a turbid cup and all perverse doctrines, makes his neighbors drunk, that is, the

rational animal, and causes those whom he has deceived to look into his caves. For the dogmas of the Church are free; they rejoice in the day and in the light. *But those who are drunk, are drunk in the night* (1 Thess. 5:7); and those who make them drunk do not lead them into the courts of the Lord, which are oppressed by no shadow of roofs, but into caves. For they have made the house of the Father, which was a house of prayer, into caves of robbers (Matt. 21), promising certain initiations and mysteries, and hidden secrets known only to heretics, of which Isaiah also speaks: *And all the handmade things they will hide, bringing them into caves and into the clefts of the rocks and the holes of the earth* (Isa. 2:18-19). Let us not, therefore, enter the caves of the heretics, nor hide ourselves there, where impious Saul was accustomed to eject the dung of his doctrines (1 Sam. 24); but rather let us ascend to the lofty cave of Mount Sinai, where Elijah saw the Lord (1 Kings 19), and Moses before him saw His back (Exod. 33). And Isaiah, crying out concerning the Lord, says: *He shall dwell in a lofty cave* (Isa. 32:16).

But if someone does not have a turbid cup and heretical doctrine, and is a teacher of the Church, and does everything for the sake of sordid gain, and sells doves in the temple, that is, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and in the priestly chair suffocates free birds, this one does not indeed make the house of prayer a cave of robbers, but he makes the house of the Father a house of trade.

After this follows: *Drink your fill of ignominy instead of glory, you too, and be shaken*, that is, O devil, O perverse dogma, O heretic, who thought yourself a golden cup by which all nations are made drunk, so that they might see your caves and secrets, for the greatness of your glory be filled with a surfeit of ignominy, and be reputed a clay vessel, the work of the potter's hands: drink you also from the cup of the Lord, of which it is said in the psalm: *A cup is in the hand of the Lord, of pure wine full of mixture, and he has inclined it from this side to that: yet its dregs are not emptied* (Ps. 74:9). And be moved from your former opinion, and do not think firm and stable those things in which you first desired to stand: because the cup of the right hand [Another reading: *the right hand*] of the Lord has surrounded you.

Furthermore, because you gave your neighbor to drink with a turbid subversion, ignominy will be gathered upon you, and upon your glory, which you first believed you had; and you will suffer this, because the impiety of Lebanon will cover you, according to that which is said: *And let his prayer become sin* (Ps. 108:7). For Lebanon is a mountain which, according to the Greek language, is homonymous (*ὁμώνυμος*) with incense; and incense is a symbol (*σύμβολον*) of spiritual incense, which is the worship of God. Therefore, the perverse prayer of heretics, not directed with evangelical simplicity, will be turned into sin for them, and the impiety of their worship of God will cover

them. Whence follows: *And the misery of the beasts will terrify you on account of the blood of men, and the impieties of the land, and of the city, and of all who dwell in it*. And the sense is: Those whom you have deceived with your frauds, and from being sheep of Christ have made into your beasts, when you see them in misery, and suffering punishments for their error, then you will be terrified, then you will lie prostrate. And lest you think that, because I named Lebanon and its beasts, I am speaking of brute animals and not of men, I tell you more clearly: You will endure these things, because you have shed the blood of many men, whom you have caused to perish for God. And you have practiced impiety in the land of the living, in the land of the meek, and your impiety has also raged in the city of the Lord, that is, in His Church; and you have made many who dwelt in it partakers of your impiety. Let this be said in the person of the heretics.

But if we wish to understand this concerning the Antichrist, or concerning the devil who will work in the Antichrist, he too, with his cup, with which he will desire to subvert the discipline of Christ, will make many drunk, so that being drunk they may enter his caves. But after the end has come, for that glory with which he had magnified himself, he will be filled with ignominy. He will be filled, because he will drink the cup of punishments, and he will be shaken, not at all firm in his malice, but trembling, and repenting too late. For the cup of the right hand of the Lord will surround him, who is the Lord and

Savior, when He will kill him with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of His coming. Then all the ignominy which he has gathered for himself by his thoughts, deeds, and words, will come upon his glory, so that as much as he was previously thought illustrious, so much will he afterwards be full of ignominy. For he has blasphemed against God, and the impiety which he has practiced in Lebanon will cover him, and the fury of many men, who have raged against the Church of God, will be imputed to him; nor will he be able to lift his neck, but will be pressed down to the earth with terror. For he has killed many men, and has laid waste the whole world, that is, the Church of Christ and its inhabitants, with his impiety.

Therefore, it should be known that this chapter, which we have now expounded, that is: *Woe to him who gives his neighbor to drink with a turbid subversion*; and the previous three in which it was said: *Woe to him who multiplies for himself what is not his*, and: *Woe to him who gathers evil avarice for his house*, and: *Woe to him who builds a city with blood*, can be taken equally according to history and according to analogy, either against Nebuchadnezzar, or against the devil and the Antichrist and the heretics.

(Verse 18.) What profiteth the graven thing, that its maker hath graven it, a molten thing and a false image? For its maker hath trusted in his own creation, to make dumb idols. LXX: What profiteth the graven thing, that they have graven it; they have formed it a molten thing, a false im-

age? For the maker trusteth in his own creation, to make dumb idols. Following what was said above (or: in the preceding parts), it is said of Nebuchadnezzar that he fabricated a statue of the idol Bel, and set it up in the plain of Dura: or, as it is written in the Hebrew, Dora, about which we read more fully in Daniel (Dan. III). Therefore, Scripture marvels at the king's madness and folly, because he himself ordered a golden statue to be made, and the maker trusts in the image he has fashioned: which indeed we can also take generally against all worshippers of idols. Nor should we think that what is carved (*sculptitur*) and what is cast (*conflatur*) are one and the same. For we can understand carving (*sculpturam*) in stones and in marbles: but casting (*conflatura*) is understood in those metals which can be melted and cast; for example, gold, silver, bronze, lead, and tin. Let this be said so that, according to the tropological sense, we may know what the difference is between a graven thing (*sculptile*) and a molten thing (*conflatile*). We read in Deuteronomy: Cursed be every man that maketh a graven and a molten thing, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place (Deut. 27:15). I believe the graven and molten thing to be perverse dogmas, which are adored by those by whom they were made. See how Arius carved for himself an idol of the creature, and adored what he had carved. Behold how Eunomius cast a false image, and bowed his neck to his own casting. And Scripture says significantly: "And he shall put," it says, "it in a

secret place." For they too have their own secret rites, and as if for their most perfect disciples, they hand down hidden sacraments, which, if they were brought to light, would immediately be proven to be fictions. Therefore, their carving and their casting will profit them nothing. Carving, which refers to stones, is understood in those dogmas which show their folly at first sight. Casting is where there seems to be some reason of worldly wisdom, and the idol is cast as if with a certain gold, that is, with the disciplines of the philosophers and the splendor of eloquence. Therefore, the creation will not profit its creator. And the mute and deaf image will not be able to hear its worshipper. If ever you see someone unwilling to believe the truth, and, when the falsity of their dogmas has been shown, they persevere in the course they have begun, you could aptly say: He trusts in his own creation, and makes mute or deaf images: for κωφᾶ in Greek signifies both, although Symmachus, by translating it as ἄλαλα, seems to have understood it as mute rather than deaf. Nor let that idiom (*ἰδίωμα*) of the Scriptures, of which we have often spoken, trouble anyone: "Who, think you, is the faithful and wise steward" (Luke 12:42)? And in another place: "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things" (Ps. 107:43)? because "who" or "what" is taken to mean "rarely": since we can also take this same thing from another place as meaning "impossible": "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress" (Rom. 8:35)? and so forth. And from

the present chapter: "What profiteth the graven thing, that its maker hath graven it?" For in both cases, an impossibility is demonstrated: that neither can any tribulation and distress separate the Apostle's love from Christ, nor is there any utility in idols.

(Verses 19, 20). Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, "Awake!"; "Arise!", to a silent stone (or, "a lying stone"): will it be able to teach? Behold, this thing is covered with gold and silver, and there is no spirit at all in its bowels. But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

Septuagint: Woe to him who says to the wood, "Wake up and arise"; and to the stone, "Be lifted up"; and it is itself an image, and it is a product of gold and silver, and there is no spirit at all in it. But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth revere his face.

And this can likewise be understood either against Nebuchadnezzar or against all who venerate idols. And human error is described, in that they esteem as gods the silver, gold, gems, and silk with which the idols are either wrapped or covered, because of the splendor of the material, when the artisan could indeed give it form, but could not give it a soul by which its limbs are animated. And conversely, the Lord is said to be in His holy temple (Psalm 10), not in a man-made temple, but either in the heavens or in each of the saints, according to the apostle who says: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor.

3:16). And elsewhere: "Your bodies are the temple of God" (1 Cor. 6:19); or in the Son, as He Himself says: "The Father who dwells in me, He does the works" (John 14:10). Or certainly according to that which is said of the heavens and the earth, the seas and the entire world (Virgil, Aeneid VI): "A spirit within nourishes; and a Mind, infused through the limbs, moves the whole mass and mingles with the great body": the whole world, which consists of heaven and earth and is enclosed by the celestial circles, is said to be the house of God. Whence also the Apostle says confidently: "For in him," he says, "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

But if someone should object, asking how it can be said that there is no spirit in idols, when unclean spirits are present at all images, let him learn the custom of Holy Scripture, that a perverse spirit is never named "spirit" absolutely, but with some addition, as in that place: "They are seduced by a spirit of fornication" (Hosea 4:12). And in the Gospel: "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man" (Luke 11:24), and other similar passages. But wherever "Spirit" is read alone and absolutely, without any addition, it always refers to the good part, that is, to the Holy Spirit, as in that passage of the Apostle: "He who sows in the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:8). And elsewhere: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal. 5:22); and in another place: "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Ibid., 16). Nor do we say this because the Holy Spirit

is not also mentioned with an addition: for He is called the Holy Spirit, and the chief spirit, and the right spirit, and the Spirit of God, and other similar things; but that the Holy Spirit is often mentioned both with an addition and alone, whereas a perverse spirit is never read of except with an addition.

But this can also be said (if someone contentiously wishes to understand a perverse spirit in this passage): that "No spirit at all is in it" is one thing; it would be another if it had said, "No spirit at all is around it." For it can be present at the images, but it cannot be within them. Whence also Aquila translates the Hebrew more significantly, saying: "And its spirit is not in its bowels," or "in its midst." Therefore, it should be known that in certain Hebrew volumes, "all" is not added, but one reads "spirit" absolutely.

But if someone, overcome by reason, should take "spirit" in the good sense, and should ask why, if it is said of the Holy Spirit, it is read with an addition: "And no spirit at all is in it"? let him know that "every spirit" is to be understood as the diverse graces of the Holy Spirit, so that the meaning is: It can have no grace in itself, no power. This is indeed better understood according to tropology, that in all the idols of the heretics and the figments of the devil, there is no grace of the Holy Spirit; but they may seem to present an image of divinity and a beauty of doctrines, when in them there is nothing breathing or vital.

Let us also say this, lest we seem to have hidden from the reader what we know: that "spirit" and "wind" are called by the same word among the Hebrews, that is, RUA, and according to the sense of the passage, it is customary to understand it as either "spirit" or "wind." Therefore, in this passage as well, we can take "spirit" either for "wind," because nothing breathes in idols; or for "soul," because the images are inanimate. That "spirit" is taken for "soul" is clearly signified by the Savior's prayer: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). For Jesus could not commend to the Father either a perverse spirit (which it is a crime even to think), or the Holy Spirit, who is Himself God, but rather His own soul, of which He had said: "My soul is sorrowful even to death" (Matt. 26:36, and Mark 14). And: "No one can take my soul from me, but I lay down my soul of my own will, and of my own accord I take it up again" (John 10:17-18).

We are writing a second book on Habakkuk, my venerable father Chromatius, dedicating a separate little work to his Canticle, and tackling with all our strength a discourse that is epic and composed in the manner of the Psalter, that is, in a lyric style. Therefore, let the hydra hiss and Sardanapalus mock, he who is more shameful for his vices than for his name (from Cicero): let us continue on the path we have begun; and with your prayers, you who have overcome the flesh by virtue, let us discuss the most manifest prophecy concerning Christ in the eighth prophet, that is, in the number of the Lord's resurrection.

THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK THE PROPHET
FOR IGNORANCES.

The Septuagint: The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet with a canticle. Aquila and Symmachus and the fifth edition, like us, translated it "for ignorances": only Theodotion translated it as ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκουσiasμῶν; that is, "for voluntary acts," and "for those who sin willingly." This is so that we may understand that (with the exception of the Septuagint) no one translated "prayer with a Canticle." For in the Hebrew it has AL SEGIONOTH, which is said to be ἐπὶ ἄγνοημάτων, and which we have translated as "for ignorances." The meaning, however, is that he had rashly said above: "How long, O Lord, shall I cry, and you will not hear? Shall I cry out to you suffering violence, and you will not save?" And then in the second complaint: "Why do you not look upon those who act unjustly, and are silent when the wicked devours one more just than himself?" To this he had heard: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets." And after other things: "Behold, he who is unbelieving, his soul shall not be right in him: but the just shall live by his faith." And he had learned that either Nebuchadnezzar, or the devil, or the Antichrist was appointed for the judgment of sinners, and was strong for the chastisement of the nations: now he does penance, and laments that he has spoken rashly: and he asks for pardon, that he may obtain mercy, because he did it in ignorance. Hence also David says: "The sins of my youth and my igno-

rances do not remember" (Psalm 24:7). There are those who think that the prayer is of the prophet, so that at the advent of Christ the error of men might be taken away: whence also the name of the prophet is noted in the title, because with a prophetic spirit he prays that the darkness be removed, and light be restored; that the image be taken away, and truth be given. Moreover, that it is a prophecy, both the entire text of the Cantic shows, and especially that passage: "In the midst of two living creatures you will be known." And: "When the years draw near, you will be known." And concerning judgment: "When my soul is troubled in anger, you will remember mercy." And again, concerning the advent of Christ: "God will come from Teman, and the Holy One from the shady and dense mountain." And also for the future: "The tents of the land of Midian will tremble, and you will ascend upon your horses, and you will stretch your bow over the kingdoms." But if anyone should ask why only Theodotion translated it as "for spontaneous acts," we can say that it is either the prophet's confession that he sinned not by any necessity, but willingly, thinking ill of God's judgment; or certainly that the future faith of the gentiles is demonstrated, that, voluntarily abandoning their former error, they would believe in him who is promised in the Cantic. We read in the sixteenth psalm: "A prayer of David." And in another similarly: "A prayer of David." And in the eighty-ninth: "A prayer of Moses the man of God." And in the one hundred and first: "A prayer of the poor man

when he was anxious, and poured out his supplication before the Lord." And wherever else the name of prayer is introduced, yet in no place is it read with "Canticle." And I do not know if it is fitting to pray with a Canticle, unless perhaps, following the Septuagint, we say that the prophet prays for the advent of Christ, and prophesies this very thing with delight, and with psalms and a Canticle, so that in that which is a prayer, he may beseech the Father, and in that which is a Canticle, praise may be given to the Father who sent the Son, and to the Son who came. This much concerning the title of the Canticle. Let us now see what is said in the Canticle.

(CHAPTER III.---Verse 1.) O Lord, I have heard thy hearing, and was afraid: O Lord, thy work, in the midst of the years revive it. LXX: O Lord, I have heard thy report, and was afraid: O Lord, I have considered thy works, and was astonished; in the midst of two living creatures thou shalt be known. For that which we and Aquila and Theodotion have translated, "revive it," Symmachus has interpreted, "revivify it." But what the Seventy said, "I have considered and was astonished," is found neither in the Hebrew nor in any of the other Interpreters, so that, with these things which are not in the Hebrew removed, it could be read according to the Seventy as: "O Lord, thy works, in the midst of two living creatures thou shalt be known"; because this seemed unintelligible (ἀδιανόητον), the preceding parts were joined to it.

Now, we read in the Hebrew ADONAI, that is, "O Lord"; PHALACH, "thy work"; BACEREB, "in the midst"; SANIM, "of the years"; HEIEU, "revive it." This is so that we may clearly recognize what is superfluous and has been added in the Septuagint.

The Hebrews, according to the historical sense, explain this passage thus: "O Lord, I have heard thy hearing, and was afraid." I have heard, he says, the punishments which you have prepared for Nebuchadnezzar and the devil, in which you said to him: "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his" (Above, II, 6). And secondly: "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house" (Verse 9). And thirdly: "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity" (Verse 12). And fourthly: "Woe to him that giveth his friend drink, putting his gall to it, and making him drunk." And fifthly: "Woe to him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise." And just as I was terrified with fear that the great dragon was to be pierced with so many wounds, so I beseech you, O Lord, that you fulfill what you have promised, and when the time is finished, you restore your Christ. For you have said that the vision is yet for a time, and it shall appear at the end, and shall not lie. Revive, therefore, what you have promised, that is, fulfill your promise; let not your word die in vain, but let it be completed in deed.

This, indeed, according to us, can also be understood of the resurrection of the Savior: that he

who died for us might rise from the dead and be brought to life.

According to the Septuagint, however, the sense is very different, and we must also set forth the explanation of the Vulgate edition. O Lord, I have heard your word in the Scriptures, and with you giving me an ear, according to that which Isaiah says: "He hath added to me an ear to hear" (Isa. 50:5); I have heard in such a way as you wish your word to be heard. And having contemplated your works more diligently (lest it be said to me: "But they regard not the works of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his hands"), from the creatures I have understood the Creator, and through each thing that you have made, and that you work daily in the whole world, I was utterly astonished, and having lost my human sense, I was turned to a holy madness.

Or certainly, disturbed by admiration, I break forth trembling into your praises, saying: "In the midst of two living creatures thou shalt be known."

This many think is to be understood of the Son and the Holy Spirit, because the Father is understood through the Son and the Spirit. These, indeed, are also interpreted to be the two Seraphim in Isaiah (Ch. 6), and the two Cherubim described in Exodus (Ch. 25), which look towards each other [alt. reading: may look and may have and veiling], and have the oracle in their midst; and in Isaiah (Ch. 6), veiling the head and feet of the Lord, they fly only in this present age, and one cries to the other the mystery of the Trinity:

and one of the seraphim, which is interpreted as "burning," is sent, and comes to the earth and cleanses the prophet's lips, and says: "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, but that it be kindled?" (Luke 12:49).

Others esteem this, and for this interpretation they use many testimonies from the Scriptures.

Furthermore, the simple interpretation and the common opinion understands it of the Savior, that he was recognized when crucified between two thieves (Mark 15, and John 19).

But those who interpret it better say this: that in the first Church, which was gathered from the circumcision and from the uncircumcision, the Savior was understood and believed in, with the two peoples surrounding him on either side. There are some who understand the two living creatures as the two Testaments, the new and the old, which are truly living and vital, which breathe, and in the midst of which the Lord is known.

In the midst of the years you will make it known. The Septuagint: When the years shall draw near, you will be known. When the time has come, he says, and you have fulfilled your promises by your work, you will show that what you have pledged is true. Or, when the consummation has drawn near, and in the final hour your Son has come to destroy sins, you will be known more clearly. It follows:

When the time has come, you will be shown forth, when my soul has been troubled. This reading, with the exception of the Septuagint, is

found neither in the Hebrew nor in any of the other interpreters. And the meaning is: When the time has come, of which it is said, "In an acceptable time I have heard you" (2 Cor. 6:2), the time of the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, then, O God the Father, your name will be known, which before was hidden from men, of which the Lord says in the Gospel: "Father, I have revealed your name to men" (John 17:6). Moreover, what is added, "When my soul has been troubled," is joined with what follows in the edition of the Septuagint interpreters, so that it can be read: "When my soul has been troubled in wrath"—and here is the division—then what follows is, "you will remember mercy"; so that, for the prophet, mere disturbance suffices as punishment, and his soul being troubled at the wrath of God, punishment is by no means inflicted, but mercy excludes wrath. But the wrath of God also has its measures: how much, and for how long, and for what causes, and upon whom it is inflicted, according to that which is written: "You will feed us with the bread of tears, and give us tears to drink in measure" (Ps. 79:6). If the prophet is troubled at the wrath of God, and he who is troubled obtains mercy, what should we hope for, or rather, fear, whose every work is worthy of God's wrath? What follows is according to the Hebrew.

When you are angry, you will remember mercy. We should not think that God forgets and then, after His anger, remembers His mercy; but rather that we, when placed in punishment, think that He forgets, according to that passage:

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" (Ps. 12:1). For even when we are covered by temptations as if by waves, and a swift storm of demons rages against us, we speak as if to one who is sleeping: "Arise, why do you sleep, O Lord?" And at the same time, behold the clemency of God: he did not say, "when you have inflicted punishments, you will remember mercy," but "when you are angry." For he who is angry sometimes does not strike, but only threatens. The apostle, perceiving this, also says: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18). But where it is revealed, it is not inflicted, it does not strike; rather, it is revealed in order to frighten, so that it may not be inflicted upon those who are frightened.

(Verse 3.) God will come from the South, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Forever. The Septuagint: God will come from Teman, and the Holy One from a shady and dense mountain. Diapsalma. Aquila and Symmachus, and the fifth edition, put the Hebrew word THEMAN itself; only Theodotion, interpreting what Theman signified, said: ELOIM, he will come from the South, and the holy one from Mount Pharan, unto the end. From this we understand that 'from a shady and dense mountain' was put by the Septuagint alone. But also this which the Septuagint translated as *diapsalma*, and which we have put as 'forever,' Symmachus interpreted as 'in aeternum' (for eternity); Theodotion, 'in finem' (unto the end); the fifth edition, the Hebrew word SELA

itself. Therefore, God will come from the South, that is, from the noonday, from the bright light, and from those who are called sons of the days. Hence also in the Song of Songs, the bridegroom drives away the north wind and calls the south wind, saying: 'Arise, O North wind, and come, O South wind, blow through my garden, and let my spices flow' (Song of Songs 4:16). God is always in the noonday: 'Where,' it says, 'do you feed your flock? Where do you make it lie down? In the noonday' (Ibid., 1:6). And to Abraham when he was under the oak, God did not come except at noonday (Genesis 18 and 43). And Joseph, who prefigured the Savior in a type, makes a feast for his brothers at noonday. The knowledge of God the Father, therefore, comes in full light to those who are worthy. And the knowledge of the Holy One, that is, of the Son of God, comes from the shady and dense mountain. The shady and dense mountain is understood as either the Father himself, full of virtues and all wisdom, protecting all things with his majesty, and extending his wings and cherishing his young; or certainly paradise and the heavens, full of angels, full of virtues, full of most fruitful trees. And may it also be granted to me, that at my voice and exposition God may come in bright light, and His Son—of whom it is written: 'Be holy, for I am holy' (Leviticus 20:26)—from the sublimity of this shady and dense discourse, woven on all sides with testimonies of the Scriptures; and with the Father and Son coming together, may their hearer become a dwelling place, and may the Scripture be fulfilled which

says: 'I and my Father will come to him, and we will make our home with him' (John 14:23). But since, instead of 'shady and dense mountain,' the Hebrew has 'Mount Paran,' and 'Paran' is interpreted as 'mouth of the seer,' beautifully, according to our interpretation, the knowledge of the Son comes from the discourse of a learned man; and not from just any discourse, but from that which is full of light, full of eyes, so that it may be brought manifest and pure to the ears of the hearers. But when it says 'from the mountain,' understand sublime dogmas. I myself have heard a Hebrew explain this passage thus: That Bethlehem is situated to the South, in which the Lord and Savior was born, and that it is of this that it is now said: 'The Lord will come from the South,' that is, he will be born in Bethlehem, and from there he will arise. And because he who was born in Bethlehem once gave the Law on Mount Sinai, he is the Holy One who comes from Mount Paran; for Paran is a place near Mount Sinai. And that which is added, **diapsalma**, that is, 'forever,' has this meaning: he who was born in Bethlehem, and who on Sinai, that is, on Mount Paran, gave the Law, is always the author and giver of all benefits, past, present, and future. Concerning **diapsalma**, which in Hebrew is called SELA, it has been more fully discussed in the Psalter. At the same time, observe that according to the Septuagint, **diapsalma** is not placed anywhere except in the Psalter and in the present passage. From which we understand that the Septuagint correctly designated it a Song of prayer.

(Verse 4.) His glory covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise. His splendor will be like the light: horns in his hands. There his strength was hidden. The Septuagint: His virtue covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise, and his splendor will be as light: horns in his hands, and he established a strong love of his strength. For that which the Seventy interpreted, "and he established a strong love of his strength," and we said, "there his strength was hidden," Aquila translated, "and he established the hiding place of his strength"; Symmachus, "and he established his hidden strength"; Theodotion alone, agreeing with our translation, says, "and there is the hiding place of his strength." For the word SAM (סַם), according to the nature of the place, is understood as both "he placed" and "there"; and in the present passage, "there" should be read more than "he placed," so that the sense and order of the sentence may be: "Horns in his hands," and it is to be understood, "there," that is, "in the horns his strength was hidden." It is manifest, however, according to the Hebrew, that at the advent of Christ all things were filled with glory, according to what is said in the Gospel: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke 2:14). And elsewhere: "He made peace in the heavens and on earth through the blood of the cross, and sat at the right hand of the Majesty," for "his word runs swiftly." And elsewhere: "O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is your name in all the earth!" (Ps. 147:1)! And again in the eighteenth Psalm:

"Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world" (Ps. 18:5). His splendor also, like the sun of justice, radiated with a clear light; and the "horns in his hands" are the standards and trophies of the cross, and in these very horns his strength was hidden: "For when he was in the form of God, he did not think it robbery to be equal with God; but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant: he was made obedient to the Father unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:6 ff.). On the cross, therefore, his strength was hidden for a little while, when he said to the Father: "My soul is sorrowful even to death" (Matt. 26:38-39); and: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me" (Luke 23:13). And on the cross itself: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Furthermore, according to the Septuagint, in that which is said, "His virtue covered the heavens," we must know that what is covered is less than that which covers it, if indeed the whole is covered, and not just a part of what is covered. Therefore, since the virtue of God covers the heavens, his virtue, by which the heavens are covered, is greater than the heavens. Moreover, we frequently read that the heavens are those who bear the image of the super-celestial one, and who declare the glory of God. The apostle also proves that the Lord Savior is the virtue of God: "Christ the virtue of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:30). This virtue is, as it were, the mother of all particular [or: spiritual] virtues: for example, it is called virtue, wisdom, fortitude, justice, temperance, truth, holiness, re-

demption: "But Christ was made for us by God wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption." These particular virtues, therefore, in which Christ is shown (according to the progress of those who receive him either as wisdom, or fortitude, or justice, and other things of this kind), are contained in the general virtue of God, that is, in the Lord Savior: and in this way we also understand concerning the earth, that those who were first called earth on account of the image of the earthly one, and to whom it was said: "You are earth, and to earth you shall go" (Gen. 3:19), are filled with the praise of the Lord at the advent of the Savior. But when the heavens have been covered by the virtue of God (that is, protected and clothed on every side), and the whole earth has been filled with the praise of God, then "his splendor will be as the light." Moreover, the apostle is not silent that the Savior God is the image of God and the splendor of his glory: "Who, after the splendor of the glory of God appeared to us, returned to his former majesty" (Heb. 1). "For even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer" (2 Cor. 5:16), but according to the spirit; because, "What was made, in him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:3-4). This the Savior shows even more manifestly in the Gospel, saying: "Father, glorify me with the glory that I had with you before the world was made" (John 17:5); so that after the ascension to heaven, the splendor may be what the light is, that is, the Son may begin to be what the Father is. As for what follows, "Horns

in his hands," it is the custom of the Scriptures always to put horns for kingdoms. For that which Hannah says in the first book of Kingdoms, "He has exalted the horn of his Christ" (1 Sam. 2:10), signifies the magnificence of the Savior's kingdom. And in Daniel, ten horns demonstrate ten kingdoms (Dan. 7). Thus it is now said, "Horns in his hands," just as we read written elsewhere: "The king's heart is in the hand of God" (Prov. 21:1): because the mind and the principal part of the heart of a holy man (who proceeds to the kingdoms of heaven, who, while still placed on earth, reigns over his body without sins) does not wander externally, but is situated under God's protection. But because in the Hebrew and in the other editions it is not written, "Horns in his hands," but "in his hand," which is said JADO (יָדוֹ), let us understand the strong and robust hand of God to be his Son. And let us say that in this hand are placed all the kingdoms of heaven, and of those who strive to ascend to heaven: which Isaiah also implies, saying: "A vineyard was made for the beloved in a horn, in a fruitful place" (Isa. 5:1), which means, in a kingdom. For this reason, I think, no horned animal is placed among the unclean in Leviticus, and the unicorn in the Psalms (49 and 91) signifies the same thing, or the rhinoceros (ῥινοκερῶτα); and that verse: "In you we will toss our enemies with the horn" (Ps. 43:7). But as for what we read according to the Septuagint, "and he established a strong love of his virtue," this also is to be understood of Christ: that God the Father therefore covered the

heavens with his virtue, and filled the earth with praise, and made his splendor to be as light, and placed the kingdom in the hand of his Son, in order to make his beloved be loved by men, and loved not lightly, but vehemently and strongly, so that for those who loved him strongly and would cleave to his love, no one could take them from his hand. On the contrary, the devil makes us love the world, and instead of the love of virtue, to love vices, and not lightly, but strongly, so that it could be said of us: "And the devil established a strong love of his vices."

(Verse 5) Before his face shall go death: and the devil shall go out before his feet. The Septuagint: Before his face shall go the word, and it shall go out into the field after his feet. For that which we have translated as **mortem** (death), in Hebrew three letters are placed, DALETH, BETH, RES, without any vowel, which if they are read as DABAR, mean **verbum** (word); if as DEBER, **pestem** (pestilence), which in Greek is called λοιμός. Finally, Aquila also interpreted it thus: "Before his face shall go pestilence"; Symmachus: "Before his face shall precede death"; the fifth edition: "Before his face shall walk death"; only the Septuagint and Theodotion interpreted it as **sermonem** (discourse/word) instead of **morte** (death). Likewise in the following little verse, where we said, "The devil shall go out before his feet," the Septuagint also translated it differently, concerning which we will dispute later: Aquila, for "devil," translated "a flying thing"; Symmachus, however, and Theodotion,

and the fifth edition, "a bird," which in Hebrew is called RESEPH. Moreover, the Hebrews hand down that, just as in the Gospel the prince of demons is said to be Beelzebub (Matthew 12), so Reseph is the name of a demon who holds dominion among the others, and on account of his extreme speed and his darting in different directions, is called a bird and a flying thing; and that he is the one who in paradise, in the form of a serpent, spoke to the woman, and from the curse by which he was condemned by God, he received the name: for RESEPH is interpreted as "crawling on its belly." This, therefore, is what is said: as soon as the Lord has come and has been baptized in the Jordan, and at the descent of the dove the voice of the Father has thundered, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17), the devil will meet him as he comes out of the water; and before his feet will stand death, and the ancient serpent, who tempted him for forty days in the wilderness. But if we read according to the Septuagint, "before his face shall go the word, and it shall go out into the fields after his feet," this signifies that the word of God precedes his visitation, which is now allegorically called his face, and prepares the hearts of believers: so that it may make the crooked straight, and level the uneven into a plain: and the soul of the hearer, like a plowed field, may be able to receive the spiritual seed.

(Verse 6) He stood, and measured the earth: he looked, and scattered the nations, and the mountains of the age were crushed: the hills of

the world were bowed down, by the ways of his eternity. LXX: He stood, and the earth was moved: he looked [or, he looked back], and the nations melted away: the mountains were crushed by violence: the hills of the age of his everlasting journey melted away. The Savior, standing and perceiving all things, and measuring the whole world with his eye, scattered the multitude of nations: and when they were scattered and dissolved, the mountains of this age were crushed, and the hills of this world were bowed down. For there are also other mountains and hills, which the bridegroom leaps and skips over in the Song of 642 Songs (Ch. 2), about which it is also said in the second psalm of the degrees: I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me (Psalm 120:1). But the mountains of the age are the same as the dark mountains, about which Jeremiah commanded that our feet should not stumble upon them (Jeremiah 31). These are the hills where Saul reigned when he killed the priests of God (1 Kings 22): for Gabaa is interpreted as "hill." And elegantly, he says, were the hills of the world bowed down. For before the advent of the Savior, they walked with stiff necks, and no one could humble their pride. But they were crushed and bowed down by the ways of his eternity, that is, of God, because his eternity deigned to come to us, or because from the beginning of the world until his incarnation he always came to the saints, and the word of God was made in the hand of each one, and in all the victors he himself conquered, and his eternal way

bowed down the hills and crushed the mountains. Let these things be said metaphorically according to the Hebrew. Furthermore, according to the Septuagint, after the Word has gone before the face of God and has gone out into the plains, God the Father comes to that place where a region has been prepared for him for his Word, and he comes after the feet of his Word, and stands; never preceding, but always waiting, so that the Word may prepare the way for him. But where he has stood next to the feet of his Word, there immediately the earth—that is, the works of the flesh and of bodies, unable to sustain the presence of God—is moved. And when they have been moved, the power of the Word and the presence of God looks upon all the nations of the soul, which we can understand as thoughts and multiple opinions on various matters, which are immediately dissolved and melt away. If anything had also exalted itself against the knowledge of God on earth, and had occupied the sense of the hearer, this, with the Word preceding and by the advent of God, will be broken and crushed. But with the mountains broken and crushed at the sight of God, the hills will clearly be consumed and reduced to nothing. For they are not the mountains of God, but the mountains of the age. For the everlasting way of God, looking to those things which his Word precedes, and being stronger than the hills of the age, will consume and destroy them. Moreover, the mountains can be understood as the 643 demons who are active in heretics and exalt themselves against the

knowledge of God; and the hills as other demonic powers, which cause men to admire the beauty of bodies, dignities, riches, nobility of birth, and the other goods of the world. It is possible to see, after the advent of the Word of God and the presence of God the Father, how human souls are moved, and everything that is earthly is dissolved, and former thoughts are reduced to nothing. Then the demons are destroyed, then the heights of the age are brought to nothing, and all the knowledge of the heretics, which at first was puffed up, is humbled, crushed, and consumed at the advent of the Word of God. And what before seemed beautiful and very great is cast aside as if despised and small. And this happens because of the advent of God and the indwelling of Christ, according to what is written elsewhere: I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Leviticus 26:12).

(Verse 7) For iniquity I have seen the tents of Ethiopia, the skins of the land of Midian shall be troubled. The Septuagint reads: For labors I have seen the tabernacles of the Ethiopians: and the tabernacles of the land of Midian shall be afraid. The Ethiopians, foul [or, most foul] and lovers of darkness, and alien to all light, who feed on the flesh of the dragon (of whom it is written: *You gave him as food to the people of Ethiopia* [Ps 73:14]), are understood to be demons, whose tabernacle becomes anyone who has labored in this world for the sake of honors and riches: which is significantly shown under the one word of iniquity, "For every rich man

is either unjust, or the heir of an unjust man." See men cross the seas, keep watch before the doors of the powerful, suffer all things that the condition of slaves scarcely endures, in order to gather riches, to receive some dignity: and after they have obtained this, they give themselves over to luxury and pleasures and all iniquity, so that what avarice has gathered, luxury may consume. These men, therefore, for their labors, are made a lodging for demons, and they who ought to have been the temple of God, become the tabernacle of the Ethiopians. But also that which follows: *The skins of the land of Midian shall be troubled*, or *and the tabernacles of the land of Midian shall be afraid*, understand these to be the same: the tabernacles of the Ethiopians and the tabernacles of the land of Midian. For after they have been enriched, and have ascended by right or wrong to the highest rank, then, by the conscience of their sins, they will always dread death, always dread judgment, and at a slight fever, like thieves in prison, they will thus sigh for eternal punishments. Now *Madian* in our language means *from judgment* (*ex judicio*), that is, condemnation, and it is shown that from fear of judgment and of eternal punishments they are always in dread, and they endure with daily terror the torments which they feel [or, know] they deserve.

(Vv. 8, 9) Were you angry with the rivers, O Lord: or was your fury against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea? Because you will mount [Alt: you who have mounted] upon your

horses, and your chariots are salvation. Rousing, you will rouse your bow, the oaths to the tribes which you have spoken. Forever. LXX: Were you angry with the rivers, O Lord: or was your fury against the rivers, or your impetus against the sea? You who [Alt: Because] mount upon your horses, and your riding is salvation: aiming, you will stretch your bow over the scepters, says the Lord. Diapsalma.

Where the Septuagint has *diapsalma*, and Aquila *semper* (forever), the others have translated similarly as above. And because the discourse hastens to the tropological interpretation, briefly grasping the literal sense of the chapter, I will proceed to the rest.

Just as you dried up the Jordan and the Red Sea, fighting for us—for you were not angry with the rivers and the sea, nor could insensible things incur any offense—so now, mounting your chariots and seizing your bow, you will give salvation to your people, and you will fulfill forever the oaths which you swore to our fathers and to the tribes.

But when he says: *Were you angry with the rivers, O Lord, or was your fury against the rivers, or your impetus against the sea?* he speaks ambiguously, and more in the language of one who questions than of one who affirms.

For there are good rivers, and there are bad ones. There is a very bad sea, and there is a very good sea. An example of good rivers is this: *The rush of the river makes glad the city of God* (Ps. 45:4). And that whoever drinks of the Lord's

water, *from his belly will flow rivers of water springing up to eternal life* (John 4). Of the bad ones is that which Pharaoh says in Ezekiel: *The rivers are mine, and I made them* (Ezek. 29:9), in which the dragon dwells, and many things similar to these.

That the sea, however, is taken in a good sense, the twenty-third Psalm is a testimony, in which 645 it is said tropologically of the Church under the term *oikoumenē*, that is, the circle of lands: *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell in it: for he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers,* that is, the world. That which is founded by the Lord upon the rivers and established upon the sea is surely taken in a good sense.

And also that which is said of the vine that was brought out of Egypt: *You stretched out its branches to the sea, and its shoots to the rivers* (Ps. 79:12), I think that “to the sea” can be taken in a good sense.

And we say that the divine words which are more manifest, and which offer a drink, as it were, to the thirsty, are called rivers; but those which are full of mysteries (*sacramentis*) and are set in the deep (of which the Apostle says: *O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* (Rom. 11:33)! and the Prophet agrees: *Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord* (Ps. 129)), are called the sea in the Scriptures. This is concerning the fact that the sea can also be understood in a better sense.

But that it is also taken in the contrary sense, there are many testimonies, among which is that in the Psalms: *This great and wide sea: there the ships pass through, small animals with great. This is the dragon which you have formed to be mocked* (Ps. 103:25-26). And from the Gospel, when the Savior rebuked the winds and the sea and said to it: *Peace, be still* (Mark 4:39). For what is rebuked is evil, according to that of Zechariah: *The Lord rebuke you, O Devil* (Zech. 3:2). And to Timothy: *Reprove, console, and rebuke* (2 Tim. 4:2).

And so, with the prophet inquiring: *Were you angry with the rivers, O Lord, or was your fury against the rivers, or your impetus against the sea?* let us say that if they are the rivers of Egypt, and the red and bloody sea, the Lord is angry and strikes them, and with all his impetus he rushes into the whirlpools that rise up against the knowledge of God.

Hence *the sea saw and fled* (Ps. 113), unable to bear the presence of God. And the Jordan turned back, yielding to the glory of the people passing through, and it is parted by both Elijah and Elisha.

But to speak more plainly, understand the rivers to be the eloquence of heretics which flows against the truth and the Church, with which the Lord is angry. But consider the sea to be the souls of those who are carried about by every wind of doctrine, and are always tossed by malice, 646 and are overwhelmed by salty whirlpools; upon this sea the Lord's impetus comes, that it may feel

his arrival, and know by what limits and barrier it is enclosed, and hear: *In you shall your waves be broken.*

But if the rivers are good and the sea is good, Jesus is washed in them, and he places his Church upon such a sea.

After this follows: *You who mount upon your horses, and your riding is salvation.* I seek the horses upon which the Lord mounts, and I think they are none other than the souls of the saints, upon which the divine word mounts, so as to save both them and others through them.

Let us give examples of horses. The bridegroom speaks in the Song of Songs: *I have compared you, my beloved, to my cavalry in the chariots of Pharaoh* (Cant. 1:8). Not that Christ compares the Church, or the word of God the soul which he calls his bride, to the chariots of Pharaoh; but that every soul, however holy and perfect it may be, when compared to God, is like a chariot of Pharaoh, and a beast of burden.

Hence Moses also says to the Lord: *But I am alogos*, that is, *irrational* (Exod. 4:10). And David: *I have become like a beast of burden before you* (Ps. 72:23). Not that he is absolutely a beast of burden, but that before God he is a beast of burden.

Contrary to these horses are those which Pharaoh has, and of which it is said: *The horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea* (Exod. 15:2): such a ride is not salvation, but perdition.

Let us also seek other horses, which the Lord mounts: In the fourth book of Kings we read that

the servant of Elisha rose early in the morning, and going out he saw an army surrounding the city walls, and horses and chariots (4 Kings 6). And after his eyes were opened at the prophet's prayers: *He looked,* it says, *and behold, the mountain was full of horses, and fiery chariots around Elisha.*

Diligently note that horses and chariots are seen, and yet in so many thousands of horses and chariots there is no rider: of these horses, he was the charioteer and he the driver of whom the Psalmist sings: *You who sit upon the Cherubim, show yourself* (Ps. 79:2). By such horses and such a chariot was Elijah also snatched up to heaven (4 Kings 2).

But if anyone wishes to learn from Zechariah who are the red horses, and who the black, and who the dappled, and who the white, coming forth from the myrtle grove, and from the mountains set in the deep, 647 or, as it is written in the Septuagint, *of bronze*, we will endeavor to explain in that prophet himself, if the Lord grants us the space of life (Zech. 1).

John also saw white horses, and their riders (Rev. 6): of which I think the white horses are the bodies of those rising again in glory; but the riders are the souls of the saints.

But if anyone is a sinner, and like me, he will sit on a black horse, and it will be said of him: *All who mounted horses have slept* (Ps. 75:7).

Of such horses it is written: *A horse is a vain thing for safety* (Ps. 32:14): for the flesh lusts against the spirit, and its wisdom is hostile to

God. Let this be said of those who love their bodies, and sit on black horses.

But let us prepare our souls to be the horses and chariots of the Lord, who mounts in Paul, mounts in Peter, and riding in such chariots, has traversed the whole world.

Also, aiming his bow or his arrows, he has rooted out, destroyed, and ruined the scepters, that is, the opposing kingdoms against which Jeremiah was sent (Jer. 18): and he has brought it about that sin should not reign in our mortal body.

But understand the scepters, that is, the kingdoms of the devil, which he also showed to the Lord, to be the diverse sins: avarice, lust, anger, slander, theft, perjury, against which the word of God, sitting on his horses and in his chariots, aims the twisted darts of his splendor, and for the moment does not release them, so that he who is terrified by the drawn bow may not feel the release of the arrows.

And this he does **forever**, which Aquila interpreted for **diapsalma**. For he always sits [Alt: sat] in his saints, he is always armed. And preparing sharp arrows in their tongues, he rides and rushes here and there for the salvation of the world.

(Verse 10.) You will cleave the rivers of the earth. The Septuagint: The earth will be cloven by rivers. Because the Lord has raised up His bow, to render to the tribes the oaths which He spoke, it is consequently said, "You will cleave the rivers of the earth," that is, you will divide and scatter

the kings of the earth who fight against your people. According to the Septuagint, however, which said, "The earth will be cloven by rivers," let us first set forth an example, so that by this, as by a step, we may come to higher things. We read in those who have composed volumes about marvels, and who have brought the Olympiads of Greece down to our own memory, explaining what new thing happened in the world in each year, that among other things, rivers which had not existed before burst forth from an earthquake, and again others were absorbed and perished: namely, that all the veins of the earth, just as in the human body they contain blood, so in themselves they have hidden waters, which are broken open by a concussion of the earth and flow forth into rivers. If we have understood this, let us see that the human soul naturally has within itself waters and rivers, and that through our own sluggishness, they are hidden and do not flow. But when it has been shaken by the preaching of the word of God, and moved from its prior state, then what was hidden bursts forth and flows for the refreshment of those who drink. I think that this very thing is also signified in Genesis, where wells are dug by the servants of Isaac, which the Philistines had covered with earth after Abraham had made them (Genesis 26). As long as Abraham lives, his wells are not closed; but when he is dead and the wells are stopped up, if the servants dig, the Philistines object, and there is a quarrel. But if Isaac himself comes and digs a well and finds water, the

Philistines are not able to object. Look at Peter and Paul, and you will not doubt concerning the wells and rivers of Christ. Behold all the apostles, and you will understand that now not four rivers, but twelve rivers, go forth from the paradise of the Scriptures. These rivers, before the earth was shaken, were hidden, and while they were in the veins of the earth, they did not offer cups to the thirsty. But after the world and all the earth was shaken at the advent of Christ, they suddenly burst forth, and then was fulfilled: "He turned rivers into a desert, and the springs of water into thirsty ground, a fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it" (Psalm 33). He turned the desert into pools of water, and the waterless land into springs of water: and He made the hungry dwell there, and they established a city for habitation. For after the Lord came into the world, and that which He said in the Gospel was fulfilled: "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind" (John 9:39), then the land of Israel, from which rivers previously flowed and irrigated the entire people of Judea, dried up, and its springs were stopped. But the whole world, which was a desert and barren, and did not have the waters of the Lord's preaching, was turned into pools of water: and as many teachers as it sent forth, so many springs it also had. Nor does it suffice for them, that is, for the springs and rivers, to irrigate the peoples of the world; but in each province, gathering into one people those who were hungry and

suffered a famine of the word of God, they built up the Church, which is called a city for habitation, and which the rush of the river makes glad.

(Verses 11 ff.) The mountains saw you and were in anguish; the torrent of waters passed by; the abyss gave its voice; the deep lifted up its hands. The sun and moon stood still in their dwelling; they go forth in the light of your arrows, in the splendor of your flashing spear. In roaring you will trample the earth; in fury you will astound the nations. You have gone forth for the salvation of your people, for salvation with your Christ. You have struck the head from the house of the impious one; you have laid bare the foundation even to the neck. Forever. We have set down only our own edition, so that, following it—that is, following the Hebrew—we may weave together the coherence of the passage, and afterwards discuss the Septuagint comma by comma through the chapters. The mountains saw you, O God, and were in anguish: that is, the lofty kingdoms, and the sublime powers of this world, and the four chariots in Zechariah, which go forth from the bronze mountains (Zech. 6): these saw you and trembled. And the torrent of waters passed by: that is, all their impetus and the persecution with which they afflicted your people, passed away after they saw you. Then the abyss, that is, the underworld, praised you: then also those above, that is, the angels, clapped their hands in applause, so as to show forth the victor, as it were, with a certain gesture and dance of raised hands. Your sun and moon, and

all the splendor with which you had previously shone upon your people, and which afterwards, by the weight of evils, had all been covered by the horror of darkness, received their light again and had their former brilliance. Your arrows and your flashing spear, that is, your plagues and your instruction, provided light to your people. Finally, in the light of your arrows and in the splendor of your spear, which chastised them for this purpose, that it might correct them, your people walked in your roaring. When, therefore, you avenge the injury of your people, you will trample earthly kingdoms, and you will make all nations wonder, because you have gone forth for the salvation of your people, and you have come to them with your Christ: although in the Hebrew it is written: "You have gone forth for the salvation of your people with your Jesus Christ," or "with your Savior Christ," for Jesus is interpreted as Savior. But with the coming of Jesus Christ your Son, you struck the Antichrist from the house of the impious one, that is, in this world, which is set in wickedness; or you struck the devil himself, who is the head of impiety, and you laid bare his foundation even to the neck, that is, you made his hidden things open, not for a short time, but forever: for this is what SELAH signifies, that is, "forever."

LXX: The peoples will see you, and they will grieve, or they will be in labor; for ὠδινήσουσι (ōdinēsousi) signifies both. Consequently, with the earth broken and the rivers flowing, the peoples who had drunk from the rivers of God will

see God, and they will be in labor. For from this very fact that they see God, they immediately conceive by the word of God and say: "From fear of you, O Lord, we have conceived in the womb, and we have been in labor and have given birth: we will make the spirit of your salvation upon the earth" (Isa. 26:17-18). "Blessed," he says, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Therefore, these peoples, washed by the rivers, have not yet seen, but are going to see God: and when they have seen, they will conceive, so that they may be able to bring forth the fruits of doctrines. But because they are called peoples, and it is not for peoples to see the face of God, although the discourse extends to the future, "they will see and they will give birth": nevertheless, according to tropology, the Hebrew text is rather to be followed, where it is said: "The mountains saw you, and they gave birth": for it is for the mountains to see God and to bear sons, whom they have conceived from the word of God.

LXX: Scatter the waters of the way. There are different waters: some eternal, others brief. Concerning the eternal waters, and those that flow from the springs of Israel, it is said: "The earth will be split by rivers." Concerning the sudden ones, and those running for a time: "All torrents go into the sea." For the end of such waters is perdition. Therefore, God will scatter all the waters that have been trampled by perverse dogmas, when He has dissipated the counsels of princes and the wisdom of this world. If you ever see some heresy to have flourished for a short

time, and afterwards to have been dissipated by the grace of God, say that this is fulfilled: "you will scatter the waters of the way." Moreover, what is said, "of the way," can be understood as "of the devil's way," so that the sense is: The Lord will divide and scatter the waters which the devil has trampled, and which have offered a way in themselves to many, that is, have been open to many errors. Whence also other interpreters, wishing to describe heretical fury, have translated: "The dashing," or "the rush of waters will pass by." For they are carried along by the swift and headlong course of their eloquence, so that they drag with them whomever they find in their way and who is fickle.

LXX: The abyss gave its voice, the height of its phantasy (*phantasia*). The abyss (*abyssus*) is often taken in a good sense, often in a bad sense, and sometimes indifferently. In a good sense: "Your judgments are a great abyss" (Ps. 35:7). And: "Deep calls to deep" (Ps. 41:8), and the rest. In a bad sense: "The waters saw you, O God" (Ps. 76:17), and the rest. But also the demons beg not to be sent into the abyss (Luke 8), and in Genesis: "The abyss over which there was darkness" (Gen. 1:2), I do not know if it can be taken in a good sense. However, it is used indifferently there: "The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Ibid., 7:11). And that in the one hundred and forty-eighth psalm: "Dragons and all deeps: fire and hail and spirit of storms," unless perhaps from the fact that it is placed between dragons,

and fire and hail, it should be drawn to a bad sense. Which I do not know if one could say, who has seen it resound with the others in praise of the Lord. If, therefore, we take "abyss" in a good sense, let us say that, the waters of the worst way having been dispersed (or, *pessimis*, "the worst waters"), your wise ones saw you, and borrowing the height of knowledge which they had from your sight (because "they saw you and the mountains were in travail"), they brought forth in the praises of their voice whatever they had previously opined of you. And beautifully he calls the opining of phantasy "height," according to Jesus son of Sirach, who says: "Who shall search out the deep and wisdom?" (Ecclus. 1:2)? Whence also from the "little mountain" (Ps. 41), that is, the assumption of the human body, which Daniel calls a stone cut from the mountain without hands, that is, without nuptial work (Dan. 2), Christ the abyss calls upon the Father, another abyss, "in the voice of his cataracts" (Ps. 41), that he might give the word with great power to those who evangelize. Or certainly, the abyss of the New Testament, in testimony of the little mountain from which the prince of Tyre was wounded, calls upon the abyss of the Old Testament, so that through the cataracts of Christ, that is, the apostles, the preaching may be made firmer. But if anyone should wish to take what is said: "The abyss gave its voice, the height of its phantasy" (Isa. 14), in a bad sense, he will use that argument, that after the "dispersed waters of the way," which are certainly taken in a bad

sense, this too is rightly understood in the contrary sense. And at the same time, observe that he did not say "its height," but "the height of its phantasy," that is, of a shadow and an image. For they seem to have height and knowledge of the Scriptures; but all their height, compared to the truth, is a phantasy, and it raises its voice in vain, because the waters of the way have already been dispersed. Let us search in the Scriptures if we can find "phantasy" anywhere in a good sense, and since it is found rarely or never, we will more firmly interpret the abyss and its phantasy in a bad sense.

LXX: The sun was raised up, and the moon stood in its order. If we follow the simple interpretation, the progress of the sun and moon is demonstrated by the present words: that, according to Isaiah, in the future age the sun will shine sevenfold, and the moon will gleam with the clarity of the sun (Isa. 30:26). For since creation will be freed from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. 8), which is now subject to vanity, on account of him who subjected it in hope of liberty, when at the consummation of the world all creation will have been freed, the sun and moon will also be freed, and they will stand in their own order. But if we wish to take the sun of justice to be Christ, in whose wings there is healing, and the moon, which is illuminated by the splendor of this sun, to be the Church, it is not difficult to say that the true light, and the light of men and the splendor of the glory of God, and the splendor of eternal

light illuminates it, which now in this age waxes and wanes according to prosperity and pressures. But when the sun has been raised up, and according to the Apostle, God has exalted him and given him a name which is above every name (Phil. 2), then also the Church, which in the present age cannot hold its order, will return to its due order, and will by no means be changed; but it will stand on a fixed step, and will hear with Moses: But as for you, stand here by me (Exod. 34:2).

LXX: Your arrows will go forth in light [Or: in lumine], in the splendor of the flashing of your armor. The arrows of God, that is, arrows going forth and proceeding, are not sent to kill, but to illuminate. For the distinction of these arrows and darts, Christ is called a chosen arrow by Isaiah, crying out: He has made me as a chosen arrow, and in his quiver he has hidden me, and he said to me: It is a great thing for you to be called my servant (Isa. 49:2, 3). This arrow will have [Or: has] more arrows, which it may send into the whole world. Whence also the bride, wounded by the chosen arrow, says: I am wounded by love (Cant. 4:9); according to which we too can say: I am wounded by chastity, I am wounded by wisdom. Wounded by this arrow of wisdom, the Queen of the South was also beside herself, and, stupefied, she had found more in the true Solomon than fame had recounted to her (1 Kings 10). These arrows, therefore, which are sent in light, also go forth in the splendor of the flashing of his armor, that is, of God. For whoever has been armed to stand against the wiles of the devil, and

girt with the armor of the Apostle (Eph. 6), the arrows of light will come to him, so that it can be said to him: You are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14). But if anyone is a sinner, and groans that he dwells in the tents of Kedar, the sharp arrows of the mighty with desolating coals are sent to him (Ps. 119), so that he may first be pricked by the words of God, and say: I am turned in my misery, when a thorn is fixed in me (Ps. 31). And after he has been pricked, then a desolating coal may be sent to him through a Seraph, that is, the burning word of God, which may burn away not only the lips, which Isaiah alone had unclean (Isa. 6), but also all the parts of his members, and reduce him to a solitude from sins.

LXX: In threat you will diminish the earth, and in fury you will carry off the nations. This can be taken to mean the consummation of the world, when, with the multitude slain by frequent wars, men will be found rarely, and those who were unwilling to be of the people of God, but remained as gentiles and heathens, will be led down to Tartarus by the fury of the Lord. But it is better that we interpret "the earth diminished by threat" as earthly works, and those who, established in the Church, being sinners, do not wait to be seized by the fury of the Lord; but hearing in the Scriptures what punishments await sinners, they do penance, and little by little diminish their earth, and advance toward heaven. If any of us fears the Lord's threat, for him the earth is diminished; but he who perseveres among the number of the gentiles, and does not wish to be of those whose

earth is decreasing, nor of the people of God, of whom it is said: The peoples will see you and be in anguish, he will be carried off with the gentiles to punishment.

LXX: *You went forth for the salvation of your people, to save your anointed ones.* First, let us see how many kinds of anointed ones (*christorum*) there are, and afterward we will discuss how the Lord went forth for the salvation of His anointed ones. In the Old Testament, patriarchs were also called anointed ones, about whom it is written in the Psalms: *He rebuked kings for their sakes: do not touch my anointed ones, and do no evil to my prophets* (Ps. 104:14-15). And in the first book of Chronicles, all who went out of Egypt are called anointed ones.

A priestly chrism is also prepared in Exodus (Ch. 30), with which the priests are later reported to have been anointed in Leviticus (Ch. 8).

There is also another ointment with which kings are anointed in the kingdom, which is divided in two. For if it is David and Solomon, that is, *strong of hand* and *peaceful* (1 Kings 16), he is anointed from a horn. But if they are Jehu and Hazael, they are poured over with a flask (4 Kings 9 and 19): for a clay vessel is so called, that is, φακός.

But also Cyrus, king of the Persians and the Medes, who released the people from captivity (although many err and think it is written about the Lord Savior), hears through Isaiah: *Thus says the Lord to my anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, that nations might hear

before him* (Isa. 45:1), etc. And at the end it is said: *But you have not known me,* which it is wicked to understand of the Savior.

There is a prophetic ointment, with which Elijah is commanded to anoint Elisha as a prophet (3 Kings 19).

And above all kinds of ointments, there is a spiritual ointment which is called the oil of exultation, with which the Savior is anointed, and it is said to him: *Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of exultation above your companions* (Ps. 44:8). I think his companions are those to whom John also speaks: *And you have an anointing from the Holy One* (1 John 2:20). And a little after: *I have written these things to you concerning those who seduce you: and let the chrism which you have received from him remain in you: and you have no need that anyone should teach you; but his chrism will teach you about all things, and it is true, and it is not a lie, and as it has taught you, remain in him* (Ibid., 26-27).

And lest perhaps those who have lost the chrism of baptism should despair of restoring the chrism, it is written in Leviticus: That when a leper cast outside the camp comes to the priest, and his leprosy has been cleansed, the priest shall put oil for him in his left hand, and dipping his finger, he shall sprinkle the oil seven times before the Lord, and touch with the same oil the ear of him who had been a leper, and his right hand, and his right foot, and what remains of the ointment he shall put entirely on his head (Lev. 14).

And when he has duly completed all these things, then he shall offer a burnt offering for him, and he himself shall be called God's anointed.

I wish to say something, but I fear I may provide an occasion of ruin for the negligent: that in the Holy Scriptures the same man is frequently found to be anointed. In fact, David was anointed a third time (2 Kings 6 and 19): which we should not understand concerning one who has sinned and is anointed again (for it is sufficient for the leper to be anointed a second time after losing the first ointment), but concerning one who makes progress day by day, and his anointing is always increased, and he passes from the leper's oil to the oil of the people and of the saints, and from the oil of the people he comes to the oil of the priests, and from the priests he transcends to the chrism of the high priest, from the high priest also to the king, from the king to the patriarchs, and from the patriarchs he proceeds to Christ, and is anointed with the oil of exultation (Ps. 44:8), and whoever has been smeared with it is made one spirit with God, and where the Father and the Son are, there he also will be.

But this is rare, and it is the aspiration of believers. For the rest, I do not know if the effect follows. For it is said: *God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness, above your companions,* that is, with that oil which those who are your companions will be able to find either rarely or never.

For the salvation of these anointed ones, therefore, God went forth from his place, as

Micah also says: *And he will go forth from his place to save* (Mic. 1:3). For because those who were in need of salvation did not want to enter to him, he himself went forth from his majesty and from his place, to lead those who were outside into the land of the meek and the region of the living, from which Adam had been expelled: from which Cain, having gone forth, dwelt in the land of Naid (Gen. 3 and 4, according to the LXX).

But it should be known, as we said above, that where the LXX put the plural number, *to save your anointed ones,* there in the Hebrew is LAJESUA ETH MESSIACH (), which Aquila translated, *for salvation with your Christ,* not that God went forth to save the people and to save his Christ, but that he came for the salvation of the people with his Christ, according to that of the Gospel: *The Father is in me, and I in the Father; and the Father who abides in me, he does his works* (John 14:10).

But the fifth edition also translated similarly: *You went forth for the salvation of your people, for salvation with your Christ.* Theodotion, however, truly as a poor man and an Ebionite, and also Symmachus of the same dogma, following a poor understanding, translated Judaically: *You went forth for the salvation of your people, to save your Christ.* And: *You went forth to save your people, to save your Christ.*

I am about to say an incredible thing, but nevertheless true. These semi-Christians translated Judaically, and the Jew Aquila interpreted as a Christian.

The sixth edition, revealing the mystery most manifestly, thus rendered from the Hebrew: *You went forth to save your people through Jesus your Christ,* which in Greek is said ἐξῆλθες τοῦ σῶσαι τὸν λαόν σου διὰ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστόν σου.

To this sense can be adapted that the Father went forth with the Son from the temple and from the ceremonies of the Jews, saying: *Your house shall be left to you desolate* (Luke 13:35); and he came for the salvation of the Gentiles, to save believers through Jesus Christ his Son.

LXX: You have sent death upon the head of the impious. Let us not think that this refers to the common death by which we all die, and by which Abraham died and was gathered to his fathers (Genesis 25); and the prophets, and Christ himself died (John 19), but a death was sent upon the iniquitous (1 Samuel 2:6); so that those who previously lived in iniquity, being dead to sin, might live to justice (1 Peter 2). This indeed is what Anna also signifies in her prayer: The Lord kills and brings to life. For He kills sinners, sending death upon the heads of the impious, that He may bring them to life for justice. I shall say something rather bold: Christ came into the world for this purpose, to send death upon the heads of the iniquitous. And just as He himself died to sin once (1 Peter 3), so too should they die to iniquity; and those who had been made partakers of this death, would also become partakers of life. According to the Hebrew, however, where it is written: You have struck the head from the house of the impious, let us take the 'head,' as

I have said, to be the prince of this world, and his 'house' to be the world, and every soul of a sinner in which the devil had his lodging. Therefore, the head is struck in the house of the impious so that, with him struck and cast out, it may become the house of God, and justice may dwell there and walk about in it. And this is a worthy thing to believe about God, who went forth for the salvation of His people with His Christ, so that, with a head of this kind struck, He who is the head of every man and of His Church might become the head in us. If, therefore, anyone still feels himself to be a house of the impious, let him pray for the coming of the Son of God, that the head of the impious may be crushed within him.

LXX: You have raised up bonds even to the neck, for an end. The Lord has raised up the bonds of charity, so that, with the prior burden laid aside and the most heavy yoke by which we were oppressed cast off, we might take up the light yoke of Christ; and being placed in His chariot, we might carry the best charioteer. Theodotion, indeed, also taking this in a good sense, says: You have adorned the foundation up to the neck. The fifth edition: You have laid bare, or, you have cleared out the foundation up to the neck, *selah*, that is, forever. For since foreigners had covered with earth the foundation of Christ, which was in the soul of each person, the piled-up soil is removed, and the excellent foundation is laid bare and adorned, so that what was hidden may appear and receive its clarity; and this is done forever, which in Hebrew is called SELA. And con-

sider at the same time that the LXX themselves, compelled by the necessity of the matter, who always used to interpret *sela* as *diapsalma*, have now translated it as for an end.

(Verses 14 ff.) You have cursed his scepters, the head of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me. Their exultation was like that of one who devours the poor in secret. You have made a way in the sea for your horses, in the mire of many waters. I heard, and my belly was troubled: at the voice my lips trembled. Let rottenness enter into my bones, and swarm beneath me: that I may rest in the day of my tribulation [the Vulgate omits "my"], that I may ascend to our girded people. And now we discuss [or: have set forth] only the Hebrew, so that we may discuss the Septuagint edition separately, for it differs greatly from the translation of all the others: "You have cursed," it says, "the scepters," that is, the kingdoms of him: doubtless of the impious one, of whom he had said above: "You have struck the head from the house of the impious one: you have laid bare the foundation even to the neck." We understand the impious one, however, to be either Nebuchadnezzar or every adversary 658 of the people of God. And not only his scepters, but also the head of the warriors whom you had struck, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, that is, to overthrow Israel and lead them away captive in different directions. Thus, moreover, they exulted in devouring the poor one, Israel, who was subject to them, as if they were doing this in secret and devouring us without Your

knowledge. You came, therefore, to battle for your people, and sending your chariots into the waters, that is, into many nations, you made a way for them in the mire of many waters, that is, so that you might trample them down and crush them like the mire with the hooves of your horses and the wheels of your chariots. As for what follows: "I heard, and my belly was troubled: at the voice (it is to be understood, Your voice) my lips trembled, let rottenness enter into my bones, and swarm beneath me: that I may rest in the day of tribulation, that I may ascend to our girded people," this is the meaning: Now we willingly suffer all distresses, and at your threat we tremble in our inmost being. Now my lips tremble, and the terror of a fearful mind is marked on my face, and not only this, but I also spontaneously seek and desire something else: let rottenness enter into my bones [or: my bones], and swarm beneath me; that is, I willingly suffer what Job suffered; I desire not only my flesh, but also the marrow of my bones to waste away, and my bed to swarm with the rottenness of my body and with innumerable worms, so that after I have endured these things here for my sins, I may rest on the bitter day, on the day of tribulation, on the day of necessity and distress. "And I will ascend to our girded people," that is, the strong, the warrior-like, and the combative. And beautifully, "I will ascend": for one always ascends to a girded people. And elegantly, "our": for he who has been troubled, and has willingly endured pressures, and has balanced future rewards against present evils, boldly says

"our," so that, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he himself may sleep in a good old age, full of days, and be gathered to his fathers. But if someone should say: "Behold, in the exposition of history, without your knowing it, you have been caught in the nets of allegory, and you have mixed tropology with history." Let him hear that the metaphor of history does not always harmonize with allegory: because frequently history itself is woven metaphorically, and is spoken of under the image of a woman, or of one man for the whole people 659. And so now we can say, in the person of the people: "I willingly undergo captivity, I endure distress with a calm mind, and I am pressed by the most grievous yoke of the Babylonians, and whatever is of ultimate and harsh necessity, I will suffer it rejoicing (or: I suffer):" "only that I may rest at that time when you will curse the scepters of the impious one, and your horses will trample the mire of many waters, so that afterwards, with your saints Zerubbabel and Jeshua son of Jozadak, and Ezra the priest, and Nehemiah, I may return to the land of promise." Thus far, lest we seem to have omitted the history entirely, we have in a way done violence to the understanding, and have dragged into captivity meanings that do not follow: now let us return to the Septuagint translators, and to the tropological exposition.

LXX: You have divided in amazement the heads of the powerful. Just as Christ is the head of the Church and of every man (I Cor. 11), so the head of all the demons who rage in this

world is Beelzebub, the prince of demons, and their individual troops have their own heads and princes. For example, the spirits of fornication have their own leader, the spirits of avarice have their own ruler (ἄρχοντα), the spirits of vain-glory, the spirits of lying, the spirits of infidelity have presidents of their own malice. Therefore, the most merciful God, who had sent death upon the heads of the iniquitous, who had raised up bonds even to the neck, in the end also divides the heads of the powerful in amazement, so that He first separates the princes from their subjects, and as it were, decapitates the body from the head, and where the worst head had been, there the best head may be replaced. Let us use an example, so that what we are saying may become clearer: if ever a tyrant is beheaded, his images and statues are also taken down; and with only the face being changed, and the head removed, the face of the one who has conquered is placed on top, so that while the body remains, and the heads are cut off, another head is substituted. I like to understand this in relation to the conventicles of heretics, that when the heads of heresies (hereseων) are separated from the rest of the people, Christ begins to be the head in their place. And at the same time, consider the significance of Holy Scripture, that it did not say, "you have cut off," or "you have felled" the heads of the powerful, but "you have divided": for what is divided is not so much amputated and destroyed, as it is separated into parts. So that just as in the building of the tower (Gen. 11), the

language which had been wickedly united was separated, and the most evil pact was torn apart by a useful division: so also these heads, which seemed to have consensus with their bodies (or among themselves) (for there are many heads of heretics, which, although they have different eyes, nevertheless bark against the Church with, so to speak, one tongue of blasphemy), might be divided into parts, and separated from their deceived bodies, they might make way for the good head. We can use this verse whenever we see kings and their leaders shedding Christian blood, and afterwards the vengeance of the Lord following. This we have observed long ago in Julian, and before him in Maximian, and further back in Valerian, Decius, Domitian, and Nero; and we can say to the Lord with exultation and prayer in the Canticle: "You have divided in amazement the heads of the powerful," that is, to the amazement of the believers, or to the amazement of all the nations, who did not think they could fall so quickly. When I was still a boy, and was being trained in the school of grammar, and all the cities were being polluted with the blood of victims, and suddenly in the very heat of the persecution the death of Julian was announced, one of the pagans elegantly said: "How," he asked, "do the Christians say that their God is patient and forbearing (ἀνεξίκακον)?" "Nothing is more wrathful, nothing more swift than this fury: He could not defer His indignation even for a short space of time." He may have said this in jest. But the Church of Christ sang with exultation:

"You have divided in amazement the heads of the powerful." I too will say something similar to this: Divide, O Lord, to the amazement of all, Ahab, and Jezebel (1 Kings 21 and 18). I am not indeed Elijah; but yet that Ahab and Jezebel killed Naboth, and took his vineyard, and made it a garden for their own luxury (2 Kings 9 and 10). Let some servant of yours, an Obadiah, be found, who may feed your poor and needy; let the blood of the harlot be given to the dogs; let the impious and avaricious Ahab be slain by the javelin of the Lord.

LXX: They shall be moved in it [or, in him], they shall open their bridles like a poor man eating in secret [or, in a hidden place]. When the heads have been divided from their bodies, and divided in no other way than in a stupor, which in Greek is called ἐν ἑκστάσει (in ecstasy); whence according to it, it is declined and said, ἐν αὐτῇ, that is, *in ea* (in it), they shall also open their bridles, or theirs (for either can be understood), so that by relaxing that dominion by which they previously ruled in the bodies subject to them, they may give place to a better rider, and to a better charioteer. And they do this as poor men [or, a poor man] eating in secret, not having freedom, nor any abundance of food, but meager morsels, and while eating them secretly they would wish no one to see what they are doing. It can also be interpreted otherwise: When the heads have been divided in a stupor, as if decapitated from the rest of the body, they will open their mouth, which had been bridled as if with

the bit of condemnation, and in the likeness of those who eat, they will gnash their teeth, striking them against each other, wishing to eat again, but not having the power to devour. Understand how after the advent of Christ the heads of the demons, separated from the nations which had previously been subject to them, wish to exercise their ancient power again. But because they have been amputated from their bodies, they do not have full freedom of eating: they eat as if poor, and not only are they poor, but poor in secret. They are poor because they have lost their former riches: they eat secretly because they always sit in ambush, that they may slay the innocent in secret places. These heads have teeth that are also arrows. And although he had said before, 'I will ascend above the stars of heaven, I will set my nest on high, and I will hold the whole world in my hand as if it were eggs,' nevertheless they will be dragged down from the heights, and having lost their former furnishings and all the substance of their house, they will scarcely attempt to eat and bite secretly like poor men. I know that the Hebrew differs greatly from these things that have been said; but what can I do, for whom it has once been proposed to interpret both the Hebrew itself and the scriptures commonly circulated throughout the whole world?

LXX: And you led your horses into the sea, troubling many waters. After God had sent death upon the heads of the iniquitous, and had struck down the heads of the mighty in a stupor, and had broken them in the sea (for it is written in

the Psalms: *You broke the heads of the dragon* [Psalm 73:14]), with the princes slain or broken, and the strong man overcome, one comes to his house, and all his vessels are plundered (Mark 3:27). But what else can we interpret the vessels and the house of the strong man and the furniture of the prince to be, if not the sea of this world, in which the dragon dwells? Therefore God, the outstanding horseman and preeminent charioteer, leads his horses—that is, the angels and sublime virtues—over the sea of this world, to trouble the many waters, the demons and contrary powers. But if we wish to interpret this concerning the advent of Christ, according to what is written in the Apocalypse (Chapter 19), that the Word of God sits on a white horse and the whole army follows him on white horses, we shall see how Christ mounted upon his apostles, saying to them: *Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*; and: *Go, therefore, and baptize all nations,* and the rest (Matthew 28). And afterwards he mounted a single white horse, which I think is none other than the apostle Paul, riding upon whom he circled the whole world. Now, the Word of God mounted his horses so that the many waters might be troubled, that is, either the many peoples who were previously in the sea and were held subject to the dragon (for *broad and spacious is the way that leads to death* [Matthew 7:13]), and that they might be troubled, first abandoning their former error, and then, being troubled, they might receive the coming horseman. Or certainly, concerning

those we mentioned above, the hordes of demons would by no means so dominate in the sea; but, being troubled, they would yield and would fear the wounds of the battling horseman. And would that the Word of God might also mount upon me, and through the lance of my mouth slay him who reigns in the many waters, so that at the king's demise, the waters that had been subject to them, being troubled, might offer their necks to my horseman, and being brought into a single four-horse chariot, we might become the Lord's Cherubim, which is interpreted as 'a multitude of knowledge'. For never is a charioteer so well-composed and so splendidly adorned as when he is among those who are joined together by a multitude of knowledge and by the reins of wisdom.

LXX: I have kept watch, and my belly trembled at the voice of the prayer of my lips: and a trembling entered into my bones, and my strength was troubled beneath me. Or as we find written elsewhere, ἡ ἕξις μου (*hē hexis mou*), which we can render as 'my disposition' (**habitus mea**) : for indeed different copies are found. Now, these things can also be said from the person of the prophet, consistent with the preceding verses: Because you, O Lord, sent death upon the heads of the iniquitous, and raised up bonds to the neck, and divided in a stupor the heads of the mighty, and led your horses into the sea, troubling many waters: for this reason I have guarded my heart with all vigilance, and my bowels trembled, and my whole strength or disposition was troubled, lest I should suffer similar things. It can also have,

as it were, its own beginning, with the prophet narrating his fear, and how he was afraid lest he had sinned [variant: should sin] in anything, and being admonished by the voice of the prayer of his own lips, he feared God so much that a trembling entered his bones: and being placed under the lofty hand of the Lord, he was troubled in all the strength or disposition of his soul. But as for what he says, 'A trembling entered into my bones,' it should be understood more emphatically (ἐμφοτικώτερον), so that we may see the magnitude of the fear of God penetrating the entirety of the soul, and moving the whole man, lest he do anything that would displease God. And because Scripture allegorically mentions members of the soul corresponding to the members of the body, let us understand the trembling belly as that power of the soul which receives spiritual foods, the lips as those with which the mind speaks to itself, and the bones as the robust and solid dogmas by which the whole structure of the soul is solidified. These things have been said by me briefly. But if anyone should find things more sagacious and truer than these, give your assent rather to his explanation.

LXX: I will rest on the day of my tribulation: that I may ascend to the people of my pilgrimage. Because with all vigilance I have guarded my heart, and my belly trembled at the voice of the prayer of my lips, and a trembling entered my bones, and beneath me my strength or my constitution was disturbed, and on account of such great vigilance I have been made a stranger to

sins: therefore I now say with confidence: I will rest on the day of tribulation, that I may ascend to the people of my pilgrimage, that is, to those who, just like me, have been pilgrims in this world. But I will ascend, being placed below, and as if striving from a valley to higher things, I will struggle with all eagerness, so that at the time when others are in tribulation and anguish, my concern may be for the ascent, how I may rest with the people of my pilgrimage in higher places. But I think the day of tribulation is the consummation of the world, about which Isaiah also says: *The day of the Lord is incurable, of fury and of wrath, to lay the whole world desolate, and to destroy the sinners* (Isai. XIV).

(Verse 17) For the fig tree shall not blossom, and there shall be no bud on the vines: the labor of the olive tree shall fail, and the fields shall yield no food: the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. LXX: Because the fig tree shall not bring forth fruit, and there will be no shoots [alt. offspring] in the vines: the labor of the olive tree shall fail, and the fields will not make food: they have failed, because the sheep would eat, and there are no oxen in the stalls. According to the Hebrew, in which we said above: "Let rottenness enter into my bones, and let it swarm beneath me, that I may rest in the day of tribulation: that I may ascend to our [alt. my] girded people," so what has preceded will be joined to what follows: For this reason I wished to endure tribulation at present, and afterwards to ascend to a strong people,

because the day of tribulation and necessity will come, and while others are in distress, I will rejoice in your majesty: "For the fig tree shall not blossom, and there shall be no bud on the vines: the labor of the olive tree shall fail, and the fields shall yield no food," and so on. Since these things do not differ much from the LXX, let us discuss them together with their interpretation. When the day of tribulation comes, and I shall have ascended to the people who once journeyed with me; or certainly, when the day of the overthrow of Judea and of the former people comes, and the daughter of Zion shall have been left like a tent in a vineyard, and like a hut in a cucumber field, and like a city that is stormed, I, who have been chosen from a perishing people (of whom it is said (Isaiah 1:9): "Unless the Lord had left us a seed, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah"), will join myself to the disciples of Christ; and because He teaches them on the mountain, leaving the crowds and the weak below, I will ascend to the mountain heights. For the fig tree did not give fruit, to which the hungry Lord came in the Gospel, and He did not find fruit on 665 it, and He cursed it, saying: "You shall not bear fruit for an age" (Matt. 21:19). And consider carefully what He said: "You shall not bear fruit for an age"; He did not say, "for ages of ages," but when this age has passed, and the fullness of the Gentiles has entered, then this fig tree also will bear its fruits, and all Israel will be saved. This is the fig tree to which the householder came for the third

time, and he wishes to cut it down as if it were not bearing fruit; for which the farmer, to whom it had been entrusted, intercedes, that he might give it time, and says: "Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it, and put on manure, and if it bears fruit, well and good; but if not, then you shall cut it down" (Luke 13). This farmer is either Gabriel or Michael, to whom the people of the Jews was entrusted, who intercedes with the Lord during the passion, and says: "Lord, give them space for repentance, and do not destroy them, and if they bear fruit, well and good; but if not, then you will destroy them." "If they bear fruit," he says, but he did not say what they would endure; nor did he say, "if they bear fruit, they will remain as they were"; but "if they bear fruit," the sentence is suspended, so that it may be understood, "you will transfer them into the Church of the Gentiles, and you will transplant them into another vineyard." The Lord came for the third time, and did not find fruit in them. First, He gave the Law through Moses; second, He spoke through the prophets; third, He Himself descended. And after the passion, having been given forty-four years for repentance, because they did not bear fruit, they were overthrown for the fourth time. This, however, is left to our understanding. For in the parable it is not written what the householder did afterwards, but only what the farmer pleaded for. From this we observe that those from this fig tree who bore fruit were transferred to the people of the Gentiles, to whom the prophet also ascends, saying: "I will

rest in the day of tribulation, that I may ascend to the people of my pilgrimage." But those who did not bear fruit, and remained in their hardness, were overthrown. The voice of John in the Gospel signifies this very thing: "Behold, the axe is laid to the roots of the trees [alt. tree]." "Every tree that does not bear fruit [alt. bear good fruit] will be cut down and cast into the fire" (Matt. 3:10; Luke 3:9). We have spoken of the fig tree, showing that 666 it is the people of the Jews; let us also speak of the vine, which indeed he who has read Isaiah will easily understand: "A vineyard was made for the beloved on a horn, in a fruitful place" (Isa. 5:1). And afterwards: "And I waited for it to bear fruit, but it brought forth thorns, and not judgment, but a cry." And in Jeremiah: "But I had planted you, a fruitful vine, all true: how are you turned into the bitterness of a strange vine?" (Jer. 2:21). And more clearly in the Psalms: "You brought a vine out of Egypt, you cast out the nations, and planted it" (Ps. 79:9). This, therefore, is the vine to which the householder had often sent servants (Matt. 21), to receive from it wine, which gladdens the heart of man; because it turned to bitterness, and at the very last dared even to kill the householder's son, producing not grapes, but thorns, and not judgment, but a cry: "Crucify, crucify him!" And: "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:6, 15). Therefore "the boar from the wood has laid it waste, and a singular wild beast has devoured it" (Ps. 79:14). He will also clearly prove the olive tree to be the people of the synagogue, who has read in the Apostle of

the broken branches of the olive tree (Rom. 11), and of us being grafted in from the wild olive, so that in the branches we may understand that the Jewish multitude was cut off, but in the roots the election of the apostles was preserved, in which we, being grafted, will remain, if we bear fruit, and it will be said of us: "Your children like olive shoots around your table" (Ps. 127:4). Many think that the fig, the vine, and the olive are to be taken in the mystery of the Trinity, such that the fig, on account of the sweetness of its fruits, is understood as the Holy Spirit. The vine is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who says in the Gospel: "I am the vine" (John 15:1). The olive, however, is God the Father almighty, by whom all things are illuminated, and from whom light proceeds, and to whom we can say: "O olive, in your light we shall see light" (Ps. 35:10), that is, in the Son we shall see the Holy Spirit. To these fruitful trees, and to the most abundant vine, come the unfruitful trees in the book of Judges (Ch. 9), and they ask them to reign over them. But the olive, the fig, and the vine never reign over the trees of the forest, which are destined for fire; but rather the bramble, full of thorns and like a hedgehog, which dwells in Babylon and always lurks in pits, commands them. This little shrub has not only thorns, but also fire, wounding and burning whatever it touches. Finally, fire went out and consumed the trees of the forest. But so that you may know, according to the superior understanding in which we have taken what was said about the synagogue—"The fig will not bear

fruit, and there will be no shoots in the vines"—that this is not said of fruits, but of good works. In the case of the olive, the riddle is clearly revealed, and it is said: "The work of the olive will lie." For the fruits which they ought to have brought forth are shown in their works: but "the work of the olive will lie," promising one thing and doing another, saying to Moses: "All that the Lord has said, we will do" (Exod. 24:7), and yet being unwilling to believe in Him who was preached by Moses. The fields also will not bear fruit. Consider that Jerusalem, which was once situated on mountains, and "mountains are round about it" (Ps. 124:2), and "its foundations are in the holy mountains" (Ps. 86:1), is now called lowly and a plain, which not only does not nourish men, that is, rational animals, but not even flocks and oxen, of which Solomon also speaks in Proverbs: "Take care for those things which are in the regions of the field, and cut the grass, and gather the hay that you may have sheep for food." There will also be no oxen in the stalls: for "where the stalls are full, the strength of the ox is manifest" (Prov. 14:4). The ox is a worker: the ox of the Lord sustaining the yoke: blessed is he who has sown in the track of the ox. All these things will be taken away from the people, because they have acted wickedly against God their Creator. But if you should wish (alt. should not wish) to take the day of tribulation as the day of consummation, you will refer all these things to those who say they are of the Church, but do not have works of justice. And the fig, the vine, and the olive,

namely the mystery of the Trinity, will not bring forth their fruit in them, and not only do they not have grain and food for rational beings, but they do not even have food in their fields for flocks and beasts of burden, and their stalls are empty, and instead of high mountains they dwell in low and humble plains.

But I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will exult in God my Jesus. God the Lord is my strength, and he will make my feet like the feet of deer. And he will lead me, the victor, upon my high places, singing in Psalms. LXX: But I will exult in the Lord: I will rejoice in God my savior [Or: Savior], the Lord God is my strength, and he will set my feet to the end: he will place me upon the high places, that I may conquer in his Song. When the fig tree, the vine, and the olive, as I have explained, do not produce their fruit, and the fields of the Jews do not bring forth food, and the flocks have also been cut off from the fold, and the herds from the stalls, after they heard from the Lord: "Your house will be left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:38), and the people have also been handed over to captivity and dispersed throughout the whole world, the prophet from the people of the Jews, whose name is interpreted as "embracing" (because he loved the Lord, and clung to him, and joined himself to him), speaks in the person of the apostles and of the people believing in Christ: "But I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will exult in God my Jesus." For which the LXX translated *tōi Sōtēri mou*, that is, "my Savior." The same is also true with Gabriel's interpretation:

"And he will be called Jesus, for he will save his people" (Matthew 2:21). God the Lord is my strength: for I will have no other strength except in Christ, and I will count all the justifications of the law as rubbish. "And he will make my feet like the feet of deer," so that I may tread upon the asp and the basilisk, and like a little child I may put my hand into the hole, and draw out the serpent, and play (or, Judah) with the viper: "For my kinsman is like a roe, or a young hart" (Song of Songs 2:9). And because he himself is a deer, he has also granted to me that I should be a deer, with lofty horns, cloven hooves, chewing the cud, and putting serpents to flight by my scent: of whom it is said in the seventeenth Psalm: "Who has perfected my feet like those of deer, and will set me upon the high places." And in the twenty-eighth: "The voice of the Lord perfecting the deer." Therefore, he will place my feet among his other deer, and will lead me to the heavenly realms, so that among the angels I may sing the glory of the Lord, and announce peace on earth to men of good will. Moreover, I will sing of his victory and triumph and the trophy of the cross. According to the Hebrew and the fifth edition, let us refer all these things to the time of the Jewish overthrow and to the advent of the Lord. But if we wish to understand it concerning the consummation of the world, it must be explained thus: just as in Exodus (Chapter 9), when Egypt was struck, and God struck their vines and their fig trees, and killed the firstborn of men and of beasts with hail, and the caterpillar and the locust con-

sumed the Egyptian crops: the fig tree in Egypt did not bring forth fruit, nor were there buds on their vines, the work of the olive failed (wherever it could be found in Egypt), and their fields did not yield food [Or: fruit]: and their flocks were wanting because they had no food, and there were no oxen in the stalls. But the people of Israel exulted in the Lord, and rejoiced in God their savior: so at the consummation of the world, when, with iniquity multiplied, charity will have grown cold (Matthew 24), and the fig tree will not have brought forth fruit, and the vines will not have had grapes, and the work of the olive will have failed, and the fields will not have sprouted food, and the rest that follows: then whoever is found just and worthy of God's election will speak, exulting. "But I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in God my savior, the Lord is my strength." And as if placed by God over the consummation of the age, so that he may afterwards ascend to higher things, and be led by God to the summit, he will say: "And he will set my feet to the end, he will place me upon the high places": so that when a prize has been set for the singers by Jesus the *agōnothetēs* (judge of the contest), who was the first to conquer in the contest, I will be victorious in his song, and my hands will compose for the lyre, and the psaltery, and every kind of musical instrument, and I will write a panegyric to the triumphant one. And I who in the beginning spoke: "How long shall I cry, and you will not hear? I will cry out to you, suffering violence, and you will not save?" and who disputed concerning

his justice and judgment: afterwards I will praise
his equity, and I will surpass the other singers
with my song.