

SAINT JEROME

COMMENTARY ON
JONAH

Commentariorum in Jonam

SABBATISMUS

Saint Jerome (347–420)
Commentariorum in Jonam · Commentary on Jonah

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Set in EB Garamond and Cinzel.
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SAINT EUSEBIUS HIERONYMUS, PRES-
BYTER OF STRIDON, COMMENTARIES ON
THE PROPHET JONAH, BOOK ONE. (C)

PROLOGUE.

About three years have passed since I interpreted five prophets: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai; and being detained by other work, I was not able to complete what I had begun: for I wrote the book **On Illustrious Men**, and two volumes **Against Jovinian**; also the **Apology**, and **On the Best Method of Translating** to Pammachius; and to Nepotian, or concerning Nepotian, two books, and other things which it would be tedious to enumerate. Therefore, after so long a time, taking up the beginning of my interpretation from Jonah, as if by a certain right of postliminy, I beseech that he who is a type of the Savior, and who, by remaining for three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, prefigured the Lord's resurrection, may also grant us our former fervor, so that we may be worthy of the coming of the Holy Spirit to us. For if **Jonas** is interpreted as **dove**, and the dove, moreover, refers to the Holy Spirit: may we also interpret the dove from the coming of the dove to us. I know that the ancient ecclesiastical writers, both Greek and Latin, have said much about this book, and with so many questions have not so much clarified as obscured its meanings; so that their very interpretation requires an interpretation, and the reader departs much more uncertain than he was before he read. Nor

do I say this to detract from great minds, or to censure others with my praise; but because it is the duty of a commentator to elucidate what is obscure, briefly and clearly, and not so much to display his own eloquence as to set forth the meaning of him whom he is explaining. We ask, therefore, whether the prophet Jonah, apart from his own book and the Gospels, that is, the Lord's testimony concerning him, is read anywhere else in the Holy Scriptures? And, if I am not mistaken, it is thus written of him in the book of Kings: ` In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, reigned in Samaria for forty-one years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He restored the border of Israel in Samaria from the entrance of Hamath to the sea of the wilderness, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai the prophet, who was from Gath, which is in Hephher` (4 Kings 14:25 ff.). The Hebrews, moreover, relate that this was the son of the widow of Zarephath, whom the prophet Elijah raised from the dead, the mother afterwards saying to him: ` Now I know that you are a man of God, and the word of God in your mouth is truth` ; and for this reason the boy himself was so named. For **Amittai** in our language means **truth**; and because Elijah spoke the truth, he who was raised is said to be the son of truth. Furthermore, Gath is a small village at the second

milestone from Sepphoris (which today is called Diocaesarea) on the way to Tiberias, where his tomb is also shown. Although others would have it that he was born and buried near Diospolis, that is, Lydda, not understanding that what is added, *Hepher*, pertains to the distinction from other cities named Gath, which are shown even today near Eleutheropolis, or Diospolis. The book of Tobit also, although it is not held in the Canon, yet because it is used by ecclesiastical men, records something of this sort, with Tobit saying to his son. ` Son, behold, I have grown old, and I am at the point of departing from my life: Take your sons, and go into Media, my son: for I know what Jonah the prophet spoke of Nineveh, that it shall be overthrown` (Tobit 14). And indeed, as far as pertains to both Hebrew and Greek histories, and especially Herodotus, we read that Nineveh was overthrown during the reign of Josiah among the Hebrews, and of Astyages, king of the Medes. From this we understand that at the first time, upon Jonah's preaching, the Ninevites, having repented, obtained pardon; but afterwards, persevering in their former vices, they provoked God's sentence against themselves. And the Hebrews relate that Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Jonah prophesied in the same times. This much for the foundations of the history. For the rest, we are not ignorant, O venerable Pope Chromatius, that it is a task of the greatest effort to refer the whole prophet to the understanding of the Savior: namely, that he fled, that he slept, that he was cast into the sea, that he was received by the

whale, that cast out on the shore he preached repentance, that he was saddened by the salvation of an innumerable city, that he was delighted by the shade of a gourd, that he was rebuked by God for having greater care for a green and suddenly withered plant than for so great a multitude of men, and the other things which we shall strive to explain in the volume itself: and yet, so that I may comprehend the whole sense of the prophet in a brief preface, there will be no better interpreter of his own type than he himself who inspired the prophets and prefigured the lines of future truth in his servants. He speaks, therefore, to the Jews, who were incredulous of his word and did not know Christ the Son of God: `The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here` (Matt. 12:41). The generation of the Jews is condemned, while the world believes; and while Nineveh repents, unbelieving Israel perishes. They have the books, we have the Lord of the books (2 Cor. 3); they hold the prophets, we have the understanding of the prophets; the letter kills them, the spirit gives us life (John 18); for them Barabbas the robber is released, for us Christ the Son of God is set free.

And the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying: Arise, and go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach in it; for its wickedness has come up before me. The Seventy, except that they said, "the cry of its wickedness has come

up to me," translated the rest similarly. Jonah is sent to the Gentiles for the condemnation of Israel, because while Nineveh was performing penance, they persevered in their wickedness. Furthermore, what he says, "its wickedness has come up before me," or, "the cry of its wickedness to me," is the very same thing that is said in Genesis: "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is multiplied" (Gen. 18:20). And to Cain: "The voice of your brother's blood cries to me from the earth" (Gen. 4:10). According to the tropological sense, however, our Lord—Jonah, that is, "dove" or "grieving" (for it is interpreted as both, either because the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and remained on him (Luke 19), or because he himself grieved for our wounds, and wept over Jerusalem, and by his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53): truly the son of truth; for God is indeed truth)—is sent to beautiful Nineveh, that is, the world, than which we behold nothing more beautiful with the eyes of the flesh (John 14). Hence also among the Greeks it received the name *kosmos* from its adornment; and when each of the works was completed, it says of it: "God saw that it was good." To Nineveh, I say, the great city, so that because Israel disdained to hear, the whole world of the Gentiles might listen. And this is because its wickedness had come up before God. For when God had built, as it were, a most beautiful house for man who was to serve Him, man was depraved by his own will, and from his youth his heart was diligently set on evil (Gen. 8); and he set his mouth against heaven,

and having built a tower of pride (Gen. 11), he deserves that the Son of God should descend to him, so that through the ruin of penance he might ascend to heaven, who could not through the swelling of pride.

And Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the face of the Lord. The Septuagint reads similarly. The prophet knows, with the Holy Spirit suggesting it to him, that the repentance of the Gentiles is the ruin of the Jews. Therefore, as a lover of his own country, he does not so much envy the salvation of Nineveh as he is unwilling for his own people to perish. Otherwise, he had read that Moses, pleading for them, had said: "If you forgive them their sin, forgive it; but if you do not forgive, blot me also out of your book which you have written" (Exod. 32:31-32), and that at his prayers Israel was saved, and Moses was not blotted out of the book, but rather that the Lord had taken the opportunity through his servant to spare his other fellow servants. For when he says, "let me alone," he shows that he can be restrained. The Apostle also says something similar: "I could wish that I myself were accursed for the sake of my brethren, who are Israelites according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3). Not that he himself desires to perish, for whom to live is Christ and to die is gain (Phil. 1); but he is more deserving of life, while he wishes to save others.

Furthermore, Jonah, seeing his fellow prophets sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel to call the people to repentance, and that Balaam the diviner had also prophesied about

the salvation of the Israelite people (Num. 22), grieved that he alone was chosen to be sent to the Assyrians, the enemies of Israel, and to the greatest city of their foes, where there was idolatry and ignorance of God; and, what is greater than these, he feared lest, on the occasion of his preaching, with them converted to repentance, Israel would be utterly abandoned. For he had known by the same spirit by which the proclamation to the Gentiles was entrusted to him, that when the nations had believed, then the house of Israel would perish, and he feared that what was to happen at some point would not happen in his own time.

Hence Jonah, imitating Cain (Gen. 4) and departing from the face of the Lord, wished to flee to Tarshish, which Josephus interprets as Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, though with the first letter changed; but as far as can be understood from the books of Chronicles, a certain place in India is so called. Moreover, the Hebrews maintain that THARSIS is generally said to mean the sea, according to that passage: "With a vehement wind you will break the ships of Tarshish" (Ps. 47:8), that is, "of the sea." And in Isaiah: "Wail, O ships of Tarshish" (Isa. 2:14). Concerning this, I remember having said many years ago in a certain letter to Marcella: Therefore, the prophet did not desire to flee to a specific place; but entering the sea, he hastened to go wherever he could, and this is more fitting for a fugitive and a fearful person, not to choose a place for a leisurely flight, but to seize the first opportunity to sail.

We can also say this: he who thought God was known only in Judea (Ps. 75), and His name great in Israel, after he felt Him in the waves, confesses and says: "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." But if He Himself made the sea and the dry land, why, by leaving the dry land, do you think you can avoid the creator of the sea while on the sea? And at the same time, he is instructed by the salvation and conversion of the sailors that even so great a multitude as Nineveh can be saved by a similar confession.

But concerning our Lord and Savior, we can say that He left His home and His country, and having assumed flesh, He fled, in a certain way, from the heavens and came to Tarshish, that is, to the sea of this age, according to what is said elsewhere: "This great and wide sea, in which are creeping things without number." "Small and great animals, there the ships will pass through [or, will walk about]." "This dragon which you have formed to play in it" (Ps. 103:25 ff.). For this reason also in His passion He said: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me," lest, with the people crying out, "Crucify, crucify such a one" (Luke 22:42). And: "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15), the fullness of the Gentiles might enter in, and the branches of the olive tree be broken off, for which the shoots of the wild olive would grow in their place (Rom. 11). And so great was His piety and love for the people, on account of the election of the fathers and the promise to Abraham, that when placed on the cross He said:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:24).

Or certainly, since "Tarshish" is interpreted as "contemplation of joy," the prophet, coming to Joppa, which itself means "beautiful," hastens to go to joy and to enjoy the blessedness of rest, to give himself wholly to contemplation (*theoria*), thinking it better to enjoy the beauty and variety of knowledge than for the people from whom Christ was to be born in the flesh to perish on the occasion of the salvation of the other Gentiles.

(Verse 3.) And he went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish: and he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the face of the Lord. Septuagint: And he went up to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish: and he gave his fare, and went up into it, to sail with them to Tarshish from the face of the Lord. We read that Joppa is a port of Judea, both in the books of Kings and of Chronicles (2 Chronicles 2), to which Hiram, king of Tyre, also transported timber from Lebanon on rafts, which would be carried to Jerusalem by a land route. This is the place where, to this day, rocks are shown on the shore, on which Andromeda was bound and once liberated by the aid of Perseus. The learned reader knows the story; but also, according to the nature of the region, the prophet, coming from the mountainous and steep parts to Joppa and the plains, is rightly said to have "descended," and to have found a ship casting off its rope from the shore and

entering the sea, and he gave its fare—that is, the price of the ship, or of his passage, according to the Hebrew—or "his own fare" [Or: *sum*], as the Septuagint translated. "And he went down into it," as is properly contained in the Hebrew: for *IERED* means "he went down," so that as a fugitive he might anxiously seek a hiding place. Or "he went up," as it is written in the Vulgate edition, so that wherever the ship might go, he would arrive, thinking he had escaped if he left Judea. But our Lord also, on the farthest shore of Judea (which, because it was in Judea, was called most beautiful), is unwilling to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs (Matthew 15); but because He had come for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He gives a price to the carriers, so that He who wishes first to heal [Or: to save] His own people, might save the inhabitants of the sea, and amidst whirlwinds and tempests—that is, His passion and the reproaches of the cross—submerged in the lower world, He might save those whom, as if sleeping in the ship, He was neglecting (Matthew 8).

The prudent reader must be asked not to seek the same order in tropology as in history. For the Apostle refers Hagar and Sarah to the two Testaments, and yet we cannot interpret everything narrated in that history tropologically. And discussing Adam and Eve in his letter to the Ephesians, he says: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and

the Church" (Ephesians 5:31-32). Can we refer the entire beginning of Genesis, the creation of the world, and the condition of humanity to Christ and the Church, just because the Apostle used this testimony in this way? For suppose we refer what is written, "Therefore a man shall leave his father," to Christ, saying that He left God the Father in heaven so that the people of the Gentiles might be joined to the Church: how can we interpret what follows, "his mother," unless perhaps we say that He left the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of the Saints, and other things much more difficult than these? That which is also written by the same Apostle, "For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4), by no means compels us to refer the entire book of Exodus to Christ. For what can we say? That this rock was struck by Moses, not once but twice (Exodus 17), that waters flowed, and torrents were filled. Shall we, on this occasion, force the entire history of this passage under the law of allegory? And will not rather each passage, according to its historical diversity, receive a different spiritual understanding?

Therefore, just as these testimonies have their own interpretations, and neither the preceding nor the following parts require the same allegory, so too the prophet Jonah cannot, without danger for the interpreter, be entirely referred to the Lord. Nor from the fact that it is said in the Gospel: "An evil [Or: wicked] and adulterous generation seeks a sign, and a sign will not be given

to it, except the sign of the Prophet Jonah." "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:39).

(Verse 4) But the Lord sent a great wind into the sea, and a great tempest was made in the sea, and the ship was in danger of being broken. LXX: And the Lord stirred up a great spirit in the sea, and a great tempest was made in the sea, and the ship was in danger of being broken. The flight of the prophet can also be referred to the common person of man, who, despising the precepts of God, withdrew from His face and gave himself over to the world, where afterwards, by a tempest of evils and the shipwreck of the whole world raging against him, he was compelled to feel God and to return to Him whom he had fled. From this we understand that even those things which men deem salutary for themselves, if God is unwilling [Another reading: willing], are turned to ruin, and not only does help not benefit those to whom it is offered, but even those who offer it are likewise broken. Just as we read that Egypt was conquered by the Assyrians because it was helping Israel against the will of the Lord. The ship which had taken on the one in peril is itself imperiled: the seas are stirred up by the wind, a tempest arises in the calm, nothing is secure when God is opposed.

(Verse 5) And the sailors were afraid, and the men cried out to their god, and they cast the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to be

lightened of them. LXX: And those who were sailing were afraid, and they cried out each one to his god, and they made a jettison of the ship's wares into the sea, that the ship might be lightened. They think the ship is weighed down by its usual cargo, and do not understand that the whole weight is that of the fugitive prophet. The sailors are afraid, each one cries to his god; though ignorant of the truth, they are not ignorant of providence, and under the error of their religion, they know that something is to be venerated: they cast the cargo into the sea, so that the lighter vessel might leap over the greatness of the waves. But Israel, on the contrary, understands God neither in good things nor in bad; while Christ weeps for the people, it has dry eyes.

And Jonah went down into the inner parts of the ship, and was sleeping in a deep slumber. LXX: But Jonah went down into the belly of the ship, and was sleeping, and snoring. As far as the history is concerned, the prophet's mind is described as secure: he is not disturbed by the tempest, nor by the dangers, bearing the same disposition both in calm and in the face of imminent shipwreck. In short, others cry to their gods, they throw the wares overboard, each one strives as he can. This man is so quiet and secure, and of such a tranquil mind, that going down into the inner parts of the ship, he enjoys a peaceful sleep. But this can also be said: He was conscious of his flight and of the sin by which he had neglected the Lord's precepts: and he perceived that the tempest, of which the others were ignorant, was

raging against him: therefore he went down into the inner parts of the ship, and sadly hid himself, lest he should see the waves, as if God's avengers, swelling against him. But the fact that he sleeps is not a sign of security, but of sorrow. For we read that the Apostles also, in the Lord's passion, were overcome with sleep from the greatness of their sorrow (Matthew 26). But if we interpret it typologically, the prophet's sleep and most heavy slumber signify man, torpid in the slumber of error, for whom it was not enough to have fled from the face of God, unless also, his mind being overwhelmed by a certain madness, he should be ignorant of God's wrath, and as if secure, should sleep and resound in deepest sleep with a hoarse snore.

(Verse 6) And the shipmaster came to him, and said to him: Why are you weighed down with sleep? Arise, call upon your God, if perhaps God will think upon us, that we may not perish. LXX: And the lookout came to him, and said to him, why are you snoring? Arise, call upon your God, if somehow God may save us, and we not perish. It is natural for everyone in their own peril to hope more from another: hence the shipmaster, or the lookout, who ought to have consoled the timid passengers, seeing the magnitude of the crisis, awakens the sleeper, and reproaches his improvident security, and admonishes him that he too should pray to his God according to his ability: so that for whom the danger was common, the prayer might be common. Furthermore, according to the tropological sense, there are many who,

sailing with Jonah and having their own gods, hasten to go to the contemplation of joy. But after Jonah has been caught by lot, and the tempest of that world has been calmed by his death, and tranquility has been restored to the sea, then the one God will be adored, and spiritual victims will be sacrificed, which, according to the letter, they certainly did not have in the midst of the waves.

(Verse 7.) And a man said to his colleague: Come and let us cast lots, and let us know why this evil is upon us: and they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. LXX: And each one said to his neighbor: Come, let us cast lots, and let us know for whose sake this evil is upon us: and they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. They knew the nature of the sea, and having sailed for so long, they knew the patterns of storms and winds; and surely, if they had seen the usual waves arise, which they had sometimes experienced, they would perhaps never have sought the author of the shipwreck, nor desired to avoid a certain danger by an uncertain means. Nor should we immediately, under this example, believe in lots, or connect to this testimony that passage from the Acts of the Apostles where Matthias is chosen for the Apostolate by lot (Acts 1), since the privileges of individuals cannot make a common law. For just as the she-donkey speaks for the condemnation of Balaam (Num. 22), and Pharaoh (Gen. 41) and Nebuchadnezzar for their own judgment (Dan. 2, 4) know future things through dreams, and yet do not understand the revealing God; Caiaphas also prophesies, not knowing that it was

expedient for one to die for all (John 11 and 18): so also here the fugitive is discovered by lot, not by the power of lots, and especially the lots of the heathens, but by the will of Him who governed the uncertain lots. As for what is said: "And let us know for whose sake this evil is upon us," here we must take "evil" (*malitia*) to mean affliction and calamity, according to that passage: "Sufficient for the day is its own evil" (Matt. 6:34). And in the prophet Amos: "Is there an evil in a city which the Lord has not done?" (Amos 3:6). And in Isaiah: "I am the Lord who make peace, and create evil" (Isa. 45:7). But in another place, "evil" is understood as the contrary of virtue [or: truth], just as we read above in this same prophet: "The cry of its evil has come up to me."

(Verse 8.) And they said to him: Tell us, for whose cause this evil is upon us, what is your work, what is your country, and where are you going, or from what people are you? LXX: And they said to him: Announce to us for whose sake this evil is in us, what is your work, and whence do you come, and where are you going, and from what region are you, and from what people are you? The one whom the lot had indicated, they compel to confess in his own voice why there is such a great tempest, or why the wrath of God rages against them: "Tell us," they say, "for whose cause this evil is upon us: what work you do, from what land, from what people you set out, where you are hastening to go." And the brevity is to be noted, which we were accustomed to admire in Virgil: "Youths, what cause has compelled

you to attempt unknown ways, where are you heading?" he said. "What is your lineage, whence your home? Do you bring peace here, or arms?" (Aeneid, book 5). His person, region, journey, and city are questioned, so that from these the cause of the danger might also be known.

(Verse 9.) And he said to them: I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. LXX: And he said to them: I am a servant of the Lord, and I worship the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. He did not say, "I am a Jew," because the schism of the ten tribes from the two imposed that name on the people; but, "I am a Hebrew," that is, περατῆς, a "passer-over," just like Abraham, who could say: "I am a sojourner and a pilgrim, as all my fathers were" (Ps. 38:13), of whom it is written in another psalm: "They went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people" (Ps. 104:13). Moses says, "I will pass over and see this great sight" (Exod. 3:3). "And I fear the Lord God of heaven": not the gods whom you invoke, and who cannot save, but the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. The sea, in which I am fleeing; the dry land, from which I am fleeing. And elegantly, for distinction from the sea, it is not called "earth" but "dry land." And in brief, the maker of the universe is shown, who is Lord of heaven, and of earth, and of the sea. It is asked, however, how he can be proven to speak truly when he says, "I fear the Lord God of heaven," when he does not do His commandments. Unless perhaps we answer that even sinners fear God,

and that it is the part of servants not to love, but to fear; although in this place, "fear" can be understood as "worship," according to the understanding of those who were listening and did not yet know God.

(Verse 10) And the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "What is this you have done?" For the men knew [Vulgate: had known] that he was fleeing from the face of the Lord, because he had told them. LXX: And the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "What is this you have done?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the face of the Lord, because he had indicated it to them. The order of the narrative is inverted: for since it could have been said that there was no cause for fear from the fact that he had confessed to them, saying, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land," it is immediately added that they were afraid for this reason, because he had indicated to them that he was fleeing from the sight of the Lord and had not followed His precepts. Finally, they find fault and say: "What is this you have done?" That is, if you fear God, why do you flee? If you proclaim that the one you worship is of such great power, how do you think you can escape him? Moreover, they fear with a great fear, because they understand him to be a holy man and a man of a holy nation (for indeed, having set sail from Joppa, they knew the privilege of the Hebrew nation), and yet they cannot hide the fugitive. Great is he who flees, but greater is He who seeks; they do not dare to hand

him over, they cannot hide him. They rebuke the fault, they confess their fear; they ask that he who had been the author of the sin should himself be the remedy. Or certainly, what they say, "What is this you have done?" is not a rebuke, but a question, as they wish to know the cause of his flight—servants from a master, sons from a father, a man from God. What, they say, is this great mystery, that the land is deserted, the seas are sought, the homeland is abandoned, and foreign places are desired?

(Verse 11) And they said to him: "What shall we do to you, that the sea may be calm for us?" for the sea was growing more and more tempestuous. LXX: And they said to him, "What shall we do to you, and the sea will be quiet for us?" for the sea was going and raising up more waves. Do you say that because of you the winds, the waves, the sea, the whirlpools are stirred up? You have exposed the cause of the sickness; point out the cure. From the fact that the sea rises against us, we understand that the anger is due to our having received you. If it is our fault that we received you, what can we do, so that the Lord may not be angry? "What shall we do to you?" that is, shall we kill you? But you are a worshipper of the Lord. Shall we save you? But you are fleeing from God. It is our part to offer our hands; it is yours to command what should be done, so that by this action the sea may grow calm, which now by its swelling testifies to the Creator's wrath. And immediately the historian adds the reason for such a question, saying, "the sea was growing

more and more tempestuous." It went, as it had been commanded; it went for the vengeance of its Lord; it went, pursuing the fugitive prophet. Moreover, it swelled with every passing moment, and as if the sailors were delaying, it was stirred up into greater waves, to show that it could not postpone the Creator's vengeance.

(Verse 12) And he said to them, "Take me up, and cast me [the Vulgate omits *me*] into the sea, and the sea will cease from you: for I know [the Vulgate adds *ego*] that for my sake this great tempest is [the Vulgate has *venit*, has come] upon you." LXX: And Jonah said to them, "Take me up, and cast me into the sea, and the sea will be quiet for you: for I know that for my sake these great waves are against you."

The tempest thunders against me, it seeks me, it threatens you with shipwreck, so that it may seize me: it will seize me, so that by my death you may live. "I know," he says, "that for my sake this great tempest is." I am not ignorant that the elements are disturbed for my punishment, that there is a confusion of the world, that shipwreck rages against me and vents its fury on you: the waves themselves command you to cast me into the sea. If I feel the tempest, you will recover tranquility.

And likewise, the magnanimity of our fugitive must be noted: he does not make excuses, he does not dissemble, he does not deny; but he who had confessed his flight, willingly accepts the punishment, desiring to perish himself, lest the others also perish on his account, and lest to the sin of

flight be added the crime of another's death. This much for the historical account. Furthermore, we are not unaware that the blowing winds, which the Lord commanded to be quiet in the Gospel (Matthew 8), and the endangered little boat, in which Jonah was sleeping, and the swelling sea which is rebuked: "Peace, be still," are referred to the Lord Savior, and the endangered Church, or the Apostles being roused [alternative reading: *sustantes*, enduring], who, deserting him in his passion, were in a way cast into the waves: This Jonah says: "I know that for my sake a great tempest is upon you," because the winds see me going with you to Tarshish, that is, sailing to the contemplation of joy, that I may lead you with me to gladness: "that where I am and the Father, there you may be also" (John 14:3). For this reason they rage, for this reason the world, which is set in wickedness, roars (1 John 5:19): for this reason the elements are disturbed: death desires to devour me, that it may kill you as well; and it does not understand that it takes the bait as if on a hook, so that by my death it may die. "Take me up, and cast me into the sea." For it is not for us to seize death, but to willingly accept it when inflicted by others. Hence, even in persecutions, it is not permitted to perish by one's own hand, except where chastity is endangered; but rather to submit one's neck to the one who strikes. Thus, he says, placate the winds, thus pour libations into the seas: the tempest that rages against you for my sake will be calmed by my dying.

(Verse 13) And the men rowed to return to dry land, but they could not, because the sea went on, and swelled up over them. LXX: And the men tried to return to the land, but they could not, because the sea went on, and rose up more against them.

The prophet had pronounced sentence against himself; but they, hearing a worshipper of God, did not dare to lay hands on him, and for that reason they strove to return to dry land and to escape the danger, lest they should shed blood, preferring to perish rather than to destroy. O what a great reversal of things! The people who had served God say: "Crucify, crucify such a one" (John 19:6). These men are commanded to kill, the sea rages, the tempest orders it, yet neglecting their own peril, they are concerned for another's safety. For which reason the Seventy also say **parebiazonto** (παρεβιάζοντο), that is, "they desired to use force" and to overcome the nature of things, lest they should do violence to the prophet of God. But in that the men rowed to return to dry land, they thought that the ship could be freed from danger without the sacrament of him who was to suffer: whereas the casting overboard of Jonah was the relief of the ship [alternative reading: **fuerit**, will have been].

(Verse 14) And they cried out to the Lord, and said: "We beseech you, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and do not lay innocent blood upon us; for you, O Lord, have done as you pleased." LXX: And they cried out to the Lord,

and said: "By no means, O Lord, let us not perish because of the life of this man, and do not lay righteous blood upon us; for you, O Lord, have done as you pleased."

Great is the faith of the sailors: they themselves are in danger, yet they pray for the life of another. For they know that the death of sin is worse than the death of life. "And do not lay," they say, "innocent blood upon us." They call the Lord to witness so that whatever they are about to do may not be imputed to them, and in a way they say: "We do not wish to kill your prophet, but he himself has confessed your wrath, and the tempest speaks, because you, O Lord, have done as you pleased; your will is being fulfilled through our hands." Does not the voice of the sailors seem to us to be the confession of Pilate, who washes his hands and says: "I am innocent of the blood of this man" (Matthew 27:25)? The Gentiles do not want Christ to perish; they protest that his blood is innocent. But the Jews say: "His blood be upon us and upon our children." And therefore, if they lift up their hands, they will not be heard, because they are full of blood. "Because you, O Lord, have done as you pleased": that we have taken him up, that the whirlwind arises, that the winds rage, that the sea is stirred into waves, that the fugitive is betrayed by lot, that he indicates what ought to be done—all this is of your will, O Lord, for you have done as you pleased. Whence the Savior also says in the psalm: "O Lord, I have desired to do your will" (Psalm 39:9).

(Verse 15) And they took Jonah, and cast him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. LXX: And they took Jonah, and cast him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its commotion. He did not say "they snatched," he did not say "they invaded," but "they took": as if carrying him with deference and honor, they cast into the sea one who was not resisting but offering his hands to their will. And the sea ceased, because it had found whom it was seeking. Just as if someone were pursuing a fugitive and proceeding with a rapid pace, after he has overtaken him, he stops running, and stands and holds the one he has apprehended. So also the sea, which was raging while Jonah was absent, holding in its bowels the one it desired, rejoices and cherishes him, and from joy tranquility returns. If we consider the errors of the world before the passion of Christ, and the contrary winds of diverse doctrines, and the little ship and the whole human race—that is, the creature of the Lord—in danger, and after his passion the tranquility of faith, and the peace of the world, and all things secure, and the conversion to God, we shall see how after the casting down of Jonah the sea ceased from its heat (or raging [furore]).

(Verse 16) And the men feared the Lord with a great fear, and they offered sacrifices to the Lord, and made vows. LXX similarly. Before the passion of the Lord, in their fear they cried out to their gods: after his passion they fear the Lord—that is, they venerate and worship him—and they do not fear simply, as we read in the begin-

ning, but with a great fear, according to what is said: "With all your soul, and with all your heart, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). And they offered sacrifices, which they certainly did not have, according to the letter, in the midst of the waves; but because a sacrifice to God is a troubled spirit (Psalm 50). And in another place it is said: "Offer to God a sacrifice of praise, and pay your vows to the Most High" (Psalm 49:14). And again: "We will render to you the calves of our lips." Therefore they offer sacrifices in the sea, and they freely promise others, making vows that they will never depart from him whom they have begun to worship. For they feared with a great fear, because from the tranquility of the sea and the flight of the tempest, they perceived the true words of the prophet. Jonah, a fugitive in the sea, shipwrecked, dead, saves the tossing little ship: he saves the Gentiles who were previously tossed about in diverse opinions by the error of the world. And Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Joel, who were prophesying at the same time, are unable to correct the people in Judea. From which it is shown that the shipwreck cannot be calmed except by the death of the fugitive.

(Chapter II - Verse 1) And the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. LXX: And the Lord commanded a great whale, and it swallowed up Jonah. The Lord commanded death and hell to receive the prophet. Thinking it was prey with its greedy jaws, as much as it rejoiced in the swallowing, so much did it mourn in the vomiting. And then was fulfilled that which is read

in Hosea: "I will be your death, O death: I will be your bite, O hell" (Hosea 13:14). But in the Hebrew we read "a great fish", for which the LXX interpreters, and the Lord in the Gospel, call it "a whale", explaining the matter itself more briefly. For in Hebrew it is called DAG GADOL, which is interpreted as "a great fish": there is no doubt but that it signifies "a whale". And it is to be noted that where destruction was thought to be, there was guardianship. Furthermore, as for what he says, "he prepared", it means either from the beginning when he created it, concerning which it is also written in the psalm: "This dragon which you formed to play therein" (Psalm 103:26); or certainly he caused it to come near the ship, so that it might receive the headlong Jonah into its bosom, and provide a dwelling place instead of death: so that he who had felt God's anger in the ship might feel Him merciful in death.

(Verse 2) And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. LXX: And Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights. The Lord himself expounds the mystery of this place in the Gospel (Matthew 12), and it is superfluous to say either that same thing, or anything else than what he himself, who suffered, expounded. We only ask how he was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Some divide the paraskeue [Preparation Day], when, as the sun fled from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, night succeeded day, into two days and nights, and adding the Sabbath, they estimate three days and three nights to be reckoned: but

let us understand the whole from the part by synecdoche: so that from the fact that he died on the paraskeue, we reckon one day and night, and another of the Sabbath; but the third night, which is assigned to the Lord's Day, we refer to the beginning of the next day: for in Genesis also the night is not of the preceding day (Genesis 1), but of the following, that is, the beginning of the future, not the end of the past. That this may be understood, I will say it more simply. Imagine someone departed from a dwelling at the ninth hour, and arrived at another dwelling at the third hour of another day: if I say he has made a two-day journey, I would not immediately be accused of a lie, because he who walked consumed not all the hours of both days, but a certain part in the journey. Certainly this seems to me to be the interpretation. If anyone, however, does not accept this, and can explain the sacrament of this place with a better meaning, his opinion is rather to be followed.

And Jonah prayed to the Lord his God out of the belly of the fish: and he said: LXX similarly, only with the order changed.

If Jonah refers to the Lord, and by the fact that he was three days and nights in the belly of the whale he indicates the passion of the Savior, his prayer ought also to be a type of the Lord's prayer. Nor am I unaware that there will be some to whom it may seem incredible that a man could be preserved for three days and nights in the belly of a whale, in which shipwrecks were swallowed; these will certainly be either faithful or unfaith-

ful: if faithful, they will be compelled to believe much greater things: how the three youths cast into the furnace of a raging fire were so unharmed that not even the smell of fire touched their garments (Daniel 3); how the sea receded and stood rigid like walls on either side, to provide a way for the people crossing (Exodus 14); how, by human reasoning, as hunger increased, the fury of the lions looked upon their prey with fear and did not touch it; and many things of this sort. But if they are unfaithful, let them read the fifteen books of Naso's *Metamorphoses* and all Greek and Latin history, and there they will see either Daphne turned into a laurel, or the sisters of Phaethon into poplar trees; how Jupiter, their most sublime god, was changed into a swan, flowed in gold, carried off in a bull, and the rest, in which the very foulness of the fables denies the holiness of divinity. They believe those things and say all things are possible to God; and while they believe foul things and defend all by the power of God, they do not attribute the same power to honorable things. But as to what is written: "And Jonah prayed to the Lord his God out of the belly of the fish, and said", we understand that after he felt himself safe in the belly of the whale, he did not despair of the Lord's mercy, and was entirely turned to supplication. For God, who had said of the just: "I am with him in tribulation" (Psalm 90:15). And: "When he calls upon me, I will say: I am here", was present with him, and he who was heard can say: "In tribulation you have enlarged me" (Psalm 4:1).

(Verse 3) I cried out of my tribulation to the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell I cried, and you heard my voice. The Seventy similarly, with only this changed: "out of the belly of the lower world, of my cry you heard my voice." He did not say "I cry", but "I cried": nor does he pray for the future, but gives thanks for the past: indicating to us that from the time when, cast into the sea, he had seen the whale, and such a great mass of body, and the immense jaws swallowing him with open mouth, he remembered the Lord and cried out, either as the waters gave way and his cry found a place, or with all the affection of his heart, according to what the Apostle says: "Crying in your hearts, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). And he cried to Him who alone knows the hearts of men, and says to Moses: "Why do you cry to me?" (Exodus 14:15), when certainly the Scripture mentions that Moses had cried nothing before this voice. This is that which we read in the first psalm of degrees: "In my trouble I cried to the Lord, and he heard me" (Psalm 119:1). But by the belly of hell let us understand the womb of the whale, which was of such great size that it held the likeness of hell. But it can better be referred to the person of Christ, who sings under the name of David in the psalm: "You will not leave my soul in hell; nor will you give your holy one to see corruption" (Psalm 15:10). Who was living in hell, free among the dead.

(Verse 4) And you cast me into the deep in the heart of the sea, and a flood encompassed me.

LXX: You cast me into the deep of the heart of the sea, and floods encompassed me.

As to the person of Jonah, the interpretation is not difficult: that he was enclosed in the belly of the whale in the deepest and in the middle of the sea, and was surrounded by floods. As to the Lord Savior, let us take the example of the sixty-eighth psalm in which he speaks: "I am stuck in the mire of the deep, and there is no substance: I have come into the depth of the sea, and a tempest has overwhelmed me;" concerning which also in another psalm it is said: "But you have cast off and despised, you have put off your Christ: you have overturned the covenant of your servant, you have profaned his sanctuary on the earth, you have destroyed all his walls" (Psalm 88:39, 40), and the rest. For in comparison with heavenly beatitude, and that place of which it is written: "His place is in holy peace" (Psalm 57:2 [LXX 75:2]), every earthly habitation is full of waves, full of tempests. Furthermore, by the "heart of the sea" is signified hell, for which we read in the Gospel: "In the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). Just as the heart of an animal is in the middle, so also hell is said to be in the middle of the earth. Or certainly, according to anagoge, he remembers that he was in the heart of the sea, that is, in the midst of temptations. And yet when he was among the bitter waters, and was tempted in all things according to us without sin, he did not feel the bitter waters: but he was surrounded by a flood, concerning which also in another place we read: "The force

of the river gladdens the city of God" (Psalm 45:5): while others were drinking salt waves, I in the midst of temptations was swallowing the sweetest streams. Nor should it seem impious to you if now the Lord says: "You have cast me into the deep" (Psalm 68:27 [LXX 68:3]), who speaks in the psalm: "For him whom you have struck, they themselves have persecuted:" according to that which is put from the person of the Father in Zechariah: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered" (Zechariah 13:7).

All your whirlpools and your waves have passed over me. LXX: All your elevations and your waves have passed over me. That the swelling waves of the sea passed over Jonah, and the savage tempest thundered, is a matter of no doubt. But we ask how all the elevations, and whirlpools, and waves of God passed over the Savior. "The life of men upon the earth is a temptation" (Job 7:1), or as it is held in the Hebrew, "a warfare", because here we serve as soldiers that we may be crowned elsewhere. And there is no man who is able to sustain all temptations, except him who was tempted in all things, according to our likeness, without sin. Whence also it is said to the Corinthians: "Let no temptation seize you, except what is human. But God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted beyond that which you are able; but will make with the temptation also an exit, that you may be able to sustain it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). And since all persecutions, and all things that happen, do not attack without the will of God: therefore

they are called the whirlpools and waves of God, which did not crush Jesus, but passed through him, threatening only shipwreck, not inflicting it. Therefore all persecutions, and whirlwinds, with which the human race was vexed, and all little ships were broken, have thundered over my head. I have sustained the tempests and broken the raging whirlwinds, so that others might sail more securely.

(Verse 5) And I said, I am cast out from the sight of your eyes. LXX: I said, I am cast out from your eyes. Before I cried out of my tribulation, and you heard me, because I had received the form of a servant, imitating also his fragility, I said: "I am cast out from the sight of your eyes." When I was with you, and enjoyed your light, and in your light I was light, I did not say, "I am cast out." But after I came into the depth of the sea and was surrounded by the flesh of man, I imitate human affections, I say: "I am cast out from the sight of your eyes." This I have spoken as if a man: furthermore as if God, and to those who, when I was in your form, I did not think it robbery to be equal to you (Philippians 2), wishing to raise up the human race to you: that where I am and you, there may be also all who have believed in me and you (John 17:24), I say:

Yet I shall see your holy temple again. LXX: Do you think I shall add to see your holy temple? This which in Greek is said *ara*, and the common edition has "Do you think", can be interpreted as "therefore", so that it is as it were the extreme conclusion of a proposition,

an assumption, a confirmation, and a syllogism, not from the uncertainty of one doubting, but from the confidence of one proving: for which we have translated: "Yet I shall see your holy temple again", according to that which is said from his person in another psalm: "Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house, and the place of the tabernacle of your glory" (Psalm 25:8). And the Gospel reading in which it is written: "Father, glorify me with yourself with that glory which I had before the world was" (John 17:5). And the Father answered from heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (Ibid., 12:28). Or certainly because it is read: "The Father in me, and I in the Father" (Ibid., 17:21), as the Son is the temple of the Father, so the Father is the temple of the Son. For he himself says: "I came out from the Father, and have come" (Ibid., 16:28). And: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Either the one and the same Savior asks as if a man: as if God he promises; and he is secure in his possession which he always had. From the person of Jonah, however, it can be clearly understood by the affection of either one wishing or one trusting, that he, placed in the depth of the sea, desired to see the temple of the Lord, and by a prophetic spirit he is elsewhere, and contemplates another thing.

The waters encompassed me even to my soul, the abyss fenced me about. LXX: Water was poured around me even to my soul: the deepest abyss fenced me about.

Those waters, which are neighbors to the abysses, which are rolled and flow on the earth, which draw much mud with them, strive to kill not the body but the soul; for they are indeed friends of bodies, and are cherished by its pleasures. Whence according to that which we said above, the Lord speaks in the Psalm: "Save me, O Lord, for the waters have entered even to my soul" (Psalm 68:1 [LXX 69:1]). And in another place: "Our soul has passed through the torrent" (Psalm 123:3). And: "Let not the pit press its mouth upon me, nor let hell close" (Ibid., 68:16 [LXX 69:15]); let it not deny me an exit, who descended voluntarily, I shall ascend voluntarily, who came a voluntary captive, I ought to deliver the captives, so that it may be fulfilled: "Ascending on high he led captivity captive" (Psalm 67 [LXX 68:18]): for those who before had been captives in death, he captured for life. But by the abysses we ought to understand certain pernicious and worst powers, or powers given to torments and punishments, to which also in the Gospel the demons ask that they not be compelled to go (Luke 8). Whence also "there were darkness over the abyss" (Genesis 1). Sometimes the abyss is also taken for the sacraments and the deepest senses, and the judgments of God: "The judgments of the Lord are a great abyss" (Psalm 35:7 [LXX 36:6]). And: "Abyss calls upon abyss, in the voice of your cataracts" (Psalm 41:8 [LXX 42:7]).

The sea covered my head, I descended to the lowest parts of the mountains, the bars of the

earth shut me in forever. LXX: My head entered into the clefts of the mountains: I went down into the earth, whose bars are eternal restraints. That the sea covered Jonah's head, and that he descended to the furthest reaches of the mountains, and came even to the depths of the earth—which, like bars and columns, support the globe of the earth by God's will—there is no doubt; of which it is said elsewhere: "I have established its columns" (Psalm 74:5 [LXX 75:3]). Concerning the Lord Savior, however, according to both editions, it seems to me that it can be understood thus: that his principle and head, that is, the soul which he deigned to assume with the body for our salvation, descended into the clefts of the mountains, which were covered by waves, which had withdrawn themselves from the liberty of heaven, which the abyss surrounded, which had cut themselves off from the majesty of God, and afterwards even penetrated to the lower regions: To which places, as if into the extreme mire of sins, souls were being drawn, as the Psalmist says: "They shall enter into the lower parts of the earth, they shall be portions for foxes" (Psalm 62:10, 11 [LXX 63:9, 10]). These are the bars of the earth, and like certain bolts of the furthest prison and punishments, unwilling to let the captive souls go out from the lower world. Whence the LXX significantly translated *katochoi aiōnioi*, that is, desiring to hold forever those whom they had once invaded. But our Lord—of whom we read under the person of Cyrus in Isaiah: "I will break the bronze doors, and I will shatter the iron

bars" (Isaiah 45:2)—descended to the furthest reaches of the mountains, and was enclosed by eternal bars, so that he might liberate all who had been shut in.

(Verse 7.) And you will lift up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. LXX: And let my life ascend from corruption, O Lord my God. He said appropriately, "you will lift up": or "let my life ascend from corruption," because he had descended to corruption and to the lower regions. This is what the Apostles interpret as prophesied in the fifteenth psalm from the person of the Lord: "Because you will not leave my soul in hell, nor will you give your Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 15:10 [LXX 16:10]): namely, that David died and was buried, but the Savior's flesh did not see corruption. Others, however, interpret that in comparison to heavenly beatitude and the Word of God, the human body is corruption, which "is sown in corruption" (1 Corinthians 15:42); and in the hundred and second psalm, it is signified from the person of the Just one: "Who heals all your infirmities: who redeems your life from destruction" (Psalm 102:3, 4 [LXX 103:3, 4]). Whence also the Apostle says: "Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). And it is called the "body of death," or the "body of humility." This they take as an occasion for their heresy: so that under the person of Christ they may lie about the antichrist: they hold Churches so that they may nourish a most fat belly, and living carnally, they dispute against the flesh. We, however,

know that the body assumed from the incorrupt Virgin was not the corruption of Christ, but a temple. But if we are drawn into the sentence of the Apostle to the Corinthians, in which the body is called "spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:44), lest we seem contentious, we shall say that this very body, and the same flesh rises again, which was buried, which was hidden in the ground; but that it changes its glory, not its nature: "For it is necessary for this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal to put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53). When the word "this" is said, in a certain way the body is shown as if grasped between two fingers: this in which we are born, this in which we die, this which those who are to be punished fear to receive, this which virginity expects as a reward, and adultery dreads as a punishment. Concerning Jonah, however, it can be understood thus: That he who in the belly of the whale (ceti) according to the nature of bodies ought to have been corrupted, and to have served as food for the beast, and been diffused through its veins and limbs, remained safe and whole. Furthermore, what he says: "O Lord my God", is an expression of flattering affection, because he felt the common God of all to be his own and as if his personal God, by the magnitude of the benefit.

(Verse 8.) When my soul was in distress within me, I remembered the Lord. LXX: When my soul was failing from me, I remembered the Lord. When, he says, I hoped for no other help, the remembrance of the Lord was salvation to

me, according to that saying: "I remembered the Lord, and I was glad" (Psalm 76:4 [LXX 77:3]). And in another place: "I remembered the ancient days, and I had the eternal years in mind" (Psalm 76:6 [LXX 77:5]). When I despaired of salvation, and the fragility of the flesh in the midst of the whale's belly permitted me to hope for nothing concerning life, whatever seemed impossible was overcome by the remembrance of the Lord. I saw myself shut up in the womb of the whale, and my whole hope was the Lord. From which things we learn, according to the Septuagint, that at that time when our soul fails and is torn from the structure of the body, we ought not to turn our thought elsewhere except to him, who both in the body and outside the body is our Lord.

Concerning the person of the Savior, however, the interpretation is not difficult, who said: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death" (Matthew 26:38, 39). And: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." And: "Into your hands I commend my spirit" (Psalm 30:6 [LXX 31:5]); and other things similar to these.

That my prayer may come to you, into your holy temple. LXX similarly. Therefore, I remembered the Lord in my tribulation, so that my prayer from the furthest sea and the clefts of the mountains may ascend to the heavens, and come into your holy temple, in which you enjoy eternal beatitude. And it should be considered that by a new kind of prayer, it is made for the prayer itself, and he prays that his prayer may ascend to the temple of God. He asks, moreover, as a high

priest, that the people may be liberated in his own body.

(Verse 9.) Those who keep vanities in vain shall forsake their own mercy. LXX: Those who keep vain things and lies have forsaken their own mercy. God is by nature merciful, and ready to save by clemency those whom he cannot save by justice: but we, by our own vice, lose and forsake the mercy that is prepared and offers itself voluntarily. And he did not say, "those who do vanities" (for "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity" [Ecclesiastes 1:2]), lest he should seem to damn all and deny mercy to the whole human race; but "those who keep vanities," or "a lie," who have passed into the affection of the heart: who not only do them, but so keep vanities as if they loved them and thought they had found a treasure. And at the same time, behold the magnanimity of the prophet: covered in the deep of the sea, in the belly of such a beast, in eternal night, he does not think of his own danger, but philosophizes on the nature of things with a general sentence. "They shall forsake," he says, "their own mercy." Although mercy has been offended, which we can understand to be God himself (for "the Lord is merciful and compassionate, patient and of much mercy" [Psalm 144:8 (LXX 145:8)]), yet he does not forsake those who keep vanities, nor does he detest them, but expects them to return: they, however, by their own will, forsake the mercy that stands ready and offers itself voluntarily. This can also be prophesied from the person of the Lord concerning the perfidy of

the Jews, who, while they think themselves to keep the precepts of men and the mandates of the Pharisees, which are vanity and a lie, have forsaken God who had always pitied them.

(Verse 10.) But I will sacrifice to you with the voice of praise: whatever I have vowed I will pay for salvation to the Lord. LXX: But I with the voice of praise and confession will sacrifice to you, whatever I have vowed I will pay to you, salvation to the Lord. Those who keep vanities have forsaken their own mercy: but I, who have been swallowed for the salvation of many, will sacrifice to you with the voice of praise and confession, offering myself: "because Christ our Passover has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7). And as the true high priest and sheep, he offered himself for us. And I will confess, he says, to you as I confessed before, saying: "I confess to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25; John 6:39); and I will pay the vows which I made for the salvation of all to the Lord, so that all that you have given me may not perish forever. We see what the Savior promised in his passion for our salvation: let us not make Jesus a liar: therefore let us be clean and separated from all the filth of sins, so that he may offer us to God the Father as the victims he had vowed.

(Verse 11.) And the Lord spoke to the fish: and it vomited Jonah out onto the dry land. LXX: And he commanded the whale, and it cast Jonah out upon the dry. These things which we read above, the Lord prayed under the person of Jonah in the belly of the whale, of which Job also speaks

mystically: "Let him curse it who cursed the day, he who is about to capture the great whale" (Job 3:8). It is commanded, therefore, to this great whale, and to the abysses and to hell, that they restore the Savior to the lands: and he who had died so that he might liberate those who were held by the bonds of death, leads out many with himself to life. That which is written, "he vomited out", we ought to receive more emphatically: that from the lowest vitals of death, victorious life proceeded.

(Chapter 3.---Verses 1, 2.) And the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying: Arise and go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach in it according to the previous preaching that I speak to you. LXX: And the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying: Arise, and go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach in it according to the previous preaching that I have spoken to you. It is not said to the prophet, "Why did you not do what had been commanded of you?" but the correction of the shipwreck and the swallowing alone is sufficient for him, so that he who had not felt the Lord commanding, might understand him liberating. Otherwise, it is superfluous to want to impute to a delinquent servant what he did after blows, since a correction of this kind is not so much an emendation as a reproach. Our Lord, moreover, after the resurrection is sent a second time to Nineveh, so that he who previously in a certain way had fled, saying: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39), and had been

unwilling to give the bread of the children to the dogs (Matthew 15:26); now, because they had said: "Crucify, crucify such a one: We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15), he goes voluntarily to Nineveh, to preach this after the resurrection, which he had been commanded to preach even before the passion. All of this, however—that he is commanded, that he obeys, that he does not want to, that again he is compelled to want to, that he executes the Father's will a second time—refer to the man and to the form of a servant, to whom such words are appropriate.

(Verse 3.) And Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord: and Nineveh was a great city of God [Vulg. lacks "of God"], a journey of three days: and Jonah began to enter into the city a journey of one day. LXX: And Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh, as the Lord had spoken to him. Now Nineveh was a great city to God, about a journey of three days' way: and Jonah began to enter the city about a journey of one day's way. Immediately Jonah completed by work what had been commanded of him. Now Nineveh, to which the prophet was going, was a great city, and of such scope that it could scarcely be circled by a journey of three days. But he, mindful of the command and of the previous shipwreck, completed the three days' way by the haste of one day—although there are those who understand it simply thus: that he preached in only the third part of the city, and the word of preaching reached the rest instantly. Our Lord, moreover, is properly said to rise up

after the lower regions, and to preach the word of the Lord, when he sends the apostles to baptize those who were in Nineveh, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, that is, by a journey of three days. And this very sacrament of human salvation is completed by the "way of one day," that is, by the confession of one God, with Jonah preaching not so much to the apostles as in the apostles. For he himself says: "Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the age" (Matthew 28:20). And no one doubts why Nineveh is a great city of God, since the world and all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made (John 1:3). It is also to be noted that he did not say "three days and nights," or "one day and night," but absolutely "days and day," so that he might show that in the mystery of the Trinity and the confession of one God, there is nothing dark.

(Verse 4.) And he cried out and said: yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be subverted. LXX: And he preached and said: yet three days, and Nineveh shall be subverted. The number three which is placed by the Septuagint does not suit penitence: and I wonder enough why it was so translated, since in Hebrew there is no commonality of letters, syllables, accents, or word. For three is called SALOS, and forty ARBAIM. Otherwise, the prophet sent from Judea on such a long journey to the Assyrians would have demanded a worthy penitence for his preaching, so that old and putrid wounds might be cured by a long-applied plaster. Furthermore, the number forty

suits sinners and fasting, and prayer, and sackcloth, and tears, and perseverance in pleading: on account of which Moses fasted forty days on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34), and Elijah, fleeing Jezebel, when famine was declared in the land of Israel and the wrath of God was hanging from above, is described as having fasted forty days (1 Kings 19). The Lord himself, the true Jonah sent for the preaching of the world, fasts forty days: and leaving us the inheritance of fasting, he prepares our souls under this number for the eating of his body. As for his crying out, that Evangelical saying is fulfilled: "Standing, he cried out in the temple, saying: He who thirsts, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37). For every word of the Savior, because he preached of great things, is called a "cry."

(Verse 5.) And the men of Nineveh believed in God, and they preached a fast, and were clothed in sackcloth from the greater even to the lesser. LXX similarly. Nineveh believed, and Israel perseveres incredulous. The uncircumcision believed, and the circumcision remains unfaithful. And first the men of Nineveh believe, who had reached the age of Christ: and they preach a fast, and are clothed in sackcloth from the greater even to the lesser. Both the food and the habit of penitence were worthy, so that those who had offended God by luxury and ambition might please him by the condemnation of those things through which they had previously offended. Sackcloth and fasting are the arms of penitence, the aids of sinners: before fasting, even

so sackcloth; before that which is hidden, and afterwards that which is manifest: the former is always exhibited to God, the latter sometimes even to men. And if of the two necessary things one must be subtracted, I would choose fasting without sackcloth rather than sackcloth without fasting. The greater age begins, and reaches even to the lesser: for no one is without sin, even if his life be of one day, and the years of his life be numberable (Job 14). For if the stars are not clean in the sight of God, how much more the worm and rottenness, and those who are held obnoxious to the sin of the offending Adam? But also the order is most beautiful: God commands the prophet. The prophet preaches to the city: first the men believe, and with them preaching the fast, every age is clothed in sackcloth. The men do not preach sackcloth, but only fasting: But indeed those to whom penitence is commanded, consequently join sackcloth to fasting, so that the empty belly and the mournful habit may more ambitiously plead with the Lord.

(Verse 6 seq.) And the word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and cast away his garment from him, and was clothed in sackcloth, and sat in ashes, and cried out and said in Nineveh, from the mouth of the king and his princes, saying: Men and beasts, and oxen and cattle shall not taste anything, nor be fed, and they shall not drink water, and men and beasts shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry to the Lord in strength: and let a man turn from his evil way, and from the iniquity

that is in their hands. Who knows if God may turn and forgive, and return from the fury of his wrath and we shall not perish? LXX: And the word approached the king of Nineveh and he arose from his throne, and took away his robe from him, and was covered with sackcloth, and sat in ashes, and it was preached in Nineveh by the king, and by all [Al. men] his great ones, saying: Men and beasts and oxen and sheep shall not taste anything, nor be fed, and they shall not drink water: and men and beasts were covered with sackcloth, and they cried to the Lord vehemently, and each one returned from his evil way, and from the iniquity that was in the hands of those saying: Who knows if God may turn and be exhorted, and turn away from the wrath of his fury, and we shall not perish? I know that most people interpret the king of Nineveh (who hears the preaching last, and descends from his throne, and casts away his former ornament, and clothed in sackcloth, sits in ashes: and not content with his own conversion, preaches penitence to his other fellow-leaders as well, saying: "Men, and beasts, and oxen, and cattle" shall be tortured by hunger, be covered with sackcloth, and having condemned their former vices, let them confer themselves entirely to penitence) as the devil, who at the end of the world (because no rational creature, and which was made by God, should perish) descending from his pride, would perform penitence, and be restored to his former place. To the proof of which sense they also bring forward that example of Daniel:

where Nebuchadnezzar, having performed penitence for seven years, is restored to his former kingdom (Daniel 4). But because holy Scripture does not say this, and it utterly subverts the fear of God—while men easily slip into vices, thinking that even the devil, who is the author of evils and the source of all sins, can be saved after performing penitence—let us cast this out from our minds. And let us know that sinners in the Gospel are sent into eternal fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25), and of these it is said: "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be extinguished" (Isaiah 66:24). We know indeed that God is merciful, nor are we who are sinners delighted by his cruelty; but we read: "The Lord is merciful and just, and our God has mercy" (Psalm 114:5 [LXX 116:5]). The justice of God is walled in by mercy, and proceeds to judgment with such ambition: thus he spares, that he may judge: thus he judges, that he may have mercy. "Mercy and truth have met together: justice and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 84:11 [LXX 85:10]). Otherwise, if all rational creatures are equal, and are either raised up by virtues or submerged into the depths by vices by their own will, and after a long circuit and infinite ages, a restitution of all things will be made, and the dignity of those serving be one, what distance will there be between a virgin and a prostitute? What difference will there be between the mother of the Lord, and (which is a crime even to say) the victims of public lusts? Will Gabriel and the devil be the same? Will the apos-

tles and the demons be the same? The prophets and the pseudo-prophets the same? The martyrs and the persecutors the same? Imagine what you please, double the years and times, and heap up infinite ages for torments: if the end of all is similar, all the past is for nothing, because we do not seek what we once were, but what we shall always be. Nor am I ignorant of what they are accustomed to say against these things, and to prepare for themselves and for the devil a hope and salvation. But it is not for this time to write more extensively against a perverse dogma and a diabolical symphragma of those teaching in corners and denying in public. It is sufficient for us to have indicated what we felt concerning this testimony, and as in commentaries briefly to intimate who the king of Nineveh is, to whom the word of God reached last. [What secular eloquence and secular wisdom are worth among the men of the age, Demosthenes, Tully, Plato, Xenophon, Theophrastus, Aristotle, and the other orators and philosophers are witnesses, who are held as kings of men, and whose precepts are received not as the precepts of mortals, but as if the oracles of the gods. Whence also Plato says: Republics will be happy, if either philosophers reign, or kings philosophize. How difficult it is, however, for men of this kind to believe in God—to pass over daily examples and be silent about the ancient histories of the ethnics—the testimony of the Apostle is sufficient for us, who writing to the Corinthians, says: See your vocation, brothers, that there are not many wise according to the

flesh, not many powerful, not many noble: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that he may confound the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world, so that he may confound the strong, and the ignoble things of the world, and those which were contemptible God has chosen (1 Corinthians 1:26), and the rest. Whence again he says: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will reprove the understanding of the prudent" (1 Corinthians 1:19). And: "See that no one despoils you through philosophy and vain seduction" (Colossians 2:8). From which it is clear that the kings of the world hear the preaching of Christ last, and having laid aside the brilliance of eloquence and the ornaments and beauty of words, they hand themselves over entirely to simplicity and rusticity, and reduced to a plebeian cult, they sit in filth, and destroy what they had previously preached. Let us propose to ourselves the blessed Cyprian (who was first an assertor of idolatry, and came into such glory of eloquence that he also taught oratory at Carthage) having finally heard the sermon of Jonah, and converted to penitence, came into such virtue that he preached Christ publicly, and for him bent his neck to the sword. Certainly we understand that the king of Nineveh descended from his throne, and exchanged purple for sackcloth, ointments for mud, cleanliness for filth: not the filth of the senses, but of words. Whence also it is said of Babylon in Jeremiah: "Babylon is a golden cup inebriating the whole earth" (Jeremiah 51:7). Whom has secular eloquence not

inebriated? Whose minds has it not dazzled by the composition of words and the brilliance of its own discursiveness? It is difficult for powerful and noble and rich men, and much more difficult for eloquent ones, to believe God: for their mind is blinded by riches and wealth and luxury, and surrounded by vices, they cannot see the virtues and simplicity of holy Scripture; they judge it not from the majesty of the senses, but from the vileness of the words. When, however, those who previously had taught evil things, turned to penitence, have begun to teach good things, then we shall see the Ninevite peoples converted by one preaching, and that which we read in Isaiah being made: "If a nation is born at once." Men also and beasts covered with sackcloth, and crying to the Lord, understand in the same sense: that both the rational and the irrational, and the prudent and the simple, perform penitence at the preaching of Jonah, according to that which is said elsewhere: "Men and beasts you will save, O Lord" (Psalm 35:7 [LXX 36:6]). We can, moreover, interpret the beasts covered with sackcloth otherwise, especially from these testimonies in which we read: "The sun and moon shall be clothed in sackcloth" (Ezekiel 32:7). And in another place: "I will clothe the heaven with sackcloth" (Isaiah 50:3), namely for a mournful habit, and grief and sadness, which metaphorically are called "sackcloth." That also which is said: "Who knows if God may turn, and forgive?" is placed as ambiguous and uncertain for this reason: so that while men are doubtful concerning salvation, they may

perform penitence more strongly, and more provoke God to mercy.

(Verse 10.) And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and God had mercy upon the punishment which he had spoken that he would do to them, and he did it not. LXX: And God saw their works, that they were returned from their evil ways: and God performed penitence over the punishment which he had spoken that he would do to them, and he did it not. According to both understandings, whether then to the Assyrian city or daily to the peoples of the world, God threatens that they should perform penitence; if they are converted, he himself also turns [Al. turns] his sentence, and it will be changed [Al. is changed] by the conversion of the people. Which both Jeremiah and Ezekiel explain more manifestly: that the Lord does not fulfill the good things which he promised if the good turn to vices; nor the evil things which he threatens to the worst if they return to salvation. Thus, therefore, even now God saw their works, because they were converted from their worst way: he did not hear words which Israel was often accustomed to promise: "All things whatsoever the Lord has spoken, we will do" (Exodus 24:3); but he beheld works: and because he prefers the penitence of a sinner rather than death (Ezekiel 18), he willingly changed his sentence, because he saw the works changed. Nay rather, God persevered in his purpose, wishing to have mercy from the beginning: for no one desiring to punish threatens what he is about to do. Moreover, take "evil" (*malitiam*)

for punishments and torments, as we said above: not that God thought [Al. thinks] to do anything of evil.

(Chapter 4, Verse 1.) And Jonah was afflicted with a great affliction, and was angry: and he prayed to the Lord and said. LXX: And Jonah was saddened with a great sadness, and was confounded: and he prayed to the Lord, and said. Seeing the fullness of the Gentiles enter in, and that which is said in Deuteronomy being fulfilled: "They have provoked me in those who are not gods, and I will provoke them over a nation which is not: over a foolish nation I will stir them up to wrath" (Deuteronomy 32:31), he despairs of the salvation of Israel, and is shaken by a great grief, which breaks out into speech, and he exposes the causes of his sorrow, and speaks in a certain way: I alone have been chosen from such a number of prophets, that through the salvation of others I should announce the ruin of my own people. He is not saddened, therefore, as some think, because the multitude of the Gentiles is saved; but because Israel perishes. Whence also our Lord wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19), and would not take the bread of the children and give it to the dogs (Mark 7). And the Apostles first preach to Israel (Acts 13). And Paul desires to be anathema for his brothers, who are Israelites, and whose are the adoption and the glory, and the Testament, and the promises, and the legislation, from whom are the fathers, and from whom is Christ according to the flesh (Romans 9). Moreover, beautifully, "Grieving" (which Jonah is

interpreted as) is afflicted with grief, and his soul is sad even unto death; because lest the people of the Jews perish, as much as was in him, he suffered many things. The name also suits a history of one more grieving, signifying a laborious prophet, and one weighed down by the miseries of pilgrimage and shipwreck.

(Verse 2, 3.) I beseech you, Lord, was not this my word when I was still in my land? For this reason I anticipated that I should flee [Vulg. 423] to Tarshish. For I know that you [Vulg. adds "are"] a God gracious and merciful, patient, and of much compassion, forgiving over evil, and now, O Lord, take I pray my soul from me, because death is better for me than life. LXX: O Lord, were these not my words when I was still in my land? Therefore I anticipated fleeing to Tarshish. For I know that you are merciful and compassionate, patient and of much compassion, and performing penitence over evils, and now, Master Lord, take my soul from me, because it is better for me to die than to live. That which we translated as "I beseech" (obsecro), and the Septuagint translated as "ὦ δὴ", is read in Hebrew as ANNA, which seems to me to be an interjection of one pleading, signifying a fawning affect. Since therefore his prayer, while he says he had wished to flee justly, in a certain way accuses the Lord of injustice, he tempers his complaints with the beginning of a plea. Was not this, he says, my word when I was still in my land? I knew you were going to do this: I was not ignorant of you being merciful, therefore I did not want to announce a severe

and grim thing: for this reason I wished to flee to Tarshish, to have leisure for the contemplation of things, and to enjoy quiet rather and ease in the sea of this world. I left my house, I abandoned my inheritance, I went out from your bosom, and I came. If I said you were merciful and gracious and forgiving of evil, no one would perform penitence: if I announced you as cruel and only a judge [Al. judgment], I knew this was not of your nature. Placed therefore in this ambiguity, I preferred to flee rather than either to deceive the penitent with lenity, or to preach concerning you what you were not. Take therefore, O Lord, my soul: because death is better for me than life. Take my soul, which was sad even unto death. Take my soul: For into your hands I commend my spirit (Luke 15), for death is better for me than life. Living, I could not save one nation, Israel: let me die, and the world will be saved. The history is manifest, and concerning the person of the prophet it can be understood thus, as we have already said frequently: that he is contristated for this reason and wishes to die, lest by the conversion of the multitude of the Gentiles, Israel should perish forever.

(Verse 4.) And the Lord said: do you think you are rightly angry? LXX: And the Lord said to Jonah: If you are vehemently saddened? The Hebrew word ARA LAC can be translated as both "you are angry" and "you are saddened": both of which suit the persons of the prophet and of the Lord: that either he is angry, lest he should seem to have lied among the Ninevites, or saddened,

understanding that Israel is to perish. And reasonably he does not say to him, "you are wrongly angry," or "saddened," lest he should seem to reprehend the one saddened. Nor again, "you are rightly angry," or "saddened": lest he should go against his own sentence; but he asks him, who is angry and saddened, that he might either respond with the causes of the anger, or of the sorrow: or if he remains silent, the true judgment of God may be proved from his silence.

(Verse 5.) And Jonah went out of the city, and sat opposite the east of the city, and made himself a booth there, and sat under it in the shadow, until he might see what should happen to the city. LXX similarly. First Cain, the fratricide and homicide, dedicating the bloody world with his brother's blood, built a city, and called it from the name of his son, Enoch (Genesis 4). Whence also the prophet Hosea says: "I am God and not man, the holy one in the midst of you: and I will not enter the city" (Hosea 11:9). For of the Lord, as the Psalmist says, are the issues of death (Psalm 67). For which reason also one city of fugitives is called Ramoth, which is interpreted as "vision of death." And rightly whoever is a fugitive, and on account of sins does not deserve to inhabit Jerusalem, inhabits a city of death, and is across the flowing waters of the Jordan, which is expressed as "descent." Therefore the "dove" or "the grieving one" goes out from a city of this kind, and inhabits opposite the East, whence the sun rises: and he is there in his tabernacle, where having contemplated each gliding time, he waits

for what may happen to the aforementioned city: before Nineveh was saved and the gourd withered; before the Gospel of Christ shone and the prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled: "Behold a man, Orient is his name" (Zechariah 6:12), Jonah was under the booth. For the truth had not yet come, of which the same evangelist and apostle speaks: "God is truth." And elegantly it is added: "And he made himself a booth there," near Nineveh. He made it for himself, for no one of the Ninevites at that time could inhabit with the prophet: and he sat under the shadow, either in the habit of a judge, or contracted from his majesty, and girt about the loins in strength, so that his garments might not all flow down to the feet and to us who are below, but might be contracted in himself by a tighter [Al. higher] belt. Furthermore, as for what he says, "that he might see what would happen to the city," he uses the usual custom of the Scriptures, that he may join human affects to God.

(Verse 6.) And the Lord God prepared an ivy (hederam), and it came up over the head of Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, and protect him, for he had labored: and Jonah rejoiced over the ivy with great joy. LXX: And the Lord God commanded a gourd (cucurbitae), and it came up over the head of Jonah, that it might be a booth over his head, and protect him from his evils: and Jonah rejoiced over the gourd with great joy. In this place a certain Cantherius of the most ancient family of the Cornelii, or (as he himself boasts) of the stock of Asinius

Pollio, is said to have accused me of sacrilege some time ago at Rome, because I translated "ivy" instead of "gourd": he feared, namely, lest if ivies should grow instead of gourds, he would not have that from which he might drink secretly and obscurely. And indeed in the gourds themselves of the vessels, which they commonly call Saucomariae, they are accustomed to shadow the images of the apostles: from which he himself assumed not his own name. But if words are changed so easily, that for the seditious tribunes the Cornelii, the Aemilii consuls are called, I wonder why it is not permitted to me to translate "ivy" for "gourd." But let us come to serious things. For "gourd" or "ivy" we read in Hebrew CICEION, which is also called CICEIA in the Syrian and Punic language. It is, moreover, a kind of shrub or little tree, having broad leaves in the manner of a vine-shoot, and a very dense shadow, sustaining itself by its own trunk, which grows very frequently in Palestine, and especially in sandy places: and in a wonderful way, if you throw the seed into the ground, quickly cherished it rises into a tree, and within a few days you look up at a little tree which you had seen as an herb. Whence also we, at the same time in which we were interpreting the prophets, wished to express that very name of the Hebrew language, because the Latin speech did not have this species of tree; but we feared the grammarians, lest they should find license for commenting: and should feign either beasts of India, or mountains of Boeotia, or certain portents of this kind, and

we followed the ancient translators, who themselves also interpreted it as ivy, which is called κισσὸς in Greek, for they had nothing else that they might say. Let us discuss the history, therefore, and before the mystical understandings, let us fan the letter alone. The gourd and the ivy are of this nature, that they creep along the ground, and without forks or supports on which they lean, they do not seek higher things. How therefore, while the prophet was ignorant, did a gourd rising up in one night provide a booth, which has not the nature to rise up into the high without trellises and reeds or shafts? Ciceion, however, while in its sudden rising it provided a miracle and showed the power of God in the protection of a green booth, also followed its own nature. But to the person of the Lord Savior, lest we should entirely leave behind the gourd on account of the "philokolokynthon", it can be referred thus: that we may commemorate that saying of Isaiah: "The daughter of Zion shall be left like a tabernacle in a vineyard, and like a cottage in a cucumber-garden, as a city which is being fought" (Isaiah 1:8). And let us say that in another place of Scripture we do not find the gourd, because where the cucumber is born, there the gourd is also accustomed to be born. And Israel is compared to this kind, which once protected Jonah under its shadow while he was waiting for the conversion of the nations, and granted him no small joy by making a booth and a tabernacle, rather than a house, having the image of roofs, not having the foundations of houses. Furthermore, our little

shrub CICEION, quickly rising up and quickly withering, will be compared in order and life to Israel, sending small roots into the earth, and indeed striving to be sustained in high things; but not equaling the height of the cedars of God and of the fir trees. Which the locusts also seem to me to signify, on which John fed, who says under the type of Israel: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30): a small animal, having weak wings, rising up indeed from the earth, but not being able to fly away higher, so that it is more than a reptile, and yet is not equaled to the birds.

(Verse 7 and 8.) And the Lord prepared a worm at the rising of the dawn on the morrow, and it struck the ivy, and it withered: and when the sun had risen, the Lord commanded a hot and burning wind; and the sun struck upon the head of Jonah, and he was parched: and he asked for his soul that he might die, and said: Death is better for me than life. LXX: And God commanded a worm early on the morrow, and it struck the gourd, and it was dried up: and immediately as the sun rose, the Lord commanded a burning spirit of heat, and the sun struck upon the head of Jonah, and he was distressed, and his soul was weary of him, and he said: Death is better for me than life. Before the sun of justice should rise, the booth was green, and Israel was not parched: after he arose, and the Ninevite darkness was scattered by his light, the worm prepared for the morrow at the rising of the dawn (concerning which the twenty-first psalm is inscribed: "For the morning taking-up"; and who without any

seed arises from the earth, and says: "I am a worm and not a man" [Psalm 21:7]) struck the booth, which, deserted of the help of God, lost all its greenness. And the Lord commanded a hot and burning wind, concerning which it is prophesied in Hosea: "The Lord will bring a burning wind ascending from the desert, and it will dry up his veins, and desolate his fountain" (Hosea 13:15). And Jonah began to be parched, and again to wish to die in baptism with Israel, so that in the laver he might receive the moisture which he had lost in negation. Whence also Peter speaks to the parched Jews: "Perform penitence, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). There are those who understand the worm and the burning wind as the Roman leaders, who after the resurrection of Christ, utterly destroyed Israel.

(Verse 9.) And the Lord said to Jonah: Do you think you are rightly angry over the ivy? And he said: I am rightly angry even unto death. LXX: And the Lord God said to Jonah: Are you greatly saddened over the gourd? And he said: I am greatly saddened even unto death. Above, with the Ninevites performing penitence and the city of the nations saved, the prophet, asked this same thing: "Do you think you are rightly angry?" responded nothing, but proved the interrogation of God by silence; for knowing that God is gracious, and merciful, and patient, and of much compassion, and forgiving of evils, he did not grieve over

the salvation of the nations: but here, after the gourd having been dried up Israel withered, and asked with distinction: "Are you rightly angry over the ivy?" he responded confidently and said: "I am rightly angry," or "saddened even unto death": for I did not so wish to save others that others should perish, nor so to gain strangers that I should lose my own. And indeed even to the present day Christ laments Israel: and he laments Jerusalem even unto death—not his own, but that of the Jews—so that they may die denying, and rise up confessing the Son of God.

(Vers. 10 and 11.) And the Lord said: You grieve over the ivy, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow; which was born in one night, and in one night it perished: and shall I not spare Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know what is between their right and left hand, and many beasts?

LXX: And the Lord said: You spared the gourd, for which you did not labor, nor did you nourish it; which was born in the night, and in the night it perished: but shall I not spare Nineveh, the great city, in which dwell more than twelve myriads [Al. thousands] of men who are ignorant of their right and left hand, and many cattle?

It is of exceeding difficulty to explain how, according to tropology (*tropologiam*), it is said to the Son: "You grieve over the ivy, in which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow," since all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made (John

1:3). Whence someone interpreting this place, in order to solve the looming question, fell into blasphemy. For assuming that from the Gospel: "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone" (Mark 10:18), he interpreted the Father as good.

But he placed the Son in a lower degree in comparison to him who is perfectly and truly good. And in saying these things, he did not consider that he had fallen into the heresy of Marcion (who introduces one God as only good and another as judge and creator) rather than that of Arius, who, although he preaches a greater Father and a lesser Son, nevertheless does not deny that the Son is the creator.

Therefore, what we are about to say should be heard with indulgence, and our efforts should be aided by favor and prayers rather than spurned with a malevolent ear; for even the unskilled can carp and detract, but it belongs to the learned, and those who know the sweat of those who labor, either to stretch out a hand to the weary or to show the way to those who wander. Our Lord and Savior did not labor in Israel in the same way he labored among the people of the Gentiles. Indeed, Israel speaks confidently: "Behold, for so many years I have served you, and I never transgressed your command, and you never gave me a young goat that I might feast with my friends; but after this son of yours came, who has devoured his substance with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf" (Luke 15): nor, however, is he refuted by the father, but it is kindly said to him: "Son,

you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours; it was fitting to feast and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and is found."

For the people of the Gentiles, the fatted calf was sacrificed, and the precious blood was shed, concerning which Paul disputes most fully to the Hebrews (Heb. 10). And David in the psalm: "A brother," he says, "does not redeem; a man will redeem" (Ps. 48:8). Christ decreed that the former should grow; the latter died so that the former might live; the one descended to the lower regions so that the other might ascend to the heavens. In Israel, truly, there was no such great labor. Whence also he envies the younger brother because, after his substance was squandered with harlots and pimps, he receives a ring and a robe, and is strong with his former dignity.

Moreover, when he says, "which was born in one night," it signifies the time before the coming of Christ, who was the light of the world, of whom it is said: "The night has passed, but the day has approached" (Rom. 13:12). And "it perished in one night," when the sun of justice set for them, and they lost the word of God.

The city of Nineveh, truly, great and most beautiful, prefigures the Church, in which the number is greater than the ten (Al. twelve) tribes of Israel; which also the fragments of twelve baskets in the wilderness signify (Mark 6). Moreover, they are ignorant of what is between the right and the left, either because of innocence and simplicity, so as to show a nursing age, and leave

to the understanding how great is the number of the other age when that of the little ones is so great. Or certainly (since the city was great, and in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earthenware (2 Tim. 2)), there was in it a very great multitude which, before penance was performed, was ignorant of what was between good and evil, between the right and the left. "But also many beasts": for great is the number in Nineveh of beasts and of irrational men, who are compared to foolish beasts and are likened to them (Ps. 48).