

SAINT JEROME

ON THE PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF THE
BLESSED MARY

De Perpetua Virginitate B. Mariae

SABBATISMUS

Saint Jerome (347–420)
De Perpetua Virginitate B. Mariae · On the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary

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[DE VIRGINITATE B. MARIAE. (C)]

IN LIBRUM SUBSEQUENTEM ADMONITIO.

Helvidius ex aliquot sacrae Scripturae testimoniis perperam intellectis, et duorum veterum Patrum, Tertulliani scilicet, et Victorini Petabionensis auctoritatibus parum perpensis, librum composuerat, in quo illud probare contendebat, Mariam Virginem, postquam Jesum Dei Filium nulla hominis opera, sed Spiritus sancti peperisset, deinde ex Joseph marito, communi caeterorum hominum more, filios aliquot genuisse, qui Fratres Domini appellantur in Evangelio. Quam insaniam ut fuco rationis aliquo obliniret, novo errore cumulavit: siquidem matrimonio minime praestare virginitatem effutivit, adductisque argumentis, immo mendaciis, probare conatus est. Erat ille, ut videtur, e populo vulgaris homo, rusticanus, et vix primis quoque imbutus litteris, tamque obscuri nominis, ut quamquam Romae eodem ac Hieronymus tempore diversaretur, numquam de facie cognitus illi fuerit, qui albus, ut aiunt, aterve esset, ignoraret. Addit Gennadius, Auxentii, qui sedem Mediolanensem invaserat, Arianorum impiissimi, discipulum, et Symmachi, ejus nempe ethnici senatoris, qui idololatriam scriptis defenderat, imitatore eum exstitisse. Sed me illud Gennadii testimonium non una de causa movet et traiectione puto gravissima laborare. Ut quid enim in respondendo, Auxentium Helvidii Magistrum Hieronymus praeteriret? Symmachum vero, nisi si nocendi animo, atque impietate, qua ratione Helvidius fuisset imitatus, qui librum neque sermone, neque ratione nitidum, quin etiam soloecis scatentem ediderit? Rursum si impietatem aemulatur, quo pacto eum dicit Gennadius scripsisse, Religionis studio? Non haec sane rectae rationi consonant, ut pariter referri ad Helvidium possint.

Ejus libello Hieronymus rogatus a fratribus demum respondit, cum diu tamen facere distulisset, ne respondendo dignus ille fieret, qui vinceretur. Pedem igitur collaturus, excerptas singulas haeretici propositiones ex ordine impugnat, Scripturae locis, atque illo imprimis Matth. I, 18, quo maxime adversarius abutebatur, expositis rite in eum sensum, ut Deiparam Mariam continuo virginem perstitisse, neque edito Salvatore, virum umquam cognovisse, quae catholicae Ecclesiae fides est, manifestissime evincat.

[ON THE VIRGINITY OF THE BLESSED MARY (C)]
NOTICE CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING BOOK.

Helvidius, having poorly understood several testimonies of the sacred Scripture, and having insufficiently considered the authorities of two ancient Fathers, namely Tertullian and Victorinus of Pettau, had composed a book in which he strove to prove that the Virgin Mary—after she had given birth to Jesus the Son of God by no human work, but by the Holy Spirit—had then, from her husband Joseph, in the common manner of other men, generated several sons, who are called the "Brothers of the Lord" (*Fratres Domini*) in the Gospel. To smear this madness with some pretense of reason, he added a new error: for he babbled that virginity is in no way superior to marriage, and by bringing forward arguments, or rather lies, he attempted to prove it. He was, as it seems, a common man from the populace, a rustic, and barely imbued even with the first elements of letters; he was of such an obscure name that, although he resided in Rome at the same time as Jerome, he was never known by face to him, who remained ignorant of whether he was white or black, as they say. Gennadius adds that he was a disciple of Auxentius—the most impious of the Arians who had invaded the see of Milan—and an imitator of Symmachus, that pagan senator who had defended idolatry in his writings. But that testimony of Gennadius troubles me for more than one reason, and I think it suffers from a very serious transposition. For why, in responding, would Jerome pass over Auxentius, the master of Helvidius? And why Symmachus, unless with the intention of doing harm, and by what reason of impiety had Helvidius imitated him—he who published a book neither polished in speech nor in reason, but rather teeming with solecisms? Again, if he emulates impiety, in what way does Gennadius say that he wrote "out of zeal for religion"? These things certainly do not harmonize with right reason so that they can be equally referred to Helvidius.

Requested by the brothers, Jerome finally responded to his booklet, although he had long delayed doing so, lest by responding, that man should become worthy of being defeated. Therefore, about to join battle, he attacks each of the heretic's propositions extracted in order, having properly explained the passages of Scripture—and especially that one of Matthew 1:18, which the adversary most greatly abused—in such a sense that he most clearly proves that Mary the Mother of God (*Deipara*) persisted as a perpetual virgin, and that, having given birth to the Savior, she never knew a man, which is the faith of the Catholic Church.

Eapropter titulum libro fecit, De Beatae Mariae Virginitate perpetua: qui rursum a Gennadio dicitur in Corbeiensi codice, egregius, et gratus libellus, in quo ostenditur Beatissimam Mariam genitricem Domini nostri Jesu Christi sicut virginem ante partum, ita virginem permansisse post partum. Quod Veterum spectat auctoritatem, satis habet de Tertulliano dicere, eum Ecclesiae hominem non fuisse; sed Victorinum Petabionensem ejusdem ac adversarius sententiae esse, pernegat: tum seriem ait Scriptorum infinitam commovere se posse, atque opponere. Denique multa de laude virginitatis edisserit, cujus praestantiam post luculentissime expositum Pauli ad Corinthios testimonium, ex nuptiarum quoque, quae ob oculos ponit, incommodis extollit. Qua de re cum ad Pammachium post annos decem scriberet Epist. 48, num. 17, Dum adviveret, inquit, sanctae memoriae Damasus, librum contra Helvidium de Beatae Mariae virginitate perpetua scripsimus, in quo necesse fuit nobis ad virginitatis beatitudinem praedicandam, multa de molestiis dicere nuptiarum. Num vir egregius, et eruditus in Scripturis, et virgo Ecclesiae virginis Doctor, aliquid in illo sermone reprehendit?

Ex hoc testimonio facile etiam colligitur, quo tempore conscriptus sit liber. Nempe exeunte anno 384 ex veterum martyrologiorum fide Damasus obiit: Hieronymus apud Damasum non ante finem anni 382 Romae est diversatus, quemadmodum in epistolarum 19 et 20 chronologicis argumentis probatum est. Biennii autem, quod intercedit, priorem annum sive 383 illi assignandum evincit testimonium hocce alterum ex epist. 22: Quantas molestias habeant nuptiae, et quot sollicitudinibus vinciantur, in eo libro quem adversus Helvidium de B. Mariae perpetua virginitate edidimus, puto breviter expressum. Pertinet enim illa Epistola, ut suo loco ostendimus, ad anni 384 priorem partem; huncque adeo, quem laudat contra Helvidium librum, jamque ad vulgi manus fuisse indicat, superiori 383 oporteat ascribi.

S. EUSEBII HIERONYMI STRIDONENSIS PRESBYTERI DE PERPETUA VIRGINITATE B. MARIAE, ADVERSUS HELVIDIUM, LIBER UNUS.

205 1. Nuper rogatus a fratribus, ut adversus libellum cujusdam Helvidii responderem, facere distuli: non quod difficile fuerit, hominem rusticanum, et vix primis quoque imbutus litteris, super veri assertionem convincere; sed ne respondendo dignus fieret, qui vinceretur.

For this reason, he gave the title to the book: *On the Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary*; which again is called by Gennadius in the Corbie codex, "an excellent and pleasing booklet, in which it is shown that the most Blessed Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, as she was a virgin before birth, so she remained a virgin after birth." Regarding the authority of the Ancients, it is enough for him to say of Tertullian that he was not a man of the Church; but he flatly denies that Victorinus of Pettau was of the same opinion as the adversary: then he says he could summon an infinite series of writers and oppose them. Finally, he discourses much on the praise of virginity, the excellence of which, after having most luminously set forth the testimony of Paul to the Corinthians, he extols also from the inconveniences of marriage, which he places before the eyes. Concerning which matter, when he wrote to Pammachius ten years later in Epistle 48, num. 17: "While Damasus of holy memory was still living," he says, "we wrote the book against Helvidius on the perpetual virginity of Blessed Mary, in which it was necessary for us, in preaching the blessedness of virginity, to say much about the troubles of marriage." Did that excellent man, learned in the Scriptures, and a virgin Doctor of the virgin Church, find anything to reproach in that discourse?

From this testimony it is also easily gathered at what time the book was composed. Namely, at the end of the year 384, according to the faith of the ancient martyrologies, Damasus died: Jerome stayed in Rome with Damasus not before the end of the year 382, as has been proved by the chronological arguments in Epistles 19 and 20. Moreover, this other testimony from Epistle 22 proves that the first year of the two-year period that intervenes, namely 383, must be assigned to it: "How great are the troubles of marriage, and with how many anxieties they are bound, I think has been briefly expressed in that book which we published against Helvidius on the perpetual virginity of Blessed Mary." For that Epistle pertains, as we have shown in its place, to the earlier part of the year 384; and therefore this book against Helvidius, which he praises and indicates was already in the hands of the common people, must be ascribed to the preceding 383.

ONE BOOK BY SAINT EUSEBIUS JEROME, PRIEST OF STRIDON, ON THE PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF BLESSED MARY, AGAINST HELVIDIUS.

1. Recently requested by the brothers to respond to the booklet of a certain Helvidius, I delayed doing so: not because it would have been difficult to convince a rustic man, and one barely imbued even with the first elements of letters, regarding the assertion of truth; but lest he, by being responded to, should become worthy of being defeated.

Huc accedebat quod homo turbulentus, et solus in universo mundo sibi et laicus et sacerdos (qui, ut ait ille, loquacitatem facundiam existimat [Al. existimet], et maledicere omnibus, bonae conscientiae signum arbitratur) accepta materia disputandi, amplius inciperet blasphemare, et quasi de sublimi loco in totum orbem ferre sententiam: meque quia veritate non posset, laceraret [Al. lacerare] conviciis. Verum quia hae omnes tam justae silentii mei causae, ob scandalum fratrum, qui ad ejus rabiem movebantur, justiori fine cessarunt, jam ad radices infructuosae arboris Evangelii securis est admovenda (Matth. 3, 10), et cum infecunditate foliorum tradenda flammis, ut discat aliquando 206 reticere, qui numquam didicit loqui.

2. Igitur sanctus mihi invocandus est Spiritus, ut beatæ Mariae virginitatem suo sensu, ore meo defendat. Invocandus est Dominus Jesus, ut sacri ventris hospitium, cujus decem mensibus inhabitator fuit, ab omni concubitus suspitione tueatur. Ipse quoque Deus Pater est imprecandus, ut matrem Filii sui, virginem ostendat fuisse post partum, quae fuit mater antequam nupta. Non campum rhetorici desideramus eloquii, non Dialecticorum tendiculas, nec Aristotelis spineta conquirimus: ipsa Scripturarum verba ponenda sunt: ipsis quibus adversum nos usus est testimoniis, revincatur, ut intelligat, se et legere potuisse quae scripta sunt, et non potuisse quae pietate roborata sunt, cognoscere.

3. Helvidius.---Prima ejus propositio fuit: «Matthaeus loquitur: Christi autem generatio sic erat: Cum esset desponsata mater ejus Maria Joseph, priusquam convenirent, inventa est habens in utero de Spiritu sancto. 207 Joseph autem vir ejus cum esset justus, et nollet eam traducere, voluit occulte dimittere eam. Haec autem eo cogitante, ecce Angelus Domini in somnis apparuit ei, dicens: Joseph, fili David, ne timeas accipere Mariam conjugem tuam. Quod enim natum est in ea, de Spiritu sancto est (Matth. I, 18 seqq.). Ecce, inquit, habes desponsatam, non commendatam, ut dicis, et utique non ob aliud desponsatam, nisi quandoque nupturam. Neque enim de non conventuris Evangelista dixisset: Priusquam convenirent: quia nemo de non pransuro dicit, antequam pranderet. Deinde ab Angelo uxorem appellatam et conjunctam. Audiamus nunc quid Scriptura pronuntiet: Exsurgens, inquit, Joseph a somno, fecit sicut praeceperat ei Angelus Domini: et accepit uxorem suam, et non cognovit eam, donec peperit filium suum (Matth. I, 24, 25).

To this was added that a turbulent man, and alone in the whole world both layman and priest to himself (who, as that one says, thinks loquacity is eloquence, and considers speaking ill of all a sign of a good conscience), having received material for disputing, would begin to blaspheme more, and as if from a sublime place would carry his sentence into the whole world: and because he could not with truth, he would tear me apart with insults. But because all these so just causes of my silence have ceased for a more just end, on account of the scandal of the brothers who were moved by his madness, the axe must now be applied to the roots of the unfruitful tree of the Gospel (Matt. 3:10), and with the barrenness of its leaves it must be handed over to the flames, so that he who never learned to speak may at last learn to be silent.

2. Therefore, the Holy Spirit must be invoked by me, so that he may defend the virginity of Blessed Mary by his own sense through my mouth. The Lord Jesus must be invoked, so that he may protect the guest-chamber of the sacred womb, of which he was an inhabitant for ten months, from all suspicion of intercourse. God the Father himself is also to be entreated, that he may show the mother of his Son to have been a virgin after birth, who was a mother before she was wedded. We do not desire the field of rhetorical eloquence, nor do we seek out the snares of the Dialecticians, nor the thickets (*spineta*) of Aristotle: the very words of the Scriptures are to be placed: let him be reconvicted by the very testimonies which he used against us, so that he may understand that he was able to read the things that were written, but was not able to know the things that have been strengthened by piety.

3. Helvidius.—His first proposition was: "Matthew speaks: 'Now the generation of Christ was in this wise: When Mary his mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found having in her womb of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary thy wife. For that which is born in her is of the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 1:18 seqq.). Behold," he says, "you have her *espoused*, not *commended*, as you say; and certainly espoused for no other reason than that she was eventually to be married. For the Evangelist would not have said of those who were not to come together: 'Before they came together': because no one says of one who is not going to dine, 'before he dined.' Then she is called *wife* and joined by the Angel. Let us now hear what the Scripture pronounces: 'Then Joseph, rising up from sleep, did as the Angel of the Lord had commanded him: and he took his wife, and knew her not till she had brought forth her son' (Matt. 1:24, 25)."

4. Hieronymus. Praepositio ante quid ostendit. Maria quare virgo sponsata conceperit.---Curramus per singula, et impietatem iisdem, quibus ingressa est, vestigiis persequentes, pugnantia inter se dixisse doceamus. Desponsatam confitetur: et statim uxorem vult esse quam confessus est sponsam. Rursum quam uxorem nominat, dicit non ob aliud desponsatam, nisi quandoque nupturam. Et ne parum hoc arbitremur: «Habes, inquit, desponsatam, et non commendatam, id est, necdum uxorem, necdum maritali vinculo copulatam. In eo vero quod ait, Neque enim de non conventuris Evangelista dixisset: Priusquam convenirent: quia nemo de non pransuro dicit, antequam pranderet, doleamne, an rideam, nescio.» Imperitiae arguam, an temeritatis accusem? Quasi si quis dixerit: Antequam in portu pranderem, ad Africam navigavi, non possit stare sententia, nisi ei in portu prandendum quandoque sit. Aut si velimus dicere: Paulus apostolus antequam ad Hispanias pergeret, Romae in vincula coniectus est. Aut certe illud: Helvidius antequam poenitentiam ageret, morte praeventus est: statim aut Paulo post vincula ad Hispanias sit eundum: aut Helvidio poenitenta agenda post mortem; cum Scriptura dicat: In inferno autem quis confitebitur tibi (Psal. VI, 6)? Ac non potius sit intelligendum, quod, ante, praepositio, licet saepe consequentiam indicet, tamen nonnumquam ea tantum quae prius cogitabantur, ostendat. Unde nec necesse sit ut cogitata fiant, cum aliud ideo intervenerit, ne ea quae cogitata sunt, fierent. Igitur cum Evangelista dicat: priusquam convenirent, proximum nuptiarum tempus ostendit, et in eo jam rem fuisse ut, quae prius sponsa fuerat, esse uxor inciperet. Quasi dixerit: Antequam oscula amplexusque miscerent; antequam rem agerent nuptiarum, inventa est habens in utero. Inventa est autem a nullo alio, nisi a Joseph, qui sponsae uterum tumentem pene jam licentia maritali, et curiosis oculis deprehendit. Non tamen sequitur, ut prioribus docuimus exemplis, eum cum Maria convenisse post partum, cuius conveniendi desiderium, uteri conceptione sublatum est. Quod autem in somnis dicitur ad Joseph: Ne timeas accipere Mariam uxorem tuam. Et rursum: Exsurgens autem Joseph a somno, fecit sicut praecepit ei Angelus Domini, et accepit uxorem suam, nullum movere debet, quasi ex eo quod uxor est appellata, sponsa esse desierit: cum hanc esse Scripturae divinae consuetudinem noverimus, ut sponsas appellet uxores. Sicut in sequentibus Deuteronomii testimoniis approbatur: Si quis, inquit, invenerit virginem desponsatam viro in campo, et vim faciens dormierit cum ea, morte moriatur, quia humiliavit uxorem proximi sui (Deut. XXII, 25).

4. Jerome. What the preposition *before* (*ante*) shows. Why Mary conceived while a virgin espoused.---Let us run through the details, and pursuing the impiety by the same tracks by which it entered, let us show that he has said things that fight against each other. He confesses her *espoused*: and immediately he wants her to be a *wife* whom he has confessed as a *betrothed*. Again, her whom he names as a wife, he says was espoused for no other reason than that she was eventually to be married. And lest we think this too little: "You have her *espoused*," he says, "and not *commended*, that is, not yet a wife, not yet joined by the marital bond. But in that which he says, 'For the Evangelist would not have said of those who were not to come together: *Before they came together*: because no one says of one who is not going to dine, before he dined,' I know not whether to grieve or to laugh." Shall I argue for his ignorance, or accuse him of rashness? As if, if someone should say: "Before I dined in the port, I sailed to Africa," the sentence could not stand unless he were to dine in the port at some time. Or if we should wish to say: "The apostle Paul, before he went to Spain, was cast into chains at Rome." Or certainly this: "Helvidius, before he performed penance, was prevented by death": must he therefore go to Spain immediately or a little after the chains; or must Helvidius perform penance after death; when the Scripture says: "But in hell who shall confess to thee?" (Psalm 6:6). And should it not rather be understood that the preposition *before* (*ante*), although it often indicates a consequence, yet sometimes shows only those things which were previously being thought? Whence it is not even necessary that the things thought of should be done, since something else intervened for the very reason that the things which were thought of should not be done. Therefore, when the Evangelist says: *before they came together*, he shows the nearest time of the marriage, and that the matter was already at such a point that she who had previously been a betrothed began to be a wife. As if he had said: "Before they mingled kisses and embraces; before they performed the act of marriage, she was found having in her womb." Moreover, she was found by no other than by Joseph, who detected the swelling womb of his betrothed with almost marital license and curious eyes. Yet it does not follow, as we have taught by the previous examples, that he came together with Mary after the birth, since the desire for coming together was removed by the conception of the womb. But as to what is said in sleep to Joseph: "Fear not to take Mary thy wife." And again: "And Joseph, rising up from sleep, did as the Angel of the Lord commanded, and took his wife," it ought to move no one, as if from the fact that she is called *wife*, she had ceased to be *betrothed*: since we know it to be the custom of the divine Scripture to call betrothed women *wives*. Just as is approved in the following testimonies of Deuteronomy: "If anyone," it says, "shall find a damsel betrothed to a man in the field, and doing violence lie with her, let him die the death, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife" (Deut. 22:25).

Et in alio loco: Si autem fuerit adolescentula desponsata viro, et invenerit homo eam in civitate, et dormierit cum ea, educetis utrumque ad portas civitatis illius, et lapidabuntur lapidibus, et morientur. Adolescentula quidem, quia non proclamavit, cum esset in civitate: vir autem, quia humiliavit uxorem proximi sui: et eradicabitis malum [Al. malignum] ex vobismetipsis (Ibid., 23, 24). Necnon et alibi: Et quis ille homo, cui desponsata est uxor, et non accepit [Al. accipiet] eam? Vadat et revertatur in domum suam, ne forte moriatur in bello, et homo alius accipiat eam (Deut. XX, 7). Si cui autem scrupulus commovetur, quare desponsata, et non potius sine sponso, sive (ut Scriptura appellat) marito, virgo conceperit, sciat triplicem fuisse rationem. Primo, ut per genealogiam Joseph, cujus Maria cognata erat, origo quoque Mariae monstraretur. 209 Secundo, ne juxta legem Moysi ut adultera lapidaretur a populo. Tercio, ut ad Aegyptum fugiens haberet solatium, custodis potius quam mariti. Quis enim in tempore illo credidisset Virgini de sancto eam Spiritu concepissee; venisse angelum Gabriel, Dei detulisse mandatum; ac non magis quasi adulteram, juxta exemplum Susannae, sententiae omnium condemnassent, cum hodie, toto jam credente mundo, argumententur Judaei, Isaia dicente, Ecce virgo in utero concipiet, et pariet filium (Isai. VII, 14), in Hebraeo juvenulam scriptum esse, non virginem, id est, AALMA, non BETHULA? Adversus quos in alio loco competentius disseremus. Denique excepto Joseph, et Elisabeth, et ipsa Maria, paucisque admodum, si quos ab his audisse possumus aestimare, omnes Jesum filium aestimabant Joseph: intantum, ut etiam Evangelistae opinionem vulgi exprimentes, quae vera historiae lex est, patrem cum dixerint Salvatoris, ut ibi, Et venit in spiritu in Templum (haud dubium quin Simeon) et cum inducerent parentes ejus puerum Jesum, ut facerent de illo secundum consuetudinem legis (Luc. II, 27). Et alibi: Et erant pater illius et mater admirantes super his quae dicebantur de eo (Ibid., 33). Et rursum: Et ibant parentes ejus per annum in Jerusalem in solemni die Paschae (Ibid., 41). Ac deinde: Et completis diebus cum reverterentur, remansit puer Jesus in Jerusalem, et non cognoverunt parentes ejus (Ibid., 43). Ipsa quoque Maria quae ad Gabrielem responderat, dicens, Quomodo erit hoc, quia virum non cognovi, quid de Joseph loquitur, ausculta: Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic? Ecce pater tuus et ego, dolentes quaerebamus te (Ibid., 48). Non hic Judaeorum, ut plerique argumentantur, non illudentium vox est. Evangelistae patrem Joseph dicunt: patrem Maria confitetur.

And in another place: "But if there be a young damsel betrothed to a man, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her, ye shall bring forth them both to the gates of that city, and they shall be stoned with stones, and they shall die. The young damsel, because she cried not out, being in the city: and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife: and ye shall root out the evil from yourselves" (Ibid. 23, 24). And also elsewhere: "And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her" (Deut. 20:7). Moreover, if a scruple is moved in anyone, why she conceived as a betrothed, and not rather without a betrothed, or (as Scripture calls him) a husband, as a virgin, let him know that there was a triple reason. First, that through the genealogy of Joseph, of whom Mary was a kinswoman, the origin of Mary also might be shown. Second, lest according to the law of Moses she should be stoned by the people as an adulteress. Third, that fleeing to Egypt she might have the solace of a guardian rather than of a husband. For who at that time would have believed a Virgin that she had conceived from the Holy Spirit; that the angel Gabriel had come, and delivered the mandate of God; and would they not rather, as an adulteress, according to the example of Susanna, have condemned her by the sentence of all, when today, the whole world now believing, the Jews argue—Isaiah saying: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bear a son" (Isai. 7:14)—that in Hebrew *young woman* is written, not *virgin*, that is, *AALMA*, not *BETHULA*? Against whom we shall discourse more competently in another place. Finally, except for Joseph, and Elizabeth, and Mary herself, and very few indeed, if we can estimate any who may have heard from these, all esteemed Jesus the son of Joseph: so much so, that even the Evangelists, expressing the opinion of the common people, which is the true law of history, called him the father of the Savior, as there: "And he came in the spirit into the Temple" (no doubt Simeon) "and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law" (Luke 2:27). And elsewhere: "And his father and mother were wondering at those things which were said of him" (Ibid. 33). And again: "And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Passover" (Ibid. 41). And then: "And when the days were fulfilled, as they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not" (Ibid. 43). Also Mary herself, who had responded to Gabriel, saying: "How shall this be, because I know not a man," listen to what she speaks of Joseph: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I, sorrowing, were seeking thee" (Ibid. 48). This is not here the voice of the Jews, as many argue, nor of those mocking. The Evangelists call Joseph father: Mary confesses him father.

Non quod (ut superius indicavi) vere pater Joseph fuerit Salvatoris; sed quod ad famam Mariae conservandam, pater sit ab omnibus aestimatus, qui antequam mone-
retur ab Angelo: Joseph, fili David, ne timueris accipere Mariam conjugem tuam;
quod enim in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est (Matth. I, 20), cogitabat occulte
dimittere eam. 210 Intantum suum non esse, qui conceptus fuerat, confidebat. Sed
jam satis docendi magis, quam respondendi studio disputatum est, cur Joseph pater
Domini, cur Maria appellata sit conjux: in quo et hoc breviter continetur, cur fratres
ejus quidam esse dicantur.

5. Helvidius.---Verum quia suum locum huic quaestiunculae reservamus, et ad
reliqua festinat oratio: nunc illud est disserendum, quomodo Scriptura dicat: Exsur-
gens autem Joseph a somno, fecit sicut praecepit ei Angelus Domini, et accepit uxorem
suam, et non cognoscebat eam, donec peperit filium, et vocavit nomen ejus Jesum
(Matth. I, 24, 25). In quo primum adversarius superfluo labore desudat, cognoscendi
verbum ad coitum magis, quam ad scientiam referendum: quasi hoc quisquam nega-
verit, et eas ineptias quas redarguit, aliquando prudens quispiam potuerit suspicari.
Deinde vult docere, quod donec, sive usque, adverbium, certum tempus significet:
quo completo fiat id, quod usque ad illud temporis quod praescriptum est, non fiebat,
velut in praesenti: Et non cognoscebat eam, donec peperit filium. Apparet, inquit,
cognitam esse post partum, cujus cognitionem filii tantum differebat generatio. Et ad
hoc approbandum congerit de Scripturis exempla quamplurima, more Andabatarum
gladium in tenebris ventilans, et linguae sonum ad confodienda sui tantum corporis
membra concutiens.

6. Hieronymus.---Ad quod nos breviter respondemus, et cognoscebat, et usque,
sermonem, in Scripturis sanctis, dupliciter intelligi. Et de eo quidem quod scriptum
est, cognoscebat, ad coitum esse referendum, ipse disseruit: nullo dubitante, quin
ad scientiam saepe referatur, ut ibi: Remansit puer Jesus in Jerusalem, et non cogno-
verunt parentes ejus. Nunc illud est ostendendum, ut quomodo ibi consuetudinem
Scripturae secutus est, sic etiam in donec, ejusdem Scripturae auctoritate frangatur,
quae saepe certum tempus (ut ipse disseruit) in ejus assumptione significat, saepe infi-
nitum, ut est illud, quod Deus ad quosdam 211 loquitur in Propheta: Ego sum, ego
sum, et donec senescatis ego sum (Isai. XLIII; Jerem. VII). Numquid postquam illi
senuerint, Deus esse desistet? Et Salvator in Evangelio ad Apostolos, Ecce ego, inquit,
vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem saeculi (Matt. XXVIII,
20).

Not that (as I have indicated above) Joseph was truly the father of the Savior; but that for preserving the reputation of Mary, he was esteemed by all as the father, who before he was warned by the Angel: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary thy wife; for that which is born in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20), was thinking of putting her away privately. So much did he trust that he who had been conceived was not his own. But enough has already been disputed, rather with the zeal for teaching than for responding, why Joseph was called the father of the Lord, and why Mary was called wife: in which also this is briefly contained, why certain ones are said to be his brothers.

5. Helvidius.—But because we reserve a place for this little question, and our discourse hastens to the rest: now it must be discussed how the Scripture says: "And Joseph, rising up from sleep, did as the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took his wife, and knew her not until she brought forth her son, and he called his name Jesus" (Matt. 1:24, 25). In which first the adversary sweats with superfluous labor, that the word **knowing** is to be referred to intercourse rather than to knowledge: as if anyone had denied this, and any prudent man could ever have suspected those ineptitudes which he refutes. Then he wants to teach that the adverb **until** (**donec**), or **even to** (**usque**), signifies a certain time: which being completed, that happens which was not happening until that time which was prescribed, as in the present: "And he knew her not until she brought forth her son." It appears, he says, that she was known after the birth, the knowledge of whom only the generation of the son was delaying. And to approve this, he heaps up very many examples from the Scriptures, brandishing his sword in the dark after the manner of the Andabatae, and shaking the sound of his tongue only to pierce the members of his own body.

6. Jerome.—To which we briefly respond, that both the word **knew** and **until** are understood in two ways in the holy Scriptures. And concerning that indeed which is written, **he knew**, he himself has discussed that it is to be referred to intercourse: no one doubting that it is often referred to knowledge, as there: "The child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not." Now it is to be shown that, just as there he followed the custom of the Scripture, so also in **until**, he may be broken by the authority of the same Scripture, which often signifies a certain time (as he discussed) in its assumption, but often an infinite time, as is that which God speaks to certain ones in the Prophet: "I am, I am, and until you grow old, I am" (Isai. 46:4; Jerem. 7). Will God cease to be after they have grown old? And the Savior in the Gospel to the Apostles: "Behold, I," he says, "am with you all days until the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

Ergo post consummationem saeculi a discipulis suis Dominus abscedet, et tunc quando in duodecim soliis iudicaturi sunt duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 38), Domini consortio fraudabuntur? Paulus quoque apostolus Corinthiis scribens: Primitiae, ait, Christus: deinde hi qui sunt Christi, qui in adventu ejus crediderunt: deinde finis, cum tradiderit regnum Deo et Patri, cum destruxerit omnem principatum et omnem potestatem et virtutem. Oportet enim illum regnare, donec ponat omnes inimicos sub pedibus ejus, omnia enim sub pedibus ejus subjecit (I Cor. XV, 23, 26). Esto, de homine dictum sit, non negamus de eo qui passus est crucem, qui postea sedere jubetur a dextris. Quid sibi vult hoc quod ait, Oportet enim illum regnare, donec ponat omnes inimicos sub pedibus ejus? Numquid tamdiu regnaturus est Dominus, donec incipiant esse inimici sub pedibus ejus; et postquam illi sub pedibus fuerint, regnare desistet: cum utique tunc magis regnare incipiet, cum inimici coeperint esse sub pedibus? David quoque in quarto graduum psalmo: Sicut oculi ancillae in manibus dominae suae, ita oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum nostrum, donec misereatur nostri (Psal. CXXII, 3). Ergo tamdiu Propheta oculos habebit ad Dominum, quamdiu misericordiam impetret, et post impetratam misericordiam, oculos torquet in terram? Qui in alio loco dicit: Oculi mei defecerunt in salutare tuum, et in verbum justitiae tuae (Psal. CXVIII, 123). Poteram super hoc innumera exempla congerere, et omnem lacescentis procacitatem, testimoniorum nube celare; verum adhuc pauca subjiciam, ut his similia ipse sibi lector inveniat.

7. Loquitur in Genesi sermo divinus: Et tradiderunt Jacob deos alienos, qui erant in manibus eorum, et in aures quae erant in auriculis eorum. Et abscondit ea Jacob subter terebinthum, quae est in Sichimis, et perdidit ea usque in hodiernum diem (Gen. XXXV, 4 seq.). 212 Item in fine Deuteronomii: Et defunctus est Moyses servus Domini in terra Moab per verbum Domini, et sepelierunt eum in Geth, prope domum Phegor, et nemo scit sepulcrum ejus usque in diem istum (Deut. XXXIV, 6, sec. LXX). Certe hodiernus dies illius temporis aestimandus est, quo historia ipsa contexta est, sive Moysen dicere volueris auctorem Pentateuchi, sive Ezram ejusdem instauratorem operis, non recuso. Nunc hoc quaeritur, an id quod dictum est, usque in diem istum, ad illam referatur aetatem, qua libri editi sive conscripti sunt.

Therefore, after the consummation of the world, will the Lord depart from his disciples, and then, when they are to judge the twelve tribes of Israel upon twelve thrones (Matt. 19:28), will they be defrauded of the Lord's company? Paul the apostle also, writing to the Corinthians: "Christ the firstfruits," he says: "then those who are Christ's, who have believed in his coming: then the end, when he shall have delivered the kingdom to God and the Father, when he shall have destroyed all principality and all power and virtue. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet, for he hath subjected all things under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:23, 25, 27). Let it be, let it be said of the man, we do not deny it, of him who suffered the cross, who is afterwards commanded to sit at the right hand. What does this mean that he says: "For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet"? Will the Lord reign only so long until enemies begin to be under his feet; and after they have been under his feet, will he cease to reign: when indeed he will then rather begin to reign, when enemies have begun to be under his feet? David also in the fourth psalm of degrees: "As the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress, so are our eyes to the Lord our God, until he have mercy on us" (Psalm 122:2). Will the Prophet, therefore, have his eyes to the Lord only so long as he may obtain mercy, and after mercy is obtained, will he twist his eyes to the earth? Who says in another place: "My eyes have failed for thy salvation, and for the word of thy justice" (Psalm 118:123). I could heap up innumerable examples upon this, and hide all the impudence of the provoker with a cloud of testimonies; but I will yet subjoin a few, that the reader himself may find things similar to these for himself.

7. The divine word speaks in Genesis: "And they delivered to Jacob the strange gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears. And Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree, which is in Shechem, and lost them until this present day" (Gen. 35:4 seq.). Likewise at the end of Deuteronomy: "And Moses the servant of the Lord died in the land of Moab by the word of the Lord, and they buried him in Geth, near the house of Peor, and no one knows his sepulcher until this day" (Deut. 34:5, 6, according to LXX). Certainly "this present day" must be esteemed of that time in which the history itself was composed, whether you wish to say Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, or Ezra the restorer of the same work, I do not refuse. Now this is asked, whether that which was said, "until this day," is referred to that age in which the books were published or written.

Doceat igitur post illam diem tot jam annorum usque ad nos voluminibus exactis, aut idola, quae sub terebintho condita fuerant, reperta, aut Moysi tumultum investigatum, quia obnixè asserit, post donec et usque, esse incipere, quod tamdiu non fuit quamdiu usque completeretur et donec. Quin potius animadvertat Scripturae sanctae idioma, et nobiscum, in quo haesitabat, intelligat ea, de quibus posset ambigi, si non fuissent scripta, signari, caetera vero nostrae intelligentiae derelinqui. Si enim adhuc recenti tempore, viventibus his qui viderant Moysen, sepulcrum ejus potuit ignorari, multo magis tot saeculis praetereuntibus. Juxta quod et illud intelligitur de Joseph, Evangelistam id indicasse, de quo scandalum poterat moveri, non eam cognitam esse a vito suo usque ad partum, ut multo magis intelligeremus cognitam non fuisse post partum, a qua tunc se abstinuit, cum adhuc de visione poterat fluctuare.

8. Ad summam, illud requiro, quare se abstinuerit Joseph usque ad partus diem. Respondebit utique, quia Angelum audierit dicentem: Quod enim in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est (Matth. I, 20). Ad quod nos inferimus, et certe audierat, Joseph, fili David, ne timeas accipere Mariam uxorem tuam (Ibid., 20). Prohibitum ei fuerat, ne relinqueret, ne adulteram existimaret uxorem. Numquid et a congressu conjugis separatus fuerat, cum utique ne separaretur magis fuisset admonitus? Et audebat, inquit, vir justus, Dei in utero audiens filium, de uxoris coitu cogitare? Pulchre. Qui ergo somnio tantum credidit, ut uxorem non ²¹³auderet attingere: is postquam pastorum voce cognoverat, Angelum Domini venisse de coelis, et dixisse ad eos: Nolite timere; ecce evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit omni populo, quia natus est vobis hodie Salvator, qui est Christus Dominus in civitate David (Luc. II, 10, et seq.); et cum eo laudes militiae concinuisse coelestis: Gloria in excelsis Deo, et super terram pax hominibus bonae voluntatis: qui Simeonem justum inter amplexus parvuli viderat praedicantem, Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace: quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum (Ibid., 27): qui Annam prophetissam, Magos, stellam, Herodem, Angelos viderat; qui, inquam, miracula tanta cognoverat, Dei templum, Spiritus sancti sedem, Domini sui matrem audebat attingere? Et certe Maria conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo (Ibid., 51). Ac ne impudenter [Al. imprudenter] neges, ista ignorasse Joseph: Et erant, inquit Lucas, pater illius, et mater admirantes super his, quae dicebantur de eo.

Let him show, therefore, after that day, so many years having now passed even to us with volumes completed, that either the idols which had been hidden under the terebinth were found, or the tomb of Moses was investigated, because he stubbornly asserts that after *until* (*donec*) and *even to* (*usque*), that begins to be which was not so long as *even to* was being fulfilled and *until*. Rather, let him notice the idiom of the holy Scripture, and understand with us that in which he was hesitating, that those things about which there could be doubt if they had not been written are signaled, but the rest are left to our intelligence. For if even in a recent time, while those who had seen Moses were living, his sepulcher could be unknown, much more so as so many centuries pass by. According to which also that is understood concerning Joseph, that the Evangelist indicated that about which a scandal could be moved, that she was not known by her husband until the birth, so that we might much more understand that she was not known after the birth, from whom he then abstained when he could still fluctuate concerning the vision.

8. In sum, I require this: why did Joseph abstain even to the day of birth? He will certainly respond, because he had heard the Angel saying: "For that which is born in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20). To which we infer: and certainly he had heard, "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary thy wife" (Ibid. 20). He had been forbidden to leave her, lest he should think his wife an adulteress. Was he also separated from the company of his spouse, when certainly he had been admonished rather lest he should be separated? And did a just man, he says, hearing of the son of God in the womb, dare to think of intercourse with his wife? Beautifully. He, therefore, who trusted a dream so much that he did not dare to touch his wife: did he—after he had known by the voice of the shepherds that the Angel of the Lord had come from heaven, and had said to them: "Fear not; behold, I evangelize to you a great joy, which shall be to all the people, because there is born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord in the city of David" (Luke 2:10 seq.); and that with him the praises of the heavenly host had sung: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will"; who had seen the just Simeon among the embraces of the little child preaching: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word in peace: because my eyes have seen thy salvation" (Ibid. 29); who had seen Anna the prophetess, the Magi, the star, Herod, the Angels; who, I say, had known such great miracles—dare to touch the temple of God, the seat of the Holy Spirit, the mother of his Lord? And certainly "Mary kept all these words, conferring them in her heart" (Ibid. 51). And lest you should impudently deny that Joseph was ignorant of these things: "And his father and mother," says Luke, "were wondering at those things which were said of him."

Licet tu mira impudentia haec in Graecis codicibus falsata contendas, quae non solum omnes pene Graeciae Tractatores in suis voluminibus reliquerunt; sed nonnulli quoque e Latinis, ita ut in Graecis habetur, assumpserint. Nec necesse est nunc de exemplariorum varietate tractare, cum omne et veteris et novae Scripturae instrumentum in Latinum sermonem exinde translatum sit, et multo purior manare credenda sit fontis unda, quam rivi.

7. Helvidius.---«Haec, ais, apud me nugae sunt. et argumentationes superfluae, et disputatio magis curiosa, quam vera. Numquid non potuit Scriptura dicere: Et accepit uxorem suam, et non fuit amplius ausus contingere eam (Gen. XXXVIII, 26): sicut de Thamar dixit et Juda? Aut defuerunt Matthaeo verba quibus id quod intelligi volebat, posset effari? Non cognovit, inquit, eam donec peperit filium (Matth. I, 25). Post partum ergo cognovit, cujus cognitionem ad partum usque distulerat.»

8. Hieronymus.---Si tam contentiosus es, jam nunc tua mente superaberis. Nolo mihi aliquod inter partum et coitum tempus interseras. Nolo dicas: Mulier quaecumque concepit et peperit masculum, immunda erit septem diebus, secundum dies secessionis et purgationis suae immundata erit: et octavo die circumcidet carnem praeputii ejus, et triginta tribus diebus sedebit in sanguine puro, et omne sanctum non tanget, et reliqua (Levit. XII, 2, 3). Statim eam invadat Joseph: statim audiat per Jeremiam: Equi insanientes in feminas facti sunt mihi, unusquisque ad uxorem proximi sui hinniebat (Jerem. V, 8). Alioqui quomodo stare poterit, Non cognovit eam, donec peperit filium: si post purgationis tempus exspectat: si quadraginta rursum diebus tanto tempore dilata libido differtur? Polluatur cruore puerpera: obstetrices suscipiant parvulum vagientem: maritus lassam teneat uxorem. Sic incipiant nuptiae, ne Evangelista mentitus sit. Sed absit, ut hoc de matre Salvatoris et viro justo sit aestimandum. Nulla ibi obstetrix: nulla muliercularum sedulitas intercessit. Ipsa pannis involvit infantem, ipsa et mater et obstetrix fuit. Et collocavit eum, inquit, in praesepio, quia non erat ei locus in diversorio (Luc. II, 7). Quae sententia et apocryphorum deliramenta convincit, dum Maria ipsa pannis involvit infantem; et Helvidii expleri non patitur voluptatem, dum in diversorio locus non fuit nuptiarum.

Although you contend with wondrous impudence that these things have been falsified in the Greek codices, which not only almost all the Commentators of Greece have left in their volumes, but some also of the Latins have assumed just as they are held in the Greek. Nor is it necessary now to treat of the variety of copies, since the whole instrument of both the old and the new Scripture has been translated from thence into the Latin speech, and the wave of the fountain must be believed to flow much purer than the stream.

7. Helvidius.—"These things," you say, "are trifles to me, and superfluous arguments, and a discussion more curious than true. Could not Scripture have said: And he took his wife, and was not further bold to touch her (Gen. 38:26), as it said of Tamar and Judah? Or did Matthew lack words by which he could express that which he wished to be understood? He knew her not, he says, until she brought forth a son (Matt. 1:25). After the birth, therefore, he knew her, whose knowledge he had deferred until the birth."

8. Jerome.—If you are so contentious, even now you shall be overcome by your own mind. I do not want you to interpose any time between the birth and cohabitation. I do not want you to say: Whatsoever woman has conceived and brought forth a male child shall be unclean seven days, according to the days of her separation and her purging she shall be unclean; and on the eighth day she shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, and thirty-three days she shall sit in pure blood, and shall not touch any holy thing, and the rest (Lev. 12:2, 3). Let Joseph invade her immediately; let him immediately hear through Jeremiah: They were made to me as horses mad after females, every one neighed after the wife of his neighbor (Jer. 5:8). Otherwise, how shall it be able to stand, He knew her not, until she brought forth a son, if he waits after the time of purging; if for forty days again a lust delayed for so long a time is deferred? Let the woman in childbirth be polluted with blood; let the midwives receive the wailing little one; let the husband hold the weary wife. Thus let the marriage begin, lest the Evangelist be found a liar. But far be it that this should be judged of the mother of the Savior and of a just man. No midwife was there; no officiousness of women intervened. She herself wrapped the infant in swaddling clothes, she herself was both mother and midwife. And she laid him, he says, in a manger, because there was no room for her in the inn (Luke 2:7). This sentence both convicts the ravings of the apocrypha, while Mary herself wrapped the infant in swaddling clothes; and does not allow the pleasure of Helvidius to be fulfilled, while there was no room for marriage in the inn.

9. Helvidius.---Verum quia jam satis abundeque respondimus ad id quod proposuerat, Antequam convenirent, et Non cognovit eam, donec peperit filium, ad tertiam veniendum est quaestionem, ut juxta disputationis ejus ordinem, etiam nostrae responsionis ordo procedat. Vult enim alios quoque filios Mariam procreasse; et ex eo quod scriptum est: Ascendit autem Joseph in civitatem David, ut profiteretur cum Maria uxore sua praegnante. Factum est autem cum ibi essent, impleti sunt dies, ut pareret, et peperit filium suum primogenitum (Luc. II, 4 et seqq.): nititur approbare primogenitum non posse dici, nisi eum qui habeat et fratres: sicut unigenitus ille vocatur, qui parentibus solus sit filius.

10. Hieronymus.---Nos autem ita definimus: Omnis unigenitus est primogenitus: non omnis primogenitus est unigenitus. Primogenitus est, non tantum post quem et alii: sed ante quem nullus. Omne, inquit Dominus ad Aaron, quod aperit vulvam, ab omni carne quae offertur Domino, ab homine usque ad pecus, tibi erunt: tantummodo pretiis redimant primogenita hominum, et primogenita pecorum immundorum (Exod. XXXIV, 19, 20, et Num. XVIII, 15). Definivit sermo Dei, quid sit primogenitum, Omne, inquit, quod aperit vulvam. Alioqui si non est primogenitus, nisi is tantum, quem sequuntur fratres, tamdiu sacerdotibus primogenita non debentur quamdiu et alia fuerint procreata; ne forte partu postea non sequente, unigenitus sit, et non primogenitus. Redemptionis, inquit, ejus erit ab uno mense, aestimatio quinque siclorum. Siclus, secundum siclum sanctuarii, viginti oboli sunt. Tantummodo primogenita vitulorum, et primogenita ovium, et primogenita caprarum non redimes, quia sancta sunt (Num. XVIII, 16, 17). Cogit me sermo Dei, ut omne quod aperit vulvam, si de mundis animalibus sit, Deo voveam; si de immundis, redimam: dans pretium sacerdoti. Possum respondere, et dicere. Quid me in unius mensis stringis articulo? Quid primogenitum vocas, quem an fratres sequantur, ignoro? Exspecta donec nascatur secundus. Nihil debeo sacerdoti, nisi et ille fuerit procreatus, per quem is qui ante natus est, incipiat esse primogenitus. Nonne mihi ipsi apices loquentur, et me stultitiae redarguent, eum esse dictum primogenitum, qui aperiat vulvam, non qui habeat et fratres?

9. Helvidius.—But because we have already responded sufficiently and abundantly to that which he had proposed, Before they came together, and He knew her not, until she brought forth a son, we must come to the third question, so that according to the order of his discussion, the order of our response may also proceed. For he wishes that Mary also procreated other sons; and from that which is written: But Joseph went up into the city of David, that he might be enrolled with Mary his wife, being great with child. And it came to pass while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should bring forth, and she brought forth her firstborn son (Luke 2:4 et seqq.): he strives to prove that firstborn cannot be said, except of him who also has brothers; just as he is called only-begotten who is the only son to his parents.

10. Jerome.—But we define it thus: Every only-begotten is a firstborn; not every firstborn is an only-begotten. He is the firstborn, not only after whom there are others, but before whom there is none. Every thing, says the Lord to Aaron, that opens the womb, from all flesh which is offered to the Lord, from man even unto beast, shall be yours: only the firstborn of men they shall redeem for prices, and the firstborn of unclean beasts (Exod. 34:19, 20, and Num. 18:15). The word of God defined what the firstborn is: Every thing, it says, that opens the womb. Otherwise, if he is not firstborn except him only whom brothers follow, the firstborn are not due to the priests for as long as others have also been procreated; lest perhaps, a birth not following afterwards, he be only-begotten and not firstborn. His redemption, it says, shall be from one month, the estimation of five shekels. A shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, is twenty oboli. Only the firstborn of calves, and the firstborn of sheep, and the firstborn of goats you shall not redeem, because they are holy (Num. 18:16, 17). The word of God compels me to vow to God everything that opens the womb, if it be of clean animals; if of unclean, to redeem it, giving the price to the priest. I am able to respond and say: Why do you bind me in the point of one month? Why do you call him firstborn, whom I do not know whether brothers follow? Wait until a second is born. I owe nothing to the priest, unless he also shall have been procreated through whom he who was born before begins to be the firstborn. Will not the very letters speak to me and refute me of folly, that he is said to be the firstborn who opens the womb, not he who also has brothers?

Denique interrogo de Joanne, quem constat esse unigenitum, an et primogenitus fuerit? Utrumne et ipse secundum Legem, pro toto ei legi fuerit obnoxius? Ambigi non potest. Certe de Salvatore Scriptura sic loquitur: Cum expleti essent dies purgationis eorum, secundum Legem Moysi, duxerunt eum in Jerusalem, ut offerrent eum Domino: sicut scriptum est in Lege Domini: Quia omne masculinum adaperiens vulvam, sanctum Domino vocabitur, et ut darent hostias secundum quod dictum est in Lege Domini, par turturum, aut duos pullos columbarum (Luc. II, 22 seqq.). Si haec lex tantum ad primogenitos pertinet, primogenitum autem sequentes faciunt, non debuit lege primogeniti teneri, qui de sequentibus ignorabat. Sed quia tenetur lege primogeniti, etiam ille quem fratres caeteri non sequuntur: colligitur eum primogenitum vocari, qui vulvam aperiat et ante quem nullus sit, non eum quem frater post genitus subsequatur. Moyses scribit in Exodo: Factum est autem circa mediam noctem et, Dominus percussit omne primogenitum in terra Aegypti, a primogenito Pharaonis, qui sedebat super thronum ejus, usque ad primogenitum captivae, quae est ad lacum, et omne primogenitum pecoris (Exod. XII, 29). Responde mihi, Qui tunc ab exterminatore fuerant interempti, primogeniti fuerunt an et unigeniti? Si primogeniti tantum illi vocantur, qui fratres habent, ergo ab internecione unigeniti liberati sunt. Si autem ut unigeniti caesi sunt, contra sententiam factum est, et inter primogenitos et unigeniti morerentur. Aut unigenitos liberabis a poena, et ridiculus eris: aut si confiteberis interfectos, ingratis obtinebimus, et unigenitos primogenitos appellari.

11. Helvidii ultima propositio.---Extrema propositio fuit (licet id ipsum in primogenito voluerit ostendere), fratres Domini in Evangeliiis nominari, ut ibi: Ecce mater ejus et fratres ejus stabant foris, quaerentes loqui cum eo (Luc. VIII, 20). Et alibi: Post haec descendit Capharnaum, ipse et mater ejus, et fratres ejus (Joan. II, 12). Et ibi: Dixerunt ergo fratres ejus ad eum: Transi hinc, et vade in Judaeam, ut et discipuli tui videant opera tua quae facis. Nemo enim aliquid in occulto faciens, quaerit ipse in palam esse. Si haec facis, manifesta teipsum mundo (Joan. VII, 3, 4). Joanne desuper inferente: Neque enim fratres ejus tunc credebant in eum (Ibid. 5). Item Marcus et Matthaeus: Et docebat eos in synagoga eorum in patria sua, ita ut stuperent, et dicerent: Unde huic omnis haec sapientia et virtutes? Nonne hic est fabri filius? nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria, et fratres ejus Jacobus et Joseph, et Simon et Judas, et sorores ejus omnes apud nos sunt (Marc. XIII, 5; V, 24)? Lucas quoque in Actibus Apostolorum ita refert: Hi omnes erant instantes unanimes in oratione cum mulieribus et Maria matre Jesu, et fratribus ipsius (Act. I, 14).

Finally, I ask concerning John, whom it is established is only-begotten, whether he was also the firstborn? Whether he himself, according to the Law, was subject to that whole law? It cannot be doubted. Certainly of the Savior the Scripture speaks thus: When the days of their purging were fulfilled, according to the Law of Moses, they led him into Jerusalem, that they might offer him to the Lord; as it is written in the Law of the Lord: That every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord; and that they might give victims according to that which is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons (Luke 2:22 et seqq.). If this law pertains only to firstborn, and followers make a firstborn, he who was ignorant of followers ought not to have been held by the law of the firstborn. But because even he whom other brothers do not follow is held by the law of the firstborn, it is gathered that he is called firstborn who opens the womb and before whom there is none, not he whom a brother born after succeeds. Moses writes in Exodus: And it came to pass about midnight, and the Lord struck every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the captive woman who is at the lake, and every firstborn of the beast (Exod. 12:29). Answer me: those who were then killed by the exterminator, were they firstborn or also only-begotten? If those only are called firstborn who have brothers, therefore the only-begotten were liberated from slaughter. But if they were slain as only-begotten, it was done against the sentence, and among the firstborn the only-begotten also died. Either you will liberate the only-begotten from punishment, and you will be ridiculous; or if you will confess that they were killed, we shall obtain even against your will that only-begotten are called firstborn.

11. Helvidius's final proposition.—The final proposition was (although he wished to show this very thing in the firstborn) that the brothers of the Lord are named in the Gospels, as there: Behold, his mother and his brothers were standing without, seeking to speak with him (Luke 8:20). And elsewhere: After these things he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brothers (John 2:12). And there: His brothers therefore said to him: Pass from hence, and go into Judea, that your disciples also may see your works which you do. For no one doing anything in secret seeks himself to be in public. If you do these things, manifest yourself to the world (John 7:3, 4). John adding from above: For neither did his brothers then believe in him (Ibid. 5). Likewise Mark and Matthew: And he taught them in their synagogue in their own country, so that they were astonished, and said: From whence has this man all this wisdom and virtues? Is not this the son of the carpenter? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude, and his sisters are they not all with us? (Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:54-56)? Luke also in the Acts of the Apostles reports thus: All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers (Acts 1:14).

Necnon et Paulus Apostolus in eadem historiae veritate pari voce concordat: Ascendi autem secundum revelationem, et neminem vidi, nisi Petrum et Jacobum fratrem Domini (Galat. II, 2). Et rursum in alio loco: Numquid non habemus potestatem manducandi et bibendi? Numquid non habemus potestatem uxores circumducendi, sicut et caeteri Apostoli, et fratres Domini, et Cephas (I Cor. IX, 4, 5)? Et ne forte aliquis Judaeorum testimonium non admitteret, qui etiam nomina fratrum illius ediderunt, simili eos asserens in fratribus errore deceptos, quo «in patre aestimando sunt lapsi, argute praecavit, et ait: Haec eadem vocabula ab Evangelistis in alio loco nominari, et eosdem esse fratres Domini, filios Mariae.» Matthaeus loquitur: Erant autem ibi (haud dubium quin ante crucem Domini) et mulieres multae a longe spectantes, quae secutae fuerant Jesum a Galilaea, ministrantes illi. Inter quas erant Maria Magdalene, et Maria Jacobi, et Joseph mater, et mater filiorum Zebedaei (Matth. XXVII, 55, 56). Item Marcus: Erant autem et mulieres a longe aspicientes, inter quas erant Maria Magdalene, et Maria Jacobi minoris, et Joseph mater, et Salome (Marc. XV, 40): ibique post modicum: Et aliae multae quae ascenderant cum eo in Jerusalem. Necnon et Lucas: Erant autem Maria Magdalene et Joanna, et Maria Jacobi, et caeterae cum eis (Luc. ult. 10).

12. Hieronymus.---Haec idcirco replicavimus, ne calumniatur et clमित, ea quae pro se faciant, a nobis esse subtracta, et sententiam suam, non testimoniis Scripturarum, sed lubrica disputatione convulsam. «Ecce, inquit, Jacobus et Joseph filii Mariae, iidem quos Judaei fratres appellaverunt. Ecce Maria Jacobi minoris et Josetis mater. Minoris autem Jacobi, ad distinctionem majoris, qui erat filius Zebedaei, sicut et in alio loco Marcus ponit: Maria autem Magdalene, et Maria Jacobi, et Josetis, viderunt ubi poneretur: et transacto sabbato, emerunt aromata, et venerunt ad monumentum. Et utique ait: Quam miserum erit et impium de Maria hoc sentire, ut cum aliae feminae curam sepulturae Jesu habuerint, matrem ejus dicamus absentem: aut alteram esse Mariam, nescio quam, confingamus: praesertim cum Evangelium Joannis testetur praesentem eam illic fuisse, quando illam de cruce Dominus jam viduam, ut matrem Joanni commendabat. Aut numquid Evangelistae et falluntur et fallunt, ut eorum Mariam matrem dicerent, quos Judaei fratres Jesu esse dixerunt?»

And also Paul the Apostle in the same truth of history agrees with a like voice: But I went up according to revelation, and I saw no one, except Peter and James the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:18, 19). And again in another place: Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about wives, even as the rest of the Apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? (1 Cor. 9:4, 5)? And lest perhaps anyone should not admit the testimony of the Jews, who also published the names of his brothers, asserting that they were deceived by a similar error in the brothers as they "fell in judging the father," he shrewdly took precaution and says: "These same names are named by the Evangelists in another place, and they are the same brothers of the Lord, the sons of Mary." Matthew speaks: And many women were there (doubtless before the cross of the Lord) looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Matt. 27:55, 56). Likewise Mark: And there were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph, and Salome (Mark 15:40); and there after a little: And many others who had come up with him to Jerusalem. Also Luke: And they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the rest with them (Luke 24:10).

12. Jerome.—These things we have therefore repeated, lest he should complain and cry out that those things which make for him have been subtracted by us, and his opinion convulsed, not by the testimonies of the Scriptures, but by a slippery discussion. "Behold," he says, "James and Joseph the sons of Mary, the same whom the Jews called brothers. Behold Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph. But of James the less, to distinguish him from the greater, who was the son of Zebedee, as also in another place Mark puts: But Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and of Joseph, saw where he was laid; and the sabbath being past, they bought spices, and came to the monument. And indeed he says: How wretched and impious it will be to think this of Mary, that while other women had care of the burial of Jesus, we should say his mother was absent; or should feign some other Mary, I know not whom; especially since the Gospel of John testifies that she was present there, when the Lord commended her, already a widow, as a mother to John from the cross. Or do the Evangelists both are deceived and deceive, so as to call them the mother of Mary, whom the Jews said were brothers of Jesus?"

13. O furor caecus, et in proprium exitium mens vesana! Dicis ad crucem Domini matrem ejus fuisse praesentem, dicis Joanni discipulo ob viduitatem et solitudinem commendatam: quasi juxta te non haberet quatuor filios, et innumeras filias, quarum consortio frueretur? Viduam quoque nominas, quod Scriptura non loquitur. Et cum omnia Evangelistarum exempla proponas, solius tibi Joannis verba non placent. Dicis transitorie, ad crucem Domini eam fuisse praesentem, ne consulto praeterisse videaris: et tamen quae cum illa mulieres fuerint, siles. Ignoscerem nescienti, nisi viderem consulto reticentem. Audi, itaque, Joannes quid dicat: Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu mater ejus, et soror matris ejus Maria Cleophae, et Maria Magdalene (Joan. XIX, 25). Nulli dubium est, duos fuisse Apostolos Jacobi vocabulo nuncupatos, Jacobum Zebedaei, et Jacobum Alphaei. Istum, nescio quem minorem Jacobum, quem Mariae filium, nec tamen matris Domini Scriptura commemorat, Apostolum vis esse, an non? Si Apostolus est, Alphaei filius erit; et credet in Jesum; et non erit de illis fratribus, de quibus, scriptum est: Neque enim tunc fratres ejus credebant in eum. Si non est Apostolus, sed tertius nescio quis Jacobus, quomodo est frater Domini putandus, et quomodo tertius ad distinctionem majoris appellabitur minor, cum major et minor, non inter tres, sed inter duos soleant praebere distantiam; et frater Domini Apostolus sit, Paulo dicente: Deinde post triennium veni Jerusalem videre Petrum, et mansi apud illum diebus quindecim. Alium autem Apostolorum vidi neminem, nisi Jacobum fratrem Domini (Galat. I, 18, 19)? Et in eadem Epistola: Et cognita gratia, quae data est mihi, Petrus et Jacobus et Joannes, qui videbantur columnae esse (Gal. II, 9). Ne autem hunc putes Jacobum filium Zebedaei, lege Actus Apostolorum. Jam ab Herode fuerat interemptus. Restat conclusio, ut Maria ista quae Jacobi minoris scribitur mater, fuerit uxor Alphaei, et soror Mariae matris Domini, quam Mariam Cleophae Joannes Evangelista cognominat, sive a patre, sive gentilitate familiae aut quacumque alia causa ei nomen imponens. Si autem inde tibi alia atque alia videtur, quod alibi dicatur: Maria Jacobi minoris mater: et hic Maria Cleophae: discite Scripturae consuetudinem, eundem hominem diversis nominibus nuncupari. Raguel socer Moysi, et Jethro dicitur.

13. O blind madness, and mind insane to its own destruction! You say that his mother was present at the cross of the Lord, you say she was commended to the disciple John on account of her widowhood and solitude; as if, according to you, she did not have four sons, and innumerable daughters, in whose company she might enjoy herself? You also name her a widow, which the Scripture does not say. And while you propose all the examples of the Evangelists, the words of John alone do not please you. You say in passing that she was present at the cross of the Lord, lest you should seem to have passed it over by design; and yet you are silent as to what women were with her. I would pardon one who did not know, unless I saw one who was silent by design. Hear, therefore, what John says: But there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene (John 19:25). To no one is it a doubt that there were two Apostles called by the name of James: James the son of Zebedee, and James the son of Alphaeus. This James, I know not what "lesser" James, whom the Scripture commemorates as the son of Mary, yet not the mother of the Lord, do you wish him to be an Apostle or not? If he is an Apostle, he will be the son of Alphaeus; and he will believe in Jesus; and he will not be of those brothers of whom it is written: For neither did his brothers then believe in him. If he is not an Apostle, but some third James I know not who, how is he to be thought the brother of the Lord, and how will he be called "lesser" to distinguish him from the greater, since "greater" and "lesser" are accustomed to provide a distance not between three, but between two; and the brother of the Lord is an Apostle, Paul saying: Then after three years I came to Jerusalem to see Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none other of the Apostles, except James the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:18, 19)? And in the same Epistle: And having known the grace which was given to me, Peter and James and John, who seemed to be pillars (Gal. 2:9). But lest you should think this James the son of Zebedee, read the Acts of the Apostles. He had already been killed by Herod. The conclusion remains, that this Mary who is written as the mother of James the less, was the wife of Alphaeus, and the sister of Mary the mother of the Lord, which Mary John the Evangelist surnames "of Cleophas," whether imposing the name on her from her father, or from the clan of her family, or from whatever other cause. But if from this she seems to you to be different and another, because in one place she is called Mary the mother of James the less, and here Mary of Cleophas: learn the custom of Scripture, that the same man is called by different names. Raguel the father-in-law of Moses is also called Jethro.

Gedeon, nullis causis immutati nominis ante praemissis, subito Jerobaal legitur. Ozias rex Juda, vicissim Azarias vocatur. Mons Thabor, Itabyrium dicitur. Rursum Hermon Phoenices cognominant Sanior, et Amorraeus cognominat eum Sanir. Eadem coeli plaga tribus nominibus appellatur, Nageb, Theman, Darom, lege Ezechiel. Petrus, et Simon dicitur, et Cephas. Judas zelotes, in alio Evangelio Thaddaeus dicitur: multa-que alia quae ad exemplum horum pertinent ipse sibi de omnibus Scripturis lector poterit congregare.

14. Nunc illud est quod conamur ostendere, quemadmodum fratres Domini appellentur filii materterae ejus, Mariae, qui antea non credentes, postea crediderunt. Licet fieri potuerit, ut uno statim credente, alii diu increduli fuerint, et hanc fuisse matrem Jacobi et Josetis, id est, Mariam Cleophae uxorem Alphaei, et hanc dictam Mariam Jacobi minoris. Quae si esset mater Domini, magis eam, ut in omnibus locis, matrem illius appellasset, et non aliorum dicendo matrem, alterius voluisset intelligi. Verum in hac parte contentiosum funem non traho, alia fuerit Maria Cleophae, alia Maria Jacobi et Josetis, dummodo constet, non eandem Mariam Jacobi et Josetis esse, quam matrem Domini. Et unde, ais, fratres Domini dicti sunt, qui non erant fratres? Jam nunc doceberis, quatuor modis in Scripturis divinis fratres dici, natura, gente, cognatione, affectu. Natura, Esau, Jacob, duodecim Patriarchae, Andreas et Petrus, Jacobus et Joannes. Gente, qua omnes Judaei inter se fratres vocantur, ut in Deuteronomio: Si autem emeris fratrem tuum, qui est Hebraeus, vel quae est Hebraea, serviet tibi sex annis: et septimo anno dimittes eum liberum abs te (Deut. XV, 12). Et in eodem: Constituendo constitues super te principem, quem elegerit Dominus Deus tuus, eum qui ex fratribus tuis sit. Non enim poteris constituere super te hominem alienigenam, quia non est frater tuus (Deut. XVII, 15). Et rursum: Ne viso vitulo fratris tui, vel ove ejus errantibus per viam, negligas ea: Reversione reduces ea fratri tuo. Quod si non appropinquat tibi frater tuus, neque noveris eum, colliges ea intra domum tuam: et erunt tecum donec quaerat ea frater tuus, et reddes ei (Deut. XXII, 1, 2). Et Apostolus Paulus, Optabam, inquit, ego ipse anathema esse a Christo pro fratribus meis, cognatis secundum carnem, qui sunt Israelitae (Rom. IX, 3, 4). Porro cognatione fratres vocantur, qui sunt de una familia, id est, patria: quas Latini paternitates interpretantur; cum ex una radice multa generis turba diffunditur, ut in Genesi.

Gideon, with no causes of a changed name previously set forth, is suddenly read as Jerubbaal. Uzziah the king of Judah is in turn called Azariah. Mount Tabor is called Itabyrium. Again, the Phoenicians surname Hermon Sirion, and the Amorite surnames him Senir. The same region of the sky is called by three names, Negeb, Teman, Darom, read Ezekiel. Peter is also called Simon and Cephas. Jude the zealot is called Thaddaeus in another Gospel: and many other things which pertain to the example of these the reader himself will be able to gather for himself from all the Scriptures.

14. Now that which we are attempting to show is in what manner the brothers of the Lord are called the sons of his maternal aunt, Mary, who, not believing before, afterwards believed. Although it could happen that, one believing immediately, others were for a long time incredulous; and that this was the mother of James and Joseph, that is, Mary of Cleophas the wife of Alphaeus, and this one was called Mary the mother of James the less. Who if she were the mother of the Lord, he would rather have called her his mother, as in all places, and not by saying she was the mother of others, would have wished her to be understood as the mother of another. But in this part I do not pull a contentious rope; let Mary of Cleophas be one, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph another, provided it be established that the same Mary the mother of James and Joseph is not the mother of the Lord. And from whence, you say, were they called brothers of the Lord, who were not brothers? Now you shall be taught that in the divine Scriptures they are called brothers in four ways: by nature, by race, by kinship, by affection. By nature: Esau, Jacob, the twelve Patriarchs, Andrew and Peter, James and John. By race, by which all Jews are called brothers among themselves, as in Deuteronomy: If however you buy your brother, who is a Hebrew, or she who is a Hebrewess, he shall serve you six years: and in the seventh year you shall dismiss him free from you (Deut. 15:12). And in the same: By appointing you shall appoint over you a prince, whom the Lord your God shall choose, him who is from your brothers. For you shall not be able to appoint over you a foreign man, because he is not your brother (Deut. 17:15). And again: Lest seeing the calf of your brother, or his sheep wandering through the way, you neglect them: by returning you shall return them to your brother. But if your brother does not approach you, nor do you know him, you shall gather them within your house: and they shall be with you until your brother seeks them, and you shall restore them to him (Deut. 22:1, 2). And the Apostle Paul: I wished, he says, that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites (Rom. 9:3, 4). Furthermore, those are called brothers by kinship who are of one family, that is, of one fatherland, which the Latins interpret as paternitates; when from one root a great multitude of the race is spread abroad, as in Genesis.

Dixit autem Abraham ad Lot: Non sit rixa inter me et te, et inter pastores meos et pastores tuos, quia homines fratres nos sumus. Ibique, et elegit sibi Lot regionem Jordanis, et elevavit Lot ab Oriente, et discesserunt unusquisque a fratre suo (Gen. XIII, 8, 11). Et certe Lot non est frater Abrahae, sed filius fratris ejus Aram. Thara quippe genuit Abraham et Nachor et Aram: et Aram genuit Lot. Et rursum: Abraham autem erat annorum septuaginta quinque, cum exiret de Charan. Et sumpsit Abraham Saram uxorem suam, et Lot filium fratris sui (Gen. XII, 4, 5). Quod si adhuc dubitas fratrem, fratris filium nuncupari, accipe exemplum. Cum autem audisset Abraham, quia captivus ductus est Lot frater suus, numeravit vernaculos suos trecentos decem et octo (Gen. XIV, 14). Et cum caedem nocturni impetu descripsisset, adjecit: Et reduxit omnem equitatum Sodomorum, et Lot fratrem suum revocavit (Ibid. 16). Sufficiebant haec ad ea quae diximus approbanda. Sed ne in aliquo cavilleris, et te quasi lubricus anguis evolvas, testimoniorum stringendus es vinculis, ne querulus sibilis, et dicas, te magis argumentationibus tortuosis, quam Scripturarum veritate superatum. Jacob, Isaac filius ac Rebeccae, cum fratris insidias metuens, Mesopotamiam perrexisset, accessit et devolvit lapidem ab ore putei, et adaquavit oves Laban fratris matris suae (Genes. XXVIII et XXIX). Et osculatus est Jacob Rachel, et exclamans voce sua, ploravit, et indicavit Rachel, quia frater est patris ejus, et quia filius Rebeccae est (Gen. XXIX, 11, 12). Ecce et hic eadem lege qua supra, frater, sororis filius appellatur. Dixit autem Laban ad Jacob: Quoniam frater meus es, non servies mihi gratis (Gen. XXIX, 15). Dic mihi, quae sit merces tua. Expletis itaque viginti annis, cum ignorante socero, uxoribus filiisque comitatus reverteretur ad patriam, consecutus est eum Laban in monte Galaad. Et cum idola quae Rachel occultabat quaesita non invenisset in sarcinis, respondit Jacob, et dixit ad Laban: Quae culpa mea est, et quod delictum meum, quod persecutus es me? et quare scrutatus es omnia vasa mea? Quid invenisti de omnibus tuis? Pone hic in conspectu fratrum tuorum et fratrum meorum: et redarguent inter nos duos (Gen. XXXI, 36, 37). Responde, qui sint isti fratres Jacob et Laban, qui tunc fuerant in praesenti. Esau certe frater Jacob absens erat, et Laban filius Bathuel fratres, excepta sorore Rebecca, non habuit.

But Abraham said to Lot: Let there not be a strife between me and you, and between my shepherds and your shepherds, because we are men who are brothers. And there: And Lot chose for himself the region of the Jordan, and Lot removed from the East, and they departed each one from his brother (Gen. 13:8, 11). And certainly Lot is not the brother of Abraham, but the son of his brother Haran. For Terah begat Abraham and Nahor and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And again: But Abraham was seventy-five years old when he went out from Haran. And Abraham took Sarah his wife, and Lot the son of his brother (Gen. 12:4, 5). But if you still doubt that the son of a brother is called a brother, take an example. But when Abraham had heard that Lot his brother was led captive, he numbered his servants three hundred and eighteen (Gen. 14:14). And when he had described the slaughter by a nocturnal assault, he added: And he brought back all the cavalry of Sodom, and he recalled Lot his brother (Ibid. 16). These were sufficient to prove those things which we have said. But lest you should cavil in anything, and should wind yourself out like a slippery snake, you must be bound by the bonds of testimonies, lest complaining you should hiss and say that you were overcome more by tortuous arguments than by the truth of the Scriptures. Jacob, the son of Isaac and Rebecca, when he had proceeded to Mesopotamia fearing the snares of his brother, approached and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the sheep of Laban the brother of his mother (Gen. 28 and 29). And Jacob kissed Rachel, and crying out with his voice, he wept, and indicated to Rachel that he is the brother of her father, and that he is the son of Rebecca (Gen. 29:11, 12). Behold also here by the same law as above, the son of a sister is called a brother. But Laban said to Jacob: Because you are my brother, you shall not serve me for nothing (Gen. 29:15). Tell me what is your reward. Twenty years having therefore been completed, when his father-in-law being ignorant, accompanied by wives and children he returned to his fatherland, Laban followed him on Mount Gilead. And when he had not found the idols which Rachel was hiding, having searched in the baggage, Jacob responded and said to Laban: What is my fault, and what is my crime, that you have persecuted me? and why have you searched all my vessels? What have you found of all your things? Put it here in the sight of your brothers and my brothers: and they shall judge between us two (Gen. 31:36, 37). Answer: who are these brothers of Jacob and Laban, who then were present? Esau certainly the brother of Jacob was absent, and Laban the son of Bethuel had no brothers, except his sister Rebecca.

15. Innumerabilia sunt istiusmodi, libris inserta divinis. Sed ne longum faciam, ad extremam divisionis partem revertar, id est, et affectu fratres dici, qui in duo scinditur, in spiritale et in commune. In spiritale, quia omnes Christiani fratres vocamur, ut ibi: Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum (Ps. CXXXIII, 1). Et in alio psalmo Salvator: Narrabo, inquit, nomen tuum fratribus meis (Ps. XI, 23). Et alibi: Vade dic fratribus meis (Joan. XX, 17). Porro in commune, quia omnes ex uno patre nati, pari inter nos germanitate conjungimur. Dicite, ait, his qui oderunt vos, fratres nostri estis (Isa. ult. cap. sec. LXX). Et Apostolus ad Corinthios: Si quis frater nominatur fornicator, aut avarus, aut idolis serviens, aut maledicus, aut ebriosus, aut rapax, cum ejusmodi nec cibum sumere (I Cor. V, 11), et caetera his similia.

Interrogo nunc, juxta quem modum fratres Domini in Evangelio intelligas appellari. Juxta naturam? Sed Scriptura non dicit, nec Mariae eos vocans filios, nec Joseph. Juxta gentem? Sed absurdum est, ut pauci ex Judaeis vocati sint fratres, quum omnes qui ibi erant hac lege Judaei, fratres potuerint appellari. Juxta affectum humani juris ac spiritus? Verum si sic, qui magis fratres quam Apostoli, quos docebat intrinsecus, quos matres vocabat et fratres? Aut si omnes quia homines, fratres, stultum fuit nuntiari quasi proprium Ecce fratres tui quaerentes te; cum generaliter omnes homines hoc jure sint fratres. Restat igitur, ut juxta superiorem expositionem fratres eos intelligas appellatos, cognatione, non affectu; non gentis privilegio, non natura. Quomodo Lot Abrahae, quomodo Jacob Laban est appellatus frater, quomodo et filiae Salphaad accipiunt Clerum inter fratres suos, quomodo et Abraham ipse Saram sororem suam habuit uxorem. Etenim ait, Vere soror mea est de patre, sed non de matre (Genes. XX, 11), id est, fratris est filia, non sororis. Alioqui quale est, ut Abraham vir justus, patris sui filiam conjugem sumpserit, cum in primis hominibus propter aurium sanctitatem idipsum Scriptura non nominet, malens intelligi, quam proferri; et Deus lege postea sanciat, ac minetur: Qui acceperit sororem suam de patre suo, vel de matre sua, et viderit turpitudinem ejus, et ipsa viderit turpitudinem illius, opprobrium est: et exterminabuntur coram filiis generis sui. Turpitudinem sororis suae detexit, peccatum suum recipiet (Levit. XVIII, 9).

15. There are innumerable things of this sort inserted in the divine books. But lest I make it long, I shall return to the last part of the division, that is, that those are also called brothers by affection, which is split into two, into the spiritual and into the common. Into the spiritual, because all Christians are called brothers, as there: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in one (Ps. 132:1). And in another psalm the Savior says: I will tell your name to my brothers (Ps. 21:23). And elsewhere: Go tell my brothers (John 20:17). Furthermore into the common, because all born from one father, we are joined among ourselves by a like brotherhood. Say, he says, to those who hate you: You are our brothers (Isa. 66:5 according to the LXX). And the Apostle to the Corinthians: If anyone who is named a brother is a fornicator, or covetous, or a server of idols, or a slanderer, or a drunkard, or a robber, with such a one not even to take food (1 Cor. 5:11), and other things like to these.

I ask now, according to which manner do you understand the brothers of the Lord to be called in the Gospel? According to nature? But the Scripture does not say so, calling them neither the sons of Mary, nor of Joseph. According to race? But it is absurd that a few of the Jews should be called brothers, when all who were there, being Jews by this law, could have been called brothers. According to the affection of human right and spirit? But if so, who were more brothers than the Apostles, whom he taught within, whom he called mothers and brothers? Or if all because they are men are brothers, it was foolish to be announced as a proper thing: Behold your brothers seeking you; when generally all men by this right are brothers. It remains, therefore, that according to the former exposition you understand them to have been called brothers by kinship, not by affection; not by the privilege of race, not by nature. In the way that Lot was called the brother of Abraham, in the way that Jacob was called the brother of Laban, in the way also that the daughters of Zelophehad receive an inheritance among their brothers, in the way also that Abraham himself had Sarah his sister as his wife. For he says: Truly she is my sister by my father, but not by my mother (Gen. 20:12), that is, she is the daughter of a brother, not of a sister. Otherwise, what sort of thing is it that Abraham, a just man, took the daughter of his own father as a spouse, when in the first men, on account of the holiness of ears, the Scripture does not name that very thing, preferring it to be understood than to be brought forth; and God afterwards sanctions by law and threatens: He who shall take his sister by his father, or by his mother, and shall see her nakedness, and she shall see his nakedness, it is a disgrace: and they shall be exterminated before the children of their race. He has uncovered the nakedness of his sister, he shall receive his sin (Lev. 20:17).

16. Imperitissime hominum, ista non legeras, et toto Scripturarum pelago derelicto, ad injuriam Virginis tuam rabiem contulisti, in exemplum ejus quem fabulae ferunt, cum vulgo esset ignotus, et nihil boni posset facinoris excogitare, quo nobilis fieret, Dianae incendisse templum; et nullo prodente sacrilegium, fertur ipse in medium processisse, clamitans sese incendium subjecisse: sciscitantibus Ephesi principibus, quam ob causam hoc facere voluisset, respondisse: Ut quia bene non poteram, male omnibus innotescerem. Et hoc quidem Graeca narrat historia. Tu vero templum Dominici corporis succendisti, tu contaminasti sanctuarium Spiritus Sancti, ex quo vis quadrigam fratrum, et sororum processisse congeriem. Denique cum Judaeis voce sociata, dicis: Nonne hic est fabri filius? Nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria, et fratres ejus Jacobus, et Joses, et Simon, et Judas, et sorores omnes apud nos sunt (Matth. XIII, 55, et Marc. VI, 3)? Omnes, nisi de turba, non dicitur. Quis, te oro, ante hanc blasphemiam noverat, quis dupondii supputabat? Consecutus es quod volebas, nobilis es factus in scelere. Ego ipse qui contra te scribo, cum in eadem tecum Urbe consistam albus, ut aiunt, aterve sis, nescio. Praetermitto vitia sermonis, quibus omnis liber tuus scatet. Taceo ridiculum exordium. O tempora! o mores! Non quaero eloquentiam; quam ipse non habens, in fratre Craterio requisisti. Non, inquam, flagito linguae nitorem, animae quaero puritatem. Apud Christianos enim soloecismus est magnus et vitium, turpe quid vel narrare, vel facere. Ad calcem venio, et te cornuta interrogatione concludo, sicque tecum agam, quasi superius nihil egerim: Eodem modo dictos esse fratres Domini, quo Joseph dictus est pater, Ego, inquit, et pater tuus, dolentes quarebamus te (Luc. I, 48). Mater haec loquitur, non Judaei. Et ipse Evangelista referens: Et erant pater et mater illius admirantes super his quae dicebantur de eo (Ibid., 33), et his similia, quae jam enumeravimus, in quibus parentes vocantur. Ac ne forte de exemplariorum varietate causeris, quia tibi stultissime persuasisti Graecos codices esse falsatos, ad Joannis Evangelium venio, in quo planissime scribitur: Invenit Philippus Nathanael, et ait illi: Quem scripsit Moyses in Lege, et Prophetae, invenimus Jesum filium Joseph a Nazareth (Joan. I, 45). Certe hoc in tuo codice continetur. Responde mihi, quomodo Jesus sit filius Joseph, quem constat de Spiritu sancto esse procreatum? Vere Joseph pater fuit? Quamvis sis hebes, dicere non audebis? An putabatur? Eodem modo aestimentur et fratres, quo aestimatus est et pater.

16. Most ignorant of men, you had not read these things, and the whole sea of the Scriptures being forsaken, you have brought your madness to the injury of the Virgin, after the example of him whom fables report, when he was unknown to the crowd and could think of no good deed by which he might become noble, to have set fire to the temple of Diana; and no one betraying the sacrilege, he is reported to have come forward into the midst himself, crying out that he had set the fire. When the princes of Ephesus asked for what cause he had wished to do this, he responded: That because I could not be known for good, I might become known to all for evil. And this indeed Greek history narrates. You truly have set fire to the temple of the Lord's body, you have contaminated the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, from which you wish a team of four brothers and a heap of sisters to have proceeded. Finally, with a voice joined to the Jews, you say: Is not this the son of the carpenter? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, and Joses, and Simon, and Jude, and are not all his sisters with us? (Matt. 13:55, and Mark 6:3). All is not said except of a crowd. Who, I pray you, knew you before this blasphemy? Who reckoned you worth a farthing? You have obtained what you wished: you have become noble in crime. I myself who write against you, though I dwell in the same City with you, know not whether you be white, as they say, or black. I pass over the faults of speech with which your whole book teems. I am silent as to the ridiculous beginning. O times! O manners! I do not seek eloquence; which you, not having it yourself, required in brother Craterius. I do not, I say, demand the brightness of the tongue, I seek the purity of the soul. For among Christians it is a great solecism and fault to either narrate or do anything shameful. I come to the end, and I conclude you with a horned interrogation, and I will act with you as if I had done nothing above: that the brothers of the Lord were called so in the same manner as Joseph was called father. I, she says, and your father, sorrowing were seeking you (Luke 2:48). This mother speaks, not the Jews. And the Evangelist himself reporting: And his father and mother were wondering over these things which were said of him (Ibid. 33), and things like to these, which we have already enumerated, in which they are called parents. And lest perhaps you should plead about the variety of copies, because you have most foolishly persuaded yourself that the Greek codices have been falsified, I come to the Gospel of John, in which it is most plainly written: Philip found Nathanael, and said to him: Him of whom Moses wrote in the Law, and the Prophets, we have found, Jesus the son of Joseph from Nazareth (John 1:45). Certainly this is contained in your codex. Answer me: how is Jesus the son of Joseph, whom it is established was procreated of the Holy Spirit? Was Joseph truly his father? Although you are dull, you will not dare to say so. Or was he so thought? In the same way let the brothers be esteemed as the father was esteemed.

17. Sed quoniam jam e cautibus et confragosis locis enavigavit oratio, pandenda sunt vela, et in epilogos illius irruendum, in quibus sciolus sibi visus, Tertullianum in testimonium vocat, et Victorini Petabionensis episcopi verba proponit. Et de Tertulliano quidem nihil amplius dico, quam Ecclesiae hominem non fuisse. De Victorino vero id assero, quod et de Evangelistis, fratres eum dixisse Domini, non filios Mariae. Fratres autem eo sensu, quem superius exposuimus, propinquitate, non natura. Verum nugas terimus, et fonte veritatis omissio, opinionum rivulos consecramur. Numquid non possum tibi totam veterum Scriptorum seriem commovere: Ignatium, Polycarpum, Irenaeum, Justinum Martyrem, multosque alios apostolicos et eloquentes viros, qui adversus Ebionem, et Theodotum, Byzantium, Valentinum, haec eadem sentientes, plena sapientiae volumina conscripserunt? Quae si legisses aliquando, plus saperes. Sed melius puto breviter ad singula respondere, quam diutius immorando, volumen extendere.

18. In illud nunc impetum facio, in quo tu virginitatem et nuptias comparando, disertus esse voluisti. Risimus in te proverbium, Camelum vidimus saltitantem. Dicis: «Numquid meliores sunt virgines Abraham, Isaac, et Jacob, qui habuere conjugia? Numquid non quotidie Dei manibus, parvuli finguntur in ventribus, ut merito erubescere debeamus, Mariam nupsisse post partum? Quod si hoc illis turpe videtur, superest ut non credant, etiam Deum per genitalia virginis natum. Turpius est enim juxta eos, Deum per virginis pudenda genitum, quam virginem suo viro nupsisse post partum.» Junge si libet et alias naturae contumelias, novem mensibus uterum insolescentem, fastidia, partum, sanguinem, pannos. Ipse tibi describatur infans, tegmine membranorum solito convolutus. Ingerantur dura praesepia, vagitus parvuli, octavae diei circumcisio, tempus purgationis, ut probetur immundus. Non erubescimus, non silemus. Quanto sunt humiliora quae pro me passus est, tanto plus illi debeo. Et cum omnia replicaveris, cruce nihil contumeliosius proferes: quam profitemur, et credimus, et in qua de hostibus triumphamus.

19. Sed ut haec quae scripta sunt, non negamus, ita ea quae non sunt scripta, renuimus. Natum Deum esse de Virgine credimus, quia legimus. Mariam nupsisse post partum, non credimus, quia non legimus. Nec hoc ideo dicimus, quo nuptias condemnemus, ipsa quippe virginitas fructus est nuptiarum: sed quod nobis de sanctis viris temere aestimare nihil liceat.

17. But since the discourse has already sailed out from the rocks and rugged places, the sails must be spread, and we must rush into his epilogues, in which, having seemed a smatterer to himself, he calls Tertullian into testimony, and proposes the words of Victorinus, bishop of Pettau. And of Tertullian indeed I say nothing more than that he was not a man of the Church. But of Victorinus I assert this, which also of the Evangelists: that he called them brothers of the Lord, not sons of Mary. But brothers in that sense which we have expounded above: by proximity, not by nature. Truly we wear away trifles, and the fountain of truth being omitted, we follow the rivulets of opinions. Am I not able to move for you the whole series of ancient writers: Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and many other apostolic and eloquent men, who against Ebion, and Theodotus of Byzantium, and Valentinus, holding these same things, wrote volumes full of wisdom? Which if you had read at any time, you would be wiser. But I think it better to respond briefly to each point, than by lingering longer to extend the volume.

18. I now make an attack on that in which you, by comparing virginity and marriage, wished to be eloquent. We laughed at the proverb in you: We have seen a camel dancing. You say: "Are virgins better than Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had marriages? Are not little ones daily fashioned by the hands of God in wombs, that we ought deservedly to blush that Mary married after childbirth? Because if this seems shameful to them, it remains that they should not believe even that God was born through the genitals of a virgin. For it is more shameful, according to them, that God was begotten through the private parts of a virgin, than that a virgin married her own husband after childbirth." Join if it please you also other insults of nature: the womb swelling for nine months, the loathings, the birth, the blood, the swaddling clothes. Let the infant be described to you, wrapped in the usual covering of membranes. Let the hard mangers be brought in, the wailing of the little one, the circumcision of the eighth day, the time of purging, so that he may be proved unclean. We do not blush, we are not silent. By how much more humble are those things which he suffered for me, by so much more do I owe to him. And when you have repeated all things, you will bring forth nothing more insulting than the cross: which we profess and believe, and in which we triumph over enemies.

19. But as we do not deny these things which are written, so we refuse those things which are not written. We believe that God was born of a Virgin, because we read it. We do not believe that Mary married after childbirth, because we do not read it. Nor do we say this for the purpose of condemning marriage, for virginity itself is the fruit of marriage: but because it is not permitted to us to judge anything rashly concerning holy men.

Possumus enim hac aestimatione possibilitatis contendere, plures quoque uxores habuisse Joseph, quia plures habuerit Abraham, plures habuerit Jacob; et de his esse uxoribus fratres Domini, quod plerique non tam pia quam audaci temeritate confingunt. Tu dicis Mariam virginem non permansisse: ego mihi plus vindico, etiam ipsum Joseph virginem fuisse per Mariam, ut ex virginali conjugio virgo filius nasceretur. Si enim in virum sanctum fornicatio non cadit, et aliam eum uxorem habuisse non scribitur: Mariae autem, quam putatus est habuisse, custos potius fuit, quam maritus: relinquitur, virginem eum mansisse cum Maria, qui pater Domini meruit appellari.

20. Et quia de comparatione virginitatis et nuptiarum sum aliqua dicturus, obsecro lecturos ne me putent nuptiis detraxisse in virginum laude, et aliquam fecisse distantiam inter sanctos veteris Testamenti et novi, id est, inter eos qui habuere conjugia, et hos qui a complexu mulierum penitus recesserunt, verum pro conditione temporum alii eos tunc subjacuisse sententiae, et alii nos, in quos fines saeculorum decurrerunt. Quamdiu lex illa permansit: Crescite, et multiplicamini, et replete terram (Gen. I, 28); et, Maledicta sterilis, quae non parit semen in Israel (Isai. ultimo sec. LXX), nubebant omnes, et nubebantur, et derelictis parentibus, fiebant una caro. Quando vero vox illa pertonuit: Tempus breuiatum est: reliquum est, ut et qui habent uxores, sic sint, quasi non habeant; adhaerentes Domino, unus cum eo efficimur spiritus (I Cor. VII, 29). Et quare? Quia qui sine uxore est, cogitat ea quae Dei sunt, quomodo placeat Deo. Qui autem cum uxore est, sollicitus est, quae sunt huius mundi, quomodo placeat uxori. Et divisa est mulier, et virgo: quae non est nupta, cogitat quae sunt Dei, ut si sancta corpore et spiritu. Nam quae nupta est, cogitat, quae sunt mundi, quomodo placeat viro (Ibid., 32, 33 et seqq.). Quid oblatras? quid repugnas? Vas electionis haec loquitur, Divisa est, dicens, mulier, et virgo. Vide quantae felicitatis sit, quae et nomen sexus amiserit. Virgo jam mulier non vocatur. Quae non est nupta, cogitat quae sunt Domini, ut sit sancta corpore et spiritu. Virginis definitio, sanctam esse corpore et spiritu; quia nihil prosit carnem habere virginem, si mente quis nupserit. Quae vero nupta est, cogitat quae sunt mundi, quomodo placeat viro. Idem tu putas esse diebus et noctibus vacare orationi, vacare jejuniis; et ad adventum mariti expolire faciem, gressum frangere, simulare blanditias? Illa hoc agit, ut turpior appareat, et naturae bonum infuscet injuria. Haec ad speculum pingitur, et in contumeliam artificis conatur pulchrior esse quam nata est.

For we are able by this judgment of possibility to contend that Joseph also had several wives, because Abraham had several, Jacob had several; and that from these wives were the brothers of the Lord, which many feign with a temerity not so much pious as audacious. You say Mary did not remain a virgin: I claim more for myself, that Joseph himself also was a virgin through Mary, so that from a virginal marriage a virgin son might be born. For if fornication does not fall upon a holy man, and it is not written that he had another wife; and of Mary, whom he was thought to have had, he was rather the guardian than the husband: it remains that he remained a virgin with Mary, who deserved to be called the father of the Lord.

20. And because I am about to say some things concerning the comparison of virginity and marriage, I beseech those who shall read that they do not think I have detracted from marriage in the praise of virgins, and made some distance between the saints of the Old Testament and the New, that is, between those who had marriages and these who have departed entirely from the embrace of women; but according to the condition of the times, some were then subject to one sentence, and we to another, upon whom the ends of the ages have run down. As long as that law remained: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth (Gen. 1:28); and: Cursed is the sterile woman who does not bring forth seed in Israel (Isa. last chapter according to LXX), all married and were given in marriage, and leaving parents, became one flesh. But when that voice thundered: The time is shortened: it remains that even those who have wives be as if they had them not; adhering to the Lord, we are made one spirit with him (1 Cor. 7:29). And why? Because he who is without a wife thinks on those things which are of God, how he may please God. But he who is with a wife is solicitous for the things which are of this world, how he may please his wife. And the woman and the virgin is divided: she who is not married thinks on the things which are of God, that she may be holy in body and spirit. For she who is married thinks on the things which are of the world, how she may please her husband (Ibid. 32-34). Why do you bark? why do you resist? The vessel of election speaks these things: The woman and the virgin, he says, is divided. See of how great happiness she is, who has even lost the name of her sex. A virgin is now not called a woman. She who is not married thinks on the things which are of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and spirit. The definition of a virgin is to be holy in body and spirit; because it profits nothing to have a virgin flesh, if one has married in mind. But she who is married thinks on the things which are of the world, how she may please her husband. Do you think it is the same thing to be at leisure for prayer days and nights, to be at leisure for fasts; and at the arrival of the husband to polish the face, to mince the gait, to feign blandishments? The former does this that she may appear more foul, and may cloud the good of nature by injury. The latter is painted at the mirror, and in insult to the Artificer endeavors to be more beautiful than she was born.

Inde infantes garriunt, familia perstrepat, liberi ab osculis et ab ore dependent, computantur sumptus, impendia praeparantur. Hinc cocorum accincta manus carnes terit, hinc textricum turba commurmurat: nuntiatur interim vir venisse cum sociis. Illa ad hirundinis modum lustrat universa penetralia, si torus rigeat, si pavimenta verberint, si ornata sint pocula, si prandium praeparatum. Responde, quaeso, inter ista ubi sit Dei cogitatio? Et hae felices domus? Caeterum ubi tympana sonant, tibia clamat, lyra garrit, cymbalum concrepat, quis ibi Dei timor? Parasitus in contumeliis gloriatur: ingrediuntur expositae libidinum victimae, et tenuitate vestium nudae impudicis oculis ingeruntur. His infelix uxor, aut laetatur, et perit: aut offenditur, et maritus in iurgia concitatur. Hinc discordia, seminarium repudii. Aut si aliqua invenitur domus, in qua ista non fiant, quae rara avis est; tamen ipsa dispensatio domus, liberorum educatio, necessitates mariti, correctio servulorum, quam a Dei cogitatione non avocent? Defecerunt, inquit Scriptura, Sarae muliebria (Gen. XVIII, 11): post quod dicitur ad Abraham: Omnia quaecumque dicit tibi Sara, audi vocem ejus (Gen. XXI, 12). Quae non est in partus anxietatibus et dolore, quae deficientibus menstrui cruoris officiis, mulier esse desiit, a Dei maledictione fit libera: nec est ad virum conversio ejus, sed e contrario vir subjicitur ei, et Domini ei voce praecipitur: Omnia quaecumque tibi dicit Sara, audi vocem ejus (Genes. III): et sic incipiunt vacare orationi. Quia quamdiu in conjugio debitum solvitur, orandi praeteritur instantia.

21. Non negamus viduas, non negamus maritatas, sanctas mulieres inveniri; sed quae uxores esse desierint, quae in ipsa necessitate conjugii virginum imitentur castitatem. Hoc est, quod Apostolus breviter, Christo in se loquente, testatus est: Innupta cogitat quae Dei sunt, quomodo placeat Deo: nupta vero cogitat quae sunt mundi, quomodo placeat viro (I Cor. VII, 34): nobis super hoc campum intelligentiae derelinquens. Neque tamen alicui necessitatem imponit aut laqueum, sed id quod honestum est, suadet, volens omnes esse sicut seipsum.

Thence infants prattle, the household makes a noise, children hang from kisses and from the mouth, expenses are calculated, outlays are prepared. On this side the girded hand of cooks rubs the meats, on that side the crowd of weavers murmurs; meanwhile it is announced that the husband has come with his companions. She, after the manner of a swallow, surveys all the inner rooms, whether the couch be stiff, whether they have swept the floors, whether the cups be adorned, whether the dinner be prepared. Answer, I pray, where among these things is the thought of God? And these are happy houses? But where drums sound, the pipe cries out, the lyre prattles, the cymbal clatters, what fear of God is there? The parasite glories in insults; victims exposed to lusts enter, and naked by the thinness of their garments are forced upon immodest eyes. At these things the unhappy wife either is glad and perishes, or is offended and the husband is incited to quarrels. Hence discord, the seed-plot of divorce. Or if some house is found in which these things do not happen, which is a rare bird; yet does not the very management of the house, the education of children, the necessities of the husband, the correction of the little servants, call away from the thought of God? The female things of Sarah, says the Scripture, had failed (Gen. 18:11); after which it is said to Abraham: In all things whatsoever Sarah says to you, hear her voice (Gen. 21:12). She who is not in the anxieties and pain of childbirth, she who, the offices of the menstrual blood failing, has ceased to be a woman, is made free from the curse of God; nor is her turning to her husband, but on the contrary the husband is subjected to her, and it is commanded to him by the voice of the Lord: In all things whatsoever Sarah says to you, hear her voice; and thus they begin to be at leisure for prayer. Because as long as in marriage the debt is paid, the instance of praying is passed over.

21. We do not deny that widows, we do not deny that married women, are found to be holy women; but those who have ceased to be wives, who in the very necessity of marriage imitate the chastity of virgins. This is what the Apostle briefly, with Christ speaking in him, testified: The unmarried woman thinks on the things of God, how she may please God: but she who is married thinks on the things of the world, how she may please her husband (1 Cor. 7:34); leaving to us over this a field of understanding. Nor yet does he impose necessity or a snare on anyone, but he persuades that which is honest, wishing all to be just as himself.

Et quamquam de virginitate praeceptum Domini non habeat: quia ultra homines est; et quodammodo impudens erat, adversum naturam cogere, alioque modo dicere, Volo vos esse, quod Angeli sunt: unde et virgo majoris est mercedis, dum id contemnit, quod si fecerit, non delinquit; nihilominus in cohaerentibus infert: Consilium autem do, tamquam misericordiam consecutus a Domino, ut sim fidelis. Existimo ergo hoc bonum esse propter instantem necessitatem; quia bonum est homini sic esse. Quae est ista necessitas? Vae praegnantibus et nutrientibus in illa die (Matt. XXIV, 19, et Marc. XIII, 17). Ideo silva succrescit, ut postea recidatur. Ideo ager seritur, ut metatur. Jam plenus est orbis, terra nos non capit. Quotidie bella nos secant, morbi subtrahunt, naufragia absorbent, et nihilominus de terminis litigamus? De hoc numero sunt illi, qui Agnum sequuntur (Apoc. II), qui vestimenta sua non coinquinaverunt, virgines enim permanserunt. Observa quid significet, coinquinaverunt. Ego non audeo exponere, ne Helvidius calumniatur. Quod autem ais quasdam esse virgines tabernarias; ego tibi plus dico, esse in his et adulteras, et, quo magis mireris, clericos esse caupones, et monachos impudicos. Sed quis non statim intelligat, nec tabernariam virginem, nec adulterum monachum, nec clericum posse esse cauponem? Numquid virginitatis est culpa, si simulator virginitatis in crimine est? Ego certe, ut aliis personis praetermissis ad Virginem veniam: quae institorias exercet artes, nescio an corpore, quod scio, spiritu virgo non permanet.

22. Rhetorici sumus, et in morem declamatorum, paululum lusimus. Tu nos, Helvidi, coegisti, qui jam Evangelio coruscante, ejusdem vis esse gloriae virgines et maritatas. Et quia arbitror te veritate superatum, ad detractionem vitae meae et ad maledicta converti (solent enim hoc et mulierculae facere, quae victoribus dominis male optant in angulis), illud dico praeveniens, gloriae mihi fore tua convicia, cum eodem quo Mariae detraxisti, ore me laceres, et caninam facundiam servus Domini pariter experiatur et mater.

And although he does not have a precept of the Lord concerning virginity: because it is beyond men; and in a certain way it was the part of an impudent man to compel against nature, and in another way to say, I wish you to be what Angels are: whence also a virgin is of greater reward, while she despises that which if she shall have done, she does not sin; nevertheless in the things connected he adds: But I give counsel, as having obtained mercy from the Lord, that I may be faithful. I think therefore that this is good on account of the present necessity; because it is good for a man so to be. What is that necessity? Woe to those who are with child and to those who give suck in that day (Matt. 24:19, and Mark 13:17). Therefore the forest grows up, that afterwards it may be cut down. Therefore the field is sown, that it may be reaped. Now the world is full, the earth does not contain us. Daily wars cut us down, diseases take us away, shipwrecks swallow us up, and nevertheless we litigate concerning boundaries? From this number are those who follow the Lamb (Rev. 14), who have not defiled their garments, for they remained virgins. Observe what defiled signifies. I do not dare to expound it, lest Helvidius should cavil. But as to what you say, that some are shop-keeping virgins; I say more to you, that there are among these even adulteresses, and, that you may wonder more, that clerics are innkeepers, and monks are immodest. But who does not immediately understand that neither a shop-keeping woman can be a virgin, nor an adulterous man a monk, nor a cleric an innkeeper? Is it the fault of virginity if a pretender of virginity is in crime? I certainly, that passing over other persons I may come to the Virgin: she who exercises the arts of a huckster, I know not whether in body, but what I do know, she does not remain a virgin in spirit.

22. We have used rhetoric, and in the manner of declaimers, we have played a little. You, Helvidius, have compelled us, who now with the Gospel flashing, wish virgins and married women to be of the same glory. And because I judge that you have been overcome by the truth, and have turned to the detraction of my life and to maledictions (for even silly women are accustomed to do this, who wish ill to their victorious masters in corners), I say this beforehand, that your reproaches will be a glory to me, when you tear me with the same mouth with which you detracted from Mary, and the servant of the Lord and his mother experience a canine eloquence alike.