

Introduction to the Treatise
on the
Incarnation of the Word.



The tract 'against the Gentiles' leaves the reader face to face with the necessity of restoration by the Divine Word as the remedy for corrupt human nature. How this necessity is met in the Incarnation is shewn in the pages which follow. The general design of the second tract is to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of the Incarnation by shewing (1) its necessity and end, (2) the congruity of its details, (3) its truth, as against the objections of Jews and Gentiles, (4) its result. He begins by a review (recapitulating *c. Gent.* 2–7) of the doctrine of creation and of man's place therein. The abuse by man of his special Privilege had resulted in its loss. By foregoing the Divine Life, man had entered upon a course of endless undoing, of progressive decay, from which none could rescue him but the original bestower of his life (2–7). Then follows a description in glowing words of the Incarnation of the Divine Word and of its efficacy against the plague of corruption (8–10). With the *Divine Life*, man had also received, in the *knowledge of God*, the conscious reflex of the Divine Likeness, the faculty of reason in its highest exercise. This knowledge their moral fall dimmed and perverted. Heeding not even the means by which God sought to remind them of Himself, they fell deeper and deeper into materialism and superstition. To restore the effaced likeness the presence of the Original was requisite. Accordingly, condescending to man's sense-bound intelligence—lest men should have been created in vain in the Image of God—the Word took Flesh and became an object of Sense, that through the Seen He might reveal the Invisible (11–16).

Having dwelt (17–19) upon the meaning and purpose of the Incarnation, he proceeds to speak of the Death and Resurrection of the Incarnate Word. He, Who alone could renew the handiwork and restore the likeness and give afresh the knowledge of God, must needs, in order to pay the debt which all had incurred (τὸ παρὰ πάντων ὀφειλόμενον), die in our stead, offering the sacrifice on behalf of all, so as to rise again, as our first-fruits, from the grave (20–32, note especially §20). After speaking of the especial fitness of the Cross, once the instrument of shame, now the trophy of victory, and after meeting some difficulties connected with the manner of the Lord's Death, he passes to the Resurrection. He shews how Christ by His triumph over the grave changed (27) the relative ascendancy of Death and Life: and how the Resurrection with its momentous train of consequences, follows of necessity (31) from the Incarnation of Him in Whom was Life.

The two main divisions of contemporary unbelief are next combated. In either case the root of the difficulty is moral; with the Greeks it is a frivolous cynicism, with the Jews, inveterate obstinacy. The latter (33–40) are confuted, firstly, by their own Scriptures, which

predict both in general and in detail the coming of Jesus Christ. Also, the old Jewish polity, both civil and religious, has passed away, giving place to the Church of Christ.

Turning to the Greeks (41–45), and assuming that they allow the existence of a pervading Spirit, whose presence is the sustaining principle of all things, he challenges them to reject, without inconsistency, the Union of that Spirit, the Logos (compare St. Augustine *Conf.* VII. ix.), with one in particular of the many constituents of that Universe wherein he already dwells. And since man alone (43. 3) of the creatures had departed from the order of his creation, it was man's nature that the Word united to Himself, thus repairing the breach between the creature and the Creator at the very point where it had occurred.

God did not restore man by a mere fiat (44) because, just as repentance on man's part (7) could not eradicate his disease, so such a fiat on God's part would have amounted to the annihilation of human nature as it was, and the creation of a fresh race. Man's definite disorder God met with a specific remedy, overcoming death with life. Thus man has been enabled once more to shew forth, in common with the rest of Creation, the handiwork and glory of his Maker.

Athanasius then confronts the Greeks, as he had the Jews, with facts. Since the coming of Christ, paganism, popular and philosophic, had been falling into discredit and decay. The impotence and rivalries of the philosophic teachers, the local and heterogeneous character, the low moral ideals of the old worships, are contrasted with the oneness and inspiring power of the religion of the Crucified. Such are the two, the dying and the living systems; it remains for him who will to taste and see what that life is which is the gift of Christ to them that follow Him (46–end).

The purpose of the tract, in common with the *contra Gentes*, being to commend the religion of Christ to acceptance, the argument is concerned more with the Incarnation as a living fact, and with its place in the scheme of God's dealing with man, than with its analysis as a theological doctrine. He does not enter upon the question, fruitful of controversy in the previous century at Alexandria, but soon to burst forth into furious debate, of the Sonship of the Word and of His relation to God the Father. Still less does he touch the Christological questions which arose with the decline of the Arian tempest, questions associated with the names of Apollinarius, Theodore, Cyril, Nestorius, Eutyches, Theodoret, and Dioscorus. But we feel already that firm grasp of soteriological principles which mark him out as the destined conqueror of Arianism, and which enabled him by a sure instinct to anticipate unconsciously the theological difficulties which troubled the Church for the century after his death. It is the broad comprehensive treatment of the subject in its relation to God, human nature, and sin, that gives the work its interest to readers of the present day. In strong reaction from modern or medieval theories of Redemption, which to the thoughtful Christian of to-day seem arbitrary, or worse, it is with relief that men find that from the beginning it was not so; that the theology of the early Church interpreted the great Mystery of godliness in

terms which, if short of the fulness of the Pauline conception, are yet so free from arbitrary assumptions, so true to human nature as the wisest of men know it, so true to the worthiest and grandest ideas of God (see below, p. 33 *ad fin.*). The *de Incarnatione*, then, is perhaps more appreciated in our day than at any date since the days of its writer.

It may therefore be worth while to devote a word or two to some peculiarities incidental to its aim and method. We observe first of all how completely the power of the writer is absorbed in the subject under discussion. It is therefore highly precarious to infer anything from his silence even on points which might seem to require explanation in the course of his argument. Not a word is said of the doctrine of the Trinity, nor of the Holy Spirit; this directly follows from the purpose of the work, in accordance with the general truth that while the Church preaches Christ to the World, the Office and Personality of the Spirit belongs to her inner life. The teaching of the tract with regard to the constitution of man is another case in point. It might appear (§3, cf. 11. 2, 13. 2) that Athanasius ascribed the reasonable soul of man, and his immortality after death, not to the constitution of human nature as such, but to the grace superadded to it by the Creator (ἡ τοῦ κατ' εἰκόνα χάρις), a grace which constituted men λογικοί (3. 4) by virtue of the power of the Logos, and which, *if not forfeited by sin*, involved the privilege of immortality. We have, then, to carefully consider whether Athanasius held, or meant to suggest, that man is by nature, and apart from union with God, (1) rational, or (2) immortal. If we confine our view to the treatise before us, there would be some show of reason in answering both questions in the negative; and with regard to immortality this has been recently done by an able correspondent of *The Times* (April 9, 1890).

But that Athanasius held the essential rationality and immortality of the soul is absolutely clear, if only from *c. Gent.* 32 and 33. We have, then, to find an explanation of his language in the present treatise. With regard to immortality, it should be observed (1) that the language employed (in 4. 5, where κενωθῆναι τοῦ εἶναι αἰεὶ is explained by τὸ διαλυθέντας μένειν ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ καὶ τῇ φθόρᾳ) suggests a *continued condition*, and therefore something short of annihilation, although not worthy of the name of existence or life,—(2) that even in the worst of men the image of God is defaced, but not effaced (14. 1, &c.), and that even when grace is lost (7. 4), man cannot be as though the contact with the divine had never taken place;—(3) that in this work, as by St. Paul in *1 Cor. xv.*, the final destiny of the wicked is passed over (but for the general reference 56. 3) in silence. It may be added (4) that Athanasius puts together *all* that separates man from irrational creatures without clearly drawing the line between what belongs to the natural man and what to the κατ' εἰκόνα χάρις. The subject of eschatology is nowhere dealt with in full by Athanasius; while it is quite certain (*c. Gent.* 33) that he did not share the inclination of some earlier writers (see D.C.B. ii. p. 192) toward the idea of conditional immortality, there is also no reason to think that he held with the Universalism of Origen, Gregory of Nyssa and others (see Migne, *Patr. Gr.* xxvii.

p. 1404 A, also 1384 C, where ‘the unfortunate Origen’s’ opinions seem to be rejected, but with an implied deprecation of harsh judgment). As to his view of the essential rationality of man (see *c. Gent.* 32) the consideration (4) urged above once more applies (compare the discussion in Harnack, *Dg.* ii. 146 sqq.). Yet he says that man left to himself can have no idea of God at all (11. 1), and that this would deprive him of any claim to be considered a rational being (ib. 2). The apparent inconsistency is removed if we understand that man may be rational potentially (as all men are) and yet not rational in the sense of exercising reason (which is the case with very many). In other words, grace gives not the faculty itself, but its integrity, the latter being the result not of the mere psychological existence of the faculty, but of the reaction upon it of its highest and adequate object. (The same is true to a great extent of the doctrine of *πνεῦμα* in the New Testament.)

A somewhat similar caution is necessary with regard to the analogy drawn out (41, &c.) between the Incarnation and the Union of the Word with the Universe. The treatise itself (17. 1, ἐκτὸς κατ’ οὐσίαν, and see notes on 41) supplies the necessary corrective in this case. It may be pointed out here that the real difference between Athanasius and the neo-Platonists was not so much upon the Union of the Word with any created Substance, which they were prepared to allow, as upon the *exclusive* Union of the Word with Man, in Contrast to His essential distinctness from the Universe. This difference goes back to the doctrine of Creation, which was fixed as a great gulf between the Christian and the Platonist view of the Universe. The relation of the latter to the Word is fully discussed in the third part of the *contra Gentes*, the teaching of which must be borne in mind while reading the forty-first and following chapters of the present treatise.

Lastly, the close relation between the doctrine of Creation and that of Redemption marks off the Soteriology of this treatise from that of the middle ages and of the Reformation. Athanasius does not leave out of sight the idea of satisfaction for a debt. To him also the Cross was the central purpose (20. 2, cf. 9. 1, 2, &c.) of His Coming. But the idea of *Restoration* is most prominent in his determination of the necessity of the Incarnation. God could have wiped out our guilt, had He so pleased, by a word (44): but human nature required to be healed, restored, recreated. This (ἀνακτίσαι) is the foremost of the three ideas (7. 5) which sum up his account of the ‘*dignus tanto Vindice nodus*’¹⁹¹.

The *translation* which follows is that printed in 1885 (D. Nutt, second edition, 1891) by the editor of this volume, with a very few changes (chiefly 2. 2, 8. 4, 34. 2, 44. 7, 8): it was originally made for the purpose of lectures at Oxford (1879–1882), and the *analytical headings* now prefixed to each chapter are extracted verbatim from notes made for the same

191 The corrections were made before he could obtain the essay carefully and gratefully used, but his text is defective, especially and text of Sievers (*Zeitsch. Hist. Theol.* 1868), where he now from the accidental omission of one of the key-clauses of the finds them nearly all anticipated. Sievers’ discussion has been whole (§17).

course of lectures. The *notes* have mostly appeared either in the former edition of the translation, or appended to the Greek text published (D. Null, 1882) by the translator. A few, however, have now been added, including some references to the *Sermo Major*, which borrows wholesale from the present treatise (Prolegg. ch. III. §1. 37). Two other English translations have appeared, the one (Parker, 1880) previous, the other (Religious Tract Society, n.d.) subsequent to that of the present translator. The *text* followed is that of the Benedictine editors, with a few exceptions. Of those that at all affect the sense, 43.6 (καὶ τὸ σῶμα) and 51. 2 (κατὰ τῆς εἰδῆς) are due to Mr. Marriott (*Analecta Christiana*, Oxf. 1844). For the others (13. 2, omission of μή, 28. 3, κατὰ τοῦ πύρος rejecting conjectures of Montf. and Marriott, 42. 6, omission of πεποιηκέναι 57. 3, καὶ τὰ for τὰ καί) the present editor is alone responsible.

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On the Incarnation of the Word.



§1. *Introductory.*—*The subject of this treatise: the humiliation and incarnation of the Word. Presupposes the doctrine of Creation, and that by the Word. The Father has saved the world by Him through Whom he first made it.*

Whereas in what precedes we have drawn out—choosing a few points from among many—a sufficient account of the error of the heathen concerning idols, and of the worship of idols, and how they originally came to be invented; how, namely, out of wickedness men devised for themselves the worshipping of idols: and whereas we have by God’s grace noted somewhat also of the divinity of the Word of the Father, and of His universal Providence and power, and that the Good Father through Him orders all things, and all things are moved by Him, and in Him are quickened: come now, Macarius¹⁹² (worthy of that name), and true lover of Christ, let us follow up the faith of our religion¹⁹³, and set forth also what relates to the Word’s becoming Man, and to His divine Appearing amongst us, which Jews traduce and Greeks laugh to scorn, but we worship; in order that, all the more for the seeming low estate of the Word, your piety toward Him may be increased and multiplied. 2. For the more He is mocked among the unbelieving, the more witness does He give of His own Godhead; inasmuch as He not only Himself demonstrates as possible what men mistake, thinking impossible, but what men deride as unseemly, this by His own goodness He clothes with seemliness, and what men, in their conceit of wisdom, laugh at as merely human, He by His own power demonstrates to be divine, subduing the pretensions of idols by His supposed humiliation—by the Cross—and those who mock and disbelieve invisibly winning over to recognise His divinity and power. 3. But to treat this subject it is necessary to recall what has been previously said; in order that you may neither fail to know the cause of the bodily appearing of the Word of the Father, so high and so great, nor think it a consequence of His own nature that the Saviour has worn a body; but that being incorporeal by nature, and Word from the beginning, He has yet of the loving-kindness and goodness of His own Father been manifested to us in a human body for our salvation. 4. It is, then, proper for us to begin the treatment of this subject by speaking of the creation of the universe, and of God its Artificer, that so it may be duly perceived that the renewal of creation has been the work of the self-same Word that made it at the beginning. For it will appear not inconsonant for the Father to have wrought its salvation in Him by Whose means He made it.

192 See *Contra Gentes*, i. The word (Μακάριε) may be an adjective only, but its occurrence in *both* places seems decisive. The name was very common (*Apol. c. Ar. passim*). ‘Macarius’ was a Christian, as the present passage shews: he is presumed (*c. Gent. i. 7*) to have access to Scripture.

193 τῆς εὐσεβείας. See 1 *Tim. iii. 16*, and note 1 on *De Decr. 1*.

§2. *Erroneous views of Creation rejected. (1) Epicurean (fortuitous generation). But diversity of bodies and parts argues a creating intellect. (2.) Platonists (pre-existent matter.) But this subjects God to human limitations, making Him not a creator but a mechanic. (3) Gnostics (an alien Demiurge). Rejected from Scripture.*

Of the making of the universe and the creation of all things many have taken different views, and each man has laid down the law just as he pleased. For some say that all things have come into being of themselves, and in a chance fashion; as, for example, the Epicureans, who tell us in their self-contempt, that universal providence does not exist, speaking right in the face of obvious fact and experience. 2. For if, as they say, everything has had its beginning of itself, and independently of purpose, it would follow that everything had come into¹⁹⁴ mere being, so as to be alike and not distinct. For it would follow in virtue of the unity of body that everything must be sun or moon, and in the case of men it would follow that the whole must be hand, or eye, or foot. But as it is this is not so. On the contrary, we see a distinction of sun, moon, and earth; and again, in the case of human bodies, of foot, hand, and head. Now, such separate arrangement as this tells us not of their having come into being of themselves, but shews that a cause preceded them; from which cause it is possible to apprehend God also as the Maker and Orderer of all.

3. But others, including Plato, who is in such repute among the Greeks, argue that God has made the world out of matter previously existing and without beginning. For God could have made nothing had not the material existed already; just as the wood must exist ready at hand for the carpenter, to enable him to work at all. 4. But in so saying they know not that they are investing God with weakness. For if He is not Himself the cause of the material, but makes things only of previously existing material, He proves to be weak, because unable to produce anything He makes without the material; just as it is without doubt a weakness of the carpenter not to be able to make anything required without his timber. For, *ex hypothesi*, had not the material existed, God would not have made anything. And how could He in that case be called Maker and Artificer, if He owes His ability to make to some other source—namely, to the material? So that if this be so, God will be on their theory a Mechanic only, and not a Creator out of nothing¹⁹⁵; if, that is, He works at existing material, but is not Himself the cause of the material. For He could not in any sense be called Creator unless He is Creator of the material of which the things created have in their turn been made. 5. But the sectaries imagine to themselves a different artificer of all things, other than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in deep blindness even as to the words they use. 6. For

194 Or, “been made in one way only.” In the next clause I formerly translated the difficult words ὥς ἐνὶ σώματος ἔνος ‘as in the case of the universe;’ but although the rendering has commended itself to others I now reluctantly admit that it puts too much into the Greek (in spite of §41. 5).

195 εἰς τὸ εἶναι.

whereas the Lord says to the Jews¹⁹⁶: “Have ye not read that from the beginning He which created them made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall become one flesh?” and then, referring to the Creator, says, “What, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder:” how come these men to assert that the creation is independent of the Father? Or if, in the words of John, who says, making no exception, “All things¹⁹⁷ were made by Him,” and “without Him was not anything made,” how could the artificer be another, distinct from the Father of Christ?

196 [Matt. xix. 4](#), &c.

197 [John i. 3](#).

§3. *The true doctrine. Creation out of nothing, of God's lavish bounty of being. Man created above the rest, but incapable of independent perseverance. Hence the exceptional and supernatural gift of being in God's Image, with the promise of bliss conditionally upon his perseverance in grace.*

Thus do they vainly speculate. But the godly teaching and the faith according to Christ brands their foolish language as godlessness. For it knows that it was not spontaneously, because forethought is not absent; nor of existing matter, because God is not weak; but that out of nothing, and without its having any previous existence, God made the universe to exist through His word, as He says firstly through Moses: "In¹⁹⁸ the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" secondly, in the most edifying book of the Shepherd, "First¹⁹⁹ of all believe that God is one, which created and framed all things, and made them to exist out of nothing." 2. To which also Paul refers when he says, "By²⁰⁰ faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear." 3. For God is good, or rather is essentially the source of goodness: nor²⁰¹ could one that is good be niggardly of anything: whence, grudging existence to none, He has made all things out of nothing by His own Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. And among these, having taken especial pity, above all things on earth, upon the race of men, and having perceived its inability, by virtue of the condition of its origin, to continue in one stay, He gave them a further gift, and He did not barely create man, as He did all the irrational creatures on the earth, but made them after His own image, giving them a portion even of the power of His own Word; so that having as it were a kind of reflexion of the Word, and being made rational, they might be able to abide ever in blessedness, living the true life which belongs to the saints in paradise. 4. But knowing once more how the will of man could sway to either side, in anticipation He secured the grace given them by a law and by the spot where He placed them. For He brought them into His own garden, and gave them a law: so that, if they kept the grace and remained good, they might still keep the life in paradise without sorrow or pain or care besides having the promise of incorruption in heaven; but that if they transgressed and turned back, and became evil, they might know that they were incurring that corruption in death which was theirs by nature: no longer to live in paradise, but cast out of it from that time forth to die and to abide in death and in corruption. 5. Now this is that of which Holy Writ also gives warning, saying in the Person of God: "Of every tree²⁰² that is in the garden, eating thou shalt eat: but of the tree of the

198 [Gen. i. 1.](#)

199 [Herm. Mand. 1.](#)

200 [Heb. xi. 3.](#)

201 [c. Gent. xli.](#) and Plato, *Timæus* 29 E.

202 [Gen. ii. 16, sq.](#)

knowledge of good and evil, ye shall not eat of it, but on the day that ye eat, dying ye shall die.” But by “dying ye shall die,” what else could be meant than not dying merely, but also abiding ever in the corruption of death?

§4. *Our creation and God's Incarnation most intimately connected. As by the Word man was called from non-existence into being, and further received the grace of a divine life, so by the one fault which forfeited that life they again incurred corruption and untold sin and misery filled the world.*

You are wondering, perhaps, for what possible reason, having proposed to speak of the Incarnation of the Word, we are at present treating of the origin of mankind. But this, too, properly belongs to the aim of our treatise. 2. For in speaking of the appearance of the Saviour amongst us, we must needs speak also of the origin of men, that you may know that the reason of His coming down was because of us, and that our transgression²⁰³ called forth the loving-kindness of the Word, that the Lord should both make haste to help us and appear among men. 3. For of His becoming Incarnate we were the object, and for our salvation He dealt so lovingly as to appear and be born even in a human body. 4. Thus, then, God has made man, and willed that he should abide in incorruption; but men, having despised and rejected the contemplation of God, and devised and contrived evil for themselves (as was said²⁰⁴ in the former treatise), received the condemnation of death with which they had been threatened; and from thenceforth no longer remained as they were made, but²⁰⁵ were being corrupted according to their devices; and death had the mastery over them as king²⁰⁶. For transgression of the commandment was turning them back to their natural state, so that just as they have had their being out of nothing, so also, as might be expected, they might look for corruption into nothing in the course of time. 5. For if, out of a former normal state of non-existence, they were called into being by the Presence and loving-kindness of the Word, it followed naturally that when men were bereft of the knowledge of God and were turned back to what was not (for what is evil is not, but what is good is), they should, since they derive their being from God who IS, be everlastingly bereft even of being; in other words, that they should be disintegrated and abide in death and corruption. 6. For man is by nature mortal, inasmuch as he is made out of what is not; but by reason of his likeness to Him that is (and if he still preserved this likeness by keeping Him in his knowledge) he would stay his natural corruption, and remain incorrupt; as Wisdom²⁰⁷ says: "The taking heed to His laws is the assurance of immortality;" but being incorrupt, he would live henceforth as God, to which I suppose the divine Scripture refers, when it says: "I have²⁰⁸

203 Cf. *Orat.* ii. 54, note 4.

204 *c. Gent.* 3–5.

205 [Eccles. vii. 29](#); [Rom. i. 21, 22](#).

206 [Rom. v. 14](#).

207 [Wisd. vi. 18](#).

208 [Ps. lxxxii. 6, sq.](#)

said ye are gods, and ye are all sons of the most Highest; but ye die like men, and fall as one of the princes.”

§5. For God has not only made us out of nothing; but He gave us freely, by the Grace of the Word, a life in correspondence with God. But men, having rejected things eternal, and, by counsel of the devil, turned to the things of corruption, became the cause²⁰⁹ of their own corruption in death, being, as I said before, by nature corruptible, but destined, by the grace following from partaking of the Word, to have escaped their natural state, had they remained good. 2. For because of the Word dwelling with them, even their natural corruption did not come near them, as Wisdom also says²¹⁰: “God made man for incorruption, and as an image of His own eternity; but by envy of the devil death came into the world.” But when this was come to pass, men began to die, while corruption thence-forward prevailed against them, gaining even more than its natural power over the whole race, inasmuch as it had, owing to the transgression of the commandment, the threat of the Deity as a further advantage against them.

3. For even in their misdeeds men had not stopped short at any set limits; but gradually pressing forward, have passed on beyond all measure: having to begin with been inventors of wickedness and called down upon themselves death and corruption; while later on, having turned aside to wrong and exceeding all lawlessness, and stopping at no one evil but devising all manner of new evils in succession, they have become insatiable in sinning. 4. For there were adulteries everywhere and thefts, and the whole earth was full of murders and plunderings. And as to corruption and wrong, no heed was paid to law, but all crimes were being practised everywhere, both individually and jointly. Cities were at war with cities, and nations were rising up against nations; and the whole earth was rent with civil commotions and battles; each man vying with his fellows in lawless deeds. 8. Nor were even crimes against nature far from them, but, as the Apostle and witness of Christ says: “For their²¹¹ women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.”



209 Cf. Concil. Araus. II. Can. 23. ‘Suam voluntatem homines faciunt, non Dei, quando id agunt quod Deo displicet.’

210 [Wisd. ii. 23, sq.](#)

211 [Rom. i. 26, sq.](#)

§6. *The human race then was wasting, God's image was being effaced, and His work ruined. Either, then, God must forego His spoken word by which man had incurred ruin; or that which had shared in the being of the Word must sink back again into destruction, in which case God's design would be defeated. What then? was God's goodness to suffer this? But if so, why had man been made? It could have been weakness, not goodness on God's part.*

For this cause, then, death having gained upon men, and corruption abiding upon them, the race of man was perishing; the rational man made in God's image was disappearing, and the handiwork of God was in process of dissolution. 2. For death, as I said above, gained from that time forth a legal²¹² hold over us, and it was impossible to evade the law, since it had been laid down by God because²¹³ of the transgression, and the result was in truth at once monstrous and unseemly. 3. For it were monstrous, firstly, that God, having spoken, should prove false—that, when once He had ordained that man, if he transgressed the commandment, should die the death, after the transgression man should not die, but God's word should be broken. For God would not be true, if, when He had said we should die, man died not. 4. Again, it were unseemly that creatures once made rational, and having partaken of the Word, should go to ruin, and turn again toward non-existence by the way of corruption²¹⁴. 5. For it were not worthy of God's goodness that the things He had made should waste away, because of the deceit practised on men by the devil. 6. Especially it was unseemly to the last degree that God's handicraft among men should be done away, either because of their own carelessness, or because of the deceitfulness of evil spirits.

7. So, as the rational creatures were wasting and such works in course of ruin, what was God in His goodness to do? Suffer corruption to prevail against them and death to hold them fast? And where were the profit of their having been made, to begin with? For better were they not made, than once made, left to neglect and ruin. 8. For neglect reveals weakness, and not goodness on God's part—if, that is, He allows His own work to be ruined when once He had made it—more so than if He had never made man at all. 9. For if He had not made them, none could impute weakness; but once He had made them, and created them out of nothing, it were most monstrous for the work to be ruined, and that before the eyes of the Maker. 10. It was, then, out of the question to leave men to the current of corruption; because this would be unseemly, and unworthy of God's goodness.

212 [Gen. ii. 15.](#)

213 [Gal. iii. 19](#) (verbally only).

214 Cf. Anselm *cur Deus Homo*, II. 4, 'Valde alienum est ab eo, ut ullam rationalem naturam penitus perire sinat.'

§7. *On the other hand there was the consistency of God's nature, not to be sacrificed for our profit. Were men, then, to be called upon to repent? But repentance cannot avert the execution of a law; still less can it remedy a fallen nature. We have incurred corruption and need to be restored to the Grace of God's Image. None could renew but He Who had created. He alone could (1) recreate all, (2) suffer for all, (3) represent all to the Father.*

But just as this consequence must needs hold, so, too, on the other side the just claims²¹⁵ of God lie against it: that God should appear true to the law He had laid down concerning death. For it were monstrous for God, the Father of truth, to appear a liar for our profit and preservation. 2. So here, once more, what possible course was God to take? To demand repentance of men for their transgression? For this one might pronounce worthy of God; as though, just as from transgression men have become set towards corruption, so from repentance they may once more be set in the way of incorruption. 3. But repentance would, firstly, fail to guard the just claim²¹⁶ of God. For He would still be none the more true, if men did not remain in the grasp of death; nor, secondly, does repentance call men back from what is their nature—it merely stays them from acts of sin. 4. Now, if there were merely a misdemeanour in question, and not a consequent corruption, repentance were well enough. But if, when transgression had once gained a start, men became involved in that corruption which was their nature, and were deprived of the grace which they had, being in the image of God, what further step was needed? or what was required for such grace and such recall, but the Word of God, which had also at the beginning made everything out of nought? 5. For His it was once more both to bring the corruptible to incorruption, and to maintain intact the just claim²¹⁷ of the Father upon all. For being Word of the Father, and above all, He alone of natural fitness was both able to recreate everything, and worthy to suffer on behalf of all and to be ambassador for all with the Father.



215 Literally “what is reasonable with respect to God,” i.e. what is involved in His attributes and in His relation to us, cf. [Rom. iii. 26](#), cf. Anselm, *ib.* I. 12, who slightly narrows down the idea of Athan. ‘Si peccatum sic dimittitur impunitum, similiter erit apud Deum peccanti et non peccanti, quod Deo *non convenit*....*Inconvenientia autem iniustitia est.*’

216 See previous note.

217 See previous note.

§8. *The Word, then, visited that earth in which He was yet always present ; and saw all these evils. He takes a body of our Nature, and that of a spotless Virgin, in whose womb He makes it His own, wherein to reveal Himself, conquer death, and restore life.*

For this purpose, then, the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God comes to our realm, howbeit he was not far from us²¹⁸ before. For no part of Creation is left void of Him: He has filled all things everywhere, remaining present with His own Father. But He comes in condescension to shew loving-kindness upon us, and to visit us. 2. And seeing the race of rational creatures in the way to perish, and death reigning over them by corruption; seeing, too, that the threat against transgression gave a firm hold to the corruption which was upon us, and that it was monstrous that²¹⁹ before the law was fulfilled it should fall through: seeing, once more, the unseemliness of what was come to pass: that the things whereof He Himself was Artificer were passing away: seeing, further, the exceeding wickedness of men, and how by little and little they had increased it to an intolerable pitch against themselves: and seeing, lastly, how all men were under penalty of death: He took pity on our race, and had mercy on our infirmity, and condescended to our corruption, and, unable to bear that death should have the mastery—lest the creature should perish, and His Father's handiwork in men be spent for nought—He takes unto Himself a body, and that of no different sort from ours. 3. For He did not simply will to become embodied, or will merely to appear²²⁰. For if He willed merely to appear, He was able to effect His divine appearance by some other and higher means as well. But He takes a body of our kind, and not merely so, but from a spotless and stainless virgin, knowing not a man, a body clean and in very truth pure from intercourse of men. For being Himself mighty, and Artificer of everything, He prepares the body in the Virgin as a temple unto Himself, and makes it His very own²²¹ as an instrument, in it manifested, and in it dwelling. 4. And thus taking from our bodies one of like nature, because all were under penalty of the corruption of death He gave it over to death in the stead of all, and offered it to the Father—doing this, moreover, of His loving-kindness, to the end that, firstly, all being held to have died in Him, the law involving the ruin of men might be undone (inasmuch as its power was fully spent in the Lord's body, and had no longer holding-ground against men, his peers), and that, secondly, whereas men had turned toward corruption, He might turn them again toward incorruption, and quicken them from death by the appropriation²²² of His body and by the grace of the Resurrection, banishing death from them like straw from the fire²²³.

218 [Acts xvii. 27.](#)

219 Cf. vi. 3.

220 Cf. 43. 2.

221 Cf. *Orat.* iii. 33, note 5, also *ib.* 31, note 10.

222 Cf. *Orat.* iii. 33, note 5, also *ib.* 31, note 10.

223 The simile is inverted. Men are the 'straw,' death the 'fire.' cf. xlv. 7.

§9. *The Word, since death alone could stay the plague, took a mortal body which, united with Him, should avail for all, and by partaking of His immortality stay the corruption of the Race. By being above all, He made His Flesh an offering for our souls; by being one with us all, he clothed us with immortality. Simile to illustrate this.*

For the Word, perceiving that no otherwise could the corruption of men be undone save by death as a necessary condition, while it was impossible for the Word to suffer death, being immortal, and Son of the Father; to this end He takes to Himself a body capable of death, that it, by partaking of the Word Who is above all, might be worthy to die in the stead of all, and might, because of the Word which was come to dwell in it, remain incorruptible, and that thenceforth corruption might be stayed from all by the Grace of the Resurrection. Whence, by offering unto death the body He Himself had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from any stain, straightway He put away death from all His peers by the offering of an equivalent. 2. For being over all, the Word of God naturally by offering His own temple and corporeal instrument for the life²²⁴ of all satisfied the debt by His death. And thus He, the incorruptible Son of God, being conjoined with all by a like nature, naturally clothed all with incorruption, by the promise of the resurrection. For the actual corruption in death has no longer holding-ground against men, by reason of the Word, which by His one body has come to dwell among them. 3. And like as²²⁵ when a great king has entered into some large city and taken up his abode in one of the houses there, such city is at all events held worthy of high honour, nor does any enemy or bandit any longer descend upon it and subject it; but, on the contrary, it is thought entitled to all care, because of the king's having taken up his residence in a single house there: so, too, has it been with the Monarch of all. 4. For now that He has come to our realm, and taken up his abode in one body among His peers, henceforth the whole conspiracy of the enemy against mankind is checked, and the corruption of death which before was prevailing against them is done away. For the race of men had gone to ruin, had not the Lord and Saviour of all, the Son of God, come among us to meet the end of death²²⁶.



224 ἀντίψυχον.

225 Possibly suggested by the practice of the emperors. Constantinople was thus dignified a few years later (326). For this simile compare *Sermo Major de Fide*, c. 6.

226 Or, “to put an end to death.”

§10. *By a like simile, the reasonableness of the work of redemption is shewn. How Christ wiped away our ruin, and provided its antidote by His own teaching. Scripture proofs of the Incarnation of the Word, and of the Sacrifice He wrought.*

Now in truth this great work was peculiarly suited to God's goodness. 1. For if a king, having founded a house or city, if it be beset by bandits from the carelessness of its inmates, does not by any means neglect it, but avenges and reclaims it as his own work, having regard not to the carelessness of the inhabitants, but to what beseems himself; much more did God the Word of the all-good Father not neglect the race of men, His work, going to corruption: but, while He blotted out the death which had ensued by the offering of His own body, He corrected their neglect by His own teaching, restoring all that was man's by His own power. 2. And of this one may be assured at the hands of the Saviour's own inspired writers, if one happen upon their writings, where they say: "For the love of Christ²²⁷ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died, and He died for all that we should no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him Who for our sakes died and rose again," our Lord Jesus Christ. And, again: "But²²⁸ we behold Him, Who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste of death for every man." 3. Then He also points out the reason why it was necessary for none other than God the Word Himself to become incarnate; as follows: "For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering;" by which words He means, that it belonged to none other to bring man back from the corruption which had begun, than the Word of God, Who had also made them from the beginning. 4. And that it was in order to the sacrifice for bodies such as His own that the Word Himself also assumed a body, to this, also, they refer in these words²²⁹: "Forasmuch then as the children are the sharers in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might bring to naught Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." 5. For by the sacrifice of His own body, He both put an end to the law which was against us, and made a new beginning of life for us, by the hope of resurrection which He has given us. For since from man it was that death prevailed over men, for this cause conversely, by the Word of God being made man has come about the destruction of death and the resurrection of life; as the man which bore Christ²³⁰ saith: "For²³¹ since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in

227 2 Cor. v. 14.

228 Heb. ii. 9, sq.

229 Heb. ii. 14, sq.

230 Cf. Gal. vi. 17

231 1 Cor. xv. 21, sq.

Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive:" and so forth. For no longer now do we die as subject to condemnation; but as men who rise from the dead we await the general resurrection of all, "which²³² in its own times He shall show," even God, Who has also wrought it, and bestowed it upon us. 6. This then is the first cause of the Saviour's being made man. But one might see from the following reasons also, that His gracious coming amongst us was fitting to have taken place.



232 [1 Tim. vi. 15.](#)

§11. *Second reason for the Incarnation. God, knowing that man was not by nature sufficient to know Him, gave him, in order that he might have some profit in being, a knowledge of Himself. He made them in the Image of the Word, that thus they might know the Word, and through Him the Father. Yet man, despising this, fell into idolatry, leaving the unseen God for magic and astrology; and all this in spite of God's manifold revelation of Himself.*

God, Who has the power over all things, when He was making the race of men through His own Word, seeing the weakness of their nature, that it was not sufficient of itself to know its Maker, nor to get any idea at all of God; because while He was uncreate, the creatures had been made of nought, and while He was incorporeal, men had been fashioned in a lower way in the body, and because in every way the things made fell far short of being able to comprehend and know their Maker—taking pity, I say, on the race of men, inasmuch as He is good, He did not leave them destitute of the knowledge of Himself, lest they should find no profit in existing at all²³³. 2. For what profit to the creatures if they knew not their Maker? or how could they be rational without knowing the Word (and Reason) of the Father, in Whom they received their very being? For there would be nothing to distinguish them even from brute creatures if they had knowledge of nothing but earthly things. Nay, why did God make them at all, as He did not wish to be known by them? 3. Whence, lest this should be so, being good, He gives them a share in His own Image, our Lord Jesus Christ, and makes them after His own Image and after His likeness: so that by such grace perceiving the Image, that is, the Word of the Father, they may be able through Him to get an idea of the Father, and knowing their Maker, live the happy and truly blessed life. 4. But men once more in their perversity having set at nought, in spite of all this, the grace given them, so wholly rejected God, and so darkened their soul, as not merely to forget their idea of God, but also to fashion for themselves one invention after another. For not only did they grave idols for themselves, instead of the truth, and honour things that were not before the living God, “and²³⁴ serve the creature rather than the Creator,” but, worst of all, they transferred the honour of God even to stocks and stones and to every material object and to men, and went even further than this, as we have said in the former treatise. 5. So far indeed did their impiety go, that they proceeded to worship devils, and proclaimed them as gods, fulfilling their own²³⁵ lusts. For they performed, as was said above, offerings of brute animals, and sacrifices of men, as was meet for them²³⁶, binding themselves down all the faster under their maddening inspirations. 6. For this reason it was also that magic arts were taught among them, and oracles in divers places led men astray, and all men ascribed the influences of their birth

233 Cf. 13. 2.

234 Cf. [Rom. i. 25](#)

235 αὐτῶν may refer to the δαίμονες, in which case compare *c. Gent. 25. sub fin.*

236 See *c. Gent. 25. 1*, τὰ ὅμοια τοῖς ὁμοίοις. Or the text may mean simply “as their due.”

and existence to the stars and to all the heavenly bodies, having no thought of anything beyond what was visible. 7. And, in a word, everything was full of irreligion and lawlessness, and God alone, and His Word, was unknown, albeit He had not hidden Himself out of men's sight, nor given the knowledge of Himself in one way only; but had, on the contrary, unfolded it to them in many forms and by many ways.

§12. *For though man was created in grace, God, foreseeing his forgetfulness, provided also the works of creation to remind man of him. Yet further, He ordained a Law and Prophets, whose ministry was meant for all the world. Yet men heeded only their own lusts.*

For whereas the grace of the Divine Image was in itself sufficient to make known God the Word, and through Him the Father; still God, knowing the weakness of men, made provision even for their carelessness: so that if they cared not to know God of themselves, they might be enabled through the works of creation to avoid ignorance of the Maker. 2. But since men's carelessness, by little and little, descends to lower things, God made provision, once more, even for this weakness of theirs, by sending a law, and prophets, men such as they knew, so that even if they were not ready to look up to heaven and know their Creator, they might have their instruction from those near at hand. For men are able to learn from men more directly about higher things. 3. So it was open to them, by looking into the height of heaven, and perceiving the harmony of creation, to know its Ruler, the Word of the Father, Who, by His own providence over all things makes known the Father to all, and to this end moves all things, that through Him all may know God. 4. Or, if this were too much for them, it was possible for them to meet at least the holy men, and through them to learn of God, the Maker of all things, the Father of Christ; and that the worship of idols is godlessness, and full of all impiety. 5. Or it was open to them, by knowing the law even, to cease from all lawlessness and live a virtuous life. For neither was the law for the Jews alone, nor were the Prophets sent for them only, but, though sent to the Jews and persecuted by the Jews, they were for all the world a holy school of the knowledge of God and the conduct of the soul. 6. God's goodness then and loving-kindness being so great—men nevertheless, overcome by the pleasures of the moment and by the illusions and deceits sent by demons, did not raise their heads toward the truth, but loaded themselves the more with evils and sins, so as no longer to seem rational, but from their ways to be reckoned void of reason.



§13. *Here again, was God to keep silence? to allow to false gods the worship He made us to render to Himself? A king whose subjects had revolted would, after sending letters and messages, go to them in person. How much more shall God restore in us the grace of His image. This men, themselves but copies, could not do. Hence the Word Himself must come (1) to re-create, (2) to destroy death in the Body.*

So then, men having thus become brutalized, and demoniacal deceit thus clouding every place, and hiding the knowledge of the true God, what was God to do? To keep still silence at so great a thing, and suffer men to be led astray by demons and not to know God? 2. And what was the use of man having been originally made in God's image? For it had been better for him to have been made simply like a brute animal, than, once made rational, for him to live²³⁷ the life of the brutes. 3. Or where was any necessity at all for his receiving the idea of God to begin with? For if he be not fit to receive it even now, it were better it had not been given him at first. 4. Or what profit to God Who has made them, or what glory to Him could it be, if men, made by Him, do not worship Him, but think that others are their makers? For God thus proves to have made these for others instead of for Himself. 5. Once again, a merely human king does not let the lands he has colonized pass to others to serve them, nor go over to other men; but he warns them by letters, and often sends to them by friends, or, if need be, he comes in person, to put them to rebuke in the last resort by his presence, only that they may not serve others and his own work be spent for naught. 6. Shall not God much more spare His own creatures, that they be not led astray from Him and serve things of nought? especially since such going astray proves the cause of their ruin and undoing, and since it was unfitting that they should perish which had once been partakers of God's image. 7. What then was God to do? or what was to be done save the renewing of that which was in God's image, so that by it men might once more be able to know Him? But how could this have come to pass save by the presence of the very Image of God, our Lord Jesus Christ? For by men's means it was impossible, since they are but made after an image; nor by angels either, for not even they are (God's) images. Whence the Word of God came in His own person, that, as He was the Image of the Father, He might be able to create afresh the man after the image. 8. But, again, it could not else have taken place had not death and corruption been done away. 9. Whence He took, in natural fitness, a mortal body, that while death might in it be once for all done away, men made after His Image might once more be renewed. None other then was sufficient for this need, save the Image of the Father.

237 The Bened. text is corrected here on the ground (1) of ms. evidence, (2) of construction (for which see 6, 7, and c. *Gent.* 20. 3).

§14. *A portrait once effaced must be restored from the original. Thus the Son of the Father came to seek, save, and regenerate. No other way was possible. Blinded himself, man could not see to heal. The witness of creation had failed to preserve him, and could not bring him back. The Word alone could do so. But how? Only by revealing Himself as Man.*

For as, when the likeness painted on a panel has been effaced by stains from without, he whose likeness it is must needs come once more to enable the portrait to be renewed on the same wood: for, for the sake of his picture, even the mere wood on which it is painted is not thrown away, but the outline is renewed upon it; 2. in the same way also the most holy Son of the Father, being the Image of the Father, came to our region to renew man once made in His likeness, and find him, as one lost, by the remission of sins; as He says Himself in the Gospels: “I came²³⁸ to find and to save the lost.” Whence He said to the Jews also: “Except²³⁹ a man be born again,” not meaning, as they thought, birth from woman, but speaking of the soul born and created anew in the likeness of God’s image. 3. But since wild idolatry and godlessness occupied the world, and the knowledge of God was hid, whose part was it to teach the world concerning the Father? Man’s, might one say? But it was not in man’s power to penetrate everywhere beneath the sun; for neither had they the physical strength to run so far, nor would they be able to claim credence in this matter, nor were they sufficient by themselves to withstand the deceit and impositions of evil spirits. 4. For where all were smitten and confused in soul from demoniacal deceit, and the vanity of idols, how was it possible for them to win over man’s soul and man’s mind—whereas they cannot even see them? Or how can a man convert what he does not see? 5. But perhaps one might say creation was enough; but if creation were enough, these great evils would never have come to pass. For creation was there already, and all the same, men were grovelling in the same error concerning God. 6. Who, then, was needed, save the Word of God, that sees both soul and mind, and that gives movement to all things in creation, and by them makes known the Father? For He who by His own Providence and ordering of all things was teaching men concerning the Father, He it was that could renew this same teaching as well. 7. How, then, could this have been done? Perhaps one might say, that the same means were open as before, for Him to shew forth the truth about the Father once more by means of the work of creation. But this was no longer a sure means. Quite the contrary; for men missed seeing this before, and have turned their eyes no longer upward but downward. 8. Whence, naturally, willing to profit men, He sojourns here as man, taking to Himself a body like the others, and from things of earth, that is by the works of His body [He teaches them], so that they who would not know Him from His Providence and rule over all things, may



238 Cf. Luc. xix. 10.

239 See [John iii. 3, 5](#).

A portrait once effaced must be restored from the original. Thus the Son...

even from the works done by His actual body know the Word of God which is in the body,
and through Him the Father. _____

§15. *Thus the Word condescended to man's engrossment in corporeal things, by even taking a body. All man's superstitions He met halfway; whether men were inclined to worship Nature, Man, Demons, or the dead, He shewed Himself Lord of all these.*

For as a kind teacher who cares for His disciples, if some of them cannot profit by higher subjects, comes down to their level, and teaches them at any rate by simpler courses; so also did the Word of God. As Paul also says: "For seeing²⁴⁰ that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the word preached to save them that believe." 2. For seeing that men, having rejected the contemplation of God, and with their eyes downward, as though sunk in the deep, were seeking about for God in nature and in the world of sense, feigning gods for themselves of mortal men and demons; to this end the loving and general Saviour of all, the Word of God, takes to Himself a body, and as Man walks among men and meets the senses of all men half-way²⁴¹, to the end, I say, that they who think that God is corporeal may from what the Lord effects by His body perceive the truth, and through Him recognize²⁴² the Father. 3. So, men as they were, and human in all their thoughts, on whatever objects they fixed their senses, there they saw themselves met half-way²⁴³, and taught the truth from every side. 4. For if they looked with awe upon the Creation, yet they saw how she confessed Christ as Lord; or if their mind was swayed toward men, so as to think them gods, yet from the Saviour's works, supposing they compared them, the Saviour alone among men appeared Son of God; for there were no such works done among the rest as have been done by the Word of God. 5. Or if they were biassed toward evil spirits, even, yet seeing them cast out by the Word, they were to know that He alone, the Word of God, was God, and that the spirits were none. 6. Or if their mind had already sunk even to the dead, so as to worship heroes, and the gods spoken of in the poets, yet, seeing the Saviour's resurrection, they were to confess them to be false gods, and that the Lord alone is true, the Word of the Father, that was Lord even of death. 7. For this cause He was both born and appeared as Man, and died, and rose again, dulling and casting into the shade the works of all former men by His own, that in whatever direction the bias of men might be, from thence He might recall them, and teach them of His own true Father, as He Himself says: "I came to save and to find that which was lost²⁴⁴."

240 1 Cor. i. 21.

241 Lit. "draws toward Himself."

242 Lit. "infer."

243 Lit. "draws toward Himself."

244 Cf. 14. 2.

§16. *He came then to attract man's sense-bound attention to Himself as man, and so to lead him on to know Him as God.*

For men's mind having finally fallen to things of sense, the Word disguised Himself by appearing in a body, that He might, as Man, transfer men to Himself, and centre their senses on Himself, and, men seeing Him thenceforth as Man, persuade them by the works He did that He is not Man only, but also God, and the Word and Wisdom of the true God. 2. This, too, is what Paul means to point out when he says: "That ye²⁴⁵ being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length, and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." 3. For by the Word revealing Himself everywhere, both above and beneath, and in the depth and in the breadth—above, in the creation; beneath, in becoming man; in the depth, in Hades; and in the breadth, in the world—all things have been filled with the knowledge of God. 4. Now for this cause, also, He did not immediately upon His coming accomplish His sacrifice on behalf of all, by offering His body to death and raising it again, for by this²⁴⁶ means He would have made Himself invisible. But He made Himself visible enough by what²⁴⁷ He did, abiding in it, and doing such works, and shewing such signs, as made Him known no longer as Man, but as God the Word. 5. For by His becoming Man, the Saviour was to accomplish both works of love; first, in putting away death from us and renewing us again; secondly, being unseen and invisible, in manifesting and making Himself known by His works to be the Word of the Father, and the Ruler and King of the universe.



245 [Eph. iii. 18](#), *sq.*

246 διὰ τούτου, perhaps, in both places—"by it," viz. His body.

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§17. *How the Incarnation did not limit the ubiquity of the Word, nor diminish His Purity. (Simile of the Sun.)*

For He was not, as might be imagined, circumscribed in the body, nor, while present in the body, was He absent elsewhere; nor, while He moved the body, was the universe left void of His working and Providence; but, thing most marvellous, Word as He was, so far from being contained by anything, He rather contained all things Himself; and just as while present in the whole of Creation, He is at once distinct in being from the universe, and present in all things by His own power,—giving order to all things, and over all and in all revealing His own providence, and giving life to each thing and all things, including the whole without being included, but being in His own Father alone wholly and in every respect,—2. thus, even while present in a human body and Himself quickening it, He was, without inconsistency, quickening the universe as well, and was in every process of nature, and was outside the whole, and while known from the body by His works, He was none the less manifest from the working of the universe as well. 3. Now, it is the function of soul to behold even what is outside its own body, by acts of thought, without, however, working outside its own body, or moving by its presence things remote from the body. Never, that is, does a man, by thinking of things at a distance, by that fact either move or displace them; nor if a man were to sit in his own house and reason about the heavenly bodies, would he by that fact either move the sun or make the heavens revolve. But he sees that they move and have their being, without being actually able to influence them. 4. Now, the Word of God in His man's nature was not like that; for He was not bound to His body, but rather was Himself wielding it, so that He was not only in it, but was actually in everything, and while external to the universe, abode in His Father only. 5. And this was the wonderful thing that He was at once walking as man, and as the Word was quickening all things, and as the Son was dwelling with His Father. So that not even when the Virgin bore Him did He suffer any change, nor by being in the body was [His glory] dulled: but, on the contrary, He sanctified the body also. 6. For not even by being in the universe does He share in its nature, but all things, on the contrary, are quickened and sustained by Him. 7. For if the sun too, which was made by Him, and which we see, as it revolves in the heaven, is not defiled²⁴⁸ by touching the bodies upon earth, nor is it put out by darkness, but on the contrary itself illuminates and cleanses them also, much less was the all-holy Word of God, Maker and Lord also of the sun, defiled by being made known in the body; on the contrary, being incorruptible, He quickened and cleansed the body also, which was in itself mortal: “who²⁴⁹ did,” for so it says, “no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.”

248 Cf. St. Aug. *de Fid. et Symb.* 10, Rufin. *in Symb. Apost.* 12. So also Tertull. *adv. Marc.* ‘Quodcunque induerit ipse dignum fecit.’

249 [1 Pet. ii. 22.](#)

§18. *How the Word and Power of God works in His human actions: by casting out devils, by Miracles, by His Birth of the Virgin.*

Accordingly, when inspired writers on this matter speak of Him as eating and being born, understand²⁵⁰ that the body, as body, was born, and sustained with food corresponding to its nature, while God, the Word Himself, Who was united with the body, while ordering all things, also by the works He did in the body shewed Himself to be not man, but God the Word. But these things are said of Him, because the actual body which ate, was born, and suffered, belonged to none other but to the Lord: and because, having become man, it was proper for these things to be predicated of Him as man, to shew Him to have a body in truth, and not in seeming. 2. But just as from these things He was known to be bodily present, so from the works He did in the body He made Himself known to be Son of God. Whence also He cried to the unbelieving Jews; “If²⁵¹ I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not Me, believe My works; that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.” 3. For just as, though invisible, He is known through the works of creation; so, having become man, and being in the body unseen, it may be known from His works that He Who can do these is not man, but the Power and Word of God. 4. For His charging evil spirits, and their being driven forth, this deed is not of man, but of God. Or who that saw Him healing the diseases to which the human race is subject, can still think Him man and not God? For He cleansed lepers, made lame men to walk, opened the hearing of deaf men, made blind men to see again, and in a word drove away from men all diseases and infirmities: from which acts it was possible even for the most ordinary observer to see His Godhead. For who that saw Him give back²⁵² what was deficient to men born lacking, and open the eyes of the man blind from his birth, would have failed to perceive that the nature of men was subject to Him, and that He was its Artificer and Maker? For He that gave back that which the man from his birth had not, must be, it is surely evident, the Lord also of men’s natural birth. 5. Therefore, even to begin with, when He was descending to us, He fashioned His body for Himself from a Virgin, thus to afford to all no small proof of His Godhead, in that He Who formed this is also Maker of everything else as well. For who, seeing a body proceeding forth from a Virgin alone without man, can fail to infer that He Who appears in it is Maker and Lord of other bodies also? 6. Or who, seeing the substance of water changed and transformed into wine, fails to perceive that He Who did this is Lord and Creator of the substance of all waters? For to this end He went upon the sea also as its Master, and walked as on dry land, to afford evidence to them that saw it of His lordship over all things. And in feeding so vast a multitude on little, and of His

250 Compare *Orat.* iii. 31, note 11.

251 [John x. 37](#), *sq.*

252 Cf. 49. 2.

own self yielding abundance where none was, so that from five loaves five thousand had enough, and left so much again over, did He shew Himself to be any other than the very Lord Whose Providence is over all things?

§19. *Man, unmoved by nature, was to be taught to know God by that sacred Manhood, Whose deity all nature confessed, especially in His Death.*

But all this it seemed well for the Saviour to do; that since men had failed to know His Providence, revealed in the Universe, and had failed to perceive His Godhead shewn in creation, they might at any rate from the works of His body recover their sight, and through Him receive an idea of the knowledge of the Father, inferring, as I said before, from particular cases His Providence over the whole. 2. For who that saw His power over evil spirits, or who that saw the evil spirits confess that He was their Lord, will hold his mind any longer in doubt whether this be the Son and Wisdom and Power of God? 3. For He made even the creation break silence: in that even at His death, marvellous to relate, or rather at His actual trophy over death—the Cross I mean—all creation was confessing that He that was made manifest and suffered in the body was not man merely, but the Son of God and Saviour of all. For the sun hid His face, and the earth quaked and the mountains were rent: all men were awed. Now these things shewed that Christ on the Cross was God, while all creation was His slave, and was witnessing by its fear to its Master's presence. Thus, then, God the Word shewed Himself to men by His works. But our next step must be to recount and speak of the end of His bodily life and course, and of the nature of the death of His body; especially as this is the sum of our faith, and all men without exception are full of it: so that you may know that no whit the less from this also Christ is known to be God and the Son of God.

§20. *None, then, could bestow incorruption, but He Who had made, none restore the likeness of God, save His Own Image, none quicken, but the Life, none teach, but the Word. And He, to pay our debt of death, must also die for us, and rise again as our first-fruits from the grave. Mortal therefore His Body must be; corruptible, His Body could not be.*

We have, then, now stated in part, as far as it was possible, and as ourselves had been able to understand, the reason of His bodily appearing; that it was in the power of none other to turn the corruptible to incorruption, except the Saviour Himself, that had at the beginning also made all things out of nought and that none other could create anew the likeness of God's image for men, save the Image of the Father; and that none other could render the mortal immortal, save our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Very Life²⁵³; and that none other could teach men of the Father, and destroy the worship of idols, save the Word, that orders all things and is alone the true Only-begotten Son of the Father. 2. But since it was necessary also that the debt owing from all should be paid again: for, as I have already said²⁵⁴, it was owing that all should die, for which especial cause, indeed, He came among us: to this intent, after the proofs of His Godhead from His works, He next offered up His sacrifice also on behalf of all, yielding His Temple to death in the stead of all, in order firstly to make men quit and free of their old trespass, and further to shew Himself more powerful even than death, displaying His own body incorruptible, as first-fruits of the resurrection of all. 3. And do not be surprised if we frequently²⁵⁵ repeat the same words on the same subject. For since we are speaking of the counsel of God, therefore we expound the same sense in more than one form, lest we should seem to be leaving anything out, and incur the charge of inadequate treatment: for it is better to submit to the blame of repetition than to leave out anything that ought to be set down. 4. The body, then, as sharing the same nature with all, for it was a human body, though by an unparalleled miracle it was formed of a virgin only, yet being mortal, was to die also, conformably to its peers. But by virtue of the union of the Word with it, it was no longer subject to corruption according to its own nature, but by reason of the Word that was come to dwell²⁵⁶ in it it was placed out of the reach of corruption. 5. And so it was that two marvels came to pass at once, that the death of all was accomplished in the Lord's body, and that death and corruption were wholly done away by reason of the Word that was united with it. For there was need of death, and death must needs be suffered on behalf of all, that the debt owing from all might be paid. 6. Whence, as I said before, the Word, since it was not possible for Him to die, as He was immortal,

253 αὐτοζωή, see *c. Gent.* 40, 46, and *Orat.* iv. 2, note 4.

254 See especially §7.

255 e.g. viii. 4; x. 5, &c. 'It is quite a peculiarity of Ath. to repeat, and to apologise for doing so,' (Newman in *Orat.* ii. 80, note 1).

256 ἐπίβασις, compare ἐπιβαίνειν, 43. 4, &c.

took to Himself a body such as could die, that He might offer it as His own in the stead of all, and as suffering, through His union²⁵⁷ with it, on behalf of all, “Bring²⁵⁸ to nought Him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

257 ἐπίβασις, compare ἐπιβάλλειν, 43. 4, &c.

258 Cf. 10. 4, above.

§21. *Death brought to nought by the death of Christ. Why then did not Christ die privately, or in a more honourable way? He was not subject to natural death, but had to die at the hands of others. Why then did He die? Nay but for that purpose He came, and but for that, He could not have risen.*

Why, now that the common Saviour of all has died on our behalf, we, the faithful in Christ, no longer die the death as before, agreeably to the warning of the law; for this condemnation has ceased; but, corruption ceasing and being put away by the grace of the Resurrection, henceforth we are only dissolved, agreeably to our bodies' mortal nature, at the time God has fixed for each, that we may be able to gain a better resurrection. 2. For like the seeds which are cast into the earth, we do not perish by dissolution, but sown in the earth, shall rise again, death having been brought to nought by the grace of the Saviour. Hence it is that blessed Paul, who was made a surety of the Resurrection to all, says: "This corruptible²⁵⁹ must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality; but when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" 3. Why, then, one might say, if it were necessary for Him to yield up His body to death in the stead of all, did He not lay it aside as man privately, instead of going as far as even to be crucified? For it were more fitting for Him to have laid His body aside honourably, than ignominiously to endure a death like this. 4. Now, see to it, I reply, whether such an objection be not merely human, whereas what the Saviour did is truly divine and for many reasons worthy of His Godhead. Firstly, because the death which befalls men comes to them agreeably to the weakness of their nature; for, unable to continue in one stay, they are dissolved with time. Hence, too, diseases befall them, and they fall sick and die. But the Lord is not weak, but is the Power of God and Word of God and Very Life. 5. If, then, He had laid aside His body somewhere in private, and upon a bed, after the manner of men, it would have been thought that He also did this agreeably to the weakness of His nature, and because there was nothing in him more than in other men. But since He was, firstly, the Life and the Word of God, and it was necessary, secondly, for the death on behalf of all to be accomplished, for this cause, on the one hand, because He was life and power, the body gained strength in Him; 6. while on the other, as death must needs come to pass, He did not Himself take, but received at others' hands; the occasion of perfecting His sacrifice. Since it was not fit, either, that the Lord should fall sick, who healed the diseases of others; nor again was it right for that body to lose its strength, in which He gives strength to the weaknesses of others also. 7. Why, then, did He not prevent death, as He did sickness? Because it was for this that He had the body, and it was unfitting to prevent it, lest the Resurrection also should be hindered, while yet it

259 1 Cor. xv. 53, *sqq.*

was equally unfitting for sickness to precede His death, lest it should be thought weakness on the part of Him that was in the body. Did He not then hunger? Yes; He hungered, agreeably to the properties of His body. But He did not perish of hunger, because of the Lord that wore it. Hence, even if He died to ransom all, yet He saw not corruption. For [His body] rose again in perfect soundness, since the body belonged to none other, but to the very Life.

§22. *But why did He not withdraw His body from the Jews, and so guard its immortality?* (1) *It became Him not to inflict death on Himself, and yet not to shun it.* (2) *He came to receive death as the due of others, therefore it should come to Him from without.* (3) *His death must be certain, to guarantee the truth of His Resurrection.* Also, *He could not die from infirmity, lest He should be mocked in His healing of others.*

But it were better, one might say, to have hidden from the designs of the Jews, that He might guard His body altogether from death. Now let such an one be told that this too was unbefitting the Lord. For as it was not fitting for the Word of God, being the Life, to inflict death Himself on His own body, so neither was it suitable to fly from death offered by others, but rather to follow it up unto destruction, for which reason He naturally neither laid aside His body of His own accord, nor, again, fled from the Jews when they took counsel against Him. 2. But this did not shew weakness on the Word's part, but, on the contrary, shewed Him to be Saviour and Life; in that He both awaited death to destroy it, and hastened to accomplish the death offered Him for the salvation of all. 3. And besides, the Saviour came to accomplish not His own death, but the death of men; whence He did not lay aside His body by a death of His own²⁶⁰—for He was Life and had none—but received that death which came from men, in order perfectly to do away with this when it met Him in His own body. 4. Again, from the following also one might see the reasonableness of the Lord's body meeting this end. The Lord was especially concerned for the resurrection of the body which He was set to accomplish. For what He was to do was to manifest it as a monument of victory over death, and to assure all of His having effected the blotting out of corruption, and of the incorruption of their bodies from thenceforward; as a gage of which and a proof of the resurrection in store for all, He has preserved His own body incorrupt. 5. If, then, once more, His body had fallen sick, and the word had been sundered from it in the sight of all, it would have been unbecoming that He who healed the diseases of others should suffer His own instrument to waste in sickness. For how could His driving out the diseases of others have been believed²⁶¹ in if His own temple fell sick in Him²⁶²? For either He had been mocked as unable to drive away diseases, or if He could, but did not, He would be thought insensible toward others also.

260 Cf. [Joh. x. 17, 18.](#)

261 Cf. [Matt. xxvii. 42.](#)

262 *i.e.* when sustained by its union with Him.

§23. *Necessity of a public death for the doctrine of the Resurrection.*

But even if, without any disease and without any pain, He had hidden His body away privily and by Himself “in²⁶³ a corner,” or in a desert place, or in a house, or anywhere, and afterwards suddenly appeared and said that He had been raised from the dead, He would have seemed on all hands to be telling idle tales²⁶⁴, and what He said about the Resurrection would have been all the more discredited, as there was no one at all to witness to His death. Now, death must precede resurrection, as it would be no resurrection did not death precede; so that if the death of His body had taken place anywhere in secret, the death not being apparent nor taking place before witnesses, His Resurrection too had been hidden and without evidence. 2. Or why, while when He had risen He proclaimed the Resurrection, should He cause His death to take place in secret? or why, while He drove out evil spirits in the presence of all, and made the man blind from his birth recover his sight, and changed the water into wine, that by these means He might be believed to be the Word of God, should He not manifest His mortal nature as incorruptible in the presence of all, that He might be believed Himself to be the Life? 3. Or how were His disciples to have boldness in speaking of the Resurrection, were they not able to say that He first died? Or how could they be believed, saying that death had first taken place and then the Resurrection, had they not had as witnesses of His death the men before whom they spoke with boldness? For if, even as it was, when His death and Resurrection had taken place in the sight of all, the Pharisees of that day would not believe, but compelled even those who had seen the Resurrection to deny it, why, surely, if these things had happened in secret, how many pretexts for disbelief would they have devised? 4. Or how could the end of death, and the victory over it be proved, unless challenging it before the eyes of all He had shewn it to be dead, annulled for the future by the incorruption of His body?

263 [Acts xxvi. 26.](#)

264 [Luke xxiv. 11.](#)

§24. *Further objections anticipated. He did not choose His manner of death; for He was to prove Conqueror of death in all or any of its forms: (simile of a good wrestler). The death chosen to disgrace Him proved the Trophy against death: moreover it preserved His body undivided.*

But what others also might have said, we must anticipate in reply. For perhaps a man might say even as follows: If it was necessary for His death to take place before all, and with witnesses, that the story of His Resurrection also might be believed, it would have been better at any rate for Him to have devised for Himself a glorious death, if only to escape the ignominy of the Cross. 2. But had He done even this, He would give ground for suspicion against Himself, that He was not powerful against every death, but only against the death devised for²⁶⁵ Him; and so again there would have been a pretext for disbelief about the Resurrection all the same. So death came to His body, not from Himself, but from hostile counsels, in order that whatever death they offered to the Saviour, this He might utterly do away. 3. And just as a noble wrestler, great in skill and courage, does not pick out his antagonists for himself, lest he should raise a suspicion of his being afraid of some of them, but puts it in the choice of the onlookers, and especially so if they happen to be his enemies, so that against whomsoever they match him, him he may throw, and be believed superior to them all; so also the Life of all, our Lord and Saviour, even Christ, did not devise a death for His own body, so as not to appear to be fearing some other death; but He accepted on the Cross, and endured, a death inflicted by others, and above all by His enemies, which they thought dreadful and ignominious and not to be faced; so that this also being destroyed, both He Himself might be believed to be the Life, and the power of death be brought utterly to nought. 4. So something surprising and startling has happened; for the death, which they thought to inflict as a disgrace, was actually a monument of victory against death itself. Whence neither did He suffer the death of John, his head being severed, nor, as Esaias, was He sawn in sunder; in order that even in death He might still keep His body undivided and in perfect soundness, and no pretext be afforded to those that would divide the Church.

265 *i.e.* suggested as ἐνδοξον (*supra*, 1); a reading παρ' ἑαυτοῦ has been suggested: (devised) "by Himself."

§25. *Why the Cross, of all deaths? (1) He had to bear the curse for us. (2) On it He held out His hands to unite all, Jews and Gentiles, in Himself. (3) He defeated the “Prince of the powers of the air” in His own region, clearing the way to heaven and opening for us the everlasting doors.*

And thus much in reply to those without who pile up arguments for themselves. But if any of our own people also inquire, not from love of debate, but from love of learning, why He suffered death in none other way save on the Cross, let him also be told that no other way than this was good for us, and that it was well that the Lord suffered this for our sakes. 2. For if He came Himself to bear the curse laid upon us, how else could He have “become²⁶⁶ a curse,” unless He received the death set for a curse? and that is the Cross. For this is exactly what is written: “Cursed²⁶⁷ is he that hangeth on a tree.” 3. Again, if the Lord’s death is the ransom of all, and by His death “the middle²⁶⁸ wall of partition” is broken down, and the calling of the nations is brought about, how would He have called us to Him, had He not been crucified? For it is only on the cross that a man dies with his hands spread out. Whence it was fitting for the Lord to bear this also and to spread out His hands, that with the one He might draw the ancient people, and with the other those from the Gentiles, and unite both in Himself. 4. For this is what He Himself has said, signifying by what manner of death He was to ransom all: “I, when²⁶⁹ I am lifted up,” He saith, “shall draw all men unto Me.” 5. And once more, if the devil, the enemy of our race, having fallen from heaven, wanders about our lower atmosphere, and there bearing rule over his fellow-spirits, as his peers in disobedience, not only works illusions by their means in them that are deceived, but tries to hinder them that are going up (and about this²⁷⁰ the Apostle says: “According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience”); while the Lord came to cast down the devil, and clear the air and prepare the way for us up into heaven, as said the Apostle: “Through²⁷¹ the veil, that is to say, His flesh”—and this must needs be by death—well, by what other kind of death could this have come to pass, than by one which took place in the air, I mean the cross? for only he that is perfected on the cross dies in the air. Whence it was quite fitting that the Lord suffered this death. 6. For thus being lifted up He cleared the air²⁷² of the malignity both of the devil and of demons of all kinds, as He says: “I beheld²⁷³ Satan as lightning fall from heaven;” and made a new



266 [Gal. iii. 13.](#)

267 [Deut. xxi. 23.](#)

268 [Eph. ii. 14.](#)

269 [John xii. 32.](#)

270 [Eph. ii. 2,](#) and see the curious visions of Antony, *Vit. Ant.*, 65, 66.

271 [Heb. x. 20.](#)

272 Cf. Lightfoot on [Coloss. ii. 15,](#) also the fragment of *Letter 22,* and *Letter 60.* 7.

273 [Luc. x. 18.](#)

opening of the way up into heaven as He says once more: “Lift²⁷⁴ up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors.” For it was not the Word Himself that needed an opening of the gates, being Lord of all; nor were any of His works closed to their Maker; but we it was that needed it whom He carried up by His own body. For as He offered it to death on behalf of all, so by it He once more made ready the way up into the heavens.

274 [Ps. xxiv. 7](#), [LXX.]

§26. *Reasons for His rising on the Third Day. (1) Not sooner for else His real death would be denied, nor (2) later; to (a) guard the identity of His body, (b) not to keep His disciples too long in suspense, nor (c) to wait till the witnesses of His death were dispersed, or its memory faded.*

The death on the Cross, then, for us has proved seemly and fitting, and its cause has been shewn to be reasonable in every respect; and it may justly be argued that in no other way than by the Cross was it right for the salvation of all to take place. For not even thus—not even on the Cross—did He leave Himself concealed; but far otherwise, while He made creation witness to the presence of its Maker, He suffered not the temple of His body to remain long, but having merely shewn it to be dead, by the contact of death with it, He straightway raised it up on the third day, bearing away, as the mark of victory and the triumph over death, the incorruptibility and impassibility which resulted to His body. 2. For He could, even immediately on death, have raised His body and shewn it alive; but this also the Saviour, in wise foresight, did not do. For one might have said that He had not died at all, or that death had not come into perfect contact with Him, if He had manifested the Resurrection at once. 3. Perhaps, again, had the interval of His dying and rising again been one of two days²⁷⁵ only, the glory of His incorruption would have been obscure. So in order that the body might be proved to be dead, the Word tarried yet one intermediate day, and on the third shewed it incorruptible to all. 4. So then, that the death on the Cross might be proved, He raised His body on the third day. 5. But lest, by raising it up when it had remained a long time and been completely corrupted, He should be disbelieved, as though He had exchanged it for some other body—for a man might also from lapse of time distrust what he saw, and forget what had taken place—for this cause He waited not more than three days; nor did He keep long in suspense those whom He had told about the Resurrection: 6. but while the word was still echoing in their ears and their eyes were still expectant and their mind in suspense, and while those who had slain Him were still living on earth, and were on the spot and could witness to the death of the Lord's body, the Son of God Himself, after an interval of three days, shewed His body, once dead, immortal and incorruptible; and it was made manifest to all that it was not from any natural weakness of the Word that dwelt in it that the body had died, but in order that in it death might be done away by the power of the Saviour.

275 Literally 'at an even' [distance], as contrasted with (a) the same day (2, above), (b) the third day (ἐν τριταίᾳ & 251· διαστήματι (6, below). ἐν ἴσῳ must therefore be equivalent *in sense* to δευτεραίου. Possibly the literal sense is '[had the Resurrection taken place] at an equal interval between the Death and the [actual day of] the Resurrection.'

§27. *The change wrought by the Cross in the relation of Death to Man.*

For that death is destroyed, and that the Cross is become the victory over it, and that it has no more power but is verily dead, this is no small proof, or rather an evident warrant, that it is despised by all Christ's disciples, and that they all take the aggressive against it and no longer fear it; but by the sign of the Cross and by faith in Christ tread it down as dead. 2. For of old, before the divine sojourn of the Saviour took place, even to the saints death was terrible²⁷⁶, and all wept for the dead as though they perished. But now that the Saviour has raised His body, death is no longer terrible; for all who believe in Christ tread him under as nought, and choose rather to die than to deny their faith in Christ. For they verily know that when they die they are not destroyed, but actually [begin to] live, and become incorruptible through the Resurrection. 3. And that devil that once maliciously exulted in death, now that its²⁷⁷ pains were loosed, remained the only one truly dead. And a proof of this is, that before men believe Christ, they see in death an object of terror, and play the coward before him. But when they are gone over to Christ's faith and teaching, their contempt for death is so great that they even eagerly rush upon it, and become witnesses for the Resurrection the Saviour has accomplished against it. For while still tender in years they make haste to die, and not men only, but women also, exercise themselves by bodily discipline against it. So weak has he become, that even women who were formerly deceived by him, now mock at him as dead and paralyzed. 4. For as when a tyrant has been defeated by a real king, and bound hand and foot, then all that pass by laugh him to scorn, buffeting and reviling him, no longer fearing his fury and barbarity, because of the king who has conquered him; so also, death having been conquered and exposed by the Saviour on the Cross, and bound hand and foot, all they who are in Christ, as they pass by, trample on him, and witnessing to Christ scoff at death, jesting at him, and saying what has been written against him of old: "O death²⁷⁸, where is thy victory? O grave, where is thy sting."



276 Cf. [Ps. lv. 4, lxxxix. 47](#); [Job. xviii. 14](#).

277 Cf. [Acts ii. 24](#)

278 Cf. above, 21. 2.

§28. *This exceptional fact must be tested by experience. Let those who doubt it become Christians.*

Is this, then, a slight proof of the weakness of death? or is it a slight demonstration of the victory won over him by the Saviour, when the youths and young maidens that are in Christ despise this life and practise to die? 2. For man is by nature afraid of death and of the dissolution of the body; but there is this most startling fact, that he who has put on the faith of the Cross despises even what is naturally fearful, and for Christ's sake is not afraid of death. 3. And just as, whereas fire has the natural property of burning, if some one said there was a substance which did not fear its burning, but on the contrary proved it weak—as the asbestos among the Indians is said to do—then one who did not believe the story, if he wished to put it to the test, is at any rate, after putting on the fireproof material and touching the fire, thereupon assured of the weakness attributed²⁷⁹ to the fire: 4. or if any one wished to see the tyrant bound, at any rate by going into the country and domain of his conqueror he may see the man, a terror to others, reduced to weakness; so if a man is incredulous even still after so many proofs and after so many who have become martyrs in Christ, and after the scorn shewn for death every day by those who are illustrious in Christ, still, if his mind be even yet doubtful as to whether death has been brought to nought and had an end, he does well to wonder at so great a thing, only let him not prove obstinate in incredulity, nor case-hardened in the face of what is so plain. 5. But just as he who has got the asbestos knows that fire has no burning power over it, and as he who would see the tyrant bound goes over to the empire of his conqueror, so too let him who is incredulous about the victory over death receive the faith of Christ, and pass over to His teaching, and he shall see the weakness of death, and the triumph over it. For many who were formerly incredulous and scoffers have afterwards believed and so despised death as even to become martyrs for Christ Himself.

279 κατὰ τοῦ πυρός κατὰ appears to have the predicative force so common in Aristotle. The Bened. translation 'the weakness of fire against the asbestos' is based on a needless conjecture.

§29. Here then are wonderful effects, and a sufficient cause, the Cross, to account for them, as sunrise accounts for daylight.

Now if by the sign of the Cross, and by faith in Christ, death is trampled down, it must be evident before the tribunal of truth that it is none other than Christ Himself that has displayed trophies and triumphs over death, and made him lose all his strength. 2. And if, while previously death was strong, and for that reason terrible, now after the sojourn of the Saviour and the death and Resurrection of His body it is despised, it must be evident that death has been brought to nought and conquered by the very Christ that ascended the Cross. 3. For as, if after night-time the sun rises, and the whole region of earth is illumined by him, it is at any rate not open to doubt that it is the sun who has revealed his light everywhere, that has also driven away the dark and given light to all things; so, now that death has come into contempt, and been trodden under foot, from the time when the Saviour's saving manifestation in the flesh and His death on the Cross took place, it must be quite plain that it is the very Saviour that also appeared in the body, Who has brought death to nought, and Who displays the signs of victory over him day by day in His own disciples. 4. For when one sees men, weak by nature, leaping forward to death, and not fearing its corruption nor frightened of the descent into Hades, but with eager soul challenging it; and not flinching from torture, but on the contrary, for Christ's sake electing to rush upon death in preference to life upon earth, or even if one be an eye-witness of men and females and young children rushing and leaping upon death for the sake of Christ's religion; who is so silly, or who is so incredulous, or who so maimed in his mind, as not to see and infer that Christ, to Whom the people witness, Himself supplies and gives to each the victory over death, depriving him of all his power in each one of them that hold His faith and bear the sign of the Cross. 5. For he that sees the serpent trodden under foot, especially knowing his former fierceness no longer doubts that he is dead and has quite lost his strength, unless he is perverted in mind and has not even his bodily senses sound. For who that sees a lion, either, made sport of by children, fails to see that he is either dead or has lost all his power? 6. Just as, then, it is possible to see with the eyes the truth of all this, so, now that death is made sport of and despised by believers in Christ let none any longer doubt, nor any prove incredulous, of death having been brought to nought by Christ, and the corruption of death destroyed and stayed.



§30. *The reality of the resurrection proved by facts: (1) the victory over death described above: (2) the Wonders of Grace are the work of One Living, of One who is God: (3) if the gods be (as alleged) real and living, a fortiori He Who shatters their power is alive.*

What we have so far said, then, is no small proof that death has been brought to naught, and that the Cross of the Lord is a sign of victory over him. But of the Resurrection of the body to immortality thereupon accomplished by Christ, the common Saviour and true Life of all, the demonstration by facts is clearer than arguments to those whose mental vision is sound. 2. For if, as our argument shewed, death has been brought to nought, and because of Christ all tread him under foot, much more did He Himself first tread him down with His own body, and bring him to nought. But supposing death slain by Him, what could have happened save the rising again of His body, and its being displayed as a monument of victory against death? or how could death have been shewn to be brought to nought unless the Lord's body had risen? But if this demonstration of the Resurrection seem to any one insufficient, let him be assured of what is said even from what takes place before his eyes. 3. For whereas on a man's decease he can put forth no power, but his influence lasts to the grave and thenceforth ceases; and actions, and power over men, belong to the living only; let him who will, see and be judge, confessing the truth from what appears to sight. 4. For now that the Saviour works so great things among men, and day by day is invisibly persuading so great a multitude from every side, both from them that dwell in Greece and in foreign lands, to come over to His faith, and all to obey His teaching, will any one still hold his mind in doubt whether a Resurrection has been accomplished by the Saviour, and whether Christ is alive, or rather is Himself the Life? 5. Or is it like a dead man to be pricking the consciences of men, so that they deny their hereditary laws and bow before the teaching of Christ? Or how, if he is no longer active (for this is proper to one dead), does he stay from their activity those who are active and alive, so that the adulterer no longer commits adultery, and the murderer murders no more, nor is the inflicter of wrong any longer grasping, and the profane is henceforth religious? Or how, if He be not risen but is dead, does He drive away, and pursue, and cast down those false gods said by the unbelievers to be alive, and the demons they worship? 6. For where Christ is named, and His faith, there all idolatry is deposed and all imposture of evil spirits is exposed, and any spirit is unable to endure even the name, nay even on barely hearing it flies and disappears. But this work is not that of one dead, but of one that lives—and especially of God. 7. In particular, it would be ridiculous to say that while the spirits cast out by Him and the idols brought to nought are alive, He who chases them away, and by His power prevents their even appearing, yea, and is being confessed by them all to be Son of God, is dead.

§31. *If Power is the sign of life, what do we learn from the impotence of idols, for good or evil, and the constraining power of Christ and of the Sign of the Cross? Death and the demons are by this proved to have lost their sovereignty. Coincidence of the above argument from facts with that from the Personality of Christ.*

But they who disbelieve in the Resurrection afford a strong proof against themselves, if instead of all the spirits and the gods worshipped by them casting out Christ, Who, they say, is dead, Christ on the contrary proves them all to be dead. 2. For if it be true that one dead can exert no power, while the Saviour does daily so many works, drawing men to religion, persuading to virtue, teaching of immortality, leading on to a desire for heavenly things, revealing the knowledge of the Father, inspiring strength to meet death, shewing Himself to each one, and displacing the godlessness of idolatry, and the gods and spirits of the unbelievers can do none of these things, but rather shew themselves dead at the presence of Christ, their pomp being reduced to impotence and vanity; whereas by the sign of the Cross all magic is stopped, and all witchcraft brought to nought, and all the idols are being deserted and left, and every unruly pleasure is checked, and every one is looking up from earth to heaven: Whom is one to pronounce dead? Christ, that is doing so many works? But to work is not proper to one dead. Or him that exerts no power at all, but lies as it were without life? which is essentially proper to the idols and spirits, dead as they are. 3. For the Son of God is²⁸⁰ “living and active,” and works day by day, and brings about the salvation of all. But death is daily proved to have lost all his power, and idols and spirits are proved to be dead rather than Christ, so that henceforth no man can any longer doubt of the Resurrection of His body. 4. But he who is incredulous of the Resurrection of the Lord’s body would seem to be ignorant of the power of the Word and Wisdom of God. For if He took a body to Himself at all, and—in reasonable consistency, as our argument shewed— appropriated it as His own, what was the Lord to do with it? or what should be the end of the body when the Word had once descended upon it? For it could not but die, inasmuch as it was mortal, and to be offered unto death on behalf of all: for which purpose it was that the Saviour fashioned it for Himself. But it was impossible for it to remain dead, because it had been made the temple of life. Whence, while it died as mortal, it came to life again by reason of the Life in it; and of its Resurrection the works are a sign.



280 [Heb. iv. 12.](#)

§32. *But who is to see Him risen, so as to believe? Nay, God is ever invisible and known by His works only: and here the works cry out in proof. If you do not believe, look at those who do, and perceive the Godhead of Christ. The demons see this, though men be blind. Summary of the argument so far.*

But if, because He is not seen, His having risen at all is disbelieved, it is high time for those who refuse belief to deny the very course of Nature. For it is God's peculiar property at once to be invisible and yet to be known from His works, as has been already stated above. 2. If, then, the works are not there, they do well to disbelieve what does not appear. But if the works cry aloud and shew it clearly, why do they choose to deny the life so manifestly due to the Resurrection? For even if they be maimed in their intelligence, yet even with the external senses men may see the unimpeachable power and Godhead of Christ. 3. For even a blind man, if he see not the sun, yet if he but take hold of the warmth the sun gives out, knows that there is a sun above the earth. Thus let our opponents also, even if they believe not as yet, being still blind to the truth, yet at least knowing His power by others who believe, not deny the Godhead of Christ and the Resurrection accomplished by Him. 4. For it is plain that if Christ be dead, He could not be expelling demons and spoiling idols; for a dead man the spirits would not have obeyed. But if they be manifestly expelled by the naming of His name, it must be evident that He is not dead; especially as spirits, seeing even what is unseen by men, could tell if Christ were dead and refuse Him any obedience at all. 5. But as it is, what irreligious men believe not, the spirits see—that He is God,—and hence they fly and fall at His feet, saying just what they uttered when He was in the body: “We²⁸¹ know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God;” and, “Ah, what have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God? I pray Thee, torment me not.” 6. As then demons confess Him, and His works bear Him witness day by day, it must be evident, and let none brazen it out against the truth, both that the Saviour raised His own body, and that He is the true Son of God, being from Him, as from His Father, His own Word, and Wisdom, and Power, Who in ages later took a body for the salvation of all, and taught the world concerning the Father, and brought death to nought, and bestowed incorruption upon all by the promise of the Resurrection, having raised His own body as a first-fruits of this, and having displayed it by the sign of the Cross as a monument of victory over death and its corruption.

281 Cf. Luc. iv. 34, and Marc. v. 7.

§33. *Unbelief of Jews and scoffing of Greeks. The former confounded by their own Scriptures. Prophecies of His coming as God and as Man.*

These things being so, and the Resurrection of His body and the victory gained over death by the Saviour being clearly proved, come now let us put to rebuke both the disbelief of the Jews and the scoffing of the Gentiles. 2. For these, perhaps, are the points where Jews express incredulity, while Gentiles laugh, finding fault with the unseemliness of the Cross, and of the Word of God becoming man. But our argument shall not delay to grapple with both especially as the proofs at our command against them are clear as day. 3. For Jews in their incredulity may be refuted from the Scriptures, which even themselves read; for this text and that, and, in a word, the whole inspired Scripture, cries aloud concerning these things, as even its express words abundantly shew. For prophets proclaimed beforehand concerning the wonder of the Virgin and the birth from her, saying: “Lo, the²⁸² Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us.” 4. But Moses, the truly great, and whom they believe to speak truth, with reference to the Saviour’s becoming man, having estimated what was said as important, and assured of its truth, set it down in these words: “There²⁸³ shall rise a star out of Jacob, and a man out of Israel, and he shall break in pieces the captains of Moab.” And again: “How lovely are thy habitations O Jacob, thy tabernacles O Israel, as shadowing gardens, and as parks by the rivers, and as tabernacles which the Lord hath fixed, as cedars by the waters. A man shall come forth out of his seed, and shall be Lord over many peoples.” And again, Esaias: “Before²⁸⁴ the Child know how to call father or mother, he shall take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria before the king of Assyria.” 5. That a man, then, shall appear is foretold in those words. But that He that is to come is Lord of all, they predict once more as follows: “Behold²⁸⁵ the Lord sitteth upon a light cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the graven images of Egypt shall be shaken.” For from thence also it is that the Father calls Him back, saying: “I called²⁸⁶ My Son out of Egypt.”

282 [Matt. i. 23](#); [Isa. vii. 14](#).

283 [Num. xxiv. 5–17](#).

284 [Isa. viii. 4](#).

285 [Isa. xix. 1](#).

286 [Hos. xi. 1](#).

§34. *Prophecies of His passion and death in all its circumstances.*

Nor is even His death passed over in silence: on the contrary, it is referred to in the divine Scriptures, even exceeding clearly. For to the end that none should err for want of instruction in the actual events, they feared not to mention even the cause of His death,—that He suffers it not for His own sake, but for the immortality and salvation of all, and the counsels of the Jews against Him and the indignities offered Him at their hands. 2. They say then: “A man²⁸⁷ in stripes, and knowing how to bear weakness, for his face is turned away: he was dishonoured and held in no account. He beareth our sins, and is in pain on our account; and we reckoned him to be in labour, and in stripes, and in ill-usage; but he was wounded for our sins, and made weak for our wickedness. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we were healed.” O marvel at the loving-kindness of the Word, that for our sakes He is dishonoured, that we may be brought to honour. “For all we,” it says, “like sheep were gone astray; man had erred in his way; and the Lord delivered him for our sins; and he openeth not his mouth, because he hath been evilly entreated. As a sheep was he brought to the slaughter, and as a lamb dumb before his shearer, so openeth he not his mouth: in his abasement his judgment was taken away²⁸⁸.” 3. Then lest any should from His suffering conceive Him to be a common man, Holy Writ anticipates the surmises of man, and declares the power (which worked) for Him²⁸⁹, and the difference of His nature compared with ourselves, saying: “But who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken away²⁹⁰ from the earth. From the wickedness of the people was he brought to death. And I will give the wicked instead of his burial, and the rich instead of his death; for he did no wickedness, neither was guile found in his mouth. And the Lord will cleanse him from his stripes.”

287 [Isa. liii. 3, sqq.](#)

288 Or, “exalted.”

289 τὴν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν. The Ben. version simplifies this difficult expression by ignoring the ὑπὲρ. Mr. E. N. Bennett has suggested to me that the true reading may be ὑπερά& 203λῶν for ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ (ἄυλος supra 8. 1, ὑπεραύλως in Philo). I would add the suggestion that αὐτοῦ stood after ὑπεράυλων, and that the similarity of the five letters in ms. caused the second word to be dropped out. ‘His exceeding immaterial power’ would be the resulting sense. (See Class. Review, 1890, No. iv. p. 182.)

290 Or, “exalted.”

§35. *Prophecies of the Cross. How these prophecies are satisfied in Christ alone.*

But, perhaps, having heard the prophecy of His death, you ask to learn also what is set forth concerning the Cross. For not even this is passed over: it is displayed by the holy men with great plainness. 2. For first Moses predicts it, and that with a loud voice, when he says: “Ye shall see²⁹¹ your Life hanging before your eyes, and shall not believe.” 3. And next, the prophets after him witness of this, saying: “But²⁹² I as an innocent lamb brought to be slain, knew it not; they counselled an evil counsel against me, saying, Hither and let us cast a tree upon his²⁹³ bread, and efface him from the land of the living.” 4. And again: “They pierced²⁹⁴ my hands and my feet, they numbered all my bones, they parted my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.” 5. Now a death raised aloft and that takes place on a tree, could be none other than the Cross: and again, in no other death are the hands and feet pierced, save on the Cross only. 6. But since by the sojourn of the Saviour among men all nations also on every side began to know God; they did not leave this point, either, without a reference: but mention is made of this matter as well in the Holy Scriptures. For “there²⁹⁵ shall be,” he saith, “the root of Jesse, and he that riseth to rule the nations, on him shall the nations hope.” This then is a little in proof of what has happened. 7. But all Scripture teems with refutations of the disbelief of the Jews. For which of the righteous men and holy prophets, and patriarchs, recorded in the divine Scriptures, ever had his corporal birth of a virgin only? Or what woman has sufficed without man for the conception of human kind? Was not Abel born of Adam, Enoch of Jared, Noe of Lamech, and Abraham of Tharra, Isaac of Abraham, Jacob of Isaac? Was not Judas born of Jacob, and Moses and Aaron of Ameram? Was not Samuel born of Elkana, was not David of Jesse, was not Solomon of David, was not Ezechias of Achaz, was not Josias of Amos, was not Esaias of Amos, was not Jeremy of Chelchias, was not Ezechiel of Buzi? Had not each a father as author of his existence? Who then is he that is born of a virgin only? For the prophet made exceeding much of this sign. 8. Or whose birth did a star in the skies forerun, to announce to the world him that was born? For when Moses was born, he was hid by his parents: David was not heard of, even by those of his neighbourhood, inasmuch as even the great Samuel knew him not, but asked, had Jesse yet another son? Abraham again became known to his neighbours as²⁹⁶ a great

291 [Deut. xxviii. 66](#), see *Orat* ii. 16, note 1.

292 [Jer. xi. 19](#).

293 Properly “let us destroy the tree with its bread” (*i.e.* fruit). The LXX, translate β^εlahmô ‘*upon* his bread,’ which is possible in itself; but they either mistook the verb, or followed some wrong reading. Their rendering is followed by all the Latin versions. For a comment on the latter see Tertull. *adv. Marc.* iii. 19, iv. 40.

294 [Ps. xxii. 16](#), *sqq.*

295 [Isa. xi. 10](#).

296 Or ‘only after he had grown great,’ *i.e.* to man’s estate.

man only subsequently to his birth. But of Christ's birth the witness was not man, but a star in that heaven whence He was descending.
