SAINT HILARY OF POITIERS

Treatise on the Mysteries

Tractatus mysteriorum

SABBATISMUS

Saint Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310–367)
Tractatus mysteriorum · Treatise on the Mysteries

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BOOK ONE

1

Manifold ...

...

we should understand those very ones in the events. For those others, however, it is enough to have fitted on even some appearance of an empty likeness, whereas a comparison must both be filled out completely from what follows and be sought on solid ground from what is present. But the whole work contained in the sacred volumes announces by its sayings, expresses by its deeds and confirms by its examples the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which, sent by the Father, he was born man of the Virgin through the Spirit. For through the whole time of this world, since it was established, by true and plain prefigurations in the patriarchs he begets the Church, or washes it, or sanctifies, or chooses, or sets apart, or redeems it: by the sleep of Adam, by the flood of Noah, by the blessing of Melchizedek, by the justification of Abraham, by the birth of Isaac, by the servitude of Jacob. Indeed, through all time the whole of prophecy, the laborious building of the mystery, has been granted for the knowledge of the flesh that was to be assumed by him. And since it has seemed good in this little book to show that the whole of his coming, of his preaching, of his Passion and resurrection, and of our gathering together is held up, like [in] an image in a mirror, in each and every man and time and thing, I shall not touch on some things in passing but shall

treat them all, each in its own time, starting from Adam, from whom knowledge of the human race is granted us, so that what was completed in the Lord may be known to have been prefigured in very many things already from the beginning of the world.

ON ADAM

2

Adam by his very name prefigures the birth of the Lord; for what is "Adam" in the Hebrew tongue, and "gepyrra" in Greek, is in Latin "flaming earth", and Scripture is wont to call the flesh of the human body "earth". This flesh, born in the Lord of the Virgin through the Spirit, changed into an appearance new and foreign to itself, was made conformed to spiritual glory [is] (Phil 3:21), according to the Apostle: the second man from heaven and the heavenly Adam (1 Cor 15:47), because the earthly Adam is an image of the one to come (Rom 5:14). With so great an author as our warrant, then, we safely take up the name of Adam too, not without some meditation on what was to come.

3

There follows how, while Adam was put to sleep, Eve is brought forth from his side and bone. When he had awoken, a prophecy of this kind follows too: This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman,

because she was taken from her man, and the two shall be in one flesh (Gen 2:23–24). Here I have no labour; for the Apostle, when he called this very prophecy to mind, said: This mystery is great, but I say in Christ and in the Church (Eph 5:32). But we read that only a bone was taken from Adam; and how is it said, "flesh of my flesh"? This could indeed be referred to the credibility of the events of that time: that since the bone, the one from his side, was clothed with flesh into a woman's body by him who can do all things, by God — since, that is, the bone [was] taken from the flesh and clothed again with flesh came forth as a body — then as bone is from bone, so also flesh is from flesh. But the Lord in the Gospels, when the Jews had tested him over the giving of a bill of divorce, shows that this was said through himself rather than through Adam, saying: Have you not read that he who made at the beginning made male and female, and said: For this a man shall leave father and mother, and the two shall be in one flesh? (Matt 19:4–5) For this follows after what was said: flesh of my flesh (Gen 2:23). So prophecy followed upon the thing that was being brought to completion in Adam. For since the Lord, who made male and female, said these words — that bone is from his bone and flesh from his flesh (Gen 2:23; Eph 5:30) — he, speaking himself through Adam of what had been done wholly in Adam himself, did not take credibility away from the events, and he showed that what was being done in another was prefigured from himself. For since the Word was made

flesh (John 1:14), and the Church, which was born from his side through water and given life through blood, is a member of Christ, and since in turn the flesh in which the Word, remaining before the ages, who is the Son of God, was born, remains in us through the sacrament, he taught plainly that his own figure and the Church's are contained in Adam and Eve: the Church which, as he signifies, was sanctified after the sleep of his death by the communion of his flesh. The same one speaks also through the Apostle: For Adam did not sin, but the woman, sinning, was in transgression. But she will be saved on account of the procreation of children, if only they remain in faith (1 Tim 2:14–15). The Church, then, is made up of publicans and sinners and Gentiles; while her second and heavenly Adam alone did not sin, she herself, a sinner, will be saved through the generation of children who remain in faith. For the rest, it is not fitting to understand it so, as if the woman had not been redeemed from her sin through the Lord; and she will be baptised to no purpose if she is to be set free rather by the merit of childbearing. But not even through the generation of children itself will she be safe, since she is not saved unless those who have been begotten have persevered as faithful. And I do not know how it could be just for anyone to be made guilty by another's sin or innocent by another's merit.

4

But, safely comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor 2:13), we shall hold this: that

the Apostle, in preaching the events of the great mystery in Adam and Eve, above all refers himself already to Christ and the Church. And it is fitting for us to judge that these things were indeed said spiritually by him in such a way that his word is to be referred no less to the teaching at hand and to the instruction of those whom he was admonishing. For, having preached in the first to the Corinthians the manifold mercy of God in sanctifying unbelievers through marriage with the faithful (1 Cor 7:14), here too he taught that a sanctification of this kind is bestowed through the procreation of children who are, however, believers, so that, just as the partnership of one of the faithful was of profit to the unbeliever through marriage, so the procreation of the faithful might come to the aid of the unbelievers.

5

This too must be contemplated in the sleep of Adam and in the embodiment of Eve: the mystery of the secret hidden in Christ and in the Church; for in it are contained the faith and the principle of the bodily resurrection. For in the creation of the woman clay is no longer taken up, nor is earth drawn out into a form, nor is lifeless matter stirred into a living soul by the breathing-in of God (Gen 2:7); instead, flesh grows onto bone, and to the flesh the perfection of a body is given, and spiritual vigour follows upon the perfection of the body. This order of the resurrection God declared through Ezekiel (Ezek 37:8–10), teaching, in the things that were to be done, the authority

of his power. For there everything runs together: the flesh is present, the spirit flies to it, nothing of his works is lost to God, for whom, to bring about his body, the things that were not were at hand. Now this mystery is, according to the Apostle, hidden from the ages in God (Col 1:26; Eph 3:9): that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ (Eph 3:6), who is able, according to the same Apostle, to make the body of our lowliness conformed to the body of his glory (Phil 3:21). So, after the sleep of his Passion, when the heavenly Adam rises again, the Church recognises her own bone, her own flesh: no longer created from clay nor quickened by a breathing-in, but growing onto bone and brought to completion into a body from a body as the spirit flies to it. For those who are in Christ will rise according to Christ (1 Thess 4:16), in whom the resurrection of all flesh has already been completed, since he himself was born in our flesh together with the power of God in which he was begotten by the Father before the ages. And since Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free, male and female, are all one in Christ (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11), since the flesh that is recognised is from flesh, and the Church is the body of Christ, and the mystery that is in Adam and Eve is preached of Christ and of the Church, whatever is being prepared for the Church through Christ for the completion of the times was already brought to completion under Adam and Eve at the outset of the world.

ON CAIN AND ABEL

6

After the first prefiguration of Christ and the Church follow the events of Cain and Abel, who prefigured in themselves the difference of the two peoples and signified by their very names and offices the ways and pursuits of each. For Cain was a tiller of the earth, and Abel a feeder of sheep. From his own fruits each of them offered God the gift of the mystery; but Abel's gifts are looked upon, while Cain's are not seen. And yet the day of the sacrifice is indistinguishable, and so is the place; and for God, who beholds all things, how is this one in his sight and that one out of his sight? But by this signification we are taught that God's sight is the token of the things that please him, and that, although all things are subject to him (1 Cor 15:27), his gaze nevertheless goes out to those that are worthy. Yet nothing had been said before about Cain's ways that should make his victim displeasing. But in what followed we understand the providence of God, who did not receive the sacrifices of one who was going to rage against his brother. For with God the knowledge of what is to come is the credibility of the deed; for he who was going to kill, as though he had killed already, is not worthy of God's regard. In the tilling of the earth, moreover, is contained the meaning of carnal works, and the whole fruit of the flesh lies in vices, which, since God abhors them, drive his sight away from themselves. So there is no regard for the victim that comes from the labours of

the earth, and only the firstlings of the sheep in their fat are pleasing: that is to say, inward fruits and the sacrifices of our own conscience delight him, and these, pleasing in the firstlings of the sheep, invite upon themselves the regard of the divine will. For since Christ is the firstfruits (1 Cor 15:23), the firstborn of creation, the firstborn from the dead, the chief of the priests as well, that he himself might be in all things holding the first place (Col 1:15, 18), himself also a sheep and, according to his bodily birth, one of the sheep, Abel's sacrifice is acceptable already under the mystery of the Church, who was afterwards to offer, from the firstlings of the sheep, the victim of the holy body. So the displeasing one envies the one who pleases, and, against the edict of God, who admonished him to be still, the acceptable is killed by the unacceptable. The guilty man is questioned with a view to the repentance of confession, but he denies, to the increase of his crime; despairing of the resurrection, he thinks he will be dissolved by death, but, groaning and trembling (Gen 4:14), he is kept for the judgement of a sevenfold vengeance, and he is cursed by all the earth, which received his brother's blood. Now the interpretation of the name Cain is "laughter", and of Abel "weeping".

7

Are not the things said above completed in the peoples? The offering of the younger is pleasing; the Jew envies the Christian and, warned in vain by the prophets, blazed up to slay him. He does

not seek pardon even through the very confession of repentance, but boldly denies to God the crime he has committed. Despairing of the glory of the resurrection, and, once Jerusalem was taken, subjected to the power of those who rule over him, groaning and trembling (Gen 4:14) he is kept for the judgement of vengeance, set apart from the saints by the very interpretations of the names, as the Lord says: Woe to those who laugh, for they shall weep! (Luke 6:25) and: Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted! (Matt 5:4) And so that the Lord might teach that all things agree with the prefiguration of the two peoples, he said: Therefore behold, I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them you will kill in the synagogues, and you will persecute them from city to city, that upon you may come all the just blood that has been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiel, whom you killed between the temple and the altar (Matt 23:34–35). … So Abel's blood is required of him who, according to the prefiguration of Cain, persecuted the just and is cursed by the earth, which, opening its mouth, received his brother's blood (Gen 4:11). For in the body of Christ, in which are both the apostles and the Church, their whole flesh and posterity took upon itself the blood of all, as they themselves cried out: His blood be upon us and upon our children (Matt 27:25).

8

Thus the credibility of the outcomes has followed upon the prefiguration of the things done in Cain, and those upon whom the vengeance for the same guilt has followed cannot be separated from the example of the prefiguration. But in the saying, too, If you offer rightly but do not divide rightly, have you not sinned? (Gen 4:7) there is contained, beyond what came about in the matter at hand, a figure of what was to come as well; for nothing pleases God but what is held in common, shared and made friendly. So the people that awaits God's promises through the Law, even if it offers rightly to God with the observance of the precepts, has nevertheless sinned, unless it shares this very Law of God, which is the shadow of things to come (Heb 10:1), with the gathering of the Gentiles. Not dividing rightly, then, he will be held fast in crime. For Cain, envying his brother, had not taken for himself a share in the grace of the victim that God had regarded, and was made a sinner because he did not divide rightly. By this example, unless those who are under the Law share out the victims of the faithful from among the Gentiles, which God has approved, they are in crime, even if they use the Law rightly.

ON LAMECH

9

But not even in Lamech are things done outside the figure of what was to come. He is reported to have been the husband of two wives, to whose names was added the name of

a third woman too, who was nevertheless free of marriage with him; and the same Lamech is also written to have said these words: And Lamech said to his wives Adah and Zillah: Hear my voice, wives of Lamech, give heed to my words, for I have killed a man to my wounding and a young man to my bruising; for vengeance has been taken seven times for Cain, but for Lamech seventy times seven (Gen 4:23–24). And who is this, more just than that just Abel, whose death is now to be avenged with so much greater a punishment? The name of the slain is passed over in silence; the wound is referred not to the slain but to the slayer, and the bruise is shown to be the striker's rather than the stricken's. The killing of the young man is announced to the wives; although the names of three women are recorded, the speech is addressed to only two. The impious man prophesies, and heaps up the vengeance for the slaughter he committed beyond the punishment of Cain.

10

These things are not to be heard in passing; rather, the figuring of things to come must be searched out in them. Lamech bears the figure of the chief of the priests, who, with the Jews and the Gentiles consenting with him, fastens the Lord to the cross; for from the court of the chief of the priests the same Lord was led to Herod, the people of the believers being kept apart from communion in the crime; and for this reason he boasts of the slaying of the young man to two,

as to his partners and wives. And since there is no sense of punishment concerning him, he took upon himself both the wounds and the bruise of the wrong and of the slaying. He spoke, too, by a prophetic impulse; for then too the chief of the priests prophesied without knowing it, as it is written in the Gospels: But one of them, Caiaphas by name, since he was high priest that year, said to them: You know nothing at all, nor do you perceive that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish. But he did not say this of himself; rather, since he was high priest that year, he prophesied (John 11:49–51). So all things agree with one another, in persons, in things, in outcome, and the credibility of the events embraces the figure of things to come. The number of the punishment in Cain and in Lamech, too, is not written down without some meaning. For since according to the prophets a sevenfold punishment was appointed for the unjust, Peter, upon whom ⟨the Lord⟩ was building the Church as upon a living foundation (Matt 16:18), asks whether, according to the Law, he is to forgive one who sins against him seven times; and the Lord answered him that he should pardon seventy times seven (Matt 18:21–22), teaching by this signification that the very punishment for his own Passion was to be remitted to those who would believe, since, by as much as the vengeance for it had been multiplied, by so much in turn would pardon abound.

11

Then Seth is born, and in him another seed is raised up in place of the slain Abel, as Eve says: God has raised up for me another seed in place of Abel, whom Cain killed (Gen 4:25). Now the interpretation of the name Seth is "foundation of faith". And since Abel was just, and since Seth was begotten in the place of the just one, the generation of the saints is understood to be ever preserved by God and renewed through successions, the Church being destined to uphold the faith on faithful foundations in Peter.

ON NOAH

12

It cannot be denied that what was done in regard to Noah is full of the mighty works of God ⟨and⟩ of examples of things to come. For however dull the mind may be, or however turned away from the understanding of what is true the will, yet there things were said and done which draw out the sense of the truth even from the unwilling. And so that the prophetic power may be understood in each of the things that came about, we must set out briefly what is to be compared with what. For Noah prefigures the man whom the Lord assumed from the Virgin; and, so that this very thing may be made known from the words of Scripture itself, we must learn what kind of prophecy his father Lamech made about him: And Lamech begot a son and called

his name Noah, saying: This one will make us rest from our works and from the sorrows of our hands and from the earth which the Lord God has cursed (Gen 5:28–29). But these words, as I judge, cannot fit perfectly that Noah of whom the account speaks. For what rest did he bring the human race, or from what works did he make it cease? On the contrary, under him the whole of mankind is wiped out and the flood is poured in; the earth is given back to that man's sight, and afterwards men live amid even graver mighty works. And where will rest have been given back through Noah? But in the one who is to make rest, it is the power to make it that is designated. Moreover, it neither befits the nature of a man, nor do we read it written, nor is it understood from the facts themselves, that Noah did any of these things; but most of the things that were Noah's own Scripture has set out most plainly: when he is acceptable to God, when he is found just, when he is ordered to make the ark, when he enters it, when he sends out the raven, when he both receives and sends out again the dove, when he goes out of the ark, when he plants a vineyard, when, drunk from its fruit, he is laid bare, when he is mocked by Ham, when he is covered by Shem and Japheth, when he lays a curse upon one and the order and measure of blessing upon two. These things are to be understood as they were done by him.

13

But a great mystery of what was to come is contained in these things, and we shall treat of each in its place, when it is time to compare things and persons with one another. To this Noah, then, will be compared our Lord, who as the Word was made flesh (John 1:14), and who also said in the Gospels: Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn that I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden is light (Matt 11:28–30). So he brings rest and imparts rest to souls; and, because of the judgement that threatens, he shuts away in the ark of his teaching and of his Church his sons, both those begotten and those so called; and he bestows the Holy Spirit (John 20:22), and dies, and is mocked, and rises again, and appoints for the human race punishment or sanctification for what has been done rightly or wrongly. And indeed, in Noah's being ordered to enter the ark or to go out of it, the principle of the Church's sanctification is to be contemplated. For it is written: But you shall go into the ark, you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives (Gen 6:18); and again: The Lord God spoke to Noah, saying: Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives (Gen 8:15–16). He pairs the sexes of those entering the ark with each other, the men with the man, the women with the woman, signifying, that is, that those who are to enter the Church must be continent, and that each would afterwards receive again the use of his own marriage …

...
when it was sent out three times.

14

And what the following sending prefigures is not uncertain. For it returns with the fruitful leaves of the olive, no longer to be received by hand, but flying back. This was fulfilled when, having received the Holy Spirit, the seventy disciples, sent out to preach the Gospel, return with the glory of the unclean spirits made subject to them (Luke 10:17), the Holy Spirit bringing back the fruit of God's mercy, which is signified in the olive; and also because, when these afterwards departed from the Lord, he was to have no rest at all. Yet the dove flew back to Noah with fruit, signifying by this, in its second return, both the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the demons made subject and, as the disciples departed from the Lord, ⟨no⟩ rest as yet in which to settle. The third sending, however, and flying away prefigures its dwelling, which is in the believer, the Holy Spirit, once sent, remaining for ever ⟨in⟩ the souls of the faithful (John 14:16).

15

Now the drunkenness from the fruit of the planted vineyard is a figure of the Passion. For the Lord removed a vineyard out of Egypt and planted it (Ps 80:9), and again: The vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel (Isa 5:7). For the cause of the Passion lies in the works of

his own people, removed and planted. If anyone should happen to think that this drunkenness of Noah does not belong to the figure of the Lord's death, he will be refuted by what follows, although the cup drunk in the Gospels shows the death of the Passion (Matt 20:22). Now, there being three sons, the father's nakedness is laughed at by one and covered again by two; but though the two covered it with one mind, while the third is cursed, there is nevertheless a different blessing in the two for one and the same work. Under these three sons the whole of mankind is shown: that is, those who live under the Law, those justified under grace, and the Gentiles. Of these, the Gentiles mock the death of the Lord and the naked body of God, while in the two who cover the nakedness the Law and grace are contained.

16

And because Japheth is settled in the houses of Shem (Gen 9:27), he shows the figure of the Gentiles, who have been led into the faith; Shem, for his part, bears the person of the Israelite people. ...

...

ON ABRAHAM

17

... Sarah too signifies the Church, Hagar the Synagogue ... And he shows that the seed called in Isaac (Gen 21:12) is Christ; in whom a prefigu-

ration of the Passion is also set forth, when he is called by his father to be the victim, when he takes up the wood of the sacrifice, when a ram stands by for the completion of the victim. …

18

In the letter added to Abram the number is one; in the one that comes to Sarah, a hundred are counted (Gen 17:5, 15); and the Saviour, leaving the ninety-nine on the mountains, went off to seek the one that had strayed (Matt 18:12). So the number one is added in the letter given to Abram. For one is the Lord Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin, and by that one all the crimes of believers have been cleansed. And what was to be fulfilled through himself he prefigures in Abraham: the one, by the addition of one, is called father of the Gentiles (Gen 17:4); he himself, by the assumption of one, is made father and redeemer of the Gentiles, the hundredth sheep being restored to Sarah, that is, to the firstborn Church of the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22–23). …

…

18*

As that householder in the Gospel visited the barren fig tree in a threefold coming (Luke 13:6–7), so holy mother Church, in her yearly return, has proclaimed for herself the coming of the Saviour through a set-apart space of three weeks. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost (Luke 19:10). He came before the

Law, because through natural understanding it was made known what each one should do and what he should follow. He came under the Law, because by the examples of the patriarchs and the proclamations of the prophets he confirmed to the seed of Abraham the decrees of the Law. He came a third time, after the Law, through grace, for the calling of the Gentiles, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting the children might learn to praise the name of the Lord (Ps 113:1–3), whom he does not cease to exhort to the worship of his majesty until the end of the world. ...

ON ISAAC

19

... Rebekah bears a twofold figure, of marriage and of childbearing, and in marriage she displays the type of the Church: she gives drink to the camels, that is, to the Gentiles made subject to Christ; by the earrings she teaches the hearing of faith; she displays the bracelets on her hands, the adornments of good work; asked about the marriage, she answers in the manner of those who are to be joined to Christ, so as to come to sight; she goes out from her father's house, showing that unless one has renounced vices and desires, he cannot be the servant of Christ (Luke 14:33); she signifies two nations, two peoples.

...

ON JACOB

20

... Scripture interpreting the proper sense of this name. And Esau said to Jacob: Give me a taste of this ⟨red⟩ stew, for I am fainting. For this reason his name was called Edom (Gen 25:30). Then he sold his birthright for food, saying: Behold, I am dying, and what do I want with these primacies? (Gen 25:32) Now in primacies this was the dignity among the ancients: that the firstborn obtained the inheritance of his father's house, the brothers who came after being subject to him. So, since for those who live in the body the dignity of the birthright has to do with this life — the dignity that Esau, under the prefiguration of the unbelieving people, was selling for carnal desires — he is certainly not despairing of the present honour of the birthright when he says: Behold, I am dying, and what do I want with these primacies? (Gen 25:32) — for that primacy which belongs to men was received before death — but because, bearing in himself the form of the people, being himself firstborn through the Law — for this people had been chosen first into the inheritance of God — he fell from the hope of the resurrection and of the glory of God, he declared, taken up with the desires of the body, that he had despaired of his own honour, which it befitted the firstborn to hope for after death.

21

So, with Esau despairing of his birthright, the rest is done both according to the credibility of the deed and according to the power of the prefiguration. So Isaac, when his eyes had grown dim,

bids Esau, according to custom, to prepare him food from his hunting and to be blessed by him before the time of his death. And when Rebekah had learnt of it, she urges Jacob to prepare food quickly for his father from two kids and to put on Esau's robe, and, since he was smooth, to counterfeit his hands and his neck by binding the skins of the kids onto himself. When this was done, he snatched the blessing that had been prepared for Esau. Then he is blessed with these words: Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a full field, which the Lord has blessed. And may the Lord give you from the dew of heaven above and from the richness of the earth abundance of grain and wine. And let nations serve you, and princes will worship you, and be lord of your brother, and the sons of your father will worship you; and whoever curses you will be cursed, and whoever blesses you will be blessed (Gen 27:27–29).

22

The thing is indeed done according to the outcome then present in Esau and Jacob, but the spiritual prefiguration holds its own order. The elder had sold his primacies through the desires of the body, despairing of the honour of things to come for the sake of the luxury of things present; and the younger bought them up at the cost of things present. Do not the things to be done spiritually follow on the things done bodily? Those who are unbelievers think that every good is placed in pleasure, and the earlier people lost the honour of the resurrection through the desires

of the flesh; but believers renounce present joys, placing all their hope in those to come, and, continent in mind and body for the sake of that hope, they snatch what was destined for the elder. For Jacob is clothed with Esau's robe, which is wont to be mentioned as the garment of immortality in the Gospel too, where the younger brother, the same who squandered the patrimony he had received, received the first robe (Luke 15:12, 22). And because he was to be carried over from sins into the brightness of innocence, Jacob is therefore covered with the skins of kids, in the event itself to imitate his brother's appearance. But because, having been a sinner, he was to have the dignity of the blessing he had seized, in the skins of dead beasts he assumes the form of a sinner.

23

But the very principle of the blessing and the power of the words show that nothing there is to be understood according to the events of the present. For Jacob is blessed so as to abound in wine and wheat from the dew of heaven and the richness of the earth. On the contrary, he was in danger of famine and bought grain from Egypt. Nations are made subject to him in servitude; yet rather he himself gave himself, with all his household, into the power of Pharaoh. He is said to be one whom princes are to worship, but rather he bore a long servitude under the rule of Laban. He is appointed lord over his brother; but why did he worship his brother as his lord? So, since Scripture is in no danger of falsehood,

although these things were said of Jacob, they are nevertheless both signified and carried out in the people whom he prefigured. For all these things are kept for the faithful according to the promises of the prophets and of the Gospel, since they are to judge the world and the angels (1 Cor 6:2–3) and are destined for fellowship in the heavenly kingdom.

24

Indeed, that very outset of the blessing embraces not things present but things to come and perfect. For he says: Behold, the smell of my son is like the smell of a full field, which God has blessed (Gen 27:27). The smell is the foreknowledge of the spirit; the full field is the perfection of fruits. And the field, as the Gospels teach, stands for the world (Matt 13:38); but by the blessed world, we must judge, is meant not the one that will be dissolved and be no more, but the one that is eternal and full of perfect fruits. So, since the smell of Jacob is the same as that of the full field, and since smell, by the nature of things, is the foreknowledge of the spirit — for what each thing is is perceived by its smell — Isaac signifies that he smells, that is, foreknows in spirit, this blessing of the younger people, and that it will be the blessing of the eternal world, both of them being eternal, that is, both the world and he who is to enjoy it.

25

And so that we might discern the abundant mercy of God in prefiguring, under things present, the outcomes of things to come, everything was set out and written with such care that one and the same order of the history ran together both towards the thing done and towards the hope to come. For Isaac, about to bless Jacob in place of Esau, is concerned not to be deceived in any way; for Jacob was saying that he was Esau. So Isaac, since he was blind, said: Come near to me and I will feel you, son, whether you are my son Esau or not (Gen 27:21). And although he had both put on Esau's robe and counterfeited his appearance by assuming the skins, he was nevertheless handled by the blind man not without suspicion. For he says, as he felt him: The voice indeed is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau (Gen 27:22). So by these words Isaac's affection is shown to be concerned for Esau. When he afterwards returns from the field and the hunt and presses himself on his father as the firstborn, so that he may bless ⟨him⟩, and the snatching of the blessing has been discovered, Isaac is not moved; rather, he persists in confirming that very blessing, saying: If I have made him your lord and have made all his brothers his servants, have strengthened him with grain and wine, what, then, shall I do for you, son? (Gen 27:37) Rather, to him who begged with weeping and tears that he would bless him, he speaks thus: Behold, your dwelling shall be from the richness of the earth and from the dew of heaven above, and by your sword you shall live, and you

shall serve your brother. But it shall be, when you have put off his yoke from your neck (Gen 27:39–40).

26

Where, then, does this turning of the will come from? And why does the man's affection disagree with itself, unless because the word of Scripture is tempered both to the bringing about of events and to the expectation of hope? The solicitude of his questioning he had from a father's affection; the change of the blessing he refused from spiritual knowledge. There he acted on a matter of nature, here he held to the order of the prefiguration; there the father is concerned for the sanctification of his firstborn, here he perseveres, in the spirit of a prophet, in the blessing of the younger people. The history tells the thing done, and its own order does not forsake the hope prefigured. But not even in this did the prophetic principle fall silent; indeed, even the sinner, the earlier people, could hope for the blessing of the younger people, if it believed. For the approach to salvation lies open to all, and the road of life is hard not by any troubles of its own, which indeed are none, but by the right of our own choice. For in attaining the mercy of God the delay belongs to the human will, as is made known from this very passage, since it is about Esau. For he had asked to be blessed, but his father, moved by a spiritual impulse, both left him to the world and gave him over to the sword and bound him to his brother's servitude. But lest these things should

be thought decreed for ever and without a return through repentance, he put off the blessing that he was asking for until the time when he should have put off from his neck the yoke of the brother who was to rule him. So it is left within his own right to put off the yoke, because to each one the right of his own will is free in respect of faith, and he is worthy of the blessing then, when he has carried himself over from the servitude of irreligion into the freedom of faith.

ON MOSES

27

The account of the things done in Moses also kept the order of the prefiguration begun already from Adam. And this was worthy of God's mercy: that the events of all his patriarchs should imitate in some measure the perfection of what was to be completed in our Lord. For what was fulfilled in that one and through that one is prefigured in part through figures and times and generations. For the imitation of so many ages could not attain what there is of truth in that one; and yet nothing was done in individuals or through individuals in such a way that the things afterwards completed, either through him or in him, did not speak almost in the very imitation of the events of that present.

28

For Moses, born at the time when Pharaoh had ordered all who were born of the male sex to be killed, floating on the water by means of wood, is kept to be the leader of the people. Did not the same and equal hatred and dread of a king, at the time when our Lord was born according to man, blaze out against the man, the same as we are, whom he assumed into himself through the mystery of the wood and the water, and who was assigned by him to heavenly glory and established as king of the Gentiles (Ps 2:6–8)? Then Pharaoh's daughter, who was to bathe in the river, took up this Moses. His sister, being at hand, offered a nurse from among the Hebrews. Then she produced his mother; she took him up to rear him and brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter, who received him and took him as her son.

29

Join the persons, compare the outcomes, look at the events: you will find the truth of what followed in the imitation of what was then present. For under Moses' sister the Law followed Christ as far as the mystery of the wood and the water. In Pharaoh's daughter, on the other hand, is the form of the Gentiles; and she, although by the credibility of the history she saw a little child, yet in the very outcome held the power of prophecy. For the Law presented to the Church, as to Pharaoh's daughter, the Synagogue as both the nurse and the mother of the infant; and thus the spiritual order was kept in the events.

For it was fitting, as the Law teaches this, that Christ should be nursed according to the flesh by the latter, and it behoved him to be adopted by the former. Moses, grown great, seeks out his brothers held in servitude. Then he strikes down the Egyptian who was lording it over them and doing wrong to one of them, and afterwards he is reproached by the very man whom he had avenged on the Egyptian. Does not Christ, when he was of complete and perfect age, visit his people, who according to the flesh are his brothers? For he came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 15:24). Did he not strike down and conquer the devil who lorded it over them? For no one will plunder the goods of the strong man unless he has first bound the strong man (Matt 12:29). Is he not reproached by the very ones to whom he was giving both vengeance on the devil and freedom from servitude? Thus the imitation that is in the giver of the Law attains the completion of grace in God.

30

The bush blazes in Moses' sight and yet is not burnt: that is, the Church is set alight by the flames of the persecutions of sinners and of temptations, as the Apostle says: Enduring distress, bearing want, but we are not forsaken. We are cast down, but we do not perish, always carrying about in the body the passions of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus Christ too may be made manifest in our body (2 Cor 4:8–10). So the fires

of all iniquities rage against us and do not burn us up.

31

Next a sign of faith is set forth: the rod changed into a serpent, and the serpent done away with and turned back into a rod. But this change is for the confirming of faith, not for a conversion of nature. And since in the rod is the power of the kingdom and in the serpent the naming of the devil, we are admonished to believe in him who, from being the God of the ages, was thought to be Beelzebub (Matt 10:25), and then, from being called and thought Beelzebub, was recognised through the change of the resurrection as the God of the ages, which he was. The following sign filled out the faith in this matter by a figure of imitation, satisfying both hope and time. For when the hand, put into the bosom, took on the whiteness of snow, it signifies that we, resting in the father's bosom, that is, Abraham's and Isaac's and Jacob's (Matt 8:11), are to be enlightened, the nature of our body being swallowed up into the appearance of glory and honour (1 Cor 15:54). But when the hand, put into the bosom again, is restored to what it had been, we are taught that what had been prefigured in the sign does not yet exist in time. And when, in the third sign, water taken from the river and poured on the ground became blood, the principle of the mystery is mingled with these, since those who have been washed through water are to pass on to the knowledge of the blood.

32

It is a great thing that in what was done under the patriarchs the outcome of things is so contained that nothing in what was afterwards fulfilled in the Lord disagrees with it, whether in place or in time or in principle. For in this the imitation sent on before attains the figure of the complete truth, and is compared, as an image, with that form which it emulates. For what was done is indeed truth in itself — it was carried out according to bodily efficacies — but that very truth of human acts was an imitation of the divine working; and this came about so for the true instruction of our hope and faith, since nothing would be found in the things of God that had not been seen before, as though rehearsed in advance, in the very ages and ways and outcomes of men. For although it has been shown in all the discourse above, up to the people's going out of Egypt, that the events of Moses agree with the events either in the Lord or through the Lord, yet even now a spiritual imitation is joined to the bodily truth.

33

For in the desert the people thirsted; the water is bitter; there is murmuring against the leader; a wood is shown, and by its dipping the water is made sweet; and in it justification and judgements and temptation are decreed. And from there they come to twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamp by the wa-

ters. Though the zeal of those who resist may turn minds away, and the error of unbelievers may bar the sense of their understanding with the bolt of disobedience, they will not be able to be ignorant of the power of so great a work. For what weight did the wood have in itself, or what efficacy did lifeless matter contain in itself, to abolish bitterness, to beget sweetness, both to bring in a nature and to take one away, while what repelled as harsh is tasted as sweet? And since in what was then being done for the present it is the efficacy of the power of God that carries a nature over from one thing into another, he is not, for all that, to be thought to have needed the service of the wood, as though he could grant the waters their change only through its intervention.

34

But because God could do all things, he works out in the present the secret of his working that was kept for its times. For to the people staying in the desert the water was useless; and indeed we often find peoples called waters, as when it is said: The waters saw you, O God, and were afraid (Ps 77:17), and again: All you waters, clap your hands (Ps 47:2; 98:8). So whether it be the waters themselves, bitter by their nature, or the whole people remaining in the desert and not yet about to gain the land of promise, bitter through the murmuring that is born of stubbornness, it is made sweet by the mystery of the wood. And it not only ceases to be what it was, but is altered for the better and beyond what use required; for it

not only ceased to be bitter but was made sweet. So the wood both works upon the water then present and is of use, by the mystery of its power, to the peoples called by the name of water.

35

On this wood, in the same Moses, the life of all hangs, when he says: You will see your life hanging before your eyes night and day, and you will fear, and you will not believe your life (Deut 28:66). In Jeremiah this is thrown into bread, thus: Against me they devised a device, saying: Come, let us throw wood into his bread (Jer 11:19). Of this material is the rod that conquers the magicians, terrifies Pharaoh, crushes Egypt, divides the sea, pours back the deep, draws out a spring, takes away bitterness, bestows sweetness; for by its mystery the hearts of unbelievers are softened and carried over from the bitterness of sins and impiety into the sweetness of faith. And lest everything should fail to agree, in the outcomes of the hidden mystery, with the things that were then being done, Scripture added: There God set justifications and judgements, and there he tempted him (Exod 15:25). When "there" is said, it is not the meaning of a place but of a deed. For we do not find that any ordinances of justifications and judgements and temptations stand in that place.

36

But on the other hand, in the mystery of the wood on which the Lord hung, on which he fastened with himself everything that stood against the salvation of the human race (Col 2:14), there is justification, because the just man is from faith (Rom 1:17); and there are judgements, because he who does not believe has already been judged (John 3:18); and there is temptation, because salvation is through the scandal of the cross (Gal 5:11); for the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but the power of God for salvation to those who believe (1 Cor 1:18; Rom 1:16). So, since the reproach of the cross is the temptation of faith, since unbelief is the cause of judgement, since faith is the price of justification, justification and judgements and temptation are rightly contained in the mystery of the wood that carries the water over from bitterness into sweetness.

37

And they came to Elim, and there were there twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. And they encamped there by the waters (Exod 15:27). So the spiritual ordering is completed in the things to be done; for they come from Marah, the place of bitterness, to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. After the knowledge of the mystery of the wood — that is, of the apostolic and evangelical preaching — a dwelling is sought, the seventy preachers giving shade for a time and the twelve apostles flowing for ever; and because the seventy chosen preachers of the Gospel were

afterwards found to be unbelievers (John 6:66), although they had brought back the fruit of faith in the unclean spirits made subject to them, while the apostles endured in the preaching of the faith, though mention is made of seventy trees together with twelve springs, yet, according to the credibility of Scripture, rest is taken at the dwelling of the waters alone.

38

And now, in the flesh of the quails and the food of the manna, how great and how plain is the principle of the spiritual matter! The people that had been led out of Egypt murmurs against its leaders; it longs for the flesh it used to eat in Egypt. A flock of quails, flying in at evening, covers the camp; the people is fed on their flesh. In the morning manna is found. Without distinction of age or sex the same measure is appointed for each: he who gathers more has nothing over, he who lays up less is not in want. In what went beyond necessity, worms swarmed. And what was left over of the manna gathered in the field melted away as the sun grew hot. On the sixth day a double portion is laid up and does not spoil; on the seventh day the manna is abstained from, though some wait for it in vain. Lastly, the omer appointed for each, laid up in a golden vessel, is kept as a testimony for the generation to come.

39

And this too must be contemplated: that the manna is given for temptation, each one being about to prove, by keeping it, whether he is fit for the precepts of God. For thus it is written: The Lord said to Moses: Behold, I will rain loaves for you from heaven, and the people will go out and gather a day's portion for each day, that I may tempt them, whether they will enter into my law or not (Exod 16:4). Of the flesh, however, it was said thus: At evening you eat flesh, and in the morning you are filled with bread (Exod 16:12). The eating at evening is signified in the flesh, the filling in the morning in the manna. So what belongs to the flesh is this: that the people, remaining in the desert, is held back by the desire of habit; for it longs for the flesh of Egypt. It takes it at evening — unbelieving towards God, that is, and impatient of his promises until the end of the world, which is signified in the evening — through the desires of the world, which has often been signified under Egypt. Indeed, the people had this flesh only once, so that it might be shown to have been given not for necessary use but for the signification of a prefiguration. In the manna, however, there is temptation; for through it the people is tempted, whether it will be obedient to God, that is, whether they will be worthy to receive the true bread from heaven; and the principle of this temptation is to be sought from what follows.

40

It is found in the morning; for in the resurrection of the Lord this is the time of the heavenly food. The same is appointed for every age and sex: contrary to human nature — for when does a little child need as much food as a grown man? — but most fitting according to the spiritual prefiguration, since the heavenly food is to be imparted equally to all, indistinguishable in its power by its portions — for we speak a mystery to those who know — no one among the greater having too much and no one among the least in want, all being filled equally, that is, from what was taken divided into portions. In what was gathered beyond the measure and overflowed into the morning, in that there are both worms and stench, it is not doubtful that, for those who have gathered unnecessary things beyond the heavenly gift and the spiritual teaching, these things are both foul to the sense, that is, corrupted away from the truth, and seething with the vices of demons, that is, restless with worms, and are one day to melt away into liquid when the sun grows hot, that is, when Christ, who is the sun of justice (Mal 3:20), returns for judgement.

41

In the double gathering of manna on the sixth day, for the sake of the rest of the seventh, a heaped-up preparation of spiritual works is urged upon those who are to use the good things prepared then, when the rest is at hand. Indeed, what is left over from the sixth day does not spoil, whereas what goes beyond the measure

on the other days stinks. So for the things that are beyond what is prescribed, too, corruption is taken for granted in advance. We must therefore work, in this time of our age, at what we may use in the rest. And the time is that of this six-thousandth year, which is signified under the number of the sixth day, as the prophet says: For a thousand years in the sight of the Lord are as one day (Ps 90:4). So on the seventh day, that is, in the rest of the Lord, the people is fed on food laid up the day before, and it uses what it had prepared, since on the seventh it would find nothing to be fed with, many going out into the field and finding nothing; for when the times of the ages are closed, we shall find nothing else for the use of our rest but what has been prepared and laid up by us beforehand.

42

Then an omer of manna is ordered to be kept in a golden vessel in the sight of the Lord for generations to come. But where, after all, is this vessel, and where is the manna that was laid up, after the many captivities of the people? After the twofold destruction of the city and the temple, what was stored away does not exist. What then? Are we then to think that God was ignorant that the manna could not be kept for posterity? Certainly he who foresees the very counsels of men to come is not to be believed to have been ignorant; rather, by the figure of the golden vessel and of the manna laid up in the sight of God and kept for generations to come, he showed that he

would be precious and eternal who was to keep in his body, as in a golden vessel, the manna he had received, while God watches over the unstained keeping of this spiritual food taken up by us.

BOOK TWO.

On Hosea

1

And in the book of the prophets another word of the Lord to Hosea is read: Go, take for yourself a wife of fornication, for the land, fornicating, will fornicate away from the Lord (Hos 1:2). And after many things in between, full of cursing against her, and after the birth of Israel and of Not-loved and of Not-my-people, these words are found: And I will make a covenant for them on that day with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky and the serpents of the earth, and I will break bow and sword and war from the land, and I will settle you in hope ⟨and I will betroth you to me⟩ myself for ever. I will betroth you to me in justice and faith, and you shall know the Lord. And it shall be on that day, says the Lord: I will hearken to the heaven, and the heaven ⟨will hearken⟩ to the earth, and the earth will hearken to the grain and the wine and the oil, and they will hear Israel. And I will sow her for myself upon the earth, and I will love Not-loved, and I will say to Not-my-people: You are My-people (Hos 2:20–25). And, as far as I can judge, there is no room for hesitation in understanding that

a prefiguration of the Church is here prefigured, since the Apostle judged that what had been said above to Hosea about the sons of this harlot was to be referred to the people of the faithful, saying to the Corinthians: He has called us not only from the Jews but also from the nations, as he says in Hosea too: I will call him who is Not-my-people My-people, and Not-loved Loved. And it shall be in the place, wherever they shall be called Not-my-people, there they shall be called sons of the living God (Rom 9:24–26).

2

So what was done bodily in the prophet — that is, the marriage and the generation: for of the harlot three were begotten, of whom the first was named Israel by the command of God, the next, a daughter, was called Loved, and the third was named Not-my-people — this is both confirmed and done by God for the spiritual understanding. For this harlot joined to the prophet the Lord made his bride in justice and faith, making a covenant with the beasts of the field, that is, with men savage by the law of the world; and with the birds of the sky, namely those who live under the emptiness and vanity of this world; and with the serpents of the earth, that is, those set in the body with a venomous and deceitful mind; being about to break the bow among the serpents, the sword among the birds, war among the beasts, and, from the kinds of weapons and the names of the animals, to tame in peace the various impulses of the human mind: the wars of the beasts,

the darts of the flying things, the venoms of the serpents.

3

The heaven hearkening to the heaven, too, and the earth to the earth (Hos 2:23), signifies, in the one who hears and the one who is heard, a difference in number, yet shows that what hears and what is heard is the very same thing, since heaven hearkens to heaven and earth to earth; and the meaning is of divinity in the heaven and of bodiliness in the earth. And because the Lord, from God, was born man, ⟨and⟩ we, from man, are to be conformed to God, therefore heaven will hear heaven and earth will hear earth. And in the grain and the wine and the oil, in that it will hear them, although these things without sense certainly have no sense of hearing, he nevertheless shows that it is he himself who, under the mystery of the anointing and of the body, is to hear in them. Through these, with Israel hearing, he sowed the harlot betrothed to himself in hope, passing over him who was named Israel and imparting to the others the honour of the change, so that he who was not his people should be His-people, and she who was not loved should be Loved.

4

For Israel was chosen out of the Gentiles in Abraham his father, as is said in the Psalms: The house of Jacob from a barbarous people (Ps 114:1). But, lingering in sins and given over to vain reli-

gions and unbelieving towards God's promises, he did not deserve to receive the effects of the promises, and, though chosen first to be God's people, he lost the honour of the election. For nothing is said of Israel, born first of the harlot, and the whole word of God concerns those begotten afterwards, who had before been rejected and removed from affection and from being his own: born not to be loved, begotten not to be used. But first the harlot is chosen as a bride of faith and justice for God; then those who were not loved, who were not his, who were of the harlot's bearing — these are called sons of the living God (Rom 9:26). And this word of God, by which the prophet is ordered to take a harlot as wife, had to be recalled for this purpose: that, since we are taught that all things are prefigured through the events of the Old Testament and are to be done in the Lord and through the Lord, we might understand, from this very fact that a harlot is joined to the prophet, that it is shown that the ignorance of the Gentiles is coupled with the prophetic teachings, through which those begotten would be called, from not loved, loved; from no people, a people; from a harlot mother, sons of God.

ON JOSHUA, SON OF NUN

5

And although it was useful to have treated this for knowing the signification of spiritual events, yet this passage was recalled by us above all for this reason: that, since we were to speak of Rahab,

in which we would show that the Church was prefigured in her, we might safely set down this comparison of the Church and a prostitute in accordance with the understanding of our mind, since the harlot joined to the prophet was found to have been betrothed, as a prefiguration of the Church, in the eternal hope of justice and faith and knowledge of God. And indeed, in the fact that everything was done in her under Joshua, there lies the greatest power of prophecy. For in him who was surnamed Jesus the complete principle of the mystery to come was shown. For after God's long discourse to Moses, when he had been told to make everything on earth according to the figure that he had seen on the mountain (Exod 25:40), he gave the surname Jesus to the man who was formerly called Hoshea, who was to be the leader of the people on its way to the land of promise (Num 13:16). Moses, ordered to arrange all things after the figure of the heavenly vision, added to the leader to be that name which had already been prepared in the heavens for the eternal leader.

6

For as the one was prince of the Synagogue, so the other is of the Church. As ⟨the one⟩ was leader for gaining the promised land, so the other is leader to the land that is to be inherited, of which the Lord says: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land (Matt 5:5). As the one came after Moses, so the other after the Law. As to the one a second circumcision with a knife of

stone was commanded (Josh 5:2), so by the Lord, who is both the sharp Word piercing even to the dividing of the soul (Heb 4:12) and the cornerstone (Eph 2:20), the circumcision of the heart was spiritually renewed (Rom 2:29). As the one divided the waters, so the other divides the peoples; for he says: I have not come to send peace, but division (Matt 10:34; Luke 12:51). As the one, for an eternal testimony, both brought up twelve stones out of the depth onto the land and placed them from the land in the depth, so the other both brought forth the apostolic teaching out of the Synagogue and left it in the Synagogue, which would use it even now if it wished, since, for an eternal testimony, the apostolic teaching in the twelve stones was both brought forth from the Law and yet was found in the Law.

7

And how evident and how plain is the very dividing of the waters, when one part stood whole and full, while the other, its bed dried up, flowed away entirely into the sea, the ark of the Lord with the priests nevertheless standing in the midst! By this signification it is understood that part of the people would cease from the course of its sins and of its death at the coming of the ark of God, that is, at the bodily coming, while the rest flows away into the sea, that is, into the condemnation and the fellowship of this world.

8

Under this Joshua, then, we must contemplate what was done by Rahab and in Rahab. For two spies, in order to view the land, turned in to the city of Jericho, to the house of this prostitute. She takes them in and hides them; when the king demands that she hand them over, she lies that they have gone back. Then, having hidden them in the house, she says that she knows that the Lord has handed over to them everything of her city, and that their God is above in heaven and below on earth (Josh 2:11). She begs them to save her and all her house at the time when the city is taken. The spies promise that whatever was found within her house would remain unharmed, and that whoever went out of the house would be ⟨guilty⟩ on his own account; and they appoint as a sign a scarlet cord hanging from the window, and report the whole matter to Joshua. Then the city is approached. The priests with the ark of the Lord go round it for six days, and on the seventh day, when they had gone round it seven times, at the sounding of the trumpet the walls of the city fell; and when all who were in the city had been slain, Rahab alone is saved by Joshua with [with] all her house.

9

This order of events is bound up with great mysteries of things to be done spiritually. The prostitute took into her house the two spies of the land sent by Joshua: the sinful Church received the Law and prophecy, sent to explore the faith of men, through which she confesses: God both

above in heaven and below on earth (Josh 2:11). For after his spiritual generation she learnt of his bodily birth, attested in these words: Afterwards he was seen on earth and lived among men (Bar 3:38). From the same men she also received the sign of salvation in the scarlet: a colour, that is, royal for its dignity and blood-red for the embodiment, both of which came together in the Passion, when the Lord was clothed in such a garment and blood flowed from his side (John 19:34). This scarlet Manasseh too received as a sign; by this blood the houses marked in Egypt were kept safe (Exod 12:7), and the book of the covenant was sprinkled, and the people was sanctified (Exod 24:7–8). But whoever of the household was found outside the house was made guilty on his own account, teaching that those who had been outside the Church would be the cause of their own death.

10

Jericho, set as a figure of this world, is gone round for six days; on the seventh, at the voice of the trumpet, it falls, and the house of Rahab is kept whole through Joshua. For in the six days is shown the time of six thousand years, in which there has been wandering round the world and running round in a kind of circle of generations, this same world being destined to be dissolved at the voice of the trumpet in the time of the seventh millennium, and the Church alone to be kept, with all her household, through the welcoming of the spies, through the confession of God in

the body, through the sign of the scarlet decreed through Joshua.

11

We have often warned that such diligence must be brought to the reading of the divine Scriptures as could discern, with careful examination and with judgement that is not empty, when the record of things done is to be understood simply and when typologically, lest, misusing both without measure and without skill, we should make both useless to our hearers: if either the knowledge of the simple sense were corrupted by an empty assertion of prefigurations, or the power of the prefigurations went unrecognised under the supposition of the simple sense; although the word of divine Scripture is such that, as nothing in it is empty and nothing outside the cause of some necessity, so nothing is found set down in it that is not subject to the discernment of the understanding we must pursue.

12

For when the creation of the world is told, God is recognised in his creating; when we hear that Enoch could be translated, man is understood to be eternal; when Lot is saved as the five cities are burnt up, we learn that God cares for the innocent; when his wife, looking back against the edict of God, is changed into a pillar of salt, we are trained to obedience to the ordinances of God by the dread of an example; when the sins of the

Amorites are waited for until they are full (Gen 15:16), we know both the mercy and the justice of God, since by his waiting time is both prolonged for us to cease from sins, and vengeance, put off until the completion of crimes, is decreed.

13

And now, the order of the generations, the election of Abraham, the procreation of the patriarchs, the servitude of the people, the plagues of the Egyptians, the dividing of the sea, the raining down of the manna, the establishing of the Law, the distinction of the sacrifices, the time of the judges, the knowledge of the kingdoms, the deportation of the people into captivity, the vision of the saints, the admonition of the prophets — how necessary they are for knowledge! For in all that has been recalled above, God the Father and God the Son, and God the Son from God the Father, God and man, Jesus Christ, is recognised: when, in the creation of the world, God commands and God carries it out; when man is formed after the appearance of a common image (Gen 1:26–27); when the Lord rains sulphur and fire from the Lord (Gen 19:24) — for no one would command himself to do something, nor would one alone extend his communion to another, nor would one give to himself and, being one, receive from himself — when a man is seen by Abraham and God is adored (Gen 18:2–3); when, in the wrestling of Jacob, God is seen by a man (Gen 32:24); when, holding the man, he asks to be blessed by the Lord (Gen 32:26); when, though

only three youths had been sent into the furnace by Nebuchadnezzar, a fourth is seen, like the Son of God (Dan 3:92); when the Virgin bears Emmanuel, him who is God with us (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23).

14

So it was fitting that these things, signified by all of them and known and fulfilled in that one, should be kept in remembrance in written and sealed volumes, so that the posterity of later successions, instructed by the events of an earlier time, might both contemplate present things in the past and venerate past things now too in the present. For since the knowledge of the truth is one and the same and perfect, if the truth is understood by reason — for all things were written for our knowledge and for the firmest faith of our judgement (1 Cor 10:11) — neither did these things, which were set down in books by the decree of God, need the knowledge of posterity. But posterity needed the knowledge of the Scriptures, so that it might learn the truth, so that it might receive the teaching of the truth by reason, so that it might follow the knowledge of life carried forward as from the very cradle: that is, that it might not doubt God from God, when the Lord rained from the Lord; might not be ignorant of the one innascible God, when God commanded; might not fail to know the only-begotten God, when God made; might not doubt that the two are one, when one pattern of a common image

was founded in man; might not deny. That God into man …

…

15

…

begotten of the fathers. And it is easy to hear Paul glorying that he is an Israelite of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1). So, since it is Elijah's office to turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons (Mal 3:23–24; Luke 1:17), the mystery of the perfect preaching is reserved for him: that he may turn the fathers to that faith which the spirit of the same prophecy has already confirmed in the sons.