John Cassian

SEVEN BOOKS ON THE INCARNATION OF THE LORD, AGAINST NESTORIUS

General Index

- Previous Index

PREFACE

Index

▪ Previous Index

BOOK I

Index

▪ Previous Index

BOOK II

Index

▪ Previous Index

BOOK III

Index

▪ Previous Index

BOOK IV

Index

▪ *Previous Index*

BOOK V

Index

▪ Previous Index

BOOK VI

Index

▪ *Previous Index*

BOOK VII

Index

▪ Previous Index

John Cassian

SEVEN BOOKS ON THE INCARNATION OF THE LORD, AGAINST NESTORIUS

Translated by Rev. Edgar C. S. Gibson

PREFACE

WHEN I had now finished the books of Spiritual Conferences, the merit of which consists in the thoughts expressed rather than in the language used (since my rude utterances were unequal to the deep thoughts of the saints), I had contemplated and almost determined on taking refuge in silence (as I was ashamed of having exposed my ignorance) that I might as far as possible make up for my audacity in speaking by modestly holding my tongue for the future. But you have overcome my determination and purpose by your commendable earnestness and most urgent affection, my dear Leo, my esteemed and highly regarded friend, ornament that you are of the Roman Church and sacred ministry, as you drag me forth from the obscurity of silence on which I had determined, into a public court which I may well dread, and oblige me to undertake new labours while I am still blushing for my past ones. And thought I was unequal to lesser tasks, you compel me to match myself to greater ones. For even in those trifling works, in which of our small ability we offered some small offering to the Lord, I would never have attempted to do or apply myself to anything unless I had been led to it by Episcopal command. And so through you there has been an increase of importance both of our subject and of our language. For whereas before we spoke, when bidden, of the business of the Lord, you now require us to speak of the actual Incarnation and glory of the Lord Himself. And so we who were formerly brought as it were into the holy place of the temple by priestly hands, now penetrate under your guidance and protection, so to speak, into the holy of holies. Great is the honour but most perilous the undertaking, because the prize of the holy sanctuary and the divine reward can only be secured by a victory over our foe. And so you require and charge us to raise our feeble hands against a fresh heresy and a new enemy of the faith, and that we should take our stand, so to speak,

against the awful open-mouthed gapings of the deadly serpent, that at my summons the power of prophecy and the divine force of the gospel word may destroy the dragon now rising up with sinuous course against the Churches of God. I obey your intreaty: I yield to your command: for I had rather trust in my own matters to you than to myself, especially as the love of Jesus Christ my Lord commands me this as well as you, for He Himself gives me this charge in your person. For in this matter you are more concerned than I am, as your judgment stands in peril rather than my duty. For in my case, whether I prove equal to what you have commanded me or no, the very fact of my obedience and humility will be in some degree an excuse for me; if indeed I might not urge that there is more value in my obedience, if there is less that I can do. For we easily comply with any one's orders, out of your abundance: but his is a great and wonderful work, whose desires exceed his powers. Yours then is this work and business, and yours it is to be ashamed of it. Pray and intreat that your choice may not be discredited by my clumsiness; and that, supposing we do not answer the expectations which you have formed of us, you may not seem to have been wrong in commanding out of an ill-considered determination, while I was right in yielding, owing to the claims of obedience.

▪ Index ▪ Forward

BOOK I

CHAPTER I: The heresy compared to the hydra of the poets.

THE tales of poets tell us that of old the hydra when its heads were cut off gained by its injuries, and sprang up more abundantly: so that owing to a miracle of a strange and unheard-of kind, its loss proved a kind of gain to the monster which was thus increased by death, while that extraordinary fecundity doubled everything which the knife of the executioner cut off, until the man who was eagerly seeking its destruction, toiling and sweating, and finding his efforts so often baffled by useless labours, added to the courage of battle the arts of craft, and by the application of fire, as they tell us, cut off with a fiery sword the manifold offspring of that monstrous body; and so when the inward parts were thus burnt, by cauterizing the rebellious throbbings of that ghastly fecundity, at length those prodigious births were brought to an end. Thus also heresies in the churches bear some likeness to that hydra which the poets' imagination invented; for they too hiss against us with deadly tongues; and they too cast forth their deadly poison, and spring up again when their heads are cut off. But because the medicine should not be wanting when the disease revives, and because the remedy should be the more speedy as the sickness is the more dangerous, our Lord God is able to bring to pass that that may be a truth in the church's warfare, which Gentile fictions imagined of the death of the hydra, and that the fiery sword of the Holy Spirit may cauterize the inward parts of that most dangerous birth, in the new heresy to be put down, so that at last its monstrous fecundity may cease to answer to its dying throbs.

CHAPTER II: Description of the different heretical monsters which spring from one another.

FOR these shoots of an unnatural seed are no new thing in the churches. The harvest I of the Lord's field has always had to put up I with burrs and briars, and in it the shoots of choking tares have constantly sprung up. For hence have arisen the Ebionites, Sabellians, Arians, as well as Eunomians and Macedonians, and Photinians and Apollinarians, and all the other tares of the churches, and thistles which destroy the fruits of good faith. And of these the earliest was Ebion, who while over-anxious about asserting our Lord's humanity robbed it of its union with Divinity. But after him the schism of Sabellius burst forth out of reaction against the above mentioned heresy, and as he declared that there was no distinction between the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, he impiously confounded, as far as was possible, the Persons, and failed to distinguish the holy and ineffable Trinity. Next after him whom we have mentioned there followed the blasphemy of Arian perversity, which, in order to avoid the appearance of confounding the Sacred Persons, declared that there were different and dissimilar substances in the Trinity. But after him in time though like him in wickedness came Eunomius, who, though allowing that the Persons of the Holy Trinity were divine and like each other, yet insisted that they were separate from each other; and so while admitting their likeness denied their equality. Macedonius also blaspheming against the Holy Ghost with unpardonable wickedness, while allowing that the Father and the Son were of one substance, termed the Holy Ghost a creature, and so sinned against the entire Divinity, because no injury can be offered to anything in the Trinity without affecting the entire Trinity. But Photinus, though allowing that Jesus who was born of the Virgin was God, yet erred in his notion that His Godhead began with the beginning of His manhood; while Apollinaris through inaccurately conceiving the union of God and man wrongly believed that He was without a human soul For it is as bad an error to add to our Lord Jesus Christ what does not belong to Him as to rob Him of that which is His. For where He is spoken of otherwise than as He is - even though it seems to add to His glory -- yet it is an offence. And so one after another out of reaction against heresies they give rise to heresies, and all teach things different from each other, but equally opposed to the faith. And just lately also, i.e., in our own days, we saw a most poisonous heresy spring up from the greatest city of the Belgae, and though there was no doubt about its error, yet there was

a doubt about its name, because it arose with a fresh head from the old stock of the Ebionites, and so it is still a question whether it ought to be called old or new. For it was new as far as its upholders were concerned; but old in the character of its errors. Indeed it blasphemously taught that our Lord Jesus Christ was born as a mere man, and maintained that the fact that He afterwards obtained the glory and power of the Godhead resulted from His human worth and not from His Divine nature; and by this it taught that He had not always His Divinity by the right of His very own Divine nature which belonged to Him, but that He obtained it afterwards as a reward for His labours and sufferings. Whereas then it blasphemously taught that our Lord and Saviour was not God at His birth, but was subsequently taken into the Godhead, it was indeed bordering on this heresy which has now sprung up, and is as it were its first cousin and akin to it, and, harmonizing both with Ebionism and these new ones, came in point of time between them, and was linked with them both in point of wickedness. And although there are some others like those which we have mentioned yet it would take too long to describe them all. Nor have we now undertaken to enumerate those that are dead and gone, but to refute those which are novel.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER III: He describes the pestilent error of the Pelagian.

AT any rate we think that this fact ought not to be omitted, which was special and peculiar to that heresy mentioned above which sprang from the error of Pelagius; viz., that in saying that Jesus Christ had lived as a mere man without any stain of sin, they actually went so far as to declare that men could also be without sin if they liked. For they imagined that it followed that if Jesus Christ being a mere man was without sin, all men also could without the help of God be whatever He as a mere man without participating in the Godhead, could be. And so they made out that there was no difference between any man and our Lord Jesus Christ, as any man could by effort and striving obtain just the same as Christ had obtained by His earnestness and efforts. Whence it resulted that they broke out into a more grievous and unnatural madness, and said that our Lord Jesus Christ had come into this world not to bring redemption to mankind but to give an example of good works, to wit, that men, by following His teaching, and by walking along the same path of virtue, might arrive at the same reward of virtue: thus destroying, as far as they could, all the good of His sacred advent and all the grace of Divine redemption, as they declared that men could by their own lives obtain just that which God had wrought by dying for man's salvation. They added as well that our Lord and Say-four became the Christ after His Baptism, and God after His Resurrection, tracing the former to the mystery of His anointing, the latter to the merits of His Passion. Whence this new author of a heresy that is not new, who declares that our Lord and Saviour was born a mere man, observes that he says exactly the same thing which the Pelagians said before him, and allows that it follows from his error that as he asserts that our Lord Jesus Christ lived as a mere man entirely without sin, so he must maintain in his blasphemy that all men can of themselves be without sin, nor would he admit that our Lord's redemption was a thing needful for His example, since men can (as they say) reach the heavenly kingdom by their own exertions. Nor is there any doubt about this, as the thing itself shows us. For hence it comes that he encourages the complaints of the Pelagians by his intervention, and introduces their case into his writings, because he cleverly or (to speak more truly) cunningly patronizes them and by his wicked liking for them recommends their mischievous teaching which is akin to his own, for he is well aware that he is of the same opinion and of the same spirit, and therefore is distressed that a heresy akin to his own has been cast out of the church, as he knows that it is

entirely allied to his own in wickedness.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IV: Leporius together with some others recants his Pelagianism.

BUT still as those who were the outcome of this stock of pestilent thorns have already by the Divine help and goodness been healed, we should also now pray to our Lord God that as in some points that older heresy and this new one are akin to each other, He would grant a like happy ending to those which had a like bad beginning. For Leporius, then a monk, now a presbyter, who followed the teaching or rather the evil deeds of Pelagius, as we said above, and was among the earliest and greatest champions of the aforesaid heresy in Gaul, was admonished by us and corrected by God, and so nobly condemned his former erroneous persuasion that his amendment was almost as much a matter for congratulation as is the unimpaired faith of many. For it is the best thing never to fall into error: the second best thing to make a good repudiation of it. He then coming to himself confessed his mistake with grief but without shame not only in Africa, where he was then and is now, but also gave to all the cities of Gaul penitent letters containing his confession and grief; in order that his return to the faith might be made known where his deviation from it had been first published, and that those who had formerly been witnesses of his error might also afterwards be witnesses of his amendment.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER V: By the case of Leporius he establishes the fact that an open sin ought to be expiated by an open confession; and also teaches from his words what is the right view to be held on the Incarnation.

AND from his confession or rather lamentation we have thought it well to quote some part, for two reasons: that their recantation might be a testimony to us, and an example to those who are weak, and that they might not be ashamed to follow in their amendment, the men whom they were not ashamed to follow in their error; and that they might be cured by a like remedy as they suffered from a like disease. He then acknowledging the perverseness of his views, and seeing the light of faith, wrote to the Gallican Bishops, and thus began: "I scarcely know, O my most venerable lords and blessed priests, what first to accuse myself of, and what first to excuse myself for. Clumsiness and pride and foolish ignorance together with wrong notions, zeal combined with indiscretion, and (to speak truly) a weak faith which was gradually failing, all these were admitted by me and flourished to such an extent that I am ashamed of having yielded to such and so many sins, while at the same time I am profoundly thankful for having been able to cast them out of my soul." And after a little he adds: "If then, not understanding this power of God, and wise in our conceits and opinions, from fear lest God should seem to act a part that was beneath Him, we suppose that a man was born in conjunction with God, in such a way that we ascribe to God alone what belongs to God separately, and attribute to man alone what belongs to man separately, we clearly add a fourth Person to the Trinity and out of the one God the Son begin to make not one but two Christs; from which may our Lord and God Jesus Christ Himself preserve us. Therefore we confess that our Lord and God Jesus Christ the only Son of God, who for His own sake was begotten of the Father before all worlds, when in time He was for our sakes: made man of the Holy Ghost and the ever- virgin Mary, was God at His birth; and while we confess the two substances of the flesh and the Word, we always acknowledge with pious belief and faith one and the same Person to be indivisibly God and man; and we say that from the time when He took upon Him flesh all that belonged to God was given to man, as all that belonged to man was joined to God. And in this sense 'the Word was made flesh:' not that He began by any conversion or change to be what He was not, but that by the Divine 'economy' the Word of the Father never left the Father, and yet vouchsafed to become truly man, and

the Only Begotten was incarnate through that hidden mystery which He alone understands (for it is ours to believe: His to understand). And thus God 'the Word' Himself receiving everything that belongs to man, is made man, and the manhood which is assumed, receiving everything that belongs to God cannot but be God; but whereas He is said to be incarnate and unmixed, we must not hold that there is any diminution of His substance: for God knows how to communicate Himself without suffering any corruption, and yet truly to communicate Himself. He knows how to receive into Himself without Himself being increased thereby, just as He knows how to impart Himself in such a way as Himself to suffer no loss. We should not then in our feeble minds make guesses, in accordance with visible proofs and experiments, from the case of creatures which are equal, and which mutually enter into each other, nor think that God and man are mixed together, and that out of such a fusion of flesh and the Word (i.e., the Godhead and manhood) some sort of body is produced. God forbid that we should imagine that the two natures being in a way moulded together should become one substance. For a mixture of this sort is destructive of both parts. For God, who contains and is not Himself contained, who enters into things and is not Himself entered into, who fills things and is not Himself filled, who is everywhere at once in His completeness and is diffused everywhere, communicates Himself graciously to human nature by the infusion of His power." And after a little: "Therefore the God-man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is truly born for us of the Holy Ghost and the ever-virgin Mary. And so in the two natures the Word and Flesh become one, so that while each substance continues naturally perfect in itself, what is Divine imparteth without suffering any loss, to the humanity, and what is human participates in the Divine; nor is there one person God, and another person man, but the same person is God who is also man: and again the man who is also God is called and indeed is Jesus Christ the only Son of God; and so we must always take care and believe so as not to deny that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Very God (whom we confess as existing ever with the Father and equal to the Father before all worlds) became from the moment when He took flesh the God-man. Nor may we imagine that gradually as time went on He became God, and that He was in one condition before the resurrection and in another after it, but that He was always of the same fulness and power." And again a little later on: "But because the Word of God vouchsafed to come down upon manhood by assuming manhood, and manhood was taken up into the Word by being assumed by God, God the Word in His completeness became complete man. For it was

not God the Father who was made man, nor the Holy Ghost, but the Only Begotten of the Father; and so we must hold that there is one Person of the Flesh and the Word: so as faithfully and without any doubt to believe that one and the same Son of God, who can never be divided, existing in two natures (who was also spoken of as a "giant") in the days of His Flesh truly took upon Him all that belongs to man, and ever truly had as His own what belongs to God: since even though He was crucified in weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God."

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VI: The united doctrine of the Catholics is to be received as the orthodox faith.

THIS confession of his therefore, which was the faith of all Catholics was approved of by all the Bishops of Africa, whence he wrote, and by all those of Gaul, to whom he wrote. Nor has there ever been anyone who quarrelled with this faith, without being guilty of unbelief: for to deny what is right and proved is to confess what is wrong. The agreement of all ought then to be in itself already sufficient to confute heresy: for the authority of all shows undoubted truth, and a perfect reason results where no one disputes it: so that if a man endeavours to hold opinions contrary to these, we should in the first instance rather condemn his perverseness than listen to his assertions, for one who impugns the judgment of all announces beforehand his own condemnation, and a man who disturbs what has been determined by all, is not even given a hearing. For when the truth has once for all been established by all men, whatever arises contrary to it is by this very fact to be recognized at once as falsehood, because it differs from the truth. And thus it is agreed that this alone is sufficient to condemn a man; viz., that he differs from the judgment of truth. But still as an explanation of a system does no harm to the system, and truth always shines brighter when thoroughly ventilated, and as it is better that those who are wrong should be set right by discussion rather than condemned by severe censures, we should cure, as far as we can with the Divine assistance, this old heresy appearing in the persons of new heretics, that when through God's mercy they have recovered their health, their cure may bear testimony to our holy faith instead of their condemnation proving an instance of just severity. Only may the Truth indeed be present at our discussion and discourse concerning it, and assist our human weakness with that goodness with which God vouchsafed to come to men, as for this purpose above all He willed to be born on earth and among men; viz., that there might be no more room for falsehood.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I: How the errors of later heretics have been condemned and refuted in the persons of their authors and originators.

AS we began by setting down in the first book some things by which we showed that our new heretic is but an offshoot from ancient stocks of heresy, the due condemnation of the earlier heretics ought to be enough to secure a sentence of due condemnation for him. For as he has the same roots and grows up out of the same fallow he has already been amply condemned in the persons of his predecessors, especially as those who went wrong immediately before these men very properly condemned the very thing which these men are now asserting, so that the examples of their own party ought to be amply sufficient for them in both directions; viz., that of those who were restored and that of those who were condemned. For if they are capable of amendment they have their remedy set forth in the correction of their own party. If they are incapable of it they receive their sentence in the condemnation of their own folk. But that we may not be thought to have prejudged the case against them instead of fairly judging it, we will produce their actual pestilent assertions, or rather I should say their blasphemous folly: taking "above all the shield of faith, and the sword

of the Spirit which is the Word of God," that when the head of the old serpent rises once more, the same sword of the Divine Word which formerly severed it in the case of those ancient dragons may even now cut it off in the persons of these new serpents. For since the error of these is the same as that of those former ones, the decapitation of those ought to be counted as the decapitation of these; and as the serpents revive and emit pestilent blasts against the Lord's church, and cause some to fail through their hissing, we must on account of these new diseases add a fresh remedy to those older cures, so that even if what has already been done prove insufficient to heal the malady, what we are now doing may be adequate to restore those who are suffering from it.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER II: Proof that the Virgin Mother of God was not only Christotocos but also Theotocos, and that Christ is truly God.

AND so you say, O heretic, whoever you may be, who deny that God was born of the Virgin, that Mary the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ ought not to be called Theotocos, i.e., Mother of God, but Christotocos, i.e., only the Mother of Christ, not of God. For no one, you say, brings forth what is anterior in time. And of this utterly foolish argument whereby you think that the birth of God can be understood by carnal minds, and fancy that the mystery of His Majesty can be accounted for by human reasoning, we will, if God permits, say something later on. In the meanwhile we will now prove by Divine testimonies that Christ is God, and that Mary is the Mother of God. Hear then how the angel of God speaks to the Shepherds of the birth of God. "There is born," he says, "to you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord." In order that you may not take Christ for a mere man, he adds the name of Lord and Saviour, on purpose that you may have no doubt that He whom you acknowledge as Saviour is God, and that (as the office of saving belongs only to Divine power) you may not question that He is of Divine power, in whom you have learnt that the power to save resides. But perhaps this is not enough to convince your unbelief, as the angel of the Lord termed Him Lord and Saviour rather than God or the Son of God, as you certainly most wickedly deny Him to be God, whom you acknowledge to be Saviour. Hear then what the archangel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary. "The Holy Ghost," he says, "shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Do you see how, when he is going to point out the nativity of God, he first speaks of a work of Divinity. For "the Holy Ghost," he says, "shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." Admirably did the angel speak, and explain the majesty of the Divine work by the Divine character of his words. For the Holy Ghost sanctified the Virgin's womb, and breathed into it by the power of His Divinity, and thus imparted and communicated Himself to human nature; and made His own what was before foreign to Him, taking it to Himself by His own power and majesty. And lest the weakness of human nature should not be able to bear the entrance of Divinity the power of the Most High strengthened the ever to be honoured Virgin, so that it supported her bodily weakness by embracing it with overshadowing protection, and human weakness was not insufficient for the

consummation of the ineffable mystery of the holy conception, since it was supported by the Divine overshadowing. "Therefore," he says, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." If only a mere man was to be born of a pure virgin why should there be such careful mention of the Divine Advent? Why such intervention of Divinity itself? Certainly if only a man was to be born from man, and flesh from flesh, a command alone might have done it, or the Divine will. For if the will of God alone, and His command sufficed to fashion the heavens, form the earth, create the sea, thrones, and seats, and angels, and archangels, and principalities, and powers, and in a word to create all the armies of heaven, and those countless thousands of thousands of the Divine hosts ("For He spake and they were made, He commanded and they were created"), why was it that that was insufficient for the creation of (according to you) a single man, which was sufficient for the production of all things divine, and that the power and majesty of God did not entrust that with the birth of a single infant, which had availed to fashion all things earthly and heavenly? But certainly the reason why all those works were performed by the command of God, but the nativity was only accomplished by His coming was because God could not be conceived by man unless He allowed it, nor be born unless He Himself entered in; and therefore the archangel pointed out that the sacred majesty would come upon the Virgin, I mean that as so great an event could not be brought about by human appointment, he announced that there would be present at the conception the glory of Him who was to be born. And so the Word, the Son, descended: the majesty of the Holy Ghost was present: the power of the Father was overshadowing; that in the mystery of the holy conception the whole Trinity might cooperate. "Therefore," he says, "also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Admirably does he add "Therefore," in order to show that this would therefore follow because that had gone before; and that because God had come upon her at the conception therefore God would be present at the birth. And when the maiden understood not, he gave a reason for this great thing, saying: "Because the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and because the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born shall be called the Son of God;" that is to say: That thou mayest not be ignorant of the provision for so great a work, and the mystery of this great secret, the majesty of God shall therefore come upon thee completely; because the Son of God shall be born of thee. What further doubt can there be about this? or what is there further to be

said? He said that God would come upon her; that the Son of God would be born. Ask now, if you like, how the Son of God can help being God, or how she who brought forth God can fail to be Theotocos, i.e., the Mother of God? This alone ought to be enough for you; aye this ought to be amply sufficient for you.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER III: Follows up the same argument with passages from the Old Testament.

BUT as there is an abundant supply of witnesses to the holy nativity; viz., all that has been on this account written, to hear witness to it, let us examine in some slight degree an announcement about God even in the Old Testament, that you may know that the fact that the birth of God was to be from a virgin was not only then announced when it actually came to pass, but had been foretold from the very beginning of the world, that, as the event to be brought about was ineffable, incredulity of the fact when actually present might be removed by its having been previously announced while still future. And so the prophet Isaiah says: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is interpreted God with us." What room is there here for doubt, you incredulous person? The prophet said that a virgin should conceive: a virgin has conceived: that a Son should be born: a Son has been born: that He Should be called God: He is called God. For He is called by that name as being of that nature. Therefore when the Spirit of God said that He should be called God, He proved that He is without the Spirit of God who makes himself a stranger to all fellowship with the Divine title. "Behold then," he says, "a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is interpreted God with us." But here is a point on which it is possible that your shuffling incredulity may fasten; viz., by saying that this which the prophet declared He should be called referred not to the glory of His Divinity, but to the name by which He should be addressed. But what are we to do because Christ is never spoken of by this name in the gospels, though the Spirit of God cannot be said to have spoken falsely through the prophet? How is it then? Surely that we should understand that that prophecy then foretold the name of His Divine nature and not of His humanity. For since in His manhood united to the Godhead He received another name in the gospel, it is certainly clear that this name belonged to His humanity, that to His Divinity. But let us proceed further and summon other true witnesses to establish the truth: For where we are speaking about the Godhead, the Divinity cannot be better established than by His own witnesses. So then the same prophet says elsewhere: "For unto us a Son is born: unto us a child is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called the angel of great counsel, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace." Just as above the prophet had expressly said that He should

be called Emmanuel, so here he says that He should be called "the angel of great counsel, and God the mighty, and the Father of the world to come and the prince of peace" (although we certainly never read that He was called by these names in the gospel): of course that we may understand that these are not terms belonging to His human, but to His Divine nature; and that the name used in the gospel belonged to the manhood which He took upon Him, and this one to His innate power. And because God was to be born in human form, these names were so distributed in the sacred economy, that to the manhood a human name was given and to the Divinity a Divine one. Therefore he says: "He shall be cat led the angel of great counsel, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the prince of peace." Not, O heretic, whoever you may be, not that here the prophet, full as he was of the Holy Spirit, followed your example and compared Him who was born to a molten image and a figure fashioned without sense. For "a Son," he says, "is born to us, a Child is given to us; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and His name shall be called the angel of great counsel, God the mighty." And that you may not imagine Him whom He announced as God to be other than Him who was born in the flesh, he adds a term referring to His birth, saying: "A child is born to us: a son is given to us." Do you see how many titles the prophet used to make clear the reality of His birth in the body? for he called Him both Son and child on purpose that the manner of the child which was born might be more clearly shown by a name referring to His infancy; and the Holy Spirit foreseeing without doubt this perversity of blasphemous heretics, showed to the whole world that it was God who was born, by the very terms and words used; that even if a heretic was determined to utter blasphemy, he might not find any loophole for his blasphemy. Therefore he says: "A Son is born to us; a child is given to us; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called the angel of great counsel, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the prince of peace." He teaches that this child which was born is both prince of peace and Father of the world to come and God the mighty. What room is there then for shuffling? This child which is born cannot be severed from God who is born in Him, for he called Him, whom he spoke of as born, Father of the world to come; Him whom he called a child, he foretold as God the mighty. What is it, O heretic? Whither will you betake yourself? Every place is hedged and shut in: there is no possibility of getting out of it. There is nothing for it but that you should at length be obliged to confess the mistake which you would not understand. But not content with these passages which are indeed enough let us

inquire what the Holy Ghost said through another prophet. "Shall a man," says he, "pierce his God, for you are piercing me?" In order that the subject of the prophecy might be still clearer the prophet foretells what he proclaimed of the Lord's passion as if from the mouth of Him of whom he was speaking. "Shall a man pierce his God, for you are piercing me?" Does not our Lord God, I ask, seem to have said this when He was led to the Cross? Why indeed do you not acknowledge Me as your Redeemer? Why are ye ignorant of God clothed in flesh for you? Are you preparing death for your Saviour? Are yon leading forth to death the Author of life? I am your God whom ye are lifting up: your God whom ye are crucifying. What mistake, I ask, is here or what madness is it? "Shall a man pierce his God, for you are piercing me?" Do you see how exactly the words describe what was actually done? Could you ask for anything more express or clearer? Do you see how sacred testimonies follow our Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ from the very cradle to the Cross which He bore, as here you can see that He whom elsewhere you read of as God when born in the flesh was God when pierced on the cross? And so there, where His birth was treated of, He is spoken of by the prophet as God: and here where His crucifixion is concerned, He is most clearly named God; that the taking upon Him of manhood might not in any point prejudice dignity of His Divinity, nor the humiliation of His body and the shame of the passion affect the glory of His majesty; for His condescension to so lowly a birth and His generous goodness in enduring his passion ought to increase our love and devotion to Him; since it is certainly a great and monstrous sin if, the more He lavishes love upon us, the less He is honoured by us.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IV: He produces testimonies to the same doctrine from the Apostle Paul.

BUT passing over these things which cannot possibly be unfolded because there would be no limit to the telling of them, as the blessings which he gives are without stint, it is time for us to consult the Apostle Paul, the stoutest and clearest witness to Him, for he can tell us everything about God in the most trustworthy way because God always spoke from his breast. He then, the chosen teacher of the nations, who was sent to destroy the errors of Gentile superstition, bears his witness in the following way to the grace and coming of our Lord God: "The grace," he says, "of God and our Saviour appeared unto all men, instructing us that denying ungodliness and worldly desires we should live soberly and justly and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." He says that "there appeared the grace of God our Saviour." Admirably does he use a word suited to show the arrival of a new grace and birth; for by saying "there appeared," he indicated the approach of a new grace and birth, for thenceforward the gift of a new grace began to appear, from the moment when God appeared as born in the world. Thus by using the right word, and one exactly suitable, he shows the light of this new grace almost as if he pointed to it with his finger. For that is most properly said to appear, which is shown by sudden light manifesting it. Just as we read in the gospel that the star appeared to the wise men m the East: and in Exodus: "There appeared," he says, "to Moses an angel in a flame of fire in the bush:" for in all these and in the case of other visions in the Holy Scripture, Scripture determined that this word in particular should be used, that it might speak of that as "appearing," which shone forth with unwonted light. So then the Apostle also, well knowing the coming of the heavenly grace, which appeared at the approach of the holy nativity, indicated it by using a term applied to a bright appearance; expressly in order to say that it appeared, as it shone with the splendour of a new light. "There appeared" then "the grace of God our Saviour." Surely you cannot raise any quibble about the ambiguity of the names in this place, so as to say that "Christ" is one and "God" another, or to divide "the Saviour" from the glory of His name, and separate "the Lord" from the Divinity? Lo, here the vessel of God speaks from God, and testifies by the clearest statement that the grace of God appeared from Mary. And in order that you may not deny that God appeared from Mary, he at once adds the name of

Saviour, on purpose that you may believe that He who is born of Mary is God, whom you cannot deny to have been born a Saviour, in accordance with this passage: "For to you is born to-day a Saviour." O excellent teacher of the Gentiles truly given by God to them, for he knew that this wild heretical folly would arise, which would turn to controversial uses the names of God, and would not hesitate to slander God from His own titles; and so just in order that the heretic might not separate the title of Saviour from the Divinity he put first the name of God, that the name of God standing first might claim as His all the names which followed, and that no one might imagine that in what followed Christ was spoken of as a mere man, as by the very first word used he had taught that He was God. "Looking," says the same Apostle, "for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Certainly that teacher of divine wisdom saw that plain and simple teaching would not in itself be sufficient to meet the crafty wiles of the devil's cunning, unless he fortified the holy preaching of the faith with a protection of extreme care. And so although he had used the name of God the Saviour up above, he here adds "Jesus Christ," in case you might think that the mere name of Saviour was not enough to indicate to you our Lord Jesus Christ, and might fail to understand that the God, whom you acknowledge as God the Saviour, is the same Jesus Christ. What then does he say? He says: "Looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Nothing is here wanting as regards the titles of our Lord and you see here God, and the Saviour, and Jesus, and Christ. But when you see all these, you see that they all belong to God. For you have heard of Him as God, but as Saviour as well. You have heard of Him as God, but as Jesus as well. You have heard of Him as God, but as Christ as well. That which the Divinity has joined and united together cannot be separated by this diversity of titles; for whichever you may seek for of them, all, you will find it there. The Saviour is God, Jesus is God, Christ is God. In all of this which you hear, though the titles used are many, yet they belong to one Person in power. For whereas the Saviour is God, and Jesus is God, and Christ is God, it is easy to see that all these, though different appellations, are united as regards the Majesty. And when you hear quite plainly that one and the same Person is called God in each case, you can surely clearly see that in all these cases there is but one God spoken of. And so you cannot any longer seek to make out a distinction of power from the different names given to the Lord, or to make a difference of Person owing to variety of titles. You cannot say: Christ was born of Mary, but God was not; for an Apostle declares that God was. You

cannot say that Jesus was born of Mary, but God was not; for an Apostle testifies that God was. You cannot say: the Saviour was born, but God was not; for an Apostle supports the fact that God was. There is no way of escape for you. Whichever of the titles of the Lord you may take, He is God, of whom you speak. You have nothing to say: nothing to assert: nothing to invent in your wicked falsehood. You can in impious unbelief refuse to believe: you have nothing to deny in the matter of your blasphemy.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER V: From the gifts of Divine grace which we receive through Christ he infers that He is truly God.

ALTHOUGH we began to speak some time back on this Divine grace of our Lord and Saviour, I want to say somewhat more on the same subject from the Holy Scriptures. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the Apostle James thus refuted those who thought that when they received the gospel they ought still to bear the yoke of the old Law: "Why," said he, "do ye tempt God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear. But by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be saved in like manner as they also." The Apostle certainly speaks of the gift of this grace as given by Jesus Christ. Answer me now, if you please: do you think that this grace which is given for the salvation of all men, is given by man or by God? If you say, By man, Paul, God's own vessel, will cry out against you, saying: "There appeared the grace of God our Saviour." He teaches that this grace is the result of a Divine gift, and not of human weakness. And even if the sacred testimony was not sufficient, the truth of the matter itself would bear its witness, because fragile earthly things cannot possibly furnish a thing of lasting and immortal value; nor can anyone give to another that in which he himself is lacking, nor supply a sufficiency of that, from the want of which he admits that he himself is suffering. You cannot then help admitting that the grace comes from God. It is God then who has given it. But it has been given by our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ is God. But if He be, as He certainly is, God: then she who bore God is Theotocos, i.e., the mother of God. Unless perhaps you want to take refuge in so utterly absurd and blasphemous a contradiction as to deny that she from whom God was born is the mother of God, while you cannot deny that He who was born is God. But, however, let us see what the gospel of God thinks about this same grace of our Lord: "Grace and truth," it says, "came by Jesus Christ." If Christ is a mere man, how did these come by Christ? Whence was there in Him Divine power if, as you say, there was in Him only the nature of man? Whence comes heavenly largesse, if His is earthly poverty? For no one can give what he has not already. As then Christ gave Divine grace, He already had that which He gave. Nor can anyone endure a diversity of things that are so utterly different from each other, as at one and the same time to suffer the wants of a poor man, and also to show the munificence of a bounteous one. And so the Apostle Paul, knowing that all the treasures of heavenly riches are

found in Christ, rightly writes to the Churches: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."For though he had already often enough taught that God is the same as Christ, and that all the glory of Deity resides in Him, and that all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Him bodily, yet here he is certainly right in praying for the grace of Christ alone, without adding the word God: for while he had often taught that the grace of God is the same as the grace of Christ, he now most perfectly prays only for the grace of Christ, for he knows that in the grace of Christ is contained the whole grace of God. Therefore he says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." If Jesus Christ was a mere man, then in his wish that the grace of Christ might be given to the Churches he was wishing that the grace of a man might be given; and by saying: "The grace of Christ be with you" he meant: the grace of a man be with you, the grace of flesh be with you, the grace of bodily weakness, the grace of human frailty! Or why did he ever even mention the word grace, if his wish was for the grace of a man? For there was no reason for wishing, if that was not in existence which was wished for; nor ought he to have prayed that there might be bestowed on them the grace of one who, according to you, did not possess the reality of that grace for which he was wishing. And so you see that it is utterly absurd and ridiculous--or rather not a thing to laugh at but to cry over, for what is a matter for laughter to some frivolous persons becomes a matter for crying to pious and faithful souls, for they shed tears of charity for the folly of your unbelief, and weep pious tears at the folly of another's impiety. Let us then recover ourselves for a while and take our breath, for this idea is not only without wisdom but also without the Spirit, as it is certainly wanting in spiritual wisdom and has nothing to do with the Spirit of salvation.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VI: That the power of bestowing Divine grace did not come to Christ in the course of time, but was innate in Him from His very birth.

BUT perhaps you will say that this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which the Apostle writes, was not born with Him, but was afterwards infused into Him by the descent of Divinity upon Him, since you say that the man Jesus Christ our Lord (whom you call a mere man) was not born with God, but afterwards was assumed by God: and that through this grace was given to the man at the same time that Divinity was given to Him. Nor do we say anything else than that Divine grace descended with the Divinity, for the Divine grace of God is in a way a bestowal of actual Divinity and a gift of a liberal supply of graces. Perhaps then it may be thought that the difference between us is one of time rather than of what is essential, since the Divinity which we say was born with Jesus Christ you say was afterwards infused into Him. But the fact is that if you deny that Divinity was born with the Lord you cannot afterwards make a confession according to the faith; for it is an impossibility for one and the same thing to be partly impious and also to turn out partly pious, and for the same thing partly to belong to faith and partly to misbelief. To begin with then I ask you this: Do you say that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary is only the Son of man, or that He is the Son of God as well? For we, I mean all who hold the Catholic faith, all of us, I say, believe and are sure and know and confess that He is both, i.e., that He is Son of man because born of a woman and Son of God because conceived of Divinity. Do you then admit that He is both, i.e., Son of God and Son of man, or do you say that He is Son of man only? If Son of man only then there cry out against you apostles and prophets, aye and the Holy Ghost Himself, by whom the conception was brought about. That most shameless mouth of yours is stopped by all the witnesses of the Divine decrees: it is stopped by sacred writings and holy witnesses: aye and it is stopped by the very gospel of God as if by a Divine hand. And that mighty Gabriel who in the case of Zacharias restrained the voice of unbelief by the power of his word, much more strongly condemned in your case the voice of blasphemy and sin, by his own lips, saying to the Virgin Mary, the mother of God: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Do you see how Jesus Christ is first proclaimed to be the Son of God that according to the flesh

He might become the Son of man? For when the Virgin Mary was to bring forth the Lord she conceived owing to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon her and the cooperation of the power of the Most High. And from this you can see that the origin of our Lord and Saviour must come from thence, whence His conception came; and since He was born owing to the descent of the fulness of Divinity in Its completeness upon the Virgin, He could not be the Son of man unless He had first been the Son of God; and so the angel when sent to announce His nativity and sacred birth, when he had already spoken of the mystery of His conception added a word expressive of His birth, saying: "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God [i.e., He shall be called the Son of Him from whom He was begotten]. Jesus Christ is therefore the Son of God, because He was begotten of God and conceived of God. But if He is the Son of God, then most certainly He is God: but if He is God, then He is not lacking in the grace of God. Nor indeed was He ever lacking in that of which He is Himself the maker. For grace and truth were made by Jesus Christ.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VII: How in Christ the Divinity, Majesty, Might and Power have existed in perfection from eternity, and will continue.

THEREFORE all grace, power, might, Divinity, aye, and the fulness of actual Divinity and glory have ever existed together with Him and in Him, whether in heaven or in earth or in the womb or at His birth. Nothing that is proper to God was ever wanting to God. For the Godhead was ever present with God, no where and at no time severed from Him. For everywhere God is present in His completeness and in His perfection. He suffers no division or change or diminution; for nothing can be either added to God or taken away from Him, for He is subject to no diminution of Divinity, as to no increase of It. He was the same Person then on earth who was also in heaven: the same Person in His low estate who was also in the highest: the same Person in the littleness of manhood as in the glory of the Godhead. And so the Apostle was right in speaking of the grace of Christ when He meant the grace of God. For Christ was everything that God is. At the very time of His conception as man there came all the power of God, all the fulness of the Godhead; for thence came all the perfection of the Godhead, whence was His origin. Nor was that Human nature of His ever without the Deity as it received from Deity the very fact of its existence. And so, to begin with, whether you like it or no, you cannot deny this; viz., that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, especially as the archangel declares in the gospels: "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." But when this is established then remember that whatever you read of Christ you read of the Son of God: whatever you read of the Lord or Jesus belongs to the Son of God. And so when you recognize a title of Divinity in all these terms which you hear uttered, as you see that in each case you ought to understand that the Son of God is meant, prove to me, if you like, how you can separate the Godhead from the Son of God.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I: That Christ, who is God and man in the unity of Person, sprang from Israel and the Virgin Mary according to the flesh.

THAT divine teacher of the Churches when in writing to the Romans he was reproving or rather lamenting the unbelief of the Jews, i.e., of his own brethren, made use of these words: "I wished myself," said he, "to be accursed from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongeth the adoption as of children, and the glory, and the testaments, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: whose are the fathers, of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever." O, the love of that most faithful Apostle, and most kindly kinsman! who in his infinite charity wished to die--as a kinsman for his relations, and as a master for his disciples. And what then was the reason why he wished to die? Only one; viz., that they might live. But in what did their life consist? Simply in this, as he himself says, that they might recognize a Divine Christ born according to the flesh, of their own flesh. And therefore the Apostle grieved the more, because those who ought to have loved Him the more as sprung from their own stock, failed to understand that He was born of Israel. "Of whom," said he, "is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever." Clearly he lays down that from them according to the flesh, was born that Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever. You certainly cannot deny that Christ was born from them according to the flesh. But the same Person, who was born from them, is God. How can you get round this? How can you shuffle out of it? The Apostle says that Christ who was born of Israel according to the flesh, is God. Teach us, if you can, at what time He did not exist. "Of whom," he says, "is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God." You see that because the Apostle has united and joined together these, "God" cannot possibly be separated from "Christ." For just as the Apostle declares that Christ is of them, so he asserts that God is in Christ. You must either deny both of these statements, or you must accept both. Christ is said to be born of them according to the flesh: but the same Person is declared by the Apostle to be "God in Christ." Whence also he says elsewhere: "For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." It is absolutely impossible

to separate one from the other. Either deny that Christ sprang from them, or admit that there was born of the virgin God in Christ, "who is," as he says, "over all, God blessed for ever."

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER II: The title of God is given in one sense to Christ, and in another to men.

THE name of God would for the faithful be amply sufficient to denote the glory of His Divinity, but by adding "over all, God blessed," he excludes a blasphemous and perverse interpretation of it, for fear that some evil-disposed person to depreciate His absolute Divinity might quote the fact that the word God is sometimes applied by grace in the Divine economy temporarily to men, and thus apply it to God by unworthy comparisons, as where God says to Moses: "I have given thee as a God to Pharaoh," or in this passage: "I said ye are Gods," where it clearly has the force of a title given by condescension. For as it says "I said," it is not a name showing power, so much as a title given by the speaker. But that passage also, where it says: "I have given thee as a God to Pharaoh," shows the power of the giver rather than the Divinity of him who receives the title. For when it says: "I have given," it thereby certainly indicates the power of God, who gave, and not the Divine nature, in the person of the recipient. But when it is said of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, "who is over all, God blessed for ever," the fact is at once proved by the words, and the meaning of the words shown by the name given: because in the case of the Son of God the name of God does not denote an adoption by favour, but what is truly and really His nature.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER III: He explains the apostle's saying: "If from henceforth we know no man according to the flesh," etc.

AND so the same Apostle says: "From henceforth we know no man according to the flesh, and if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him so no longer." Admirably consistent are all the writings of the sacred word with each other, and in every portion of them: even where they do not correspond in the farm of the words, yet they agree in the drift and substance. As where he says: "And if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him so no longer." For the witness of the passage before us confirms that quoted above, in which he said: "Of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever." For there he writes: "Of whom is Christ according to the flesh;" and here: "if we have known Christ according to the flesh." There: "who is over all, God blessed for ever;" and here: "yet now we no longer know Christ according to the flesh." The look of the words is different, but their force and drift is the same. For it is the same Person whom he there declares to be God over all born according to the flesh, whom he here asserts that he no longer knows according to the flesh. And plainly for this reason; viz., because Him whom he had known as born in the flesh, he acknowledges as God for ever; and therefore says that he knows him not after the flesh, because He is over all, God blessed for ever; and the phrase there: "who is over all God," answers to this: "we no longer know Christ according to the flesh;" and this phrase: "we no longer know Christ according to the flesh" implies this: "who is God blessed for ever." The declaration of Apostolic teaching then somehow rises, as it were to greater heights, and though it is self-consistent throughout, yet it supports the mystery of the perfect faith, with a still more express statement, and says: "And though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him so no longer," i.e., as formerly we knew Him as man as well as God, yet now only as God. For when the frailty of flesh comes to an end, we no longer know anything in Him except the power of Divinity, for all that is in Him is the power of Divine Majesty, where the weakness of human infirmity has ceased to exist. In this passage then he has thoroughly expounded the whole mystery of the Incarnation, and of His perfect Divinity. For where he says: "And if we have known Christ according to the flesh," he speaks of the mystery of God born in flesh. But by adding "yet now we know Him so no longer," he manifests His power when weakness is laid aside. And thus that knowledge of the flesh has to

do with His humanity, and that ignorance, with the glory of His Divinity. For to say "we have known Christ according to the flesh:" means "as long as that which was known, existed. Now we no longer know it, after it has ceased to exist. For the nature of flesh has been transformed into a spiritual substance: and that which formerly belonged to the manhood, has all become God's. And therefore we no longer know Christ according to the flesh, because when bodily infirmity has been absorbed by Divine Majesty, nothing remains in that Sacred Body, from which weakness of the flesh can be known in it. And thus whatever had formerly belonged to a twofold substance, has become attached to a single Power. Since there is no sort of doubt that Christ, who was crucified through human weakness lives entirely through the glory of His Divinity.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IV: From the Epistle to the Galatians he brings forward a passage to show that the weakness of the flesh in Christ was absorbed by His Divinity.

The Apostle indeed declares this in the whole body of his writings, and admirably says in writing to the Galatians: "Paul an Apostle not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." You see how thoroughly consistent he is with himself in the former and the present passage. For there he says: "Now we no longer know Christ according to the flesh." Here he says: "Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ." It is clear that his doctrine is the same here as in the former passage. For where he says that he is not sent by man, he implies: "We have not known Christ according to the flesh:" and so I am "not sent by man" but "by Christ;" for if I am sent by Christ, I am not sent by man but by God. For there is no longer room for the name of man, in Him whom Divinity claims entirely for itself. And so when he had said that he was sent "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ," he rightly added: "And God the Father," thus showing that he was sent by God the Father and God the Son; in whom owing to the mystery of the sacred and ineffable generation there are two Persons (He who begets, and He who is begotten), but there is but one single Power of God who is the sender. And so m saying that he was sent by God the Father and God the Son, he shows that the Persons are two in number, but he also teaches that their Power is One in sending.

CHAPTER V: As it is blasphemy to pare away the Divinity of Christ, so also is it blasphemous to deny that He is true man.

BUT he says "by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." That renowned and admirable teacher, knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ must be preached as true man, as well as true God, always declares the glory of the Divine in Him, in such a way as not to lose hold of the confession of the Incarnation: plainly excluding the phantasm of Marcion, by a real Incarnation, and the poverty of the Ebionite, by Divinity: lest through one or other of these wicked blasphemies it might be believed that our Lord Jesus Christ was either altogether man without God, or God without man. Excellently then did the Apostle, when declaring that He was sent by God the Son as well as by God the Father, add at once a confession of the Lord's Incarnation, by saying: "Who raised Him from the dead:" clearly teaching that it was a real body of the Incarnate God, which was raised from the dead: in accordance with this: "And though we have known Christ according to the flesh," excellently adding: "Yet now we know Him so no longer." For he says that he knows this in Him according to the flesh; viz., that He was raised from the dead; but that he knows Him no longer according to the flesh inasmuch as when the weakness of the flesh is at an end, he knows that He exists in the Power of God only. Surely he is a faithful and satisfactory witness of our Lord's Divinity which had to be proclaimed, who at his first call was smitten from heaven itself, and did not merely believe in his heart the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead, but actually established its truth by the evidence of his bodily eyes.

CHAPTER VI: He shows from the appearance of Christ vouchsafed to the Apostle when persecuting the Church, the existence of both natures in Him.

WHEREFORE also, when arguing before King Agrippa and others of the world's judges, he speaks as follows: "When I was going to Damascus with authority and permission of the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and all those that were with me. And when we were all fallen down to the ground, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And I said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said to me: I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." You see how truly the Apostle said that he no longer knew according to the flesh one whom he had seen in such splendour and majesty. For when as he lay prostrate he saw the splendour of that divine light which he was unable to endure, there followed this voice: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And when he asked who it might be, the Lord answers and clearly points out His Personality: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Now then, you heretic, I ask you, I summon you. Do you believe what the Apostle says of himself, or do you not believe it? Or if you think that unimportant, do you believe what the Lord says of Himself or do you not believe it? If you do believe it, there is an end of the matter: for you cannot help believing what we believe. For we, like the Apostle, even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet know Him so no longer. We do not heap insults on Christ. We do not separate the flesh from the Divinity; and all that is in Christ we believe is in God. If then you believe the same that we believe you must acknowledge the same mysteries of the faith. But if you differ from us, if you refuse to believe the Churches, the Apostle, aye and God's own testimony about Himself, show us in this vision which the Apostle saw, how much is flesh, and how much God. For I cannot here separate one from the other. I see the ineffable light, I see the inexpressible splendour, I see the radiance that human weakness cannot endure, and beyond what mortal eyes can bear, the glory of God shining with inconceivable light. What room is there here for division and separation? In the voice we hear Jesus, in the majesty we see God. How can we help believing that in one and the same (Personal) substance God and Jesus exist. But I should like to have a few more words with you on this subject. Tell me, I pray you, if there appeared to you in your present persecution

of the Catholic faith that same vision which then appeared to the Apostle in his ignorance, if when you were not expecting it and were off your guard, that radiance shone round about you, and the glory of that boundless light smote you in your terror and confusion, and you lay prostrate in darkness of body and soul; which the unlimited and indescribable terror of your heart increased,--tell me, I intreat you; When the dread of immediate death was pressing on you, and the terror of the glory that threatened you from above, weighed you down, and you heard as well in your bewilderment of mind those words which your sin so well deserves: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and to your inquiry who it was the answer was given from heaven: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest," what would you say? "I do not know, I do not yet fully believe. I want to think over it with myself a little longer, who I think that Thou art, who speakest from heaven, who overwhelmest me with the brightness of Thy Divinity: whose voice I hear and whose splendour I cannot bear. I must consider of this matter, whether I ought to believe Thee or not: whether Thou art Christ or God. If Thou art God alone whether it is in Christ. If Thou art Christ alone, whether it is in God. I want this distinction to be carefully observed, and thoroughly considered what we should believe that Thou art, and what we should judge Thee to be. For I don't want any of my offices to be wasted. As if I were to regard Thee as a man, and yet pay to Thee some Divine honours." If then you were lying on the ground, as the Apostle Paul was then lying, and overwhelmed with the brightness of the Divine light, were at your last gasp, perhaps you would say this, and prate with all this silly chattering. But what shall we make of the fact that another course commended itself to the Apostle; and when he had fallen down, trembling and half dead, he did not think that he ought any longer to conceal his belief, or to deliberate it was enough for him that he was taught by inexpressible arguments to know that He whom he had ignorantly fancied to be a man, was God. He did not conceal his belief, he made no delay. He did not any longer protract his erroneous ideas by deliberating and disbelieving, but as soon as he heard from heaven the name of Jesus his Lord, he replied in a voice, subdued like that of a servant, tremulous like that of one scourged, and full of fervour like that of one converted, "What shall I do, Lord?" And so at once for his ready and earnest faith, it was granted to him that He should never be without His presence whom he had faithfully believed: and that He, to whom he had passed in heart, should Himself pass into his heart: as the Apostle himself says of himself: "Do you seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me?"

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VII: He shows once more by other passages of the Apostle that Christ is God.

I want you to tell me, you heretic, whether in this passage He who, as the Apostle tells us, speaks in him, is man or God. If He is man, how can another's body speak in his heart? If God, then Christ is not a man but God; for since Christ spoke in the Apostle, and only God could speak in him, therefore a Divine Christ spoke in him. And so you see that there is nothing to be said here, that no division or separation can be made between Christ and God: because complete Divinity was in Christ, and Christ was completely in God. No division or severing of the two can here be admitted. There is only one simple, pious, and sound confession to be made; viz., to adore, love, and worship Christ as God. But do you want to understand more fully and thoroughly that there is no separation to be made between God and Christ, and that we must hold that God is altogether one with Christ? Hear what the Apostle says to the Corinthians: "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." But in another passage, in writing to the Romans he says: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God: for it is written: As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." You see then that the judgment seat of God is the same as that of Christ; understand then without any doubt that Christ is God; and when you see that the substance of God and Christ is altogether inseparable, admit also that the Person cannot be severed. Unless forsooth because the Apostle in one Epistle said that we should be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, and in another before that of God, you invent two judgment seats, and fancy that some will be judged by Christ and others by God. But this is foolish and wild, and madder than a madman's utterances. Acknowledge then the Lord of all, the God of the universe, acknowledge the judgment seat of God in the judgment seat of Christ. Love life, love your salvation, love Him by whom you were created. Fear Him by whom you are to be judged. For whether you will or no, you have to be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, and laying aside wicked blasphemy and the childish talk of unbelieving words, though you think that the judgment seat of God is different from that of Christ, you will come before the judgment seat of Christ, and will find by evidence that there is no gainsaying, that the judgment seat of God is indeed the same as that of Christ, and that in Christ the Son of God, there is all

the glory of God the Son, and the power of God the Father. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father." For whoever denies the Father denies the Son also. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son, hath the Father also." And so you should learn that the glory of the Father and the Son is inseparable, and their majesty is inseparable also and that the Son cannot be honoured without the Father, nor the Father without the Son. But no man can honour God and the Son of God except in Christ the only-begotten Son of God. For it is impossible for a man to have the Spirit of God who is to be honoured except in the Spirit of Christ, as the Apostle says: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And again: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus who died, yea rather who rose again." You see then now, even against your will, that there is absolutely no difference between the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, or between the judgment of God and the judgment of Christ. Choose then which you will --for one of the two must happen--either acknowledge in faith that Christ is God, or admit that God is in Christ at your condemnation.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VIII: When confessing the Divinity of Christ we ought not to pass over in silence the confession of the cross.

BUT let us see what else follows. In writing to the church of Corinth, he whom we spoke of above, the instructor of all the churches viz. Paul, speaks thus: "The Jews," says he, "seek signs, and the Greeks ask for wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Gentiles foolishness: but to them that are saved, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." O most powerful teacher of the faith, who even in this passage, when teaching the Church thought it not enough to speak of Christ as God without adding that He was crucified on purpose that for the sake of the open and solid teaching of the faith he might proclaim Him, whom he called the crucified, to be the wisdom of God. He then employed no subtilty or circumlocution, nor did he when he preached the gospel of the Lord blush at the mention of the cross of Christ. And though it was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles to hear of God as born, God in bodily form, God suffering, God crucified, yet he did not weaken the force of his pious utterance because of the wickedness of the offence of the Jews: nor did he lessen the vigour of his faith because of the unbelief and the foolishness of others: but openly, persistently, and boldly proclaimed that He, whom a mother had borne, whom men had slain, the spear had pierced, the cross had stretched-- was "the power and wisdom of God, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness." But still that which was to some a stumbling-block and foolishness, was to others the power and wisdom of God. For as the persons differed, so was there a difference of their thoughts: and what a man who was void of sound understanding, and incapable of true good, foolishly denied in unbelief, that a wise faith could feel in its inmost soul to be holy and life giving.

CHAPTER IX: How the Apostle's preaching was rejected by Jews and Gentiles because it confessed that the crucified Christ was God.

TELL me then, you heretic, you enemy of all men, but of yourself above all--to whom the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is an offence as with the Jews, and foolishness as with the Gentiles, you who reject the mysteries of true salvation, with the stumbling of the former, and are foolish with the stubbornness of the others, why was the preaching of the Apostle Paul foolishness to the pagans, and a stumbling-block to the Jews? Surely it would never have offended men, if he had taught that Christ was, as you maintain He is, a mere man? For who would think that His birth, passion, cross, and death were incredible or a difficulty? Or what would there have been novel or strange about the preaching of Paul, if he had said that a merely human Christ suffered that which human nature daily endures among men everywhere? But it was surely this that the foolishness of the Gentiles could not receive, and the unbelief of the Jews rejected; viz., that the Apostle declared that Christ whom they, like you, fancied to be a mere man, was God. This it certainly was which the thoughts of these wicked men rejected, which the ears of the faithless could not endure; viz., that the birth of God should be proclaimed in the man Jesus Christ, that the passion of God should be asserted, and the cross of God proclaimed. This it was which was a difficulty: this was what was incredible; for that was incredible to the hearing of men, which had never been heard of as happening to the Divine nature. And so you are quite secure, with such an announcement and teaching as yours, that your preaching will never be either foolishness to the Gentiles or a stumbling-block to the Jews. You will never be crucified with Peter by Jews and Gentiles, nor stoned with James, nor beheaded with Paul. For there is nothing in your preaching to offend them. You maintain that a mere man was born, a mere man suffered. You need not be afraid of their troubling you with persecution, for you are helping them by your preaching.

CHAPTER X: How the apostle maintains that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

BUT let us see something more on the subject. Christ then, according to the Apostle, is the power of God and the wisdom of God. What have you to say to this? How can you get out of it? There is no place for you to escape and fly to. Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God. He, I say, whom the Jews attacked, the Gentiles mocked, whom you yourself together with them are persecuting,--He, I say, who is foolishness to the heathen, and a stumbling-block to the Jews, and both to you, He, I say, is the power of God and the wisdom of God. What is there that you can do? Shut your ears, forsooth, so as not to hear? This the Jews did also when the Apostle was preaching. Do what you will, Christ is in heaven, and in God, and with Him, and in Him in the heavens above in whom also He was here below: you can no longer persecute Him with the Jews. But you do the one thing that you can. You persecute Him in the faith, you persecute Him in the church, you persecute Him with the arms of a wicked belief, you persecute Him with the sword of false doctrine. Perhaps you do rather more than the Jews of old did. You now persecute Christ, after ever those who did persecute Him, have believed. But perhaps you think that the sin is less because you can no longer lay hands on Him. No less grievous, I tell you, no less grievous to Him is that persecution, in which sinful men persecute Him in the persons of His followers. But the mention of the Lord's cross offends you. It always offended the Jews as well. You shudder at hearing that God suffered: the Gentiles in their error mocked at this also. I ask you then, in what point do you differ from them, since you both agree in this forwardness? But for my part I not only do not water down this preaching of the holy cross, this preaching of the Lord's passion, but as far as my wishes and powers go I emphasise it. For I will declare that He who was crucified is not only the power and wisdom of God, than which there is nothing greater, but actually Lord of absolute Divinity and glory. And this the rather, because this assertion of mine is the doctrine of God, as the Apostle says: "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect: but the wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world who are brought to nought: but we speak the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man,

what God hath prepared for them that love Him." You see what great matters the Apostle's discourse comprises in how small a compass. He says that he speaks wisdom, but a wisdom which only those that are perfect can know, and which the prudent of this world cannot know. For he says that this is the wisdom of God, which is hidden in a Divine mystery, and predestined before all worlds for the glory of the saints: and that therefore it is only known to those who savour of God; while the princes of this world are utterly ignorant of it. But he adds the reason, to establish both points that he had mentioned, saying: "For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. But it is written, that eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love Him." You see then how the wisdom of God, hidden in a mystery, and predestined before all worlds, was unknown to those who crucified the Lord of glory, and known by those who received it. And well does he say that the wisdom of God was hidden in a mystery, for never yet could the eye of any man see, or the ear hear, or the heart imagine this; viz., that the Lord of glory should be born of a virgin and come in the flesh, and suffer all kinds of punishment, and shameful passion. But with regard to these gifts of God, as there is no one who-- since they were hidden in a mystery--could ever of himself understand them, so blessed is he who has grasped them when they are revealed. Thus all who have failed to grasp them must be reckoned among the princes of this world, and those who have grasped them among God's wise ones. He then does not grasp it who denies God born in the flesh; therefore you also do not grasp it, as you deny this. But do what you will, deny as impiously as you like, we the rather believe the Apostle. But why should I say the Apostle? the rather do we believe God. For through the Apostle we believe Him, whom we know to have spoken by the Apostle. The Divine word says that the Word of glory was crucified by the princes of the world. You deny it. They also who crucified Him denied that it was God whom they were crucifying. They then who confess Him have their portion with the Apostle who confessed Him. You are sure to have your lot with His persecutors. What is there then that can be replied to this? The Apostle says that the Lord of glory was chief-fled. Alter this if you can. Separate now, if you please, Jesus from God. At least you cannot deny that Christ was crucified by the Jews. But it was the Lord of glory who was crucified. Therefore you must either deny that Christ was nailed to the cross, or you must admit that God was nailed to it.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XI: He supports the same doctrine by proofs from the gospel.

BUT perhaps it is a difficulty to you that all this time I am chiefly using the witness of the Apostle Paul alone. He is good enough for me, whom God chose, nor do I blush to call as the witness to my faith, the man whom God willed to be the teacher of the whole world. But to yield to your wishes, as perhaps you fancy that I have no other proofs to use, hear the perfect mystery of man's salvation and eternal bliss, which Martha proclaims in the gospel. For what does she say? "Of a truth, Lord, I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." Learn the true faith from a woman. Learn the confession of eternal hope. Yet you have a splendid consolation: you need not blush to be taught the mystery of salvation by her, whose testimony God did not refuse to accept.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XII: He proves from the renowned confession of the blessed Peter that Christ is God.

BUT if you prefer the authority of a greater person (although you ought not to slight the authority of any one of either sex, on whom the confession of the mystery confers weight--for whatever may be a person's condition, or however humble his position, yet the value of his faith is not thereby diminished) let us interrogate no beginner or untaught schoolboy, nor a woman whose faith might perhaps appear to be but rudimentary; but that greatest of disciples among disciples, and of teachers among teachers, who presided and ruled over the Roman Church, and held the chief place in the priesthood as he did in the faith. Tell us then, tell us, we pray, O Peter, thou chief of Apostles, tell us how the Churches ought to believe in God. For it is right that you should teach us, as you were taught by the Lord, and that you should open to us the gate, of which you received the key. Shut out all those who try to overthrow the heavenly house: and those who are endeavouring to enter by secret holes and unlawful approaches: as it is clear that none can enter the gate of the kingdom save one to whom the key bestowed on the Churches is revealed by you. Tell us then how we ought to believe in Jesus Christ and to confess our common Lord. You will surely reply without hesitation: "Why do you consult me as to the way in which the Lord should be confessed, when you have before you my own confession of Him? Read the gospel, and you will not want me myself, when you have got my confession. Nay, you have got me myself when you have my confession; for though I have no weight apart from my confession, yet the actual confession adds weight to my person." Tell us then, O Evangelist, tell us the confession: tell us the faith of the chief Apostle: did he confess that Jesus was only a man, or God? did he say that there was nothing but flesh in Him, or did he proclaim Him the Son of God? When then the Lord Jesus Christ asked whom the disciples believed and confessed Him to be, Peter, the first of the Apostles, replied-- one in the name of all--for the answer of one was to the same effect as the faith of them all. But it was fitting that he should first give the answer, that the order of the answer might correspond to the degree of honour: and that he might outstrip them in confession, as he outstripped them in age. What then does he say? "Thou art," he says, "the Christ the Son of the living God." I am obliged, you heretic, to make use of a plain and simple question to confute you. Tell me, I pray, who was He, to whom Peter gave that answer? You cannot deny that it was the

Christ. I ask then, what do you call Christ? man or God? Man certainly without any doubt: for hence springs the whole of your heresy, because you deny that Christ is the Son of God. And so too you say that Mary is Christotocos, but not Theotocos, because she was the mother of Christ, not of God. Therefore you maintain, that Christ is only a man, and not God, and so that He is the Son of man not of God. What then does Peter reply to this? "Thou art," he says, "the Christ, the Son of the living God." That Christ whom you declare to be only the Son of man, he testifies to be the Son of God. Whom would you like us to believe? you or Peter? I imagine that you are not so shameless as to venture to prefer your own opinion to that of the first of the Apostles. And yet what is there that you would not venture on? or how can you help scorning the Apostle, if you can deny God? "Thou art then," he says, "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Is there anything puzzling or obscure in this? It is nothing but a plain and open confession: he proclaims Christ to be the Son of God. Perhaps you will deny that the words were spoken: but the Evangelist testifies that they were. Or do you say that the Apostle told a lie? But it is an awful lie to accuse an Apostle of lying. Or perhaps you will maintain that the words were spoken of some other Christ? But this is a novel kind of monstrous fabrication. What then is left for you? One thing indeed; viz., that since what is written is read, and what is read is true, you should finally be driven by force and compulsion (as you cannot assert its falsehood) to desist from impugning its truth.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XIII: The confession of the blessed Peter receives a testimony to its truth from Christ Himself.

BUT still, as I have made use of the testimony of the chief Apostle, in which he openly confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as God, let us see how He whom he confessed approved of his confession; for of far more value than the Apostle's words is the fact that God Himself commended his utterance. When then the Apostle said: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God," what was the answer of our Lord and Saviour? "Blessed art thou," said He, "Simon Barjonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but the Spirit of My Father which is in heaven." If you do not like to use the testimony of the Apostle use that of God. For by commending what was said God added His own authority to the Apostle's utterance, so that although the utterance came from the lips of the Apostle, yet God who approved of it made it His own. "Blessed art thou," said He, "Simon Barjonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but the Spirit of My Father which is in heaven." Thus in the words of the Apostle you have the testimony of the Holy Spirit and of the Son who was present and of God the Father. What more can you want, or what comes up to this? The Son commended: the Father was present: the Holy Ghost revealed. The utterance of the Apostle thus gives the testimony of the entire Godhead: for this utterance must necessarily have the authority of Him from whose prompting it proceeds. "Blessed then art thou," said He, "Simon Barjonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but the Spirit of My Father which is in heaven." If then flesh and blood did not reveal this to Peter or inspire him, you must at last see who inspires you. If the Spirit of God taught him who confessed that Christ was God, you see how you are taught by the spirit of the devil if you can deny it.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XIV: How the confession of the blessed Peter is the faith of the whole Church.

BUT what are the other words which follow that saying of the Lord's, with which He commends Peter? "And I," said He, "say unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church." Do you see how the saying of Peter is the faith of the Church? He then must of course be outside the Church, who does not hold the faith of the Church. "And to thee," saith the Lord, "I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven." This faith deserved heaven: this faith received the keys of the heavenly kingdom. See what awaits you. You cannot enter the gate to which this key belongs, if you have denied the faith of this key. "And the gate," He adds, "of hell shall not prevail against thee." The gates of hell are the belief or rather the misbelief of heretics. For widely as hell is separated from heaven, so widely is he who denies from him who confessed that Christ is God. "Whatsoever," He proceeds, "thou shalt bind on earth, shalt be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shalt be loosed also in heaven." The perfect faith of the Apostle somehow is given the power of Deity, that what it should bind or loose on earth, might be bound or loosed in heaven. For you then, who come against the Apostle's faith, as you see that already you are bound on earth, it only remains that you should know that you are bound also in heaven. But it would take too long to go into details which are so numerous as to make a long and wearisome story, even if they are related with brevity and conciseness.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XV: St. Thomas also confessed the same faith as Peter after the Lord's resurrection.

BUT I want still to add one more testimony from an Apostle for you: that you may see how what followed after the passion corresponded with what went before it. When then the Lord appeared in the midst of His disciples when the doors were shut, and wished to make clear to the Apostles the reality of His body, when the Apostle Thomas felt His flesh and handled His side and examined His wounds--what was it that he declared, when he was convinced of the reality of the body shown to him? "My Lord," he said, "and my God." Did he say what you say, that it was a man and not God? Christ and not Divinity? He surely touched the body of his Lord and answered that He was God. Did he make any separation between man and God? or did he call that flesh Theotocos, to use your expression, i.e., that which received Divinity? or did he, after the fashion of your blasphemy, declare that He whom he touched was to be honoured not for His own sake, but for the sake of Him whom He had received into Himself? But perhaps God's Apostle knew nothing of that subtle separation of yours, and had no experience of the fine distinctions of your judgment, as he was a rude countryman, ignorant of the dialectic art, and of the method of philosophic disputation; for whom the Lord's teaching was amply sufficient, and as he was one who knew nothing whatever except what he learnt from the instruction of the Lord! And so his words contain heavenly doctrine; his faith is a Divine lesson. He had never learnt to separate, as you do, the Lord from His body: and had no idea how to rend God asunder from Himself. He was holy, straightforward, upright: filled with practical innocence, unalloyed faith, and pure knowledge: having a simple understanding joined with prudence, a wisdom entirely free from all evil, together with perfect simplicity: ignorant of any corruption, and free from all heretical perversity, and as one who had experienced in himself the force of the Divine lesson, he held fast everything which he had learnt. And so he--countryman and ignorant fellow as you fancy him--shuts you up with a brief answer, and destroys your position with a few words of his. What then did the Apostle Thomas touch when he drew near to handle his God? Certainly it was Christ without any doubt. But what did he exclaim? "My Lord," he said, "and my God." Now, if you can, separate Christ from God, and change this Saying, if you are able to. Make use of all dialectic art--all the prudence of this world, and that foolish wisdom which consists in wordy subtlety. Turn yourself about in every direction, and draw in

your horns. Do whatever you can with ingenuity and art. Say what you like, and do what you like; you cannot possibly get out of this without confessing that what the Apostle touched was God. And indeed, if the thing can, possibly be done, perhaps you will want to alter the statement of the gospel story, so that we may not read that the Apostle Thomas touched the body of the Lord, or that he called Christ Lord and God. But it is absolutely impossible to alter what is written in the gospel of God. For "heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words" of God "shall not pass away." For lo, even now he who then bore his witness, the Apostle Thomas, proclaims to you: "Jesus whom I touched is God. It is God whose limbs I handled. I did not feel what was incorporeal, not handle what was intangible: I touched not a Spirit with my hand, so that it might be believed that I said of it alone 'It is God.' For 'a spirit,' as my Lord Himself said, 'hath not flesh and bones.' I touched the body of my Lord. I handled flesh and bones. I put my fingers into the prints of the wounds: and I declared of Christ my Lord, whom I had handled: 'My Lord and my God.' For I know not how to make a separation between Christ and God, and I cannot insert blasphemous distinctions between Jesus and God, or rend my Lord asunder from Himself. Away from me, whoever is of a different opinion, and whoever says anything different. I know not that Christ is other than God. This faith I held together with my fellow apostles: this I delivered to the Churches: this I preached to the Gentiles: this I proclaim to thee also, Christ is God, Christ is God. A sound mind imagines nothing else: a sound faith says nothing else. The Deity cannot be parted from Itself. And since whatever is Christ is God, there can be found in God none other but God."

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XVI: He brings forward the witness of God the Father to the Divinity of the Son.

WHAT do you say now, you heretic? Are these evidences of the faith, aye and of all your unbelief, enough for you: or would you like some more to be added to them? but what can be added after Prophets and Apostles? unless perhaps--as the Jews once demanded--you too might ask for a sign to be given you from heaven? But if you ask this; we must give you the same answer which was formerly given to them: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. And no sign shall be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah." And indeed this sign would be enough for you as for the Jews who crucified Him, that you might be taught to believe in the Lord God by this alone, through which even those who had persecuted Him, came to believe. But as we have mentioned a sign from heaven, I will show you a sign from heaven: and one of such a character that even the devils have never gainsaid it: while, constrained by the demands of truth, though they saw Jesus in bodily form, they yet cried out that He was God, as indeed He was. What then does the Evangelist say of the Lord Jesus Christ? "When He was baptized," he says, "straightway He went up out of the water. And lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit descending like a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold, a voice from heaven, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What do you say to this, you heretic? Do you dislike the words spoken, or the Person of the Speaker? The meaning of the utterance at any rate needs no explanation: nor does the worth of the Speaker need the commendation of words. It is God the Father who spoke. What He said is clear enough. Surely you cannot make so shameless and blasphemous an assertion as to say that God the Father is not to be believed concerning the only begotten Son of God? "This," He then says, "is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." But perhaps you will try to maintain that this is madness, and that this was said of the Word and not of Christ. Tell me then who was it who was baptized? The Word or Christ? Flesh or Spirit? You cannot possibly deny that it was Christ. That man then, born of man and of God, conceived by the descent Of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin, and by the overshadowing of the Power of the Most High, and thus the Son of man and of God, He it was, as you cannot deny, who was baptized. If then it was He who was baptized, it was He also who was named, for certainly the Person who was baptized was the one named. "This," said He, "is My beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased." Could anything be said with greater significance or clearness? Christ was baptized. Christ went up out of the water. When Christ was baptized the heavens were opened. For Christ's sake the dove descended upon Christ, the Holy Spirit was present in a bodily form. The Father addressed Christ. If you venture to deny that this was spoken of Christ, the only thing is for you to maintain that Christ was not baptized, that the Spirit did not descend, and that the Father did not speak. But the truth itself is urgent and weighs you down so that even if you will not confess it, yet you cannot deny it. For what says the Evangelist? "When He was baptized, straightway He went up out of the water." Who was baptized? Most certainly Christ. "And behold," he says, "the heavens were opened to Him." To where, forsooth, save to Him who was baptized? Most certainly to Christ. "And He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him." Who saw? Christ indeed. Upon whom did It descend? Most certainly upon Christ. "And a voice came from heaven. saying"--of whom? Of Christ indeed: for what follows? "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In order that it might be made clear on whose account all this happened, there followed the voice, saying: "This is My beloved Son," as if to say: This is He on whose account all this took place. For this is My Son: on His account the heavens were opened: on His account My Spirit came: on His account My voice was heard. For this is My Son. In saying then "This is My Son" whom did He so designate? Certainly Him whom the dove touched. And whom did the dove touch? Christ indeed. Therefore Christ is the Son of God. My promise is fulfilled, I fancy. Do you see then now, O heretic, a sign given you from heaven; and not one only, but many and special ones? For there is one in the opening of heaven, another in the descent of the Spirit, a third in the voice of the Father. All of which most clearly show that Christ is God, for the laying open of the heavens indicates that He is God, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him supports His Divinity, and the address of the Father confirms it. For heaven would not have been opened except in honour of its Lord: nor would the Holy Ghost have descended in a bodily form except upon the Son of God: nor would the Father have declared Him to be the Son, had he not been truly such; especially with such tokens of a Divine birth, as not merely to confirm the truth Of the right faith, but also to exclude the wickedness of guilty and erroneous belief. For when the Father had expressly and pointedly said with the inexpressible majesty of a Divine utterance, "This is My Son," He added also what follows--I mean, "My beloved, in whom I am well pleased." As He had already declared Him by the prophet to be God the Mighty and God the

Great, so when He says here, "My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," He adds further to the name of His own Son the title also of His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased: that the addition of the titles might denote the special properties of the Divine nature; and that that might specially redound to the glory of the Son of God, which had never happened to any man. And so just as in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ these special and unique things happened; viz., that the heavens were opened, that in the sight of all God the Father touched Him in a sort of way, through the coming and presence of the dove, and pointed almost with His finger to Him saying, "This is My Son;" so this too is special and unique in His case; viz., that He is specially beloved, and is specially named as well-pleasing to the Father, in order that these special accompaniments might mark the special import of His nature, and that the special character of His names might support the special position of the only begotten Son, which the honour of the signs previously given had already confirmed. But here comes the end of this book. For this saying of God the Father can neither be added to, nor equalled by any words of men. For us God the Father Himself is a sufficiently satisfactory witness concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, when He says "This is My Son." If you think that it is possible for these utterances of God the Father to be gainsaid, then you are forced to contradict Him, who by the clearest possible announcement caused Him to be acknowledged as His Son by the whole world.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I: That Christ was before the Incarnation God from everlasting.

AS we have finished three books with the most certain and the most valuable witnesses, whose truth is substantiated not only by human but also by Divine evidences, they would abundantly suffice to prove our case by Divine authority, especially as the Divine authority of the case itself would be enough for this. But still as the whole mass of the sacred Scriptures is full of these evidences, and where there are so many witnesses, there are so many opinions to be urged--nay where Holy Scripture itself gives its witness so to speak with one Divine mouth--we have thought it well to add some others still, not from any need of confirmation, but because of the supply of material at our disposal; so that anything which might be unnecessary for purposes of defence, might be useful by way of ornamentation. Therefore since in the earlier books we proved the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ while He was in the flesh by the evidence not only of prophets and apostles, but of evangelists and angels as well, let us now show that He who was born in the flesh was God even before His Incarnation; that you may understand by the harmony and concord of the evidences from the sacred Scriptures, that you ought to believe that at His birth in the body He was both God and man, who before His birth was only God, and that He who after He had been brought forth by the Virgin in the body was God, was before His birth from the Virgin, God the Word. Learn then first of all from the Apostle the teacher of the whole world, that He who is without beginning, God, the Son of God, became the Son of man at the end of the world, i.e., in the fulness of the times. For he says: "But when the fulness of the times was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Tell me then, before the Lord Jesus Christ was born of His mother Mary, had God a Son or had He not? You cannot deny that He had, for never yet was there either a son without a father, or a father without a son: because as a son is so called with reference to a father, so is a father so named with reference to a son.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER II: He infers from what he has said that the Virgin Mary gave birth to a Son who had pre- existed and was greater than she herself was.

YOU see then that when the Apostle says that God sent. His Son, it was His own Son to use the actual words of the Apostle, "His own Son" that God sent. For, since He sent His own Son, it was not some one else's Son that He sent, nor could He send Him at all if He who was sent had no existence. He sent then, he says, "His own Son, made of a woman." Therefore because He sent Him, He sent one who existed: and because He sent His own, it certainly was not another's but His own whom He sent. What then becomes of that argument of yours drawn from this world's subtleties? No one ever yet gave birth to one who had already existed before. For had not the Lord a pro-existence before Mary? Was not the Son of God existent before the daughter of man? In a word did not God Himself exist before man--since certainly there is no man who is not from God. You see then that I do not merely say that Mary gave birth to one who had existed before her, not only, I say, one who had existed before her, but one who was the author of her being, and that in giving birth to her Creator, she became the mother of Him who gave her being: because it was as simple for God to bring about birth for Himself as for man and as easy for Him to arrange that He Himself should be born of mankind, as that a man should be born. For the power of God is not limited in regard to His own Person, as if what was allowable to Him in the case of all others, was not allowable in His own case, and as if He who in the Divine nature could do all things as God, was yet unable in His own Person to become God in man. Setting aside then and rejecting your foolish and feeble and dull arguments from earthly things, we ought merely to put credence in straightforward evidence and the naked truth, and to adapt our faith to those witnesses of God alone, whom God sent, and in whose person He Himself, so to speak, preached. For it is fight to believe Him in a matter concerning knowledge of Himself, as everything that we know of Him comes from Him Himself, for God could not possibly be known of men, unless He Himself gave us the knowledge of Himself. And so it is right that we should believe everything of Him that we know, from whom comes everything that we know, for if we do not believe Him from whom our knowledge comes, the result will be that we shall know nothing at all, since we refuse to believe Him, through whom our knowledge comes.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER III: He proves from the Epistle to the Romans the eternal Divinity of Christ.

AND so as it is clear from the above testimony that God sent His own Son, and that He who was ever the Son of God became the Son of man, let us see whether the same Apostle gives any Other testimony of the same sort elsewhere, that the truth which is already clear enough in itself, may be rendered still more clear by the light of a twofold testimony. So then the same Apostle says: "God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." You see that the Apostle certainly did not use these words by chance or at random, as he repeated what he had already said once--for indeed there could not be found in him chance or want of consideration as the fulness of Divine counsel and speech had taken up its abode in him. What then does he say? "God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." He says the same thing again and repeats it, saying, "God sent His own Son." Oh renowned and excellent teacher! for knowing that in this is contained the whole mystery of the Catholic faith, in order that it might be believed that the Lord was born in the flesh and that the Son of God was sent into this world, again and again he makes the same proclamation saying, "God sent His own Son." Nor need we wonder that he who was specially sent to preach the coming of God, made this announcement, since even before the law, the giver of the law himself proclaimed it, saying: "I beseech Thee, 0 Lord, provide another whom Thou mayest send," or as it stands still more clearly in the Hebrew text: "I beseech Thee, O Lord, send whom Thou wilt send." It is clear that the holy prophet, feeling in himself a yearning for the whole human race, prayed as it were with the voices of all mankind to God the Father that He would send as speedily as possible Him who was to be sent by the Father for the redemption and salvation of all men, when he said, "I beseech Thee, O Lord, send whom Thou wilt send." "God," he therefore says, "sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Full well, when he says that He was sent in the flesh, does he exclude for Him sin of the flesh: for he says "God sent His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin," in order that we may know that though the flesh was truly taken, yet there was no true sin, and that, as far as the body is concerned, we should understand that there was reality; as far as sin is concerned, only the likeness of sin. Forthough all flesh is sinful, yet He had flesh without sin, and had in Himself the likeness of sinful flesh, while He was in the flesh but He was free from what was truly sin, because He was without sin: and therefore he says: "God sent His own Son in

the likeness of sinful flesh."

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IV: He brings forward other testimonies to the same view.

IF you would know how admirably the Apostle preached this, hear how this utterance was put into his mouth; as if from the mouth of God Himself, as the Lord says: "For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." For lo, as you see, the Lord Himself affirms that He was sent by God the Father to save mankind. But if you think that it ought to be shown still more clearly, what Son God sent to save men,--though God's own and only begotten can only be one, and when God is said to have sent His Son, He is certainly shown to have sent His only begotten Son,--yet hear the prophet David pointing out with the utmost clearness Him who was sent for the salvation of Men. "He sent," said he, "His Word and healed them." Can you twist this so as to refer it to the flesh as if you could say that a mere man was sent by God to heal mankind? You certainly cannot, for the prophet David and all the holy Scriptures would cry out against you, saying, "He sent His Word and healed them." You see then, that the Word was sent to heal men, for though healing was given through Christ, yet the Word of God was in Christ, and healed all things through Christ: and so since Christ and the Word were united in the mystery of the Incarnation, Christ and the Word of God became one Son of God in either substance. And when the Apostle John was anxious to state this clearly, he said "God sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world." Do you see how he joined together God and man in an union that cannot be severed? For Christ who was born of Mary is without the slightest doubt called Saviour, as it is said, "For to you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." But here he calls the very Word of God, which was sent, a Saviour, saying: "God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world."

CHAPTER V: How in virtue of the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ the Word is rightly termed the Saviour, or incarnate man, and the Son of God.

AND so it is clear that through the mystery of the Word of God joined to man, the Word, which was sent to save men, can be termed Saviour, and the Saviour, who was born in the flesh, can through union with the Word be called the Son of God; and so through the indifferent use of either title, since God is joined to man, whatever is God and man, can be termed altogether God. And so the same Apostle well adds the words: "Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and the love of God is perfected in him." He tells us that he believes, and declares that he is filled with divine love, who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. But he testifies that the Word of God is the Son of God, and thus means us fully to understand that the only begotten Word of God, and Jesus Christ the Son of God are one and the same Person. But do you want to be told more fully that,--though Christ according to the flesh was truly born as man of man,--yet in virtue of the ineffable unity of the mystery, by which man was joined to God, there is no separation between Christ and the Word? Hear the gospel of the Lord, or rather hear the Lord Himself saying of Himself: "This," says He, "is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." You heard above that the Word of God was sent to heal mankind: here you are told that He who was sent is Jesus Christ. Separate this, if you can,-- though you see that so great is the unity of Christ and the Word, that it was not merely that Christ was united with the Word, but that in virtue of the actual unity [of Person] Christ may even be said to be the Word.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VI: That there is in Christ but one Hypostasis (i.e., Personal self).

BUT perhaps you think it a trifle to make this clear: not because it fails in clearness, but because the obscurity of unbelief always causes obscurity even in what is clear. Hear then how the Apostle sums up in a few words this whole mystery of the Lord's unity Person]. "Our one Lord Jesus Christ," he says, "by whom are all things." O good Jesus, what weight there is m Thy words! For Thine they are, when spoken of Thee by Thine own. See how much is embraced in the few words of this saying of the Apostle's. "One Lord," says he, "Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." Did he make use of any circumlocution in order to proclaim the truth of this great mystery? or did he make a long story of that which he wanted us to grasp? "Our one Lord," he says, "Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." In a plain and short phrase he taught the secret of this great mystery, through this confidence by which he realized that in what refers to God his statements had no need of lengthened arguments, and that the Divinity added faith to his utterances. For the demonstration of facts is enough to confirm what is said, whenever the proof rests on the authority of the speaker. There is then, he says, "one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." Notice how you read the same thing of the Word of the Father, which you read of Christ. For the gospel tells us that "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made." The Apostle says, "By Christ are all things:" the gospel says, "By the Word are all things." Do these sacred utterances contradict each other? Most certainly not. But by Christ, by whom the Apostle said that all things were created, and by the Word, by whom the Evangelist relates that all things were made, we are meant to understand one and the same Person. Hear, I tell you, what the Word of God, Himself God, has said of Himself. "No man," he saith, "hath ascended into heaven, save He who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." And again He says: "If ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was before." He said that the Son of man was in heaven: He asserted that the Son of man had come down from heaven. What does it mean? Why are you muttering? Deny it, if you can. But do you ask the reason of what is said? However I do not give it you. God has said this. God has spoken this to me: His Word is the best reason. I get rid of arguments and discussions. The Person of the Speaker alone is enough to make me believe. I may not debate about the trustworthiness of what is said, nor discuss it. Why should I

question whether what God has said is true, since I ought not to doubt that what God says is true. "No man," He says, "hath ascended into heaven, save He who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." Certainly the Word of the Father was ever in heaven: and how did He assert that the Son of man was ever in heaven? You are then to understand that He showed that He who was ever the Son of God was also the Son of man: when lie asserted that He, who had but recently appeared as the Son of man, was ever in heaven. To this points still mere that other passage in which He testifies that the same Son of man; viz., the Word of God who, as He said, came down from heaven, even at the time when He was speaking on earth, was in heaven. For "no man," He said, "hath ascended into heaven, save He who came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." Who, I pray you, is this who is speaking? Assuredly it is Christ. But where was He at the moment when He spoke? Assuredly on earth. And how can He assert that He came down from heaven when He was born, and that He was in heaven when He was speaking, or say that He is the same Son of man, when certainly no one but God can come down from heaven, and when He speaks on earth, and certainly cannot be in heaven except through the Infinite nature of God? Consider then this at last, and note that the Son of man is the same Person as the Word of God: for He is the Son of man since He is truly born of man, and the Word of God, since He who speaks on earth abideth ever in heaven. And so when He truly terms Himself the Son of man, it refers to His human birth, while the fact that He never departs from heaven, refers to the Infinite character of His Divine nature. And so the Apostle's teaching is admirably in accordance with those sacred words:("for He that descended," says He, "is the same that ascended also above all heavens, that He might fill all things," 1) when He says that He that descended is the same that ascended. But none can descend from heaven except the Word of God: who certainly "being in the form of God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Thus the Word of God descended from heaven: but the Son of man ascended. But He says that the same Person ascended and descended. Thus you see that the Son of man is the same Person as the Word of God.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VII: He returns to the former subject, in order to show against the Nestorians that those things are said of the man, which belong to the Divine nature as it were of a Person of Divine nature, and conversely that those things are said of God, which belong to the human nature as it were of a Person of human nature, because there is in Christ but one and a single Personal self.

AND so following the guidance of the sacred word we may now say fearlessly and unhesitatingly that the Son of man came down from heaven, and that the Lord of Glory was crucified: because in virtue of the mystery of the Incarnation, the Son of God became Son of man, and the Lord of Glory was crucified in(the nature of) the Son of man. What more is there need of? It would take too long to go into details: for time would fail me, were I to try to examine and explain everything which could be brought to bear on this subject. For one who wished to do this would have to study and read the whole Bible. For what is there which does not bear on this, when all Scripture was written with reference to this? We must then say--as far as can be said--some things briefly and cursorily, and enumerate rather than explain them, and sacrifice some to save the rest, as for this reason it would certainly be well hurriedly to run through some points, lest one should be obliged to pass over almost everything in silence. The Saviour then in the gospel says that "the Son of man is come to save what was lost." And the Apostle says: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation; that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chid." But the Evangelist John also says: "He came unto his own, and His own received Him not." You see then that Scripture says in one place that the Son of man, in another Jesus Christ, in another the Word of God came into the world. And so we must hold that the difference is one of title not of fact, and that under the appearance of different names there is but one Power [or Person]. For though at one time we are told that the Son of man, and at another that the Son of God came into the world, but one Person is meant under both names.

CHAPTER VIII: How this interchange of titles does not interfere with His Divine power.

For certainly when the evangelist says that He came into the world by whom the world itself was made, and that He was made the Son of man, who is as God the creator of the world, it makes no difference what particular title is used, as God in all cases is meant. For His condescension and will do not interfere with His Divinity, since they the rather prove His Divinity, because whatever He willed came to pass. Therefore also because He willed it, He came into the world; and because He willed it, He was born a man; and because He willed it, He was termed the Son of man. For just as there are so many words, so are they powers belonging to God. The variety of names in Him does not take anything away from the efficacy of His power. Whatever may be the names given Him, in all eases it is one and the same Person. Though there may be some variety in the appearance of His titles, yet there is but a single Divine Person (Majestas) meant by all the names.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IX: He corroborates this statement by the authority of the old prophets.

BUT since up to this point we have made use more particularly of the witness, comparatively new, of evangelists and apostles, now let us bring forward the testimony of the old prophets, intermingling at times new things with old, that everybody may see that the holy Scriptures proclaim as it were with one mouth that Christ was to come in the flesh, with a body of His own complete. And so that far-famed and renowned prophet as richly endowed with God's gifts as with his testimony, to whom alone it was given to be sanctified before His birth, Jeremiah, says, "This is our Lord, and there shall no other be accounted of in comparison with Him. He found out all the way of knowledge and gave it to Jacob His servant and Israel His beloved. Afterwards He was seen upon earth and conversed with men." "This is," then, he says, "our God." You see how the prophet points to God as it were with his hand, and indicates Him as it were with his finger. "This is," he says, "our God." Tell me then, who was it that the prophet showed by these signs and tokens to be God? Surely it was not the Father? For what need was there that He should be pointed out, whom all believed that they knew? For even then the Jews were not ignorant of God, for they were living under God's law. But he was clearly aiming at this, that they might come to know the Son of God as God. And so excellently did the Prophet say that He who had found out all knowledge, i.e., had given the law, was to be seen upon earth, i.e., was to come in the flesh, in order that, as the Jews did not doubt that He who had given the law was God, they might recognize that He who was to come in the flesh was God, especially since they heard that He, in whom they believed as God the giver of the law, was to be seen among men by taking upon Him manhood, as He Himself promises His own advent by the prophet: "For I myself that spoke, behold I am here." "There shall then," says the Scriptures, "be no other accounted of in comparison of Him." Beautifully does the prophet here foresee false teaching, and so exclude the interpretations of heretical perverseness. "There shall no other be accounted of in comparison of Him." For He is alone begotten to be God of God: at whose bidding the completion of the universe followed: whose will is the beginning of things: whose empire is the fabric of the world: who spake all things, and they came to pass: commanded all things, and they were created. He then alone it is who spake to the patriarchs, dwelt in the prophets, was conceived by the Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, appeared in the

world, lived among men, fastened to the wood of the cross the handwriting of our offences, triumphed in Himself, slew by His death the powers that were at enmity and hostile to us; and gave to all men belief in the resurrection, and by the glory of His body put an end to the corruption of man's flesh. You see then that all these belong to the Lord Jesus Christ alone: and therefore no other shall be accounted of in comparison with Him, for He alone is God begotten of God in this glory and unique blessedness. This then is what the prophet's teaching was aiming at; viz., that He might be known by all men to be the only begotten Son of God the Father, and that when they heard that no other was accounted of as God in comparison with the Son, they might confess that there was but one God in the Persons of the Father and the Son. "After this," he said, "He was seen upon earth and conversed with men." You see how plainly this points to the advent and nativity of the Lord. For surely the Father--of whom we read that He can only be seen in the Son--was not seen upon earth, nor born in the flesh, nor conversed with men? Most certainly not. You see then that all this is spoken of the Son of God. For since the prophet said that God should be seen upon earth, and no other but the Son was seen upon earth, it is clear that the prophet said this only of Him, of whom facts afterwards proved that it was spoken. For when He said that God should be seen, He could not say this truly, except of Him who was indeed afterwards seen. But enough of this. Now let us turn to another point. "The labour of Egypt," says the prophet Isaiah, "and the merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabaeans, men of stature, shall come over to thee and shall be thy servants. They shall walk after thee, bound with manacles, and they shall worship thee, and they shall make supplication to thee: for in thee is God, and there is no God beside thee. For thou art our God and we knew thee not, O God of Israel the Saviour."How wonderfully consistent the Holy Scriptures always are! For the first mentioned prophet said, "This is our God," and this one says, "Thou art our God." In the one there is the teaching of Divinity, in the other the confession of men. The one exhibits the character of the Master teaching, the other that of the people confessing. For consider now the prophet Jeremiah daily teaching, as he does, in the church, and saying of the Lord Jesus Christ, "This is our God," what else could the whole Church reply, as it does, than what the other prophet said to the Lord Jesus, "Thou art our God." So that full well could the mention of their past ignorance be joined to their present acknowledgment, in the words of the people: "Thou art our God, and we knew thee not." For well can these who, in times past being taken up with the superstitions of devils did not know God, yet when now

converted to the faith say, "Thou art our God, and we knew thee not."

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER X: He proves Christ's Divinity from the blasphemy of Judaizing Jews as well as from the confession of converts to the faith of Christ.

BUT if you would like to have this proved to you rather from representatives of the Jews, consider the Jewish people when after their unhappy ignorance and wicked persecution they were converted, and acknowledged God here and there, and see whether they could not rightly say, "Thou art our God, and we knew Thee not." But I will add something else, to prove it to you not only from those Jews who confess Him, but also from those who deny Him. For ask those Jews who still continue in their state of unbelief whether they know or believe in God. They will certainly confess that they both know and believe in Him. But on the other band ask them whether they believe in the Son of God. They will at once deny and begin to blaspheme. against Him. You see then that the Prophet said this of Him of whom the Jews have always been ignorant, and whom now they know not; and not of Him whom they imagine that they believe in and confess. And so full well can those, who after having been in ignorance come out of Judaism to the faith, say, "Thou art our God, and we knew Thee not." For rightly do those, who after having been ignorant come to believe, say that they knew not Him in whom up to this time they have not believed, and whom they strive not to know. For it is clear that those who after their previous ignorance come to confess Him, say that formerly they knew Him not, whom up to this time they have ignorantly denied.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XI: He returns to the prophecy of Isaiah.

"THE labour," says he, "of Egypt, and the merchandize of Ethiopia, and the Sabaeans, men of stature shall come over to thee." No one can doubt that in these names of different nations is signified the coming of the nations who were to believe. But you cannot deny that the nations have come over to Christ, for since the name of Christianity has arisen, they have come over to the Lord Jesus Christ not only in faith but actually in name. For since they are called what they really are, that which was the work of faith becomes the token by which they are named. "They shall," he says, "come over to thee and shall be thine: they shall walk after thee bound with manacles." As there are chains of coercion, so too there are chains of love, as the Lord says: "I drew them with chains of love." For indeed great are these chains, and chains of ineffable love, for those who are bound with them rejoice in their fetters. Do you want to know whether this is true? Hear how the Apostle Paul exults and rejoices in his chains, when he says: "I therefore a prisoner in the Lord beseech you." And again: "I beseech thee, whereas thou art such an one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Jesus Christ." You see how he rejoiced in the dignity of his chains, by the example of which he actually stirred up others. But there can be no doubt that where there is single-minded love of the Lord, there is also single-minded delight in chains worn for the Lord's sake: as it is written: "But the multitude of the believers was of one heart and one soul." "And they shall worship thee," he says, "and shall make supplication to thee: for in thee is God, and there is no God beside thee." The Apostle clearly explains the prophet's words, when he says that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." "In Thee then," he says, "is God and there is no God beside thee." When the prophet says "In Thee is God," most admirably does he point not merely to Him who was visible, but to Him who was in what was visible, distinguishing the indweller from Him in whom He dwelt, by pointing out the two natures, not by denying the unity(of Person).

CHAPTER. XII: How the title of Saviour is given to Christ in one sense, and to men in another.

"THOU," he says, "art our God, and we knew Thee not, O God of Israel the Saviour." Although holy Scripture has already shown by many and clear tokens, who is here spoken of, yet it has most plainly pointed to the name of Christ by using the name of Saviour: for surely the Saviour is the same as Christ, as the angel says: "For to you is born this day a Saviour who is Christ the Lord." For everybody knows that in Hebrew" Jesus" means "Saviour," as the angel announced to the holy Virgin Mary, saying: "And thou shall call His name Jesus, for He it is that shall save His people from their sins." And that you may not say that He is termed Saviour in the same sense as the title is given to others("And the Lord raised up to them a Saviour, Othniel the Son of Kenaz," and again, "the Lord raised up to them a Saviour, Ehud the son of Gera"), he added: "for He it is that shall save His people from their sins." But it does not lie in the power of a man to redeem his people from the captivity of sin,--a thing which is only possible for Him of whom it is said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." For the others saved a people not their own but God's, and not from their sins, but from their enemies.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XIII: He explains who are those in whose person the Prophet Isaiah says: "Thou art our God, and we knew Thee not."

"THOU art then," he says, "our God, and we knew Thee not, O God of Israel the Saviour." Who do you imagine chiefly say this; and in whose mouths are such words specially suitable, Jews or Gentiles? If you say Jews: certainly the Jews did not know Christ, as it is said, "But Israel hath not known Me, My people have not considered;" and, "The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." But if you say Gentiles, it is clear that the Gentile world was given over to idols, and knew not Christ, though it knew not the Father any more; but still if it has now come to know Him, it is only through Christ. You see then that whether the believing people belong to the Jews or the Gentiles, in either case they can truly say for themselves: "Thou art our God; and we knew Thee not, O God of Israel the Saviour." For the Gentiles who formerly worshipped idols knew not God; and the Jews who denied the Lord, knew not the Son of God. And thus both truly say of Christ: "Thou art our God and we knew Thee not." For those who did not believe in God were as ignorant of Him as those who denied the Son of God. If therefore Christ is to be believed in, as the truth declares, as the Deity asserts, as indeed Christ Himself declares, who is both, why are you miserably trying in your madness to interpose between God and Christ? Why do you seek to divide His body from the Son of God, and try to separate God from Himself? You are severing what is one, and dividing what is joined together. Believe the Word of God concerning God: for you cannot possibly make a better confession of God's Divinity than by confessing with your voice that which God teaches about Himself. For you must knew that, as the Prophet says, "the Lord Himself is God, who found out all the way of knowledge; who was seen upon earth and conversed with men." He brought the light of faith into the world. He showed the light of salvation. "For God is the Lord, and hath given us light." Then believe Him, and love Him, and confess Him. For since, as it is written, "Every knee shall bow to Him, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord in the glory of God the Father," whether you will or no, you cannot deny that Jesus Christ is Lord in the glory of God the Father. For this is the crowning virtue of a perfect confession, to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is ever Lord and God in the glory of God the Father.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

BOOK V

CHAPTER I: He vehemently inveighs against the error of the Pelagians, who declared that Christ was a mere man.

WE said in the first book that that heresy which copies and follows the lead of Pelagianism, strives and contends in every way to make it believed that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, when born of the Virgin was only a mere man; and that having afterwards taken the path of virtue He merited by His holy and pious life to be counted worthy for this holiness of His life that the Divine Majesty should unite Itself to Him: and thus by cutting off altogether from Him the honour of His sacred origin, it only left to Him the selection on account of His merits. And their aim and endeavour was this; viz., that, by bringing Him down to the level of common men, and making Him one of the common herd, they might assert that all men could by their good life and deeds secure whatever He had secured by His good life. A most dangerous and deadly assertion indeed, which takes away what truly belongs to God, and holds out false promises to men; and which should be condemned for abominable lies on both sides, since it attacks God with wicked blasphemy, and gives to men the hope of a false assurance. A most perverse and wicked assertion as it gives to men what does not belong to them, and takes away from God what is His. And so of this dangerous and deadly evil this new heresy which has recently sprung up, is in a way stirring and reviving the embers, and raising a fresh flame from its ancient ashes by asserting that our Lord Jesus Christ was born a mere man. And so why is there any need for us to ask whether its consequences are dangerous, as in its fountain head it is utterly wrong. It is unnecessary to examine what it is like in its issues, as in its commencement it leaves us no reason for examination. For what object is there in inquiring whether like the earlier heresy, it holds out the same promises to man, if(which is the most awful sin) it takes away the same things from God? So that it would be almost wrong, when we see what it begins like, to ask what there is to follow; as if some possible way might appear in the sequel, in which a man who denies God, could prove that he was not irreligious. The new heresy then, as we have already many times declared, says that the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, only a mere man: and so that Mary should be called Christotocos not Theotocos,

because she was the mother of Christ, not of God. And further to this blasphemous statement it adds arguments that are as wicked as they are foolish, saying, "No one ever gave birth to one who was before her." As if the birth of the only begotten of God, predicted by prophets, announced since the beginning of the world, could be dealt with or measured by human reasons. Or did the Virgin Mary, O you heretic, whoever you are, who slander her for her childbearing--bring about and consummate that which came to pass, by her own strength, so that in a matter and event of so great importance, human weakness can be brought as an objection? And so if there was anything in this great event which was the work of man, look for human arguments. But if everything, which was done, was due to the power of God, why should you consider what is impossible with men, when you see that it is the work of Divine power? But of this more anon. Now let us follow up the subject we began to treat of some little way back; that everybody may know that you are trying to fan the flame in the ashes of Pelagianism, and to revive the embers by breathing out fresh blasphemy.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER II: That the doctrine of Nestorius is closely connected with the error of the Pelagians.

You say then that Christ was born a mere man. But certainly this was asserted by that wicked heresy of Pelagius, as we clearly showed in the first book; viz., that Christ was born a mere man. You add besides, that Jesus Christ the Lord of all should be termed a form that received God (Theodo'chos), i.e., not God, but the receiver of God, so that your view is that He is to be honoured not for His own sake because He is God, but because He receives God into Himself. But clearly this also was asserted by that heresy of which I spoke before; viz., that Christ was not to be worshipped for His own sake because He was God, but because owing to His good and pious actions He won this; viz., to have God dwelling in Him. You see then that you are belching out the poison of Pelagianism, and hissing with the very spirit of Pelagianism. Whence it comes that you seem rather to have been already judged, than to have now to undergo judgment, for since your error is one and the same, you must be believed to fall under the same condemnation: not to mention for the present that you compare the Lord to a statue of the Emperor, and break out into such wicked and blasphemous impieties that you seem in this madness of yours to surpass even Pelagius himself, who surpassed almost every one else in impiety.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER III: How this participation in Divinity which the Pelagians and Nestorians attribute to Christ, is common to all holy men.

You say then that Christ should be termed a form which received God (Theodo'chos), i.e., that He should be revered not for His own sake because He is God, but because He received God within Him. And so in this way you make out that there is no difference between Him and all other holy men: for all holy men have certainly had God within them. For we know well that God was in the patriarchs, and that He spoke in the prophets. In a word we believe that, I do not say apostles and martyrs, but, all the saints and servants of God have within them the Spirit of God, according to this: "Ye are the temple of the living God: as God said, For I will dwell in them." And again: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And thus we are all receivers of God (Theodo'choi); and in this way you say that all the saints are only like Christ, and equal to God. But away with such a wicked and abominable heresy as that the Creator should be compared to His creatures, the Lord to His servants, the God of things earthly and heavenly, to earthly frailty: and out of His very kindnesses this wrong be done to Him; viz., that He who honours man by dwelling in him should therefore be said to be only the same as man.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IV: What the difference is between Christ and the saints.

MOREOVER there is between Him and all the saints the same difference that there is between a dwelling and one who dwells in it, for certainly it is the doing of the dweller not the dwelling, if it is inhabited, for on him it depends both to build the house and to occupy it. I mean, that he can choose, if he will, to make it a dwelling, and when he has made it, to live in it. "Or do you seek a proof," says the Apostle, "of Christ speaking in me?" And elsewhere, "Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobate?" And again: "in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Do you not see what a difference there is between the Apostle's doctrine and your blasphemies? You say that God dwells in Christ as in a man. He testifies that Christ Himself dwells in men: which certainly, as you admit, flesh and blood cannot do; so that He is shown to be God, from the very fact from which you deny Him to be God. For since you cannot deny that He who dwells in man is God, it follows that we must believe that He, whom we know to dwell in men, is most decidedly God. All, then, whether patriarchs, or prophets, or apostles, or martyrs, or saints, had every one of them God within him, and were all made sons of God and were all receivers of God (Theodo'choi), but in a very different and distinct way. For all who believe in God are sons of God by adoption: but the only begotten alone is Son by nature: who was begotten of His Father, not of any material substance, for all things, and the substance of all things exist through the only begotten Son of God--and not out of nothing, because He is from the Father: not like a birth, for there is nothing in God that is void or mutable, but in an ineffable and incomprehensible manner God the Father, wherein He Himself was regenerate, begat his only begotten Son; and so from the Most High, Ingenerate, and Eternal Father proceeds the Most High, Only Begotten, and Eternal Son. Who must be considered the same Person in the flesh as He is in the Spirit: and must be held to be the same Person in the body as He is in glory, for when He was about to be born in the flesh, He made no division or separation within Himself, as if some portion of Him was born while another portion was not born: or as if some portion of Divinity afterwards came upon Him, which had not been in Him at His birth from the Virgin. For according to the Apostle, "all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Christ bodily." Not that It dwells in Him at times, and at times dwells not; nor that It was there at a later date, and not an earlier one:

otherwise we are entangled in that impious heresy of Pelagius, so as to say that from a fixed moment God dwelt in Christ, and that He then came upon Him; when He had won by His life and conversation this; viz., that the power of the Godhead should dwell in Him. These things then belong to men, to men, I say, not to God,--that as far as human weakness can, they should humble themselves to God, be subject to God, make themselves dwellings for God, and by their faith and piety win this, to have God as their guest and indweller. For in proportion as anyone is fit for God's gift, so does the Divine grace reward him: in proportion as a man seems worthy of him: in proportion as a man seems worthy of God, so does he enjoy God's presence, according to the Lord's promise: "if any man love Me, he will keep My word; and I and My Father will come to him and make Our abode with Him." But very different is the case as regards Christ; in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily: for He has within Him the fulness of the Godhead so that He gives to all of His fulness, and He--as the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him--Himself dwells in each of the saints in proportion as He deems them worthy of His Presence, and gives of His fulness to all, yet in such a way that He Himself continues m all that fulness,--who even when He was on earth in the flesh, yet was present in the hearts of all the saints, and filled the heaven, the earth, the sea, aye and the whole universe with His infinite power and majesty; and yet was so complete in Himself that the whole world could not contain Him. For however great and inexpressible whatever is made may be, yet there are no things so boundless and infinite as to be able to contain the Creator Himself.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER V: That before His birth in time Christ was always called God by the prophets.

HE it is then of whom the Prophet says: "For in Thee is God, and there is no God beside Thee. For Thou art our God and we knew Thee not, O God of Israel the Saviour?" Who "afterwards appeared on earth and conversed with men." Of whom and in whose Person the Prophet David also speaks: "From my mother's womb Thou art my God:" showing clearly that He who was Lord and man was never separate from God: in whom even in the Virgin's womb the fulness of the Godhead dwelt. As elsewhere the same Prophet says: "Truth has sprung from the earth and righteousness hath looked down from heaven," that we may know that when the Son of God looked down from heaven (i.e., came and descended), righteousness was born of the flesh of the Virgin, no phantasm of a body, but the Truth: for He is the Truth, according to His own witness of Truth: "I am the Truth and the life." And so as we have proved in the earlier books that this Truth; viz., the Lord Jesus Christ, was God when born of the Virgin, let us now do as we determined to do in the book before this, and show that He who was to be born of the Virgin, was always declared to be God beforehand. And so the prophet Isaiah says, "Cease ye from the man whose breath is in his nostrils, for it is He in whom he is reputed to be;" or as it is more exactly and clearly in the Hebrew: "for he is reputed high." But by saying "cease ye," a term which deprecates violence, he admirably denotes the disturbance of persecution. "Cease ye," he says, "from the man whose breath is in his nostrils, for he is reputed high." Does he not in one and the same sentence speak of the taking upon Him of the manhood, and the truth of His Godhead? "Cease ye," he says, "from the man whose breath is in his nostrils, for he is reputed high." Does he not, I ask you, seem plainly to address the Lord's persecutors, and to say, "Cease ye from the man" whom ye are persecuting, for this man is God: and though He appears in the lowliness of human flesh, yet He still continues in the high estate of Divine glory? But by saying "Cease ye from the man whose breath is in his nostrils," he admirably showed His manhood, by the clearest tokens of a human body, and this fearlessly and confidently, as one who would as urgently assert the truth of His humanity as that of His Godhead, for this is the true and Catholic faith, to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ possessed the substance of a true body just as He possessed a true and perfect Divinity. Unless possibly you think that anything can be made out of the fact that he uses the word "High" instead of

"God"; whereas it is the habit of holy Scripture to put "High" for "God," as where the prophet says: "the Most High uttered His voice and the earth was moved," and "Thou alone art Most High over all the earth." Isaiah too, who says this: "The High and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity": where we are clearly to understand that as he there puts Most High without adding the name of God, so here too he speaks of God by the name of Most High. So then, since the Divine word spoken by the prophet clearly announced beforehand that the Lord jesus Christ would be both God and man, let us now see whether the New Testament corresponds to and harmonizes with the testimony of the Old.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VI: He illustrates the same doctrine by passages from the New Testament.

"THAT," says the Apostle John, "which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of the life: for the life was manifested: and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal which was with the Father, and hath appeared unto us." You see how the old testimonies are confirmed by fresh ones, and the support of the new preaching is given to the ancient prophecy. Isaiah said: "Cease ye from the man whose breath is in his nostrils for he is reputed high." But John says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled." The former said that as man He would be persecuted by the Jews: the latter declared that as man He was handled by men's hands. The one predicted that He whom he announced as man, would be God Most High: the other asserts that He whom he showed to have been handled by men, was ever God in the beginning. It is then as clear as possible that they both showed the Lord Jesus Christ to be both God ant man; and that the same Person was afterwards man who had always been God, and thus He was God and man, because God Himself became man. That then, he says, "which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal which was with the Father, and hath appeared unto us." You see the number of proofs and ways, very different and numerous, in which that Apostle so well beloved and so devoted to God, indicates the mystery of the Divine Incarnation. In the first instance he testifies that He, who ever was in the beginning, was seen in the flesh. Lest in case it might not seem sufficient for unbelievers that he had spoken of Him as seen and heard, he supports it by saying that He was handled, i.e., touched and felt by his own hands and by those of others. Admirably indeed by showing how He took flesh, does he shut out the view of the Marcionites and the error of the Manichees, so that no one may think that a phantom appeared to men, since an apostle has declared that a true body was handled by him. Then he adds "the word of life: and the life was manifested;" and that he saw it, announced it, and proclaimed it: thus at the same time carrying out the duties of the faith and striking the unbelievers with terror, that while he declares

that he proclaims Him, he may bring home the danger in which he stands, to the man who will not listen. "We declare to you," he says, "the life eternal which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us." He teaches that that which was ever with the Father appeared to men: and that which was ever in the beginning, was seen of men: and that which was the Word of life without beginning, was handled by men's hands. You see the number and variety, the particularity and the clearness of the ways in which he unfolds the mystery of the flesh joined to God, in such a way that no one could speak at all of either without acknowledging both. As the Apostle himself clearly says elsewhere: "For Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." This is what he said in the passage given above: "That which was from the beginning, our hands have handled." Not that a spirit can in its own nature be handled: but that the Word made flesh was in a sense handled in the manhood with which it was joined. And so Jesus is "the same yesterday and to-day": i.e., the same Person before the commencement of the world, as in the flesh; the same in the past as in the present, the same also for ever, for He is the same through all the ages, as before all the ages. And all this is the Lord Jesus Christ.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VII: He shows again from the union in Christ of two natures in one Person that what belongs to the Divine nature may rightly be ascribed to man, and what belongs to the human nature to God.

AND how was it the same Person before the origin of the world, who was but recently born? Because it was the same Person, who was recently born in human nature, who was God before the rise of all things. And so the name of Christ includes everything that the name of God does; for so close is the union between Christ and God that no one, when he uses the name of Christ can help speaking of God under the name of Christ, nor, when he speaks of God, can he help speaking of Christ under the name of God. And as through the glory of His holy nativity the mystery of each substance is joined together in Him, whatever was in existence--I mean both human and Divine--all is regarded as God. And hence the Apostle Paul seeing with unveiled eyes of faith the whole mystery of the ineffable glory in Christ, spoke as follows, in inviting the peoples who were ignorant of God's goodness to give thanksgiving to God: "Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He may hold the primacy. Because it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to the things on earth, and the things that are in heaven." Surely this does not need the aid of any further explanation, as it is so fully and clearly expressed that in itself it contains not merely the substance of the faith, but a clear exposition of it. For he bids us give thanks to the Father: and adds a weighty reason for thus giving thanks; viz., because He hath made us worthy to be partakers with the saints, and hath delivered us from the power of darkness, hath translated us unto the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption and remission of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for in Him and through Him

were all things created; of which He is both the Creator and the ruler: and what follows after this? "He is" he says, "the head of the body the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead." Scripture speaks of the resurrection as a birth: because as birth is the beginning of life, so resurrection gives birth unto life. Whence also the resurrection is actually spoken of as regeneration, according to the words of the Lord: "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Therefore he calls Him the first-born from the dead, whom he had previously declared to be the invisible Son and image of God. But who is the image of the invisible God, except the only-begotten, the Word of God? And how can we say that He rose from the dead, who is termed the image and word of the invisible God? And what is it that follows afterwards? "That in all things He may hold the primacy: for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to things on earth and the things that are in heaven." Surely the Creator of all things has no need of the primacy in all things? Nor He who made them, of the primacy of those things which were made by Him? And how can we say of the Word, that it pleased God that all fulness should dwell in Him who was the first-born from the dead, when He was Himself the only-begotten Son of God and the Word of God, before the origin of all things, and had within Him the invisible Father, and so first had within Him all fulness, that He might Himself be the fulness of all things? And what next? "Bringing all things to peace through the blood of His cross, both things on earth, and the things which are in heaven." Certainly he has made it as clear as possible of whom he was speaking, when he called Him the first-born from the dead. For are all things reconciled and brought into peace through the blood of the Word or Spirit? Most certainly not. For no sort of passion can happen to nature that is impassible, nor can the blood of any but a man be shed, nor any but a man die: and yet the same Person who is spoken of in the following verses as dead, was above called the image of the invisible God. How then can this be? Because the apostles took every possible precaution that it might not be thought that there was any division in Christ, or that the Son of God being joined to a Son of man, might come by wild interpretations to be made into two Persons, and thus He who is in Himself but one might by wrongful and wicked notions of ours, be made into a double Person in one nature. And so most excellently and admirably does the apostle's preaching pass from the only

begotten Son of God to the Son of man united to the Son of God, that the exposition of the doctrine might follow the actual course of the things that happened. And so he continues with an unbroken connexion, and makes as it were a sort of bridge, that without any gap or separation you might find at the end of time Him whom we read of as in the beginning of the world; and that you might not by admitting. some division and erroneous separation imagine that the Son of God was one person in the flesh and another in the Spirit; When the teaching of the apostle had so linked together God and man through the mystery of His birth in the body, so as to show that it was the same Person reconciling to Himself all things on the Cross, who had been proclaimed the image of the invisible God before the foundation of the world.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VIII: He confirms the judgment of the Apostle by the authority of the Lord.

AND though this is the saying of an Apostle, yet it is the very doctrine of the Lord For the same Person says this to Christians by His Apostle, who had Himself said something very like it to Jews in the gospel, when He said: "But now ye seek to kill me, a man, who have spoken the truth to you, which I heard of God: for I am not come of Myself, but He sent me." He clearly shows that He is both God and man: man, m that He says that He is a man: God, in that He affirms that He was sent. For He must have been with Him from whom He came: and He came from Him, from whom He said that He was sent. Whence it comes that when the Jews said to Him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old and hast Thou seen Abraham?" He replied in words that exactly suit His eternity and glory, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham came into being, I am." I ask then, whose saying do you think this is? Certainly it is Christ's without any doubt. And how could He who had been but recently born, say that He was before Abraham? Simply owing to the Word of God, with which He was entirely united, so that all might understand the closeness of the union of Christ and God: since whatever God said in Christ, that in its fulness the unity of the Divinity claimed for Himself. But conscious of His own eternity, He rightly then when in the body, replied to the Jews, with the very words which He had formerly spoken to Moses in the Spirit. For here He says, "Before Abraham came into being, I am." But to Moses He says, "I am that I am." He certainly announced the eternity of His Divine nature with marvellous grandeur of language, for nothing can be spoken so worthily of God, as that He should be said ever to be. For "to be" admits of no beginning in the past or end in the future. And so this is very clearly spoken of the nature of the eternal God, as it exactly describes His eternity. And this the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, when He was speaking of Abraham, showed by the difference of terms used, saying, "Before Abraham came into being I am." Of Abraham he said, "Before he came into being:" Of Himself, "I am," for it belongs to things temporal to come into being: to be belongs to eternity. And so "to come into being" He assigns to human transitoriness: but "to be" to His own nature. And all this was found in Christ who, by virtue of the mystery of the manhood and Divinity joined together in Him who ever "was," could say that He already "was."

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IX: Since those marvellous works which from the days of Moses were shown to the children of Israel are attributed to Christ, it follows that He must have existed long before His birth in time.

AND when the Apostle wanted to make this clear and patent to everybody he spoke as follows, saying that, "Jesus having saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterward destroyed them that believed not." But elsewhere too we read: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and were destroyed by serpents." Peter also the chief of the apostles says: "And now why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear. But we believe that we shall be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ even as they were." We know most certainly that the people of God were delivered from Egypt, and led dryshod through mighty tracts of water, and preserved in the vast desert wastes, by none but God alone; as it is written: "The Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange God among them." And how can an Apostle declare in so many and such clear passages that the people of the Jews were delivered from Egypt by Jesus, and that Christ was at that time tempted by the Jews in the wilderness, saying, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and were destroyed of the serpents?" And further the blessed Apostle Peter says of all the saints who lived under the law of the Old Covenant that they were saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Get out then, and wriggle out of this if you can--whoever you are--you who rage with vapid mouth and a spirit of blasphemy, and think that there is no difference at all between Adam and Christ; and you who deny that He was God before His birth of the Virgin, show clearly how you can prove that He was not God before His body came into existence. For lo, an Apostle says that the people were saved out of the land of Egypt by Jesus: and that Christ was tempted by unbelievers in the wilderness: and that our fathers, i. e., the patriarchs and prophets, were saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Deny it if you can. I shall not be surprised if you manage to deny what we all read, as you have already denied what we all believe. Know then that even then it was Christ in God who led the people out of Egypt, and it was Christ in God who was tempted by the people who tempted, and it was Christ in God who saved all the righteous men by His lavish grace: for through the oneness of the mystery (of the Incarnation) the terms God and Christ so pass into each other, that whatever God did, that we may say that Christ

did; and whatever afterwards Christ bore, we may say that God bore. And so when the prophet said, "There shall no new God be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any other God," he announced it with the same meaning and in the same spirit as that with which the Apostle said that Christ was the leader of the people of Israel out of Egypt; to show that He who was born of the Virgin as man, was even through the unity of the mystery still in God. Otherwise, unless we believe this, we must either believe with the heretics that Christ is not God, or against the teaching of the prophet hold that He is a new God. But may it be far from the Catholic people of God, to seem either to differ from the prophet or to agree with heretics: or perchance the people who should be blessed may be involved in a curse, and be charged with putting their hope in man. For whoever declares that the Lord Jesus Christ was at His birth a mere man, is doubly liable to the curse, whether he believes in Him or not. For if he believes, "Cursed is he who puts his hope in man." But if he does not believe, none the less is he still cursed, because though not believing in man, he still has altogether denied God.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER X: He explains what it means to confess, and what it means to dissolve Jesus.

FOR this it is which John, the man so dear to God, foresaw from the Lord's own revelation to him and so spoke of Him, who was speaking in him. "Every spirit," he says, "which confesseth Jesus come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of Antichrist, of whom you have heard already, and he is now already in the world." O the marvellous and singular goodness of God, who like a most careful and skilful physician, foretold beforehand the diseases that should come upon His Church, and when He showed the mischief beforehand, gave in showing it, a remedy for it: that all men when they saw the evil approaching, might at once flee as far as possible from that which they already knew to be imminent. And so Saint John says, "Every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of Antichrist." Do you recognize him, O you heretic? Do you recognize that it is plainly and markedly spoken of you? For no one thus dissolves Jesus but he who does not confess that He is God. For since in this consists all the faith and all the worship of the Church; viz., to confess that Jesus is very God; who can more dissolve His glory and worship than one who denies the existence in Him of all that we all worship? Take then, I beseech you, take care lest any one may even term you Antichrist. Do you think that I am reviling and Cursing? What I am saying is not my own idea: for lo, the Evangelist says, "Every one that dissolveth Jesus is not of God; and this is Antichrist." If you do not dissolve Jesus, and deny God, no one may call you Antichrist. But if you deny it why do you accuse any one for calling you Antichrist? While you are denying it, I declare you have said it of yourself. Would you like to know whether this is true? Tell me, when Jesus was born of a Virgin, what do you make Him to be--man or God? If God only, you certainly dissolve Jesus, as you deny that in Him manhood was joined to Divinity. But if you say He was man, none the less do you dissolve Him, as you blasphemously say that a mere man (as you will have it) was born. Unless perhaps you think that you do not dissolve Jesus, you who deny Him to be God, you who would certainly dissolve Him even if you did not deny that man was born together with God. But possibly you would like this to be made clearer by examples. You shall have them in both directions. The Manichees are outside the Church, who declare that Jesus was God alone: and the Ebionites, who say that he was a mere man. For both of them deny and dissolve Jesus: the one by saying

that He is only man, the other by saying that He is only God. For though their opinions were the opposite of each other, yet the blasphemy of these diverse opinions is much the same, except that if any distinction can be drawn between the magnitude of the evils, your blasphemy which asserts that He is a mere man is worse than that which says that He is only God: for though both are wrong, yet it is more insulting to take away from the Lord what is Divine than what is human. This then alone is the Catholic and the true faith; viz., to believe that as the Lord Jesus Christ is God so also is He man; and that as He is man so also is He God. "Every one who dissolves Jesus is not of God." But to dissolve Him is to try to rend asunder what is united in Jesus; and to sever what is but one and indivisible. But what is it in Jesus that is united and but one? Certainly the manhood and the Godhead. He then dissolves Jesus who severs these and rends them asunder. Otherwise, if he does not rend them asunder and sever them, he does not dissolve Jesus: But if he rends them asunder he certainly dissolves Him.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XI: The mystery of the Lord's Incarnation clearly implies the Divinity of Christ.

AND so to every man who breaks out into this mad blasphemy, the Lord Jesus in the gospel Himself repeats what He said to the Pharisees, and declares: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." For although where it was originally spoken by God it seems to be in answer to another matter, yet the deep wisdom of God which was speaking not more of carnal than of spiritual things, would have this to be taken of that subject indeed, but even more of this: for when the Jews of that day believed with you that Jesus was only a man without Divinity, and the Lord was asked a question about the union in marriage, in His teaching He not only referred to it, but to this also: though consulted about matters of less importance His answer applied to greater and deeper matters, when he said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," i. e., Do not sever what God hath joined together in My Person. Let not human wickedness sever that which the Divine Glory hath united in Me. But if you want to be told more fully that this is so, hear the Apostle talking about these very subjects of which the Saviour was then teaching, for he, as a teacher sent from God that his weak-minded hearers might be able to take in his teaching, expounded those very subjects which God had proclaimed in a mystery. For when he was discussing the subject of carnal union, on which the Saviour had been asked a question in the gospel, he repeated those very passages from the old Law on which He had dwelt, on purpose that they might see that as he was using the same authorities he was expounding the same subject: besides which, that nothing may seem to be wanting to his case, he adds the mention of carnal union, and puts in the names of husband and wife whom he exhorts to love one another: "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the Church." And again: "So also ought men to love their wives even as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as Christ also doth the Church, for we are members of His body." You see how by adding to the mention of man and wife the mention of Christ and the Church, he leads all from taking it carnally to understand it in a spiritual sense. For when he had said all this, he added those passages which the Lord had applied in the Gospel, saying: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh." And after this with special emphasis he adds: "This is a great

mystery." He certainly altogether cuts off and gets rid of any carnal interpretation, by saying that it is a Divine mystery. And what did he add after this? "But I am speaking of Christ and the Church." That is to say: "But that is a great mystery. But I am speaking of Christ and the Church," i.e., since perhaps at the present time all cannot grasp that, they may at least grasp this, which is not at variance with it, nor different from it, Because both refer to Christ. But because they cannot grasp those more profound truths let them at least take in these easier ones that by making a commencement by grasping what lies on the surface, they may come to the deeper truths, and that the acquisition of a somewhat simple matter may open the way in time to what is more profound.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XII: He explains more fully what the mystery is which is signified under the name of the man and wife.

WHAT then is that great mystery which is signified under the name of the man and his wife? Let us ask the Apostle himself, who elsewhere to teach the same thing uses words of the same force, saying: "And evidently great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory." What then is that great mystery which was manifested in the flesh? Clearly it was God born of the flesh, God seen in bodily form: who was openly received up in glory just as He was openly manifested in the flesh. This then is the great mystery, of which he says: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh." Who then were the two in one flesh? God and the soul, for in the one flesh of man which is joined to God are present God and the soul, as the Lord Himself says: "No man can take My life (anima) away from Me. But I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." You see then in this, three; viz., God, the flesh, and the soul. He is God who speaks: the flesh in which He speaks: the soul of which He speaks. Is He therefore that man of whom the prophet says: "A brother cannot redeem, nor shall a man redeem"? Who, as it was said, "ascended up where He was before," and of whom we read: "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He who came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." For this cause, I say, He has left his father and mother, i.e., God from whom He was begotten and that "Jerusalem which is the mother of us all," and has cleaved to human flesh, as to his wife. And therefore he expressly says in the case of the father "a man shall leave Ms father," but in the case of the mother he does not say "his," but simply says "mother:" because she was not so much his mother, as the mother of all believers, i.e., of all of us. And He was joined to his wife, for just as man and wife make but one body, so the glory of Divinity and the flesh of man are united and the two, viz., God and the soul, become one flesh. For just as that flesh had God as an indweller in it, so also had it the soul within it dwelling with God. This then is that great mystery, to search out which our admiration for the Apostle summons us, and God's own exhortation bids us: and it is one not foreign to Christ and His Church, as he says, "But I am speaking of Christ and the Church." Because the flesh of the Church is the flesh of Christ, and in the flesh of Christ there is

present God and the soul: and so the same person is present in Christ as in the Church, because the mystery which we believe in the flesh of Christ, is contained also by faith in the Church.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XIII: Of the longing with which the old patriarchs desired to see the revelation of that mystery.

THIS mystery then, which was manifested in the flesh and appeared in the world, and was preached to the Gentiles, many of the saints of old longed to see in the flesh, as they foresaw it in the spirit. For "Verily," saith the Lord, "I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things which ye hear and have not heard them." And so the prophet Isaiah says: "O that Thou, Lord, would rend the heavens and come down," and David too: "O Lord, bow the heavens and come down." Moses also says: "Show me Thyself that I may see Thee plainly." No one ever approached nearer to God speaking out of the clouds, and to the very presence of His glory than Moses who received the law. And if no one ever saw more closely into God than he did, why did he ask for a still clearer vision, saying, "Show me Thyself that I may see Thee plainly"? Simply because he prayed that this might happen which the apostle tells us in almost the same words actually did happen; viz., that the Lord might be openly manifested in the flesh, might openly appear to the world, openly be received up in glory; and that at last the saints might with their very bodily eyes see all those things which with spiritual sight they had foreseen.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XIV: He refutes the wicked and blasphemous notion of the heretics who said that God dwelt and spoke in Christ as in an instrument or a statue.

OTHERWISE, as the heretics say, God would i be in the Lord Jesus Christ as in a statue or in an instrument, i.e., He would dwell as it were in a man and speak as it were through a man, and it would not be He who dwelt and spoke as God of Himself and in His own body: and certainly He had already thus dwelt in the saints and spoken in the persons of the saints. In those men too, of whom I spoke above, who had prayed for His advent, He had thus dwelt and spoken. And what need was there for all these to ask for what they already possessed, if they were seeking for what they had previously received? Or why should they long to see with their eyes what they were keeping in their hearts, especially as it is better for a man to have the same thing within himself than to see it outside? Or if God was to dwell in Christ in the same way as in all the saints, why should all the saints long to see Christ rather than themselves? And if they were only to see the same thing in Jesus Christ, which they themselves possessed, why should they not much rather prefer to have this in themselves than to see it in another? But you are wrong, you wretched madman, "not understanding," as the Apostle says, "what you say and whereof you affirm": for all the prophets and all the saints received from God some portion of the Divine Spirit as they were able to bear it. But in Christ "all the fulness of the Godhead" dwelt and "dwells bodily." And therefore they all fall far short of His fulness, from whose fulness they receive something: for the fact that they are filled is the gift of Christ: because they would all certainly be empty, were He not the fulness of all.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XV: What the prayers of the saints for the coming of Messiah contained; and what was the nature of that longing of theirs.

THIS then all the saints wished for: for this they prayed. This they longed to see with their eyes in proportion as they were wise in heart and mind. And so the prophet Isaiah says: "O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down." But Habakkuk too declaring the same thing which the other was wishing for, says: "When the years draw nigh, Thou wilt show Thyself: at the coming of the times Thou wilt be manifested: God will come from Teman," or "God will come from the south." David also: "God will clearly come:" and again: "Thou that sittest above the Cherubim, show Thyself." Some declared His advent which He presented to the world: others prayed for it. Some in different forms but all with equal longing: understanding up to a certain point how great a thing they were praying for, that God dwelling in God, and continuing in the form and bosom of God, might "empty Himself," and take the form of a servant and submit Himself to endure all the bitterness and insults of the passion, and undergo punishment for His goodness, and what is hardest, and the most disgraceful thing of all, meet with death at the hands of those very persons for whom He would die. All the saints then understanding this up to a certain point- -up to a certain point, I say, for how vast it is none can understand--with concordant voice and (so to speak) by mutual consent all prayed for the advent of God: for indeed they knew that the hope of all men lay therein, and that the salvation of all was bound up in this, because no one could loose the prisoners except one who was Himself free from chains: no one could release sinners, save one Himself without sin: for no one can in any case set free anyone, unless he is himself free in that particular, in which another is freed by him. And so when death had passed on all, all were wanting in life, that, dying in Adam, they might live in Christ. For though there were many saints, many elect and even friends of God, yet none could ever of themselves be saved, had they not been saved by the advent of the Lord and His redemption.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

BOOK VI

CHAPTER I: From the miracle of the feeding of the multitude from five barley loaves and two fishes he shows the majesty of Divine Power.

WE read in the gospel that when five loaves were at the Lord's bidding brought to Him an immense number of God's people were fed with them. But how this was done it is impossible to explain, or to understand or to imagine. So great and so incomprehensible is the, might of Divine Power, that though we are perfectly assured of the fact, yet we are unable to understand the manner of the fact. For first one would have to comprehend how so small a number of loaves could be sufficient, I will not say for them to eat and be filled, but even to be divided and set before them, when there were many more thousands of men than there were loaves; and almost more companies than there could be fragments of the whole number of loaves. The plentiful supply then was the creation of the word of the Lord. The work grew in the doing of it. And though what was visible was but little; yet what was given to them became more than could be reckoned. There is then no room for conjecture, for human speculation, or imagination. The only thing in such a case is that like faithful and wise men we should acknowledge that, however great and incomprehensible are the things which are done by God, even if they are altogether beyond our comprehension, we must recognize that nothing is impossible with God. But of these unspeakable acts of Divine Power, we will, as the subject demands it, speaks more fully later on, because it exactly corresponds to the ineffable miracles of His Holy Nativity.

CHAPTER II: The author adapts the mystery of the number seven (made up of the five loaves and two fishes) to his own work.

MEANWHILE as we have alluded to the five loaves, I think it will not be out of place to make a comparison of the five books which we have already composed. For as they are equal in number, so they are not dissimilar in character. For as the loaves were of barley, so these books may (as far as my ability is concerned) be fairly termed "of barley," although they are enriched with passages from Holy Scripture, and contain life-giving treasures in contemptible surroundings. And even in this point they are not unlike those loaves, for though they were poor things to look at, yet they proved to be rich in blessing: and so these books, though, as far as my powers are concerned, they are worthless, yet they are valuable from the sacred matter which is mingled with them: and though they appear outwardly worthless like barley owing to my words, yet within they have the savour of the bread of life owing to the testimonies from the Lord Himself. It remains that, after His example, they may, by the gift of Divine grace, furnish life-giving food from countless seeds. And as those loaves supplied bodily strength to those who ate them, so may these give spiritual vigour to those who read them. But as then the Lord, from whom this gift comes as did that, by means of that food provided that they might be filled and so should not faint by the way, so now is He able to bring it about that by means of this men may be filled and not err (from the faith). But still because there, where a countless host of God's people was fed with a mighty gift, though there was very little for them to eat, we read that to those five loaves there were added two fishes, it is fitting that we too, who are anxious to give to all God's people who are following, the nourishment of a spiritual repast, should add to those five books corresponding to the five loaves, two more books corresponding to the two fishes: praying and beseeching Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt look on our efforts and prayers, and grant a prosperous issue to our pious undertaking. And since we, out of our love and obedience, desire to make the number of our books correspond to the number of loaves and fishes, do Thou grant the virtue of Thy Benediction upon them; and, as Thou dost bless this little work of ours with a gospel number, so mayest Thou fill up the number with the fruit of the gospel, and grant that this may be for holy and saving food to all the people of Thy Church, of every age and sex. And if there are some who are affected by the deadly breath

of that poisonous serpent, and in an unhealthy state of soul and spirit have caught a pestilential disease in their feeble dispositions, give to them all the vigour of health, and entire soundness of faith, that by granting to them all, by means of these writings of ours, the saving care of Thy gift--just as that food in the gospel was completely sanctified by Thee, so that by eating it those hungry souls were strengthened,--so mayest Thou bid languid souls to be healed by these.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER III: He refutes his opponent by the testimony of the Council of Antioch.

THEREFORE since we have, as I fancy, already in all the former books with the weight of sacred testimonies, given a complete answer to the heretic who denies God, now let us come to the faith of the Creed of Antioch and its value. For as he was himself baptized and regenerated in this, he ought to be confuted by his own profession, and (so to speak) to be crushed beneath the weight of his own arms, for this is the method, that as he is already convicted by the evidence of holy Scripture, so now he may be convicted by evidence out of his own mouth. Nor will there be any need to bring anything else to bear against him when he has clearly and plainly convicted himself. The text then and the faith of the Creed of Antioch is this. "I believe in one and the only true God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, and the first-born of every creature, begotten of Him before all worlds, and not made: Very God of Very God, Being of one substance. with the Father: By whom both the worlds were framed, and all things were made. Who for us came, and was born of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried: and the third day He rose again according to the Scripture: and ascended into heaven, and shall come again to judge the quick and the dead," etc. In the Creed which gives the faith of all the Churches, I should like to know which you would rather follow, the authority of men or of God? ThoUgh I would not press hardly or unkindly upon you, but give the opportunity of choosing whichever alternative you please, that accepting one, I may deny the other: for I will grant you and yield to you either of them. And what do I grant, I ask? I will force you to one or other even against your will. For you ought, if you like, to understand of your own free will that one or other of these is in the Creed: if you don't like it, you must be forced against your will to see it. For, as you know, a Creed (Symbolum) gets its name from being a "collection." For what is called in Greek "s'umbolos" is termed in Latin "Collatio." But it is therefore a collection (collatio) because when the faith of the whole Catholic law was collected together by the apostles of the Lord, all those matters which are spread over the whole body of the sacred writings with immense fulness of detail, were collected together in sum in the matchless brevity of the Creed, according to the Apostle's words: "Completing His word, and cutting it short in righteousness: because a short word shall the Lord make upon the earth." This then

is the "short word" which the Lord made, collecting together in few words the faith of both of His Testaments, and including in a few brief clauses the drift of all the Scriptures, building up His own out of His own, and giving the force of the whole law in a most compendious and brief formula. Providing in this, like a most tender father, for the carelessness and ignorance of some of his children, that no mind however simple and ignorant might have any trouble over what could so easily be retained in the memory.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IV: How the Creed has authority Divine as well as human.

YOU see then that the Creed has the authority of God: for "a short word will the Lord make upon the earth." But perhaps you want the authority of men: nor is that wanting, for God made it by means of men. For as He fashioned the whole body of the sacred Scriptures by means of the patriarchs and more particularly his own prophets, so He formed the Creed by means of His apostles and priests. And whatever He enlarged on in these (in Scripture) with copious and abundant material, He here embraced in a most complete and compendious form by means of His own servants. There is nothing wanting then in the Creed; because as it was formed from the Scriptures of God by the apostles of God, it has in it all the authority it can possibly have, whether of men or of God: Although too that which was made by men, must be accounted God's work, for we should not look on it so much as their work, by whose instrumentality it was made, but rather as His, who was the actual maker. "I believe," then, says the Creed, "in one true and only God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son and the first-born of every creature; Begotten of Him before all worlds, and not made; Very God of Very God, being of one substance with the Father; by whom both the worlds were framed and all things were made; who for us came, and was born of the Virgin Mary; and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven: and shall come again to judge the quick and the dead," etc.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER V: He proceeds against his opponent with the choicest arguments, and shows that we ought to hold fast to the religion which we have received from our fathers.

IF you were an assertor of the Arian or Sabellian heresy, and did not use your own creed, I would still confute you by the authority of the holy Scriptures; I would confute you by the words of the law itself; I would refute you by the truth of the Creed which has been approved throughout the whole world. I would say that, even if you were void of sense and understanding, yet still you ought at least to follow universal consent: and not to make more of the perverse view of a few wicked men than of the faith of all the Churches: which as it was established by Christ, and handed down by the apostles ought to be regarded as nothing but the voice of the authority of God, which is certainly in possession of the voice and mind of God. And what then if I were to deal with you in this way? What would you say? What would you answer? Would it not, I adjure you, be this: viz., that you had not been trained up and taught in this way: that something different had been delivered to you by your parents, and masters, and teachers. That you did not hear this in the meeting place of your father's teaching, nor in the Church of your Baptism: finally that the text and words of the Creed delivered and taught to you contained something different. That in it you were baptized and regenerated. You would say that you would hold fast this which you had received, and that you would live in that Creed in which you learnt that you were regenerated. When you said this, would you not, I pray, fancy that you were using a very strong shield even against the truth? And indeed it would be no unreasonable defence, even in a bad business, and one which would give no bad excuse for error, if it did not unite obstinacy with error. For if you held this, which you had received from your childhood, we should try to amend and correct your present error, rather than be severe in punishing your past fault: Whereas now, as you were born in a Catholic city, instructed in the Catholic faith, and regenerated with Catholic Baptism, how can I deal with you as with an Arian or Sabellian? Would that you were one! I should grieve less had you been brought up in what was wrong, instead of having fallen away from what was right: had you never received the faith, instead of having lost it: had you been an old heretic instead of a fresh apostate, for you would have brought less scandal and harm on the whole Church; finally it would have been a less bitter sorrow, and less injurious example had you been able to try the Church as a layman rather than a priest. Therefore, as I said

above, if you had been a follower and assertor of Sabellianism or Arianism or any heresy you please, you might shelter yourself under the example of your parents, the teaching of your instructors, the company of those about you, the faith of your creed. I ask, O you heretic, nothing unfair, and nothing hard. As you have been brought up in the Catholic faith, do that which you would do for a wrong belief. Hold fast to the teaching of your parents. Hold fast the faith of the Church: hold fast the truth of the Creed: hold fast the salvation of baptism. What sort of a wonder--what sort of a monster are you? You will not do for yourself what others have done for their errors. But we have launched out far enough: and out of love for a city that is connected with us, have yielded to our grief as to a strong wind, and while we were anxious to make way, have overshot the mark of our proper course.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VI: Once more he challenges him to the profession of the Creed of Antioch.

THE Creed then, O you heretic, of which we gave the text above, though it is that of all the churches (for the faith of all is but one) is yet specially that of the city and Church of Antioch, i.e., of that Church in which you were brought up, instructed, and regenerated. The faith of this Creed brought you to the fountain of life, to saving regeneration, to the grace of the Eucharist, to the Communion of the Lord: And what more! Alas for the grievous and mournful complaint! Even to the ministerial office, the height of the presbyterate, the dignity of the priesthood. Do you, you wretched madman, think that this is a light or trivial matter? Do you not see what you have done? Into what a depth you have plunged yourself? In losing the faith of the Creed, you have lost everything that you were. For the mysteries of the priesthood and of your salvation rested on the truth of the Creed. Can you possibly deny that? I say that you have denied your very self. But perhaps you think that you cannot deny yourself. Let us look at the text of the Creed; that if you say what you used to do, you may not be refuted, but if you say things widely different and contrary, you may not look to be confuted by me, as you have condemned yourself already. For if you now maintain something else than what is in the Creed and what you formerly maintained yourself, how can you help ascribing your punishment to nobody but yourself, when you see that the opinion of everybody else about you is the same as your own? "I believe," the Creed says, "in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, the first-born of every creature; Begotten of Him before all worlds, and not made." It is well that you should first reply to this: Do you confess this of Jesus Christ the Son of God, or do you deny it? If you confess it, everything is right enough. But if not, how do you now deny what you yourself formerly confessed? Choose then which you will: Of two things one must follow; viz., that that same confession of yours, if it still holds good, should alone set you free, or if you deny it, be the first to condemn you. For you said in the Creed: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, and the first-born of every creature." If the Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten, and the first-born of every creature, then by our own confession He is certainly God. For no other is the only begotten and first-born of every creature but the only begotten Son of God: as He is the first-born of the creatures, so He is also God the Creator of all. And how can you

say that He was a mere man at His birth from the Virgin, whom you confessed to be God before the world. Next the Creed says: "Begotten of the Father before all worlds, and not made." This Creed was uttered by you. You said by your Creed, that Jesus Christ was begotten before the worlds of God the Father, and not made. Does the Creed say anything about those phantasms, of which you now rave? Did you yourself say anything about them? Where is the statue? Where that instrument of yours, I pray? For God forbid that this should be another's and not yours. Where is it that you assert that the Lord Jesus Christ is like a statue, and so you think that He ought to be worshipped not because He is God, but because He is the image of God; and out of the Lord of glory you make an instrument, and blasphemously say that He ought to be adored not for His own sake, but for the sake of Him who (as it were) breathes in Him and sounds through Him? You said in the Creed that the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father before all worlds, and not made: and this certainly belongs to none but the only begotten Son of God: that His birth should not be a creation, and that He could be said simply to be begotten, not made: for it is contrary to the nature of things and to His honour that the Creator of all should be believed to be a creature: and that He, the author of all things that have a commencement, should Himself have a beginning, as all things began from Him. And so we say that He was begotten not made: for His generation was unique and no ordinary creation. And since He is God, begotten of God, the Godhead of Him who is begotten must have everything complete which the majesty of Him who begat has.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VII: He continues the same line of argument drawn from the Creed of Antioch.

But there follows in the Creed: "Very God of Very God; Being of one substance with the Father; by whom both the worlds were framed, and all things were made." And when you said all this, remember that you said it all of the Lord Jesus Christ. For you find stated in the Creed: that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and the first-born of every creature: and after this and other clauses: "Very God of Very God, Being of one substance with the Father; by whom also the worlds were framed." How then can the same Person be God and not God; God and a statue; God and an instrument? These do not harmonize, you heretic, in any one Person, nor do they fit together, so that you can, when you like, call Him God; and when you like, consider the same Person a creation. You said in the Creed, "Very God." Now you say: "a mere man." How can these things fit together and harmonize so that one and the same Person may be the greatest Power, and utter weakness: the Highest glory, and mere mortality? These things do not meet together in one and the same Lord. So that severing Him for worship and for degradation, on one side, you may do Him honour as you like, and on the other, you may injure Him as you like. You said in the Creed when you received the Sacrament of true Salvation: "the Lord Jesus Christ, Very God of Very God, Being of one substance with the Father, Creator of the worlds, Maker of all things." Where are you alas! Where is your former self? Where is that faith of yours? Where that confession? How have you fallen back and become a monstrosity and a prodigy? What folly, what madness was your ruin? You turned the God of all power and might into inanimate material and a lifeless creation: Your faith has certainly grown in time, in age, and in the priesthood. You are worse as an old man than formerly as a child: worse now as a veteran than as a tyro: worse as a Bishop than you were as a novice: nor were you ever a learner after you had begun to be a teacher.

CHAPTER VIII: How it can be said that Christ came and was born of a Virgin.

But let us look at the remainder which follows. As then the Creed says: "The Lord Jesus Christ, Very God of Very God, Being of one substance with the Father; By whom both the worlds were framed, and all things were made," it immediately subjoins in closest connexion the following, and says: "Who for us came and was born of the Virgin Mary." He then, who is Very God, who is of one substance with the Father, who is the Maker of all things, He, I repeat, came into the world and was born of the Virgin Mary; as the Apostle Paul says: "But when the fulness of the times was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." You see how the mysteries of the Creed correspond with the Holy Scriptures. The Apostle declares that the Son of God was "sent from the Father:" The Creed affirms that He "came." For it certainly follows that our faith should confess that He has "come," whom the Apostle had taught us to be sent. Then the Apostle says: "Made of a woman:" The Creed, "born of Mary." And so you see that there speaks through the Creed the Scripture itself, from which the Creed acknowledges that it is itself derived. But when the Apostle says, "made of a woman," he rightly enough uses "made" for "born," after the manner of Holy Scripture in which "made" stands for "born:" as in this passage: "Instead of thy fathers there are made to thee sons:" or this: "Before Abraham was made, I am;" where we certainly see clearly that He meant "Before he was born, I am:" alluding to the fact of his birth under the term "was made," because whatever does not need to be made has the very reality of creation. "Who," it then says, "for us came and was born of the Virgin Mary." If a mere man was born of Mary, how can it be said that He "came"? For no one "comes" but He who has it in Him to be able to come. But in the case of one who had not yet received His existence, how could He have it in Him to come. You see then how by the word "coming" it is shown that He who came was already in existence: for He only had the power to come, to whom there could be the opportunity of coming, from the fact that He was already existing. But a mere man was certainly not in existence before he was conceived, and so had not in himself the to come. It is clear then that it was God who came: to whom it belongs in each case both to be, and to come. For certainly He came because He was, and He ever was, because He could ever come.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IX: Again he convicts his opponent of deadly heresy by his own confession.

But why are we arguing about words, when the facts are clear enough? and seeking for a determination of the matter from the terms of the Creed, when the Creed itself deals with the question. Let us repeat the confession of the Creed, and of you yourself (for yours it is as well as the Creed's, for you made it yours by confessing it), that you may see that you have departed not only from the Creed but from yourself. "I believe" then, says the Creed, "In one only true God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible: And in the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, and the first- born of every creature: Begotten of Him before all worlds and not made; Very God of Very God; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom both the worlds were framed, and all things were made. Who for us came, and was born of the Virgin Mary." "For us" then the Creed says, our Lord Jesus Christ "came and was born of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate; and was buried, and rose again according to the Scriptures." The Churches are not ashamed to confess this: the Apostles were not ashamed to preach it. You yourself, you, I say, whose every utterance is now blasphemy, you who now deny everything, you did not deny all these truths: that God was born; that God suffered, that God rose again. And what next? Whither have you fallen? What have you become? To what are you reduced? What do you say? What are you vomiting forth? What, as one says, even mad Orestes himself would swear to be the words of a madman. For what is it that you say? "Who then is the Son of God who was born of the Christotocos? As for instance if we were to say I believe in God the Word, the only Son of God, begotten of His Father, Being of one substance with the Father, who came down and was buried, would not our ears be shocked at the sound? God dead?" And again: "Can it possibly be, you say, that He who was begotten before all worlds, should be born a second time, and be God?" If all these things cannot possibly be, how is it that the Creed of the Churches says that they did happen? How is it that you yourself said that they did? For let us compare what you now say with what you formerly said. Once you said: "I believe in God the Father Almighty; and in Jesus Christ His Son, Very God of Very God; Being of one substance with the Father; who for us came and was born of the Virgin Mary; and was crucified under Pontius Pilate; and was buried." But now what is it that you say? "If we should say: I believe in God the Word, the only Son of God, Begotten of His

Father; Being of one substance with the Father, who came down and was buried, would not our ears be shocked at the sound?" The bitterness indeed and blasphemy of your words might drive us to a furious and ferocious attack in answer; but we must somewhat curb the reins of our pious sorrow.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER X: He inveighs against him because though he has forsaken the Catholic religion, he nevertheless presumes to teach in the Church, to sacrifice, and to give decisions.

I APPEAL then to you, to you yourself, I say. Tell me, I pray, if any Jew or pagan denied the Creed of the Catholic faith, should you think that we ought to listen to him? Most certainly not. What if a heretic or an apostate does the same? Still less should we listen to him, for it is worse for a man to forsake the truth which he has known, than to deny it without ever having known it. We see then two men in you: a Catholic and an apostate: first a Catholic, afterwards an apostate. Determine for yourself which you think we ought to follow: for you cannot press the claims of the one in yourself without condemning the other. Do you say then that it is your former self which is to be condemned: and that you condemn the Catholic Creed, and the confession and faith of all men? And what then? O shameful deed! O wretched grief! What are you doing in the Catholic Church, you preventer of Catholics? Why is it that you, who have denied the faith of the people, are still polluting the meetings of the people: And above all venture to stand at the altar, to mount the pulpit, and show your impudent and treacherous face to God's people--to occupy the Bishop's throne, to exercise the priesthood, to set yourself up as a teacher? To teach the Christians what? Not to believe in Christ: to deny that He in whose Divine temple they are, is God. And after all this, O folly! O madness! you fancy that you are a teacher and a Bishop, while (O wretched blindness) you are denying His Divinity, His Divinity (I repeat it) whose priest you claim to be. But we are carried away by our grief. What then says the Creed? or what did you yourself say in the Creed? Surely "the Lord Jesus Christ, Very God of Very God; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom the worlds were created and all things made:" and that this same Person "for us came and was born of the Virgin Mary." Since then you said that God was born of Mary, how can you deny that Mary was the mother of God? Since you said that God came, how can you deny that He is God who has come? You said in the Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God: I believe in Very God of Very God, of one substance with the Father: who for us came and was born of the Virgin Mary; and was crucified under Pontius Pilate; and was buried." But now you say: "If we should say, I believe in God the Word, the only Son of God, Begotten of the Father, of one substance with the Father; who came and was buried, would not our ears be shocked at the sound?" Do

you see then how you are utterly destroying and stamping out the whole faith of the Catholic Creed and the Catholic mystery? "O Sin, O monstrosity, to be driven away," as one says, "to the utmost parts of the earth:" for this is more truly said of you, that you may forsooth go into that solitude where you will not be able to find anyone to ruin. You think then that the faith of our salvation, and the mystery of the Church's hope is a shock to your ears and hearing. And how was it that formerly when you were hastening to be baptized, you heard these mysteries with unharmed ears? How was it that when the teachers of the church were in-strutting you your ears were not damaged? You certainly at that time did your duty without any double shock to your mouth and ears; when you repeated what you heard from others, and as the speaker yourself heard yourself speaking. Where then were these injuries to your ears? Where these shocks to your hearing? Why did you not contradict and cry out against it? But indeed you are at your will and fancy, when you please, a disciple; and when you please, the Church's enemy: when you please a Catholic, and when you please an apostate. A worthy leader indeed, to draw Churches after you, to whatever side you attach yourself; to make your will the law of our life, and to change mankind as you yourself change, that, as you will not be what all others are, they may be what you want! A splendid authority indeed, that because you are not now what you used to be, the world must cease to be what it formerly was!

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XI: He removes the silent objection of heretics who want to recant the profession of their faith made in childhood.

BUT perhaps you say that you were a baby when you were regenerated, and so were not then able to think or to contradict. It is true: that your infancy did prevent you from contradicting, when if you had been a man you would have died for contradicting. For what if when in that most faithful and devout Church of Christ the priest delivered the Creed to the Catechumen and the attesting people, you had tried to hold your tongue at any point, or to contradict? Perhaps you would have been heard, and not sent forth at once like some new kind of monster or prodigy as a plague to be expelled. Not because that most earnest and religious people of God has any wish to be stained with the blood of even the worst of men: but because especially in great cities the people inflamed with the love of God cannot restrain the ardour of their faith when they see anyone rise up against their God. But be it so. As a baby, if it be so, you could not contradict and deny the Creed. Why did you hold your tongue when you were older and stronger. At any rate you grew up, and became a man, and were placed in the ministry of the Church. Through all these years, through all the steps of office and dignity, did you never understand the faith which you taught so long before? At any rate you knew that you were His deacon and priest. If the rule of salvation was a difficulty to you, why did you undertake the honour of that, of which you disliked the faith? But indeed you were a far sighted and simply devout man, who wished so to balance yourself between the two, as to maintain both your wicked blasphemy, and the honour of Catholicity!

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XII: Christ crucified is an offence and foolishness to those who declare that He was a mere man.

THE shock then to your hearing and ears is that God was born, and God suffered. And where is that saying of yours, O Apostle Paul: "But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling block, but to the Gentiles foolishness: but to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God." What is the Wisdom and Power of God? Certainly it is God. But he preaches Christ who was crucified, as the Power and Wisdom of God. If then Christ is without any doubt the Wisdom of God, He is therefore without any doubt God. "We," then, he says, "preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling block, but to the Gentiles foolishness." And so the Lord's cross, which was foolishness to the Gentiles and a stumbling block to the Jews is both together to you. Nor indeed is there any greater foolishness than not to believe, or any greater stumbling block than to refuse to listen. Their ears were wounded then by the preaching and the passion of God, just as yours are wounded now. They thought as you think that this shocked their ears. And hence it was that when the Apostle was preaching Christ as God, at the name of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, they stopped the ears in their head, as you stop the ears of your understanding. The sin of both of you in this matter might seem to be equal, were it not that your fault is the greater, because they denied Him, in whom the passion still showed the manhood, while you deny Him, whom the resurrection has already proved to be God. And so they were persecuting Him on the earth, whom you are persecuting even in heaven. And not only so, but this is more cruel and wicked, because they denied Him in ignorance, you deny Him after having received the faith: they not knowing the Lord, you when you have confessed Him as God: they under cover of zeal for the law, you under the cloke of your Bishopric: they denied Him to whom they thought that they were strangers, you deny Him whose priest you are. O unworthy act, and one never heard of before! You persecute and attack the very One, whose office you are still holding.

CHAPTER XIII: He replies to the objection in which they say that the child born ought to be of one substance with the mother.

BUT indeed in your deceit and blasphemy you use a grand argument for denying and attacking the Lord God, when you say that "the child born ought to be of one substance with the mother." I do not entirely admit it, and maintain that in the matter of the birth of God it would not be observed; for the birth was not so much the work of her who bore Him as of her Son, and He was born as He willed, whose doing it was that He was born. Next, if you say that the child born ought to be of one substance with the parent, I affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ was of one substance with His Father, and also with His mother. For in accordance with the difference of the Persons He showed a likeness to each parent. For according to His Divinity He was of one substance with the Father: but according to the flesh He was of one substance with His mother. Not that it was one Person who was of one substance with the Father, and another who was of one substance with His mother, but because the same Lord Jesus Christ, both born as man, and also being God, had in Him the properties of each parent, and in that He was man He showed a likeness to His human mother, and in that He was God He possessed the very nature of God the Father.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XIV: He compares this erroneous view with the teaching of the Pelagians.

OTHERWISE if Christ who was born of Mary is not the same Person as He who is of God, you certainly make two Christs; after the manner of that abominable error of Pelagius, which in asserting that a mere man was born of the Virgin, said that He was the teacher rather than the redeemer of mankind; for He did not bring to men redemption of life but only an example of how to live, i.e., that by following Him men should do the same sort of things and so come to a similar state. Your blasphemy then has but one source, and the root of the errors is one and the same. They maintain that a mere man was born of Mary: you maintain the same. They sever the Son of man from the Son of God: you do the same. They say that the Saviour was made the Christ by His baptism: you say that in baptism He became the Temple of God.

They do not deny that He became God after His Passion: you deny Him even after His ascension. In one point only therefore your perverseness goes beyond theirs, for they seem to blaspheme the Lord on earth, and you even in heaven. We do not deny that you have beaten and outstripped those whom you are copying. They at last cease to deny God; you never do. Although theirs must not altogether be deemed a true confession, as they only allow the glory of Divinity to the Saviour after His Passion, and while they deny that He was God before this, only confess it afterwards: for, as it seems to me, one who denies some part in regard to God, denies Him altogether: and one who does not confess that He ever existed, denies Him forever. Just as you also, even if you were to admit that now in the heavens the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary, is God, would not truly confess Him unless you admitted that He was always God. But indeed you do not want in any point to change or vary your opinion. For you assert that He whom you speak of as born a mere man, is still at the present time not God. O novel and marvellous blasphemy, though with the heretics you assert Him to be man, you do not with the heretics confess Him to be God!

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XV: He shows that those who patronize this false teaching acknowledge two Christs.

BUT still, I had begun to say, that as you certainly make out two Christs this very matter must be illustrated and made clear. Tell me, I pray you, you who sever Christ from the Son of God, how can you confess in the Creed that Christ was begotten of God? For you say: "I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His Son." Here then you have Jesus Christ the Son of God: but you say that it was not the same Son of God who was born of Mary. Therefore there is one Christ of God, and another of Mary. In your view then there are two Christs. For, though in the Creed you do not deny Christ, you say that the Christ of Mary is another than the one whom you confess in the Creed. But perhaps you say that Christ was not begotten of God: how then do you say in the Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God?" You must then either deny the Creed or confess that Christ is the Son of God. But if you confess in the Creed that Christ is the Son of God, you must also confess that the same Christ, the Son of God, is of Mary. Or if you make out another Christ of Mary, you certainly make the blasphemous assertion that there are two Christs.

CHAPTER XVI: He shows further that this teaching is destructive of the confession of the Trinity.

BUT still even if your obstinacy and dishonesty are not restrained by this faith of the Creed, are you not, I ask you, overwhelmed by an appeal to reason and the light of truth? Tell me, I ask, whoever you are, O you heretic--At least there is a Trinity, in which we believe, and which we confess: Father and Son and Holy Ghost. Of the Glory of the Father and the Spirit there is no question. You are slandering the Son, because you say that it was not the same Person who was born of Mary, as He who was begotten of God the Father. Tell me then: if you do not deny that the only Son of God was begotten of God, whom do you make out that He is who was born of Mary? You say "a mere man," according to that which He Himself said: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." But He cannot be called a mere man who was begotten not after the law of human creation alone. "For that which is conceived in her," said the angel, "is of the Holy Ghost." And this even you dare not deny, though you deny almost all the mysteries of salvation. Since then He was born of the Holy Ghost, and cannot be termed a mere man, as He was conceived by the inspiration of God, if it is not He who, as the Apostle says, "emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant," and "the word was made flesh," and "humbled Himself by becoming obedient unto death," and "who for our sakes, though He was rich, became poor," tell me, then, who He is, who was born of the Holy Ghost, and was conceived by the overshadowing of God? You say that He is certainly a different Person. Then there are two Persons; viz., the one, who was begotten of God the Father in heaven; and the other who was conceived of Mary, by the inspiration of God. And thus there is a fourth Person whom you introduce, and whom (though in words you term Him a mere man) you assert actually not to have been a mere man, since you allow (not however as you ought) that He is to be honoured, worshipped, and adored. Since then the Son of God who was begotten of the Father is certainly to be worshipped, and He who was conceived of Mary by the Holy Ghost is to be worshipped, you make two Persons to be honoured and venerated, whom you so far sever from each other, as to venerate each with an honour special and peculiar to Him. And thus you see that by denying and by severing from Himself the Son of God, you destroy, as far as you can, the whole mystery of the divinity. For while you are endeavouring to introduce a fourth Person into the Trinity, you see that you have utterly denied the whole Trinity.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XVII: Those who are under an error in one point of the Catholic religion, lose the whole faith, and all the value of the faith.

AND since this is so, in denying that Jesus Christ the Son of God is one, you have denied everything. For the scheme of the mysteries of the Church and the Catholic faith is such that one who denies one portion of the Sacred Mystery cannot confess the other. For all parts of it are so bound up and united together that one cannot stand without the other and if a man denies one point out of the whole number, it is of no use for him to believe all the others. And so if you deny that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, the result is that in denying the Son of God you deny the Father also. For as St. John says: "He who hath not the Son hath not the Father; but he who hath the Son hath the Father also." By denying then Him who was begotten you deny also Him who begat. By denying also that the Son of God was born in the flesh, you are led also to deny that He was born in the Spirit, for it is the same Person who was born in the flesh who was first born in the Spirit. If you do not believe that He was born in the flesh, the result is that you do not believe that He suffered. If you do not believe in His Passion what remains for you but to deny His resurrection? For faith in one raised springs out of faith in one dead. Nor can the reference to the resurrection keep its place, unless belief in His death has first preceded it. By denying then his Passion and Death, you deny also his resurrection from hell. It follows certainly that you deny His ascension also, for there cannot be the ascension without the resurrection. And if we do not believe that He rose again, we cannot either believe that He ascended: as the Apostle says, "For He that descended is the same also that ascended." Thus, so far as you are concerned, the Lord Jesus Christ did not rise from hell, nor ascend into heaven, nor sit at the right hand of God the Father, nor will He come at that day of judgment which we look for, nor will He judge the quick and the dead.

CHAPTER XVIII: He directs his discourse upon his antagonist with whom he is disputing, and begs him to return to his senses. The sacrament of reconciliation is necessary for the lapsed for their salvation.

AND so, you wretched, insane, obstinate creature, you see that you have utterly upset the whole faith of the Creed, and all that is valuable in our hope and the mysteries. And yet you still dare to remain in the Church: and imagine that you are a priest, though you have denied everything by which you came to be a priest. Return then to the right way, and recover your former mind, return to your senses if you ever had any. Come to your self, if there ever was in you a self to which you can come back. Acknowledge the sacraments of your salvation, by which you were initiated and regenerated. They are of no less use to you now than they were then; for they can now regenerate you by penance, as they then gave you birth through the Font. Hold fast the full scheme of the Creed. Hold the entire truth of the faith. Believe in God the Father: believe in God the Son: in one who begat and one who was begotten, the Lord of all, Jesus Christ; Being of one substance with the Father; Begotten in His divinity; born in the flesh: of twofold birth, yet of but one glory; who Himself creator of all things, was begotten of the Father, and was afterwards born of the Virgin.

CHAPTER XIX: That the birth of Christ in time diminished nothing of the glory and power of His Deity.

FOR the fact that He came of the flesh and in the flesh, has reference to His birth, and involves no diminution in Him: and He was simply born, not changed for the worse. For though, still remaining in the form of God, He took upon Him the form of a servant, yet the weakness of His human constitution had no effect on His nature as God: but while the power of His Deity remained whole and unimpaired, all that took place in His human flesh was an advancement of His manhood and no diminution of His glory. For when God was born in human flesh, He was not born in human flesh in such a way as not to remain Divine in Himself, but so that, while the Godhead remained as before, God might become man. And so Martha while she saw with her bodily eyes the man, confessed Him by spiritual sight to be God, saying, "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into the world." So Peter, owing to the Holy Spirit's revelation, while externally he beheld the Son of man, yet proclaimed Him to be the Son of God, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." So Thomas when he touched the flesh, believed that he had touched God saying, "My Lord and my God." For they all confessed but one Christ, so as not to make Him two. Do you therefore believe Him; and so believe that Jesus Christ the Lord of all, both only Begotten and first- born, is both Creator of all things and Preserver of men and that the same Person is first the framer of the whole world, and afterwards redeemer of mankind? Who still remaining with the Father and in the Father, Being of one substance with the Father, did (as the Apostle says), "Take the form of a servant, and humble Himself even unto death, the death of the Cross:" and (as the Creed says) "was born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven; and shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead." This is our faith; this is our salvation: to believe that our God and Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same before all things and after all things. For, as it is written, "Jesus Christ is yesterday and today and the same for ever." For "yesterday" signifies all time past, wherein, before the beginning, He was begotten of the Father. "Today" covers the time of this world, in which He was again born of the Virgin, suffered, and rose again. But by the expression the same "for ever" is denoted the whole boundless eternity to come.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XX: He shows from what has been said that we do not mean that God was mortal or of flesh before the worlds, although Christ, who is God from eternity and was made man in time, is but one Person.

But perhaps you will say: If I admit that the same Person was in the end of time born of a Virgin, who was begotten before all things of God the Father, I shall imply that before the beginning of the world God was in the flesh, as I say that He was afterwards man, who was always God: and so I shall say that that man who was afterwards born, had always existed. I do not want you to be confused by this blind ignorance, and these obscure misconceptions, so as to fancy that I am maintaining that the manhood which was born of Mary had existed before the beginning of things, or asserting that God was always m a bodily form before the commencement of the world. I do not say, I repeat it, I do not say that the manhood was in God before it was born: but that God was afterwards born in the manhood. For that flesh which was born of the flesh of the Virgin had not always existed: but God who always was, came in the flesh of man of the flesh of the Virgin. For "the Word was made flesh," and did not manifest flesh together with Himself: but in the glory of Divinity joined Himself to human flesh. For tell me when or where the Word was made flesh, or where He emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant: or where He became poor, though He was rich? Where but in the holy womb of the Virgin, where at His Incarnation, the Word of God is said to have been made flesh, at His birth He truly took the form of a servant; and when He is in human nature nailed to the Cross, He became poor, and was made poor in His sufferings in the flesh, though He was rich in His Divine glory? Otherwise if, as you say, at some later period the Deity entered into Him as into one of the Prophets and saints, then "the Word was made flesh" in those men also in whom He vouch-soled to dwell: then in each one of them He emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant. And thus there is nothing new or unique in Christ. Neither His conception, nor His birth nor His death had anything special or miraculous about it.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXI: The authority of Holy Scripture teaches that Christ existed from all eternity.

AND yet to return to what we said before, though all these things are so, as we have stated: how do we read that Jesus Christ (whom you assert to be a mere man) was ever existing even before His birth of a Virgin, and how is He proclaimed by prophets and apostles as God even before the worlds? As Paul says: "One Lord Jesus, through whom are all things." And elsewhere he says: "For in Christ were created all things in heaven and on earth, both visible and invisible." The Creed too, which is framed both by human and Divine authority, says: "I believe in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son." And after other clauses: "Very God of Very God; by whom both the worlds were framed and all things were made." And further: "Who for us came and was born of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified, and was buried."

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXII: The hypostatic union enables us to ascribe to God what belongs to the flesh in Christ.

HOW then is Christ (whom you term a mere man) proclaimed in Holy Scripture to be God without beginning, if by our own confession the Lord's manhood did not exist before His birth and conception of a Virgin? And how can we read of so close a union of man and God, as to make it appear that man was ever co-eternal with God, and that afterwards God

suffered with man: whereas we cannot believe that man can be without beginning or that God can suffer? It is this which we established in our previous writings; viz., that God being joined to manhood, i.e., to His own body, does not allow any separation to be made in men's thoughts between man and God. Nor will He permit anyone to hold that there is one Person of the Son of man, and another Person of the Son of God. But in all the holy Scriptures He joins together and as it were incorporates in the Godhead, the Lord's manhood, so that no one can sever man from God in time, nor God from man at His Passion. For if you regard Him in time, you will find that the Son of man is ever with the Son of God. If you take note of His Passion, you will find that the Son of God is ever with the Son of man, and that Christ the Son of man and the Son of God is so one and indivisible, that, in the language of holy Scripture, the man cannot be severed in time from God, nor God from man at His Passion. Hence comes this: "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He who came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." Where the Son of God while He was speaking on earth testified that the Son of man was in heaven: and testified that the same Son of man, who, He said, would ascend into heaven, had previously come down from heaven. And this: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before," where He gives the name of Him who was born of man, but affirms that He ever was up on high. And the Apostle also, when considering what happened in time, says that all things were made by Christ. For he says, "There is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." But when speaking of His Passion, he shows that the Lord of glory was crucified. "For if," he says, "they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." And so too the Creed speaking of the only and first-begotten Lord Jesus Christ, "Very God of Very God, Being of one substance with the Father, and the Maker of all things,"

affirms that He was born of the Virgin and crucified and afterwards buried. Thus joining in one body (as it were) the Son of God and of man, and uniting God and man, so that there can be no severance either in time or at the Passion, since the Lord Jesus Christ is shown to be one and the same Person, both as God through all eternity, and as man through the endurance of His Passion; and though we cannot say that man is without beginning or that God is passible, yet in the one Person of the Lord Jesus Christ we can speak of man as eternal, and of God as dead. You see then that Christ means the whole Person, and that the name represents both natures, for both man and God are born, and so it takes in the whole Person so that when this name is used we see that no part is left out. There was not then before the birth of a Virgin the same eternity belonging in the past to the manhood as to the Divinity, but because Divinity was united to manhood in the womb of the Virgin, it follows that when we use the name of Christ one cannot be spoken of without the other.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXIII: That the figure Synecdoche, in which the part stands for the whole, is very familiar to the Holy Scripture.

WHATEVER then you say of the Lord Jesus Christ, you say of the whole person, and in mentioning the Son of God you mention the Son of man, and in mentioning the Son of man you mention the Son of God: by the grammatical trope synecdoche in which you understand the whole from the parts, and a part is put for the whole: and the holy Scriptures certainly show this, as in them the Lord often uses this trope, and teaches in this way about others and would have us understand about Himself in the same way. For sometimes days, and things, and men, and times are denoted in holy Scripture in no other fashion. As in this case where God declares that Israel shall serve the Egyptians for four hundred years, and says to Abraham: "Know thou that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs, and they shall bring them under bondage and afflict them four hundred years." Whereas if you take into account the whole time after that God spoke, they are more than four hundred: but if you only reckon the time in which they were in slavery, they are less. And in giving this period indeed, unless you understand it in this way, we must think that the Word of God lied (and away with such a thought from Christian minds!). But since from the time of the Divine utterance, the whole period of their lives amounted to more than four hundred years, and their bondage endured for not nearly four hundred, you must understand that the part is to be taken for the whole, or the whole for the part. There is also a similar way of representing days and nights, where, when in the case of either division of time one day is meant, either period is shown by a portion of a single period. And indeed in this way the difficulty about the time of our Lord's Passion is cleared up: for whereas the Lord prophesied that after the model of the prophet Jonah, the Son of man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and whereas after the sixth day of the week on which He was crucified, He was only in hell for one day and two nights, how can we show the truth of the Divine words? Surely by the trope of Synecdoche, i.e., because to the day on which He was crucified the previous night belongs, and to the night on which He rose again, the coming day; and so when there is added the night which preceded the day belonging to it, and the day which followed the night belonging to it, we see that there is nothing lacking to the whole period of time, which is made up of its portions. The holy Scriptures abound in such instances of ways of speaking: but it would take too long to relate

them all. For so when the Psalm says, "What is a man that Thou art mindful of Him," from the hart we understand the whole, as while only one man is mentioned the whole human race is meant. So also where Ahab sinned we are told that the people sinned. Where -- though all are mentioned, a part is to be understood from the whole. John also the Lord's forerunner says: "After me cometh a man who is preferred before me for He was before me." How then does He mean that He would come after Him, whom He shows to be before Him? For if this is understood of a man who was afterwards born, how was he before him? But if it is taken of the Word how is it, "a man cometh after me?" Except that in the one Lord Jesus Christ is shown both the posteriority of the manhood and the precedence of the Godhead. And so the result is that one and the same Lord was before him and came after him: for according to the flesh He was posterior in time to John; and according to His Deity was before all men. And so he, when he named that man, denoted both the manhood and the Word, for as the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God was complete in both manhood and Divinity in mentioning one of these natures in Him he denoted the whole person. And what need is there of anything further? I think that the day would fail me if I were to try to collect or to tell everything that could be said on this subject. And what we have already said is enough, at any rate on this part of the subject, both for the exposition of the Creed, and for the requirements of our case, and for the limits of our book.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

BOOK VII

CHAPTER I: As he is going to reply to the slanders of his opponents he implores the aid of Divine grace to teach a prayer to be used by those who undertake to dispute with heretics.

As it happens to those who having escaped the perils of the sea, are in terror of the sands that stretch before the harbour, or the rocks that line the shore, so it is in my case that, -as I have kept to the last some of the slanders of the heretics, -- although I have reached the limit of the work which I set myself, yet I am beginning to dread the close, which I had longed to reach. But, as the Prophet says, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do to me," so we will not fear the pitfalls which crafty heretics have dug in front of us, nor the paths thickly strewn with horrid thorns. For as they make our road difficult but do not close it, there is before us the trouble of clearing them away, rather than the fear of not being able to do so. For when, as we are walking feebly along the right road, they come in our way, and frighten the walkers rather than hurt them, our work and business has more to do in clearing them away, than to fear from the difficulty of this: And so, laying our hands upon that monstrous head of the deadly serpent, and longing to lay hold of all the limbs that are entangled in the huge folds and coils of his body, again and again do we pray to Thee, O Lord Jesus, to whom we have ever prayed, that Thou wouldst give us words by opening our mouth "to the pulling down of strongholds, destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every understanding unto Thine obedience:" for he is indeed free, who has begun to be led captive by Thee. Do Thou then be present to this work of thine, and to those of Thine who are striving for Thee above the measure of their strength. Grant us to bruise the gaping mouths of this new serpent, and its neck that swells with deadly poison, O Thou who makest the feet of believers to tread unharmed on serpents and scorpions, and to go upon the adder and basilisk, to tread under foot the lion and the dragon. And grant that through the fearless boldness of steadfast innocence, the sucking child may play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child thrust his hand into the den of the basilisk. Grant then to us also that we may thrust our hands unharmed into the den of this monstrous and most wicked basilisk; and if it has in any holes, i.e., in the

human heart, a lurking or resting place, or has laid its eggs there, or left a trace of its slimy course, do Thou remove from them all the foul and deadly pollution of this most noxious serpent. Take away the uncleanness their blasphemy has brought on them, and purify with the fan of Thy sacred cleansing the souls that are plunged in stinking mud, so that the "dens of thieves" may become "houses of prayer:" and that in those which are now, as is written, the dwellings where hedgehogs and monsters, and satyrs, and all kinds of strange creatures dwell, there the gifts of Thy Holy Spirit, namely the beauty of faith and holiness may shine forth. And as once Thou didst destroy idolatry and cast out images, and make shrines of virtue out of the temples of devils, and let into the dens of serpents and scorpions the rays of shining light, and make out of the dens of error and shame the homes of beauty and splendour, so do Thou pour upon all whose eyes the darkness of heretical obstinacy has blinded, the light of Thy compassion and truth, that they may at length with clear and unveiled sight behold the great and life-giving mystery of Thine Incarnation, and so come to know Thee to have been born as Very man of that sacred womb of a pure Virgin, and yet to acknowledge that Thou wast always Very God.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER II: He meets the objection taken from these words: No one gave birth to one who had existed before her.

And before I begin to speak of those things of which I have given no foretaste in the earlier books, I think it right to try to carry out what I have already promised, that when I have thoroughly redeemed my pledge, I may begin to speak more freely of what has not been touched upon, after having satisfied my promise. So then that new serpent, in order to destroy the faith of the holy nativity, hisses out against the Church of God and says: "No one ever gives birth to one older than herself." To begin with then I think that you know neither what you say nor where you get it from. For if you knew or understood where you got it from, you would never regard the nativity of the only begotten of God in the light of human fancies, nor would you try to settle by merely human propositions, about Him who was born without His conception originating from man: nor would you bring human impossibilities as objections against Divine Omnipotence if you knew that with God nothing was impossible. No one then, you say, gives birth to one older than herself. Tell me then, I pray, of what cases are you speaking, for the nature of what creatures do you think that you can lay down rules? Do you suppose that you can fix laws for men or beasts or birds or cattle? Those (and others of the same kind) are the things of which such assertions can be made. For none of them is able to produce one older than itself; for what has already been produced cannot return to it again so as to be born again by a new creation. And so no one can bear one older than herself, as no one can beget one older than himself: for the opportunity of bearing only results where there is the possibility of begetting. Do you then imagine that in reference to the nativity of Almighty God regard must be had to the same considerations as in the birth of earthly creatures? And do you bring the nature of man's conditions as a difficulty in the case of Him who is Himself the author of nature? You see then that, as I said above, you know not whence or of whom you are talking, as you are comparing creatures to the Creator; and in order to calculate the power of God are drawing an instance from those things which would never have existed at all, but that the very fact of their existence comes from God. God then came as He would, when He would, and of her whom He would. Neither time nor person, nor the manner of men, nor the custom of creatures was any difficulty with Him; for the law of the creatures could not stand in the way of Him who is Himself the Creator of them all. And whatever He would have possible was ready

to His hand, for the power of willing it was His. Do you want to know how far the omnipotence of God extends, and how great it is? I believe that the Lord could do that even in the case of His creatures which you do not believe that He could do in His own case. For all living creatures which now bear things younger than themselves could, if only God gave the word, bear things much older than themselves. For even food and drink, if it were God's will, could be turned into the foetus and offspring: and even water, which has been flowing from the beginning of things, and which all living creatures use, could, if God gave the word, be made a body in the womb, and have birth given to it. For who can set a limit to divine works, or circumscribe Divine Providence? or who (to use the words of Scripture) can say to Him "What doest thou?" If you deny that God can do all things, then deny, that, when God was born, one older than Mary could be born of her. But if there is nothing impossible with God, why do you bring as an objection against His coming an impossibility, when you know that for Him nothing is impossible in anything?

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER III: He replies to the cavil that the one who is born must be of one substance with the one who bears.

THE second blasphemous slander or slanderous blasphemy of your heresy is when you say that the one who is born must be of one substance with the one who bears. It is not very different from the previous one, for it differs from it in terms rather than in fact and reality. For when we are treating of the birth of God, you maintain that one of greater power could not be born of Mary just as above you maintain than one older could not be begotten. And so you may take it that the same answer may be given to this as to what you said before: or you may conceive that the answer given to this assertion, which you are now making, applies to that also. You say then that the one who is born must be of one substance with the one who bears. If this refers to earthly creatures, it is most certainly the case. But if it refers to the birth of God, why in the case of His birth do you regard precedents from nature? for appointments are subject to Him who appointed them, and not the appointer to His appointments. But would you like to know more fully how these slanders of yours are not only wicked but foolish, and the idle talk of one who does not in the least see the omnipotence of God? Tell me, I pray, you who think that like things can only be produced from like things, whence was the origin of that unaccountable host of quails in the wilderness of old time to feed the children of Israel, for nowhere do we read that they had been previously born of mother birds, but that they were brought up and came suddenly. Again whence came that heavenly food which for forty years fell on the camp of the Hebrews? Did manna produce manna? But these refer to ancient miracles. And what of more recent ones? With a few loaves and small fishes the Lord Jesus Christ fed countless hosts of the people that followed Him, and not once only. The reason that they were satisfied lay not in the food: for a secret and unseen cause satisfied the hungry folk, especially as there was much more left when they were filled than there had been set before them when they were hungry. And how was all this brought about that when those who ate were satisfied, the food itself was multiplied by an extraordinary increase? We read that in Galilee wine was produced from water. Tell me how what was of one nature produced something of an altogether different substance from its own quality? Especially when (which exactly applies to the birth of the Lord) it was the production of a nobler substance from what was inferior to it? Tell me then how from mere water there could be produced rich and splendid wine? How was it

that one thing was drawn out, another poured in? Was the cistern a well of such a nature as to change the water drawn from it into the best wine? Or did the character of the vessels or the diligence of the servants effect this? Most certainly neither of these. And how is it that the manner of the fact is not understood by the thoughts of the heart, though the truth of the fact is firmly held by the conscience? In the gospel clay was placed on the eyes of a blind man and when it was washed off eyes were produced. Had water the power of giving birth to eyes, or clay of creating light? Certainly not, especially as water could be of no use to a blind man, and clay would actually hinder the sight of those who could see. And how was it that a thing that itself in its own nature was injurious, became the means of restoring health; and that what was ordinarily hurtful to sound people, was then made the instrument of healing? You say that the power of God brought it about, and the remedy of God caused it, and that all these things of which we have been speaking were simply brought about by Divine Omnipotence; which is able to fashion new things from unwonted material, and to make serviceable things out of their opposites, and to change what belongs to the realm of things impossible and impracticable into possibilities and actual performances.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER IV: How God has shown His Omnipotence in His birth in time as well as in everything else.

CONFESS then the same truth in respect of the actual nativity of the Lord, as in respect of everything else. Believe that God was born when He would, for you do not deny that He could do what He would; unless possibly you think that that power which belonged to Him for all other things was deficient as regards Himself, and that His Omnipotence though proceeding from Him and penetrating all things, was insufficient to bring about His own nativity. In the case of the Lord's nativity you bring this as an objection against me: No one gives birth to one who is anterior in time: and in regard of the birth which Almighty God underwent you say that the one who is born ought to be of one substance with the one who bears; as if you had to do with human laws as in the case of any ordinary man, to whom you might bring the impossibility as an objection, as you include him in the weakness of earthly things. You say that for all men there are common conditions of birth, and but one law of generation; and that a thing could not possibly happen to one man only out of the whole of humanity, which God has forbidden to happen to all. You do not understand of whom you are speaking; nor do you see of whom you are talking; for He is the Author of all conditions, and the very Law of all natures, through whom exists whatever man can do, and whatever man cannot do: for He certainly has laid down the limits of both; viz., how far his powers should extend, and the bounds beyond which his weakness should not advance. How wildly then do you bring human impossibilities as an objection in the case of Him, who possesses all powers and possibilities. If you estimate the Person of the Lord by earthly weaknesses, and measure God's Omnipotence by human rules, you will most certainly fail to find anything which seems appropriate to God as concerns the sufferings of His Body. For if it can seem to you unreasonable that Mary could give birth to God who was anterior to her, how will it seem reasonable that God was crucified by men? And yet the same God who was crucified Himself predicted: "Shall a man afflict God, for you afflict Me?" If then we cannot think that the Lord was born of a Virgin because He who was born was anterior to her who bore Him, how can we believe that God had blood? And yet it was said to the Ephesian elders: "Feed the Church of God which He has purchased with His own Blood." Finally how can we think that the Author of life was Himself deprived of life: And yet Peter says: "Ye have killed the Author of life." No one who is set on earth can be in heaven: and how does the

Lord Himself say: "The Son of man who is in heaven"? If then you think that God was not born of a Virgin because the one who is born must be of one substance with the one who bears, how will you believe that different things can be produced from different natures?

Thus according to you the wind did not suddenly bring the quails, nor did the manna fall, nor was water turned into wine nor were many thousands of men fed with a few loaves, nor did the blind man receive his sight after the clay had been put on him. But if all these things seem incredible and contrary to nature, unless we believe that they were wrought by God, why should you deny in the matter of His nativity, what you admit in the matter of His works? Or was He unable to contribute to His own nativity and advent what He did not refuse for the succour and profit of men?

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER V: He shows by proofs drawn from nature itself, that the law which his opponents lay down; viz., that the one born ought to be of one substance with the one who bears, fails to hold good in many cases.

IT would be tedious and almost childish to speak further on this subject. But still in order to refute that folly and madness of yours, in which you maintain that the one born ought to be of one substance with the one who bears, i.e., that nothing can produce something of a different nature to itself, I will bring forward some instances of earthly things, to convince you that many creatures are produced from things of a different nature. Not that it is possible or right to make any comparison in such a case as this: but that you may not doubt the possibility of that happening in the case of the holy Nativity, which as you see takes place in these frail earthly things. Bees, tiniest of creatures though they are, are yet so clever and cunning that we read that they can be produced and spring from things of an entirely different nature. For as they are creatures of marvellous intelligence, and well endowed not merely with sense but with foresight, they are produced from the gathered flowers of plants. What greater instance do you think can be produced and quoted? Living creatures are produced from inanimate: sensate from insensate. What artificer, what architect was there? Who formed their bodies? Who breathed in their souls? Who gave them articulate sounds by which to converse with each other? Who fashioned and arranged these harmonies of their feet, the cunning of their mouths, the neatness of their wings? Their powers, wrath, foresight, movements, calmness, harmony, differences, wars, peace, arrangements, contrivances, business, government, all those things indeed which they have in common with men--from whose teaching, or whose gift did they receive them? from whose implanting or instruction? Did they gain this through generation? or learn it in their mother's womb or from her flesh? They never were in the womb, and had no experience of generation. It was only that flowers which they culled were brought into the hive and from this by a marvellous contrivance bees issued forth. Then the womb of the mother imparted nothing to the offspring: nor are bees produced from bees. They are but their artificers, not their authors. From the blossoms of plants living creatures proceed. What is there akin in plants and animals? I fancy then that you see who is the contriver of those things. Go now and inquire whether the Lord could bring about that in the case of His own nativity, which you see that He procured in the

case of these tiniest of creatures. Perhaps it is needless after this to add anything further. But still let us add in support of the argument what may not be necessary to prove the point. We see how the air is suddenly darkened, and the earth filled with locusts. Show me their seed--their birth--their mothers. For, as you see, they proceed thence, whence they have their birth. Assert in all these cases that the one who is born must be of one substance with the one who bears. And in these assertions you will be shown to be as silly, as you are wild in your denial of the Nativity of the Lord. And what next? Do even you think that we must go on any further? But still we will add something else. There is no doubt that basilisks are produced from the eggs of the birds which in Egypt they call the Ibis. What is there of kindred or relationship between a bird and a serpent? Why is the thing born not of one substance with that which bears it? And yet those who bear are not the authors of all these things, nor do those who are born understand them: but they result from secret causes, and from some inexplicable and manifold law of nature which produces them. And you are bringing as objections to His Nativity your petty assertions from earthly notions, while you cannot explain the origin of those things, which are produced by His bidding and command, whose will does everything, whose sway causes everything: whom nothing can oppose or resist; and whose will is sufficient for everything which can possibly be done.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VI: He refutes another argument of Nestorius, in which he tried to make out that Christ was like Adam in every point.

BUT since we cannot (as we should much prefer) ignore them, it is now time to expose the rest of your more subtle and insidious blasphemies that at least they may not deceive ignorant folk. In one of your pestilent treatises you have maintained and said that "Since man is the image of the Divine nature, and the devil dragged this down and shattered it, God grieved over His image, as an Emperor over his statue, and repairs the shattered image: and formed without generation a nature from the Virgin, like that of Adam who was born without generation; and raises up man's nature by means of man: for as by man came death, so also by man came the resurrection of the dead." They tell us that some poisoners have a custom of mixing honey with the poison in the cups which they prepare; that the injurious ingredient may be concealed by the sweet: and while a man is charmed with the sweetness of the honey, he may be destroyed by the deadly poison. So then, when you say that man is the image of the Divine nature, and that the devil dragged this down and shattered it, and that God grieved over His image as an Emperor over his statue, you smear (so to speak) the lips of the cup with something sweet like honey, that men may drain the cup offered to them, and not perceive its deadliness, while they taste what is alluring. You put forward God's name, in order to speak falsehoods in the name of religion. You set holy things in the front, in order to persuade men of what is untrue: and by means of your confession of God you contrive to deny Him whom you are confessing. For who is there who does not see whither you are going? What you are contriving? You say indeed that God grieved over His image as an Emperor over his statue, and repaired the shattered image, and formed without generation a nature from the Virgin, like that of Adam who was born without generation, and raises up man's nature by man, for as by man came death, so also by man came the resurrection of the dead. So then with all your earnestness, with all your professions, you crafty plotter, you have managed by your smooth assertions, by naming God in the forefront, to come down to a (mere) man in the conclusion: and in the end you degrade Him to the condition of a mere man, from whom under colour of humility you have already taken away the glory of God. You say then that the Divine goodness has restored the image of God which the devil shattered and destroyed, for you say that He restores the shattered image. Now

with what craft you say that He restores the shattered image in order to persuade us that there was nothing more in Him, in whom the image is restored, than there was in the actual image, of which the restoration was brought about. And thus you make out that the Lord is only the same as Adam was: that the restorer of the image is nothing more than the actual destructible image. Finally in what follows you show what you are aiming and driving at, when you say that He formed without generation a nature from the Virgin like that of Adam, who was born without generation, and raises up man's nature by man. You maintain that the Lord Jesus Christ was in all respects like Adam: that the one was without generation, and the other without generation: the one a mere man, and the other a mere man. And thus you see that you have carefully guarded and provided against our thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ as in any way greater or better than Adam: since you have compared them together by the same standard, so that you would think that you detracted something from Adam's perfection, if you added anything more to Christ.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER VII: Heretics usually cover their doctrines with a cloak of holy Scripture.

"For as," you say, "by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Do you actually try to prove your wrong and impious notion by the witness of the Apostle? And do you bring the "chosen vessel" into disgrace by mixing him up with your wicked ideas? I mean, that, as you cannot understand the author of your Salvation, therefore the Apostle must be made out to have denied God. And yet, if you wanted to make use of Apostolic witnesses, why did you rest contented with one, and pass over all the others in silence? and why did you not at once add this: "Paul, an Apostle not of men neither by man, but by Jesus Christ:" or this: "We speak wisdom among the perfect:" and presently: "Whom none," says he, "of the princes of this world knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Or this: "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And: "One Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things." Or do you partly agree, and partly disagree with the Apostle, and only receive him so far as in consequence of the Incarnation he names Christ man, and repudiate him where he speaks of Him as God? For Paul does not deny that Jesus is man, but still he confesses that man is God: and declares that to mankind the resurrection came by man in such a way that he shows that in that man God arose. For see whether he declares that He who rose was God, as he bears his witness that He who was crucified was the Lord of glory.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER. VIII: The heretics attribute to Christ only the shadow of Divinity, and so assert that he is to be worshipped together with God but not as God.

BUT still in order to avoid thinking of the Lord Jesus as one of the whole mass of people, you have given to Him some glory, by attributing to Him honour as a saint, but not Deity as true man and true God. For what do you say? "God brought about the Lord's Incarnation. Let us honour the form of the Theodochos together with God, as one form of Godhead, as a figure that cannot be severed from the Divine link, as an image of the unseen God." Above you said that Adam was the image of God, here you call Christ the image: the one you speak of as a statue, and the other also as a statue. But I suppose we ought for God's honour to be grateful to you, because you grant that the form of the Theodochos should be worshipped together with God: in which you wrong Him rather than honour Him. For in this you do not attribute to the Lord Jesus Christ the glory of Deity, but you deny it. By a subtle and wicked art you say that He is to be worshipped together with God in order that you may not have to confess that He is God, and by the very statement in which you seem deceitfully to join Him with God, you really sever Him from God. For when you blasphemously say that He is certainly not to be adored as God, but to be worshipped together with God, you thus grant to Him an union of nearness to Divinity, in order to get rid of the truth of His Divinity. Oh, you most wicked and crafty enemy of God, you want to perpetrate the crime of denying God under pretext of confessing Him. You say: Let us worship Him as a figure that cannot be severed from the Divine will, as an image of the unseen God. It is I suppose, then, owing to His kind acts that our Lord Jesus Christ has obtained among us honour as Creator and Redeemer. If then we were redeemed by Him from eternal destruction, in calling our Redeemer a figure we are endeavouring indeed to respond to His kindness and goodness, by a worthy service and a worthy allegiance, if we try to get rid of that glory which He did not refuse to bring low for our sakes.

CHAPTER IX: How those. are wrong who say that the birth of Christ was a secret, since it was clearly shown even to the patriarch Jacob.

BUT I suppose you excuse the degradation offered to the Lord by means of a subordinate honour, by the words "as the image of the secret God." By the fact that you term Him an image you compare Him to man's estate. In speaking of Him as the image of the secret God, you detract from the honour plainly due to Him. For "God," says David, "shall plainly come; our God, and shall not keep silence." And He surely came and did not keep silence, who before that He in His own person uttered anything after His birth, made known His advent by both earthly and heavenly witnesses alike, while the star points Him out, the magi adore Him, and angels declare Him. What more do you want? His voice was yet silent on earth, and His glory was already crying aloud in heaven. Do you say then that God was and is secret in Him? But this was not the announcement of the Prophets, of the Patriarchs, aye and of the whole Law. For they did not say that He would be secret, whose coming they all foretold. You err in your wretched blindness, seeking grounds for blasphemy and not finding them. You say that He was secret even after His advent. I maintain that He was not secret even before His advent. For did the mystery of God to be born of a Virgin escape the knowledge of that celebrated Patriarch on whom the vision of God present with him conferred a title, whereby from the name of Supplanter he rose to the name of Israel? Who, when from the struggle with the man who wrestled with him he understood the mystery of the Incarnation yet to come, said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." What, I pray you, had he seen, for him to believe that he had seen God? Did God manifest Himself to him in the midst of thunder and lightning? or when the heavens were opened, did the dazzling face of the Deity show itself to him? Most certainly not: but rather on the contrary he saw a man and acknowledged a God. O truly worthy of the name he received, as with the eyes of the soul rather than of the body he earned the honour of a title given by God! He saw a human form wrestling with him, and declared that he saw God. He certainly knew that human form was indeed God: for in that form in which God then appeared, in the selfsame form He was in very truth afterwards to come. Although why should we be surprised that so great a patriarch unhesitatingly believed what God Himself so plainly showed in His own Person to him, when he said, "I have seen God face to face and

my life is preserved." How did God show to him so much of the presence of Deity, that he could say that the face of God was shown to him? For it seems that only a man had appeared to him, whom he had actually beaten in the struggle. But God was certainly bringing this about by precursory signs, that there might not be any one to disbelieve that God was born of man, when already long before the Patriarch had seen God in human form.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER X: He collects more witnesses of the same fact.

BUT why am I lingering so long over one instance, as if many were wanting? For even then how could the fact that God was to come in the flesh escape the knowledge of men, when the Prophet said openly as if to all mankind of Him: "Behold your God;" and elsewhere: "Behold our God." And this: "God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace;" and: "of His kingdom there shall be no end." But also when He had already come, could the fact of His having come escape the knowledge of those who openly confessed that He had come? Was Peter ignorant of the coming of God, when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?" Did not Martha know what she was saying or whom she believed in, when she said, "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world?" And all those men, who sought from Him the cure of their sicknesses, or the restoration of their limbs, or the life of their dead, did they ask these things from man's weakness, or from God's omnipotence?

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XI: How the devil was forced by many reasons to the view that Christ was God.

FINALLY as for the devil himself, when he was tempting Him with every show of allurements, and overly art of his wickedness, what was it that in his ignorance he suspected, or wanted to find out by tempting Him? Or what so greatly moved him, that he sought God under the humble form of man? Had he learned that by previous proofs? Or had he known of anyone who came as God in man's body? Most certainly not. But it was by the mighty evidence of signs, by mighty results of actions, by the words of the Truth Himself that he was driven to suspect and examine into this matter: inasmuch as he had already! once heard from John: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world." And again from the same person: "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" The dove also which came down from heaven and stopped over the Lord's head had made itself a clear and open proof of a God who declared Himself. The voice too which was sent from God not in riddles or figures had moved him, when it said: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." And though he saw a man outwardly in Jesus, yet he was searching for the Son of God, when he said: "If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Did the contemplation of the man drive away the devil's suspicions of His Divinity, so that owing to the fact that he saw a man, he did not believe that He could be God? Most certainly not. But what does he say? "If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Certainly he had no doubt about the possibility of that, the existence of which he was examining into. His anxiety was about its truth. There was no security as to its impossibility.

CHAPTER XII: He compares this notion and reasonable suspicion of the devil with the obstinate and inflexible idea of his opponents, and shows that this last is worse and more blasphemous than the former.

BUT he certainly knew that the Lord Jesus Christ was born of Mary: he knew that He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger: that His childhood was that of a poor person at the commencement of His human life; and His infancy without the proper accessories of cradles: further he did not doubt that He had true flesh, and was born a true man. And why did this seem to him not enough for him to be secure in? Why did he believe that He could not be God, whom he knew to be very man? Learn then, you wretched madman, learn, you lunatic, you cruel sinner, learn, I pray, even from the devil, to lessen your blasphemy. He said: "If Thou art the Son of God." You 'say: "Thou art not the Son of God." You deny what he asked about. No one was ever yet found but you, to outdo the devil in blasphemy. That which he confessed to be possible in the case of the Lord, you do not believe to have been possible.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XIII: How the devil always retained this notion of Christ's Divinity (because of His secret working which he experienced) even up to His Cross and Death.

BUT perhaps he afterwards ceased and rested, and when his temptations were vanquished laid aside his suspicion because he found no result? Nay, it rather remained always in him, and even up to the very cross of the Lord the suspicion lasted in him and was increased by peculiar terrors. What need is there of anything further? Not even then did he cease to think of Him as the Son of God, after that he knew that such licence was granted to His persecutors against Him. But the crafty foe saw even in the midst of His bodily sufferings the signs of Divinity, and though he would have much preferred Him to be a (mere) man, was yet forced to suspect that He was God: for though he would have preferred to believe what he wanted, yet he was driven by surest proofs to that which he feared. And no wonder: for although he beheld Him spitted on, and scourged, and disgraced, and led to the Cross, yet he saw Divine powers abounding even in the midst of the indignities and wrongs; when the veil of the temple is rent, when the sun hides itself, the day is darkened, and all things feel the effects of the Passion: all things even, which know not God, acknowledge the work of Deity. And therefore the devil seeing this, and trembling, tried in every way to arrive at the knowledge of His Godhead, even at the very death of the manhood, saying in the person of those who crucified Him: "If He be the Son of God, let Him come down now from the Cross, and we will believe Him." He certainty perceived that by His bodily Passion our Lord God was working out the redemption of man's salvation, and also that by it he was being destroyed and subdued, while we were being redeemed and saved. And so the enemy of mankind wanted by every means and every wile to defeat that which he knew was being done for the redemption of all men. "If," he says, "He be the Son of God, let Him come down now from the Cross and we will believe Him:" on purpose that the Lord might be moved by the reproach of the words, and destroy the mystery, while He avenged the wrong. You see then that the Lord even when hanging on the Cross was termed the Son of God. You see that they suspect the fact to which they refer. And so do you learn, as I said above, even from His persecutors, even from the devil, to believe on the Son of God. Who ever came up to the unbelief of the devil? Who went beyond it? He suspected that He was the Son of God even when He endured death. You deny it even when He has risen. He suspected that He was God,

from whom He hid Himself. You, to whom He has proved it, deny it.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XIV: He shows how heretics pervert holy Scripture, by replying to the argument drawn from the Apostle's words, "Without father, without mother," etc.: Heb. vii.

YOU then make use of the holy Scriptures against God, and try to bring His own witnesses against Him. But how? Truly so as to become a false accuser not only of God, but of the evidences themselves. Nor indeed is it wonderful that, as you cannot do what you want, you only do what you can: as you can not turn the sacred witnesses against God, you do what you can, and pervert them. For you say: Then Paul tells a lie, when he says of Christ: "Without mother, without genealogy." I ask you, of whom do you think that Paul said this? Of the Son and Word of God, or of the Christ, whom you separate from the Son of God, and blasphemously assert to be a mere man? If of the Christ, whom you maintain to be a mere man, how could a man be born without a mother and without a genealogy on the mother's side? But if of the Word of God and Son of God--what can we make of it, when the same Apostle, your own witness, as you impiously imagine, testifies in the same place and by the same witness, that He whom you assert to be without mother, was also without father; saying, "Without father, without mother, without genealogy"? It follows then that if you use the Apostle's witness, since you assert that the Son of God was "without mother," you must also be guilty of the blasphemy that He was "without father." You see then in what a downfall of impiety you have landed yourself, in your eagerness for your perversity and wickedness, so that, while you say that the Son of God had not a mother, you must also deny Him a Father--a thing which no one yet since the world began, except perhaps a madman, ever did. And this, whether with greater wickedness or folly, I hardly know; for what is more foolish and silly than to give the name of Son and to try to keep back the name of Father? But you say I don't keep it back, I don't deny it. And what madness then drove you to quote that passage, where, while you say that He had no mother, you must seem also to deny to Him a Father? For as in the same passage He is said to be without mother and also without father, it follows that if it can be understood that there He is without mother, in the same way in which we understand that He is without mother, we must also believe that He is without father. But that hasty craze for denying God did not see this; and when it quoted mutilated, what was written entire, it failed to see that the shameless and palpable lie could be refuted by laying open the contents of the sacred volume. O foolish blasphemy, and madness! which, while it

failed to see what it ought to follow, had not the wit to see even what could be read: as if, because it could get rid of its own intelligence, it could get rid of the power of reading from everybody else, or as if everybody would lose their eyes in their heads for reading, because it had lost the eyes of the mind. Hear then, you heretic the passage you have garbled: hear in full and completely, what you quoted mutilated and hacked about. The Apostle wants to make clear to every one the twofold birth of God--and in order to show how the Lord was born in the Godhead and in flesh, he says, "Without father, without mother:" for the one belongs to the birth of Divinity, the other to that of the flesh. For as He was begotten in His Divine nature "without mother," so He is in the body "without father:" and so though He is neither without father nor without mother, we must believe in Him "without father and without mother." For if you regard Him as He is begotten of the Father, He is without mother: if, as born of His mother, He is without father. And so in each of these births He has one: in both together He is without each: for the birth of Divinity had no need of mother, and for the birth of His body, He was Himself sufficient, without a father. Therefore says the Apostle "Without mother, without genealogy."

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XV: How Christ could be said by the Apostle to be without genealogy.

HOW does he say that the Lord was "without genealogy," when the Gospel of the Evangelist Matthew begins with the Saviour's genealogy, saying: "The book of the generations of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham"? Therefore according to the Evangelist He has a genealogy, and according to the Apostle, He has not: for according to the Evangelist, He has it on the mother's side, according to the Apostle He has not, as He springs from the Father. And so the Apostle well says: "Without father, without mother, without genealogy:" and where he lays down that He was begotten without mother, there also he records that He was without genealogy. And thus as regards both the nativities of the Lord, the writings of the Evangelist and of the Apostle agree together. For according to the Evangelist He has a genealogy "without father," when born in the flesh: and according to the Apostle, the Lord has not, when begotten in His Divine nature "without mother;" as Isaiah says: "But who shall declare His generation?"

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XVI: He shows that like the devil when tempting Christ, the heretics garble and pervert holy Scripture.

WHY then, you heretic, did you not in this way quote the whole and entire passage which you had read? So you see that the Apostle laid down that the Lord was "without mother" in the same way in which he laid down that He was born "without father:" that we might know that He is "without mother" in the same way in which we understand Him to be "without father." And as it is impossible to believe Him to be altogether "without father," so we cannot understand that He is altogether "without mother." Why then, you heretic, did you not in this way quote what you had read in the Apostle, entire and unmutilated? But you insert part, and omit part; and garble the words of truth in order that you may be able to build up your false notions by your wicked act. I see who was your master. We must believe that you had his instruction, whose example you are following. For so the devil in the gospel when tempting the Lord said: "If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down. For it is written that He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee to keep Thee in all Thy ways." And when he had said this, he left out the context and what belongs to it; viz., "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon." Surely he cunningly quoted the previous verse and left out the latter: for he quoted the one to deceive Him: he held his tongue about the latter to avoid condemning himself. For he knew that he himself was signified by the asp and basilisk, the lion and dragon in the Prophet's words. So then you also bring forward a part and omit a part; and quote the one to deceive; and omit the other for fear lest if you were to quote the whole, you might condemn your own deception. But it is now time to pass on to further matters, for by dwelling too long on particular points, as we are led to do by the desire of giving a full answer, we exceed the limits even of a longish book.

CHAPTER XVII: That the glory and honour of Christ is not to be ascribed to the Holy Ghost in such a way as to deny that it proceeds from Christ Himself, as if all that excellency, which was in Him, was another's and proceeded from another source.

You say then in another discussion, nay rather in another blasphemy of yours, "and He separated the Spirit from the Divine nature Who created His humanity. For Scripture says that that which was born of Mary is of the Holy Ghost. Who also filled with righteousness (justitia) that which was created: for it says 'He appeared in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit.' Again: Who made Him also to be feared by the devils: 'For I,' He says, 'by the Spirit of God cast out devils.' Who also made His flesh a temple. 'For I saw His spirit descending like a dove and abiding upon Him.' Again: Who granted to Him His ascension into Heaven. For it says, "Giving a commandment to the apostles whom He had chosen, by the Holy Ghost He was taken up." Finally that it was He who granted such glory to Christ." The whole of your blasphemy then consists in this: that Christ had nothing of Himself: nor did He, a mere man, as you say, receive anything from the Word, i.e., the Son of God; but everything in Him was the gift of the Spirit. If then we can show that all that which you refer to the Spirit, is His own, what remains but that we prove that He whom you therefore would have taken to be a man, because as you say everything which He has is another's, is therefore God, because everything which He has is His own? And indeed we will prove this not only by discussion and argument, but by the voice of Divinity Itself: for nothing testifies of God better than things divine. And because nothing knows itself better than the very glory of God, we believe nothing on the subject of God with greater right than those writings in which God Himself is His own witness. First then, as to this that you say that the Holy Spirit created His humanity; we might take it simply, if we could acknowledge that you had not brought it forward in the interests of unbelief. For neither do we deny that the flesh of the Lord was conceived by the Holy Ghost: but we assert that the body was conceived by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost in such a way that we can say that His Humanity was created for Himself by the Son of God, as the Holy Spirit Itself says in holy Scripture, testifying that "Wisdom hath builded for Itself a house." You see then that that which was conceived by the Holy Ghost was built and perfected by the Son of God: not that the work of the Son of God is one thing, and the work of the Holy Ghost another: but that

through the unity of the Godhead and glory the operation of the Spirit is the building of the Son of God; and the building of the Son of God is the co-operation of the Holy Ghost. And so we read not only that the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin, but also that the power of the Most High overshadowed the Virgin; that since Wisdom Itself is the fulness of the Godhead, no one might doubt that when Wisdom built Itself a house all the fulness of the Godhead was present. But the wretched hardness of your blasphemy, while it tries to sever Christ from the Son of God, fails to see that it is entirely severing the nature of the Godhead from Itself. Unless perhaps you believe that the house is therefore built for Him by the Holy Ghost because He Himself was insufficient and incapable of building for Himself an house. But it is as absurd as it is wild, to believe that He, whom we believe to have created the whole universe of things heavenly and earthly by His will, was unable to build for Himself a body: especially as the power of the Holy Ghost is His power, and the Divinity and Glory of the Trinity are so united and inseparable, that we cannot think of anything at all in One Person of the Trinity, which can be separated from the fulness of the Godhead. Therefore when this is laid down and grasped; viz., that according to the faith of holy Scripture, when the Holy Ghost came upon (the Virgin) and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, Wisdom builded Itself an house; the rest of the slanders of your blasphemy come to nothing. For neither is it doubtful that He made all things by Himself and in Himself, in whose name and faith, the faith even of believers can do anything. For neither did He need the aid of another, as neither have they needed it, who have trusted in His power. And so as for your assertions that He was justified by the Spirit, and that the Spirit made Him to be feared by the devils, and that His flesh became the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that He was taken up by the Spirit into heaven, they are all blasphemous and wild: not because we are to believe that in all these things which He Himself did, the unity and cooperation of the Spirit was wanting--since the Godhead is never wanting to Itself, and the [power of the Trinity was ever present in the Saviour's works--but because you will have it that the Holy Ghost gave assistance to the Lord Jesus Christ as if He had been feeble and powerless; and that He granted those things to Him, which He was unable to procure for Himself. Learn then from sacred witnesses to believe God, and not to mingle falsehood with truth: for the subject does not admit it, and common sense abhors the idea of mingling the notions of the spirit of the devil with the witnesses that are Divine.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XVIII: How we are to understand the Apostle's words: "He appeared in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit," etc.

For to begin with this assertion of yours that the Spirit filled with righteousness (justitia) what was created, and your attempts to prove this by the evidence of the Apostle, where he says that "He appeared in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit," you make each statement in an unsound sense and wild spirit. For you make this assertion; viz., that you will have it that He was filled with righteousness by the Spirit, in order to show how He was void of righteousness, as you assert that the being filled with it was given to Him. And as for your use of the evidence of the Apostle on this matter, you garble the arrangement and meaning of the sacred passage. For the Apostle's statement is not as you have quoted it, mutilated and spoilt. For what says the Apostle? "And evidently great is the mystery of Godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit." You see then that the Apostle declared that the mystery or sacrament of Godliness was justified. For he was not so forgetful of his own words and teaching as to say that He was void of righteousness, whom he had always proclaimed as righteousness, saying: "Who was made unto us righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Elsewhere also he says: "But ye were washed, but ye were justified, but ye were sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." How far then from Him was it to need being filled with righteousness, as He Himself filled all things with righteousness, and for His glory to be without righteousness, whose very name justifies all things. You see then how foolish and wild are your blasphemies, since you are trying to take away from our Lord what is ever shed forth by Him upon all believers in such a way that still in its continuous supply it is never diminished.

CHAPTER XIX: That it was not only the Spirit, but Christ Himself also who made Him to be feared.

You say too that the Spirit made Him to be feared by the devils. To reject and refute which, even though the horrible character of the utterance is enough, we will still add some instances. Tell me, I pray, you who say that the fact that the devils feared Him was not His own doing but another's, and who will have it that this was not His own power but a gift, how was it that even His name had that power, of which He Himself was, according to you, void? How was it that in His name devils were cast out, sick persons were cured, dead men were raised? For the Apostle Peter says to that lame man who was sitting at the beautiful gate of the Temple: "In the name of Jesus Christ arise and walk." And again in the city of Joppa to the man who had been lying on his bed paralysed for eight years he says, "Aeneas, may the Lord Jesus Christ heal thee: arise and make thy bed for thyself." Paul too says to the pythonical spirit: "I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ come out of her," and the devil came out of her. But understand from this how utterly alien this weakness was from our Lord: for I do not call even those weak, whom He by His name made strong, since we never heard of any devil or infirmity able to resist any of the apostles since the Lord's resurrection. How then did the Spirit make Him to be feared, who made others to be feared? Or was He in Himself weak, whose faith even through the instrumentality of others reigned over all things? Finally those men who received power from God, never used that power as if it were their own: but referred the power to Him from whom they received it: for the power itself could never have any force except through the name of Him who gave it. And so both the apostles and all the servants of God never did any thing in their own name, but in the name and invocation of Christ: for the power itself derived its force from the same source as its origin, and could not be given through the instrumentality of the ministers, unless it had come from the Author. You then -- who say that the Lord was the same as one of His servants (for as the apostles had nothing but what they received from their Lord, so you make out that the Lord Himself had nothing but what He received from the Spirit; and thus you make out that everything that He had, He had not as Lord, but had received it as a servant), do you tell me then, how it was that He used this power as His own and not as something which H e had received? For what do we read of Him? He says to the paralytic: "Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house." And again to a father who pleads on behalf

of his child, He says: "Go thy way: thy son liveth." And where an only son of his mother was being carried forth for burial, "Young man," He says, "I say unto thee Arise." Did He then like those who received power from God, ask that power might be given to Him for performing these things by the invocation of the Divine Name? Why did He not Himself work by the name of the Spirit, just as the apostles wrought by His Name? Finally, what does the gospel itself state about Him? It says: "He was teaching them as one that had authority, and not like the Scribes and Pharisees." Or do you make out that He was so proud and haughty as to put to the credit of His own might the power which (according to you) He had received from God? But what do we make of the fact that the power never submitted to His servants, except through the name of its author, and could have no efficacy if the actor claimed any of it as his own?

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XX: He tries by stronger and weightier arguments to destroy that notion.

But why are we so long dealing with your wild blasphemy, with arguments that are plain indeed but still slight? Let us hear God Himself speaking to His disciples: "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." And again: "In My name," He says, "ye shall cast out devils." Had He any need of Another s name for the exercise of His power, who made His own name to be a power? But what is still added? "Behold," He says, "I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy." He Himself says that He was gentle, as indeed He was, and humble in heart. And how was it that as regards the greatest possible power, He commanded others to work in His own name, if He Himself worked in Another's name? Or did He give to others, as if it were His own, what He Himself, according to you, did not possess, unless He received it from Another? But tell me, which of the saints receiving power from God, so worked? Or would not Peter have been thought a lunatic, or John a madman, or Paul out of his mind, if they had said to any sick folk: "In our name arise;" or to the lame: "In our name walk;" or to the dead: "In our name live;" or this to some: "We give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy"? You see then from this your madness: for just as these words are mad if they spring from man's assurance, so are you utterly mad if you do not see that they come from Divine power. For you must admit one of two alternatives; either that man could possess and give Divine power, or at any rate if no man can do this, that He who could do it, was God. For no one can grant of His liberality Divine power, except Him who possesses it by nature.

CHAPTER XXI: That it must be ascribed equally to Christ and the Holy Ghost that His flesh and Humanity became the temple of God.

But there follows in your blasphemy that His flesh was made a temple of the Holy Ghost, for this reason, that John has said: "For I saw the Spirit descending from heaven and abiding upon Him." For you try to support even this wild statement of yours by Scriptural authority: wherefore let us see whether this sacred authority has said that which you say. "For I saw," it says, "the Spirit descending like a dove, and abiding upon Him." Discern here, if you can, which is the more powerful, which greater, which more to be honoured? He who descended, or He to whom the descent was made? He who brought down the honour, or He to whom the honour was brought? Where do you find in this passage that the Spirit made His flesh a temple? or wherein does it lessen the honour of God, if God Himself descended to show God to mankind? For certainly we ought not to think that He is less whose high estate was pointed out, than He who pointed out His high estate. But away with the thought of believing or making any separation in the Godhead: for one and the same Godhead and equal power shut out altogether the wicked notion of inequality. And so in this matter, where there is the Person of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and where it is the Son of God to whom the descent is made, the Spirit who descends, the Father who gives His witness, no one had more honour, and no one received any slight, but it all redounds equally to the fulness of the Godhead, for each Person of the Trinity contains within Himself the glory of the whole Trinity. And so nothing further needs to be said, except only to show the rise and origin of your blasphemy. For thorns and thistles springing up from the roots produce shoots of their own nature, and from their character show their origin. So then you also, a thorny offshoot of the Pelagian heresy, show in germ just the same that your father is said to have had in the root. For he (as Leporius his follower said) declared that our Lord was made the Christ by His baptism: you say that at His baptism He was made the temple of God by the Spirit. The words are not altogether identical: but the wrong-headedness is altogether the same.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXII: That the raising up of Christ into heaven is not to be ascribed to the Spirit alone.

But you add this also to those impieties of yours mentioned above; viz., that the Spirit granted to the Lord His ascension into heaven: showing by this blasphemous notion of yours that you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was so weak and powerless that had not the Spirit raised Him up to heaven, you fancy that He would still at this day have been on earth. But to prove this assertion you bring forward a passage of Scripture: for you say "Giving commands to the apostles

whom He had chosen, by the Holy Ghost He was raised up." What am I to call you? What am I to think of you who by corrupting the sacred writings contrive that their evidences should not have the force of evidences? A new kind of audacity, which strives by its impious arguments to manage that truth may seem to confirm falsehood. For the Acts of the Apostles does not say what you make out. For what says the Scripture? "What Jesus began to do and to teach until the day in which giving charge to the apostles whom He had chosen by the Holy Ghost, He was taken up." Which is an instance of Hyperbaton, and must be understood in this way: what Jesus began to do and to teach until the day in which he was taken up, giving charge to the apostles whom He had chosen by the Holy Ghost; so that we ought not perhaps to have to give you any further answer m this matter than that of the passage itself, for the entire passage ought to be sufficient for the full truth, if the mutilation of it was available for your falsehood. But still, you, who think that our Lord Jesus Christ could not have ascended into heaven, unless He had been raised up by the Spirit; tell me how is it that He Himself says "No one hath ascended into heaven but He who came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven"? Confess then how foolish and absurd your notion is that He could not ascend into heaven, who is said, although He had descended into earth, never to have been absent from heaven: and say whether to leave the regions below and ascend into heaven was possible for Him to whom it was easy when still on earth, ever to continue in heaven. But what is that which He Himself says: "I ascend unto my Father." Did He imply that in this ascension there would be the intervention of Another's help, who by the very fact that He said He would ascend, shows the efficacy of His own power? David also says of the Ascension of the

Lord: "God ascended with a merry noise, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet:" He clearly explained the glory of Him who ascends by the power of the ascension.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXIII: Hecontinues the same argument to show that Christ had no need of another's glory as He had a glory of His own.

But to end let us see the addition with which you sum up your preceding blasphemies. Your words are, "Who gave such glory to Christ?" You name glory in order to degrade Him. For by the assertion that the Lord was endowed with glory, in saying that He received it you blasphemously imply that He stood in need of it. For your perverse notion suggests that the generosity of the giver shows the need of the receiver. O miserable impiety of yours! and where is that which Divinity itself once foretold of the Lord Jesus Christ ascending into heaven? Saying: "Lift up your heads, and the King of glory shall come in." And when He (after the fashion of Divine utterances) had made answer to Himself as if in the character of an inquirer: "Who is the King of glory?" at once He adds: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle:" showing under the figure of a battle fought, the victory of the Lord in His triumph. Then when, to complete the exposition of it, He had repeated the words of the utterance quoted above, He showed by the following conclusion the majesty of the Lord as He entered heaven, saying "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." On purpose that the fact of His taking a body might not interfere with the glory of His mighty Divinity, He taught that the same Person was Lord of hosts and King of heavenly glory, whom He had previously proclaimed Victor in the battle below. Go now and say that the glory was given to the Lord, when both prophecy has said that He was the King of glory, and He Himself also has testified of Himself as follows: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory." Refute it, if you can, and contradict this; viz., that whereas He testifies that He has glory of His own, you say that He has received Another's. Although we maintain that He has His own glory, in such a way that we do not deny that His very property of glory is common to Him with the Father and the Holy Ghost. For whatever God possesses belongs to the Godhead: and the kingdom of glory belongs to the Son of God in such a way that it is not kept back from belonging to the entire Godhead.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXIV: He supports this doctrine by the authority of the blessed Hilary.

But it is quite time to finish the book, aye and the whole work, if I may however add the sayings of a few saintly men and illustrious priests, to support by the faith of the present day what we have already proved by the authority of holy Scripture. Hilary, a man endowed with all virtues and graces, and famous for his life as well as for his eloquence, who also, as a teacher of the churches and a priest, advanced not only by his own merits but also by the progress of others, and remained so steadfast during the storms of persecution that through the fortitude of his unconquered faith he attained the dignity of being a Confessor, -- he testifies in the First book on the faith that the Lord Jesus Christ, Very God of Very God, was both begotten before the world, and afterwards born as man. Again in the Second book: "One only Begotten God grew in the womb of the holy Virgin into the form of a human body; He who contains all things, and in whose power all things are, is brought forth according to the law of human birth." Again in the same book: "An angel is witness that He who is born is God with us." Again in the Tenth book: "We have taught the mystery of God born as man by the birth from the Virgin." Again in the same book: "For when God was born as man, He was not born on purpose not to remain God." Again in the same writer's preface to his exposition of the gospel according to Matthew: "For to begin with it was needful for us that for our sakes the only Begotten God should be known to be born as man." Again in what follows: "that besides being God, He should be born as man, which He was not yet." Again in the same place: "Then this third matter was fitting: that as God was born as man in the world" etc.: Here are a few passages out of any number. But still you see even from these which we have quoted, how clearly and plainly he asserts that God was born of Mary. And where then is this saying of yours: "The creature could not bring forth the Creator: and that which is born of the flesh, is flesh." It would take too long to quote passages bearing on this point from each separate writer. I must try to enumerate them rather than to explain them: for they will sufficiently explain themselves.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXV: He shows that Ambrose agrees with S. Hilary.

AMBROSE, that illustrious priest of God, who never leaving the Lord's hand, ever shone like a jewel upon the finger of God, thus speaks in his book to the Virgins: "My brother is white and ruddy. White because He is the glory of the Father: ruddy because He was born of the Virgin. But remember that in Him the tokens of Divinity are of longer standing than the mysteries of the body. For He did not begin to exist from the Virgin, but He who was already in existence, came into the Virgin." Again on Christmas Day: "See the miracle of the mother of the Lord: A Virgin conceived, a Virgin brought forth. She was a Virgin when she conceived, a Virgin when with child, a Virgin after the birth. As is said in Ezekiel: "And the gate was shut and not opened, because the Lord passed through it." A splendid Virginity, and wondrous fruitfulness! The Lord of the world is born: and there are no cries from her who brought Him forth. The womb is left empty, and a true child is born, and yet the Virginity is not destroyed. It was right that when God was born the power of chastity should become greater, and that her purity should not be violated by the going forth of Him who had come to heal what was corrupt." Again in his exposition of the gospel according to Luke he says that "one was especially chosen, to bring forth God, who was espoused to an husband." He certainly declares that God was born of the Virgin. He calls Mary the mother of God. And where is that awful and execrable utterance of yours asking how can she be the mother of one of a different nature from her own. But if she is called mother by them, it is the human nature which was born not the Godhead. So, that illustrious teacher of the faith says both that she who bare Him was human, and that He who was born is God: and yet that this is no reason for unbelief, but only a miracle of faith.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXVI: He adds to the foregoing the testimony of S. Jerome.

JEROME, the Teacher of the Catholics, whose writings shine like divine lamps throughout the whole world, says in his book to Eustochium: "The Son of God for our salvation was made the Son of man. He waits ten months in the womb to be born: and He, in whose hand the world is held, is contained in a narrow manger." Again in his commentary on Isaiah: "For the Lord of hosts, who is the King of glory, Himself descended into the Virgin's womb, and entered in and went forth from the East Gate which is ever shut." Of whom Gabriel says to the Virgin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. Wherefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And in Proverbs: "Wisdom hath builded herself an house." Compare this if you please with your doctrine or rather your blasphemy, in which you assert that God is the Creator of the months, and was not an offspring of months. For lo, Jerome, a man of the greatest knowledge and also of the most pure and approved doctrine testifies almost in the very words in which you deny that the Son of God was an offspring of months, that He was an offspring of months. For he says that He waits ten months in the womb to be born. But perhaps the authority of this man seems a mere nothing to you. You may take it that every one says the same and in the same words, for whoever does not deny that the Son of God is the offspring of the Virgin, admits that He is the offspring of months.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXVII: To the foregoing he adds Rufinus and the blessed Augustine.

Rufinus also, a Christian philosopher, with no mean place among Ecclesiastical Doctors testifies as follows of the Lord's Nativity in his Exposition of the Creed. "For the Son of God," he says, "is born of a Virgin, not chiefly allied to the flesh alone, but generated in the soul which is the medium between the flesh and God." Does he witness obscurely that God was born of man? Augustine the priest of Hippo Regiensis says: "That men might be born of God, God was first born of them: for Christ is God. And Christ when born of men only required a mother on earth, because He always had a Father in heaven, being born of God through whom we are made, and also born of a woman, through whom we might be re- created." Again, in this place: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Why then need you wonder that men are born of God? Notice how God Himself was born of men." Again in his Epistle to Volusianus: "But Moses himself and the rest of the prophets most truly prophesied of Christ the Lord, and gave Him great glory: they declared that He would come not as one like themselves, nor merely greater in the same sort of power of working miracles, but clearly as the Lord God of all, and as made man for men. Who therefore Himself also willed to do such things as they did to prevent the absurdity of His not doing Himself those things which He did through them. But still it was right also for Him to do something special; viz., to be born of a Virgin, to rise from the dead, to ascend into heaven. And if anyone thinks that this is too little for God, I know not what more he can look for.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXVIII: As he is going to produce the testimony of Greek or Eastern Bishops, he brings forward in the first place S. Gregory Nazianzen.

BUT perhaps because those whom we have enumerated came from different parts of the world, their authority may seem to you less valuable. An absurd thing, indeed, because faith is not interfered with by place, and we have to consider what a man is, not where: especially since religion unites all together, and those who are in the one faith may be also known to be in the one body. But still we will bring forward for you some, whom you cannot despise, even from the East. Gregory, that most grand light of knowledge and doctrine, who though he has been for some time dead, yet still lives in authority and faith, and though he has been for some time removed in the body from the Churches, yet has not forsaken them in word and authority. "When then," he says, "God had come forth from the Virgin, in that human nature which He had taken, as He existed in one out of two which are the opposite of each other; viz., flesh and spirit, the one is taken into God, the other exalts into the grace of Deity. O new and unheard of intermingling! O marvellous and exquisite union! He who was, came to be, and the Creator is created: and He who is infinite is embraced by the soul which is the medium between God and the flesh: and He who makes all rich, is made poor." Again he says of the Epiphany: "But what happens? What is done concerning us and for us? There is brought about some new and unheard of change of natures and God is made man." Again in this passage: "The Son of God began to be also the Son of man, not being changed from what He was, for He is unchangeable, but taking to Himself what He was not: for He is pitiful so that He, who could not be embraced, can now be embraced." You see how grandly and nobly he asserts the majesty of His Godhead so that He may bring in the condescension of the Incarnation: for that admirable teacher of the faith knew well that of all the blessings which God granted to us at His coming into the world this was the chief, without diminishing in any way His glory. For whatever God gave to man, ought to increase the love of Him in us, and not to lessen the honour which we give to Him.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXIX: In the next place he puts the authority of S. Athanasius.

ATHANASIUS also, priest of the city of Alexandria, a splendid instance of constancy and virtue, whom the storm of heretical persecution tested without crushing him: whose life was always like a clear glass, and who had almost obtained the reward of martyrdom before attaining the dignity of confessorship: Let us see what was his view of the Lord Jesus Christ and the mother of the Lord. "This then," he says, "is the mind and stamp of Holy Scripture, as we have often said; viz., that in one and the same Saviour two things have to be understood: that He was ever God, and is Son, Word, and Light, and Wisdom of the Father, and that afterwards for our sakes He took flesh of the Virgin Mary the Theotocos, and was made man." Again after some other matter: "Many then were saints and clean from sin: Jeremiah also was sanctified from the womb, and John, while still in the womb leapt for joy at the voice of Mary the Theotocos." He certainly says that God, the Son of God, who (to declare the faith of all in his words) is "the Word, and Light and Wisdom of the Father," took flesh for our sakes; and therefore he calls the Virgin Mary Theotocos, because she was the Mother of God.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXX: He adds also S. John Chrysostom.

As for John the glory of the Episcopate of Constantinople, whose holy life obtained the reward of martyrdom without any show of Gentile persecution, hear what he thought and taught on the Incarnation of the Son of God: "And Him," he says, "whom if He had come in unveiled Deity neither the heaven nor the earth nor the sea nor any other creature could have contained, the pure womb of a Virgin bore." This man's faith and doctrine then, even if you ignore that of others, you ought to follow and hold, as out of love and affection for him the pious people chose you as their Bishop. For when it took you for its priest from the Church of Antioch, from which it had formerly chosen him, it believed that it would receive in you all that it had lost in him. Did not, I ask you, all these almost with prophetic spirit say all these things in order to confound your blasphemies. For you declare that our Lord and Saviour Christ is not God: they declare that Christ the Lord is Very God. You blasphemously assert that Mary is Christotocos not Theotocos: they do not deny that she is Christotocos, while they acknowledge her as Theotocos. Not merely the substance but the words also are opposed to your blasphemies: that we may clearly see that an impregnable bulwark was formerly prepared by God against your blasphemies, to break on the wall of truth ready prepared, the force of the heretical attack which was at some time or other to come. And you, O you most wicked and shameless contaminator of an illustrious city, you disastrous and deadly plague of a Catholic and holy people, do you, dare to stand and teach in the Church of God, and with your wild and blasphemous words slander the priests of an ever unbroken faith and Catholic confession, and say that the people of the city of Constantinople are in error through the fault of their earlier teachers? Are you then the corrector of former Bishops, the accuser of ancient priests, are you better than Gregory, more approved than Nectarius, greater than John, and all the other Bishops of Eastern cities who, though not of the same renown as those whom I have enumerated, were yet of the same faith? which, as far as the matter in hind is concerned, is enough: for when it is a question of the faith, all are as good as the best in so far as they agree with the best.

▪ Back ▪ Index ▪ Forward

CHAPTER XXXI: He bemoans the unhappy lot of Constantinople, owing to the misfortune which has overtaken it from that heretic; and at the same time he urges the citizens to stand fast in the ancient Catholic and ancestral faith.

WHEREFORE I also, humble and insignificant as I am in name as in desert, and although I cannot claim a place as Teacher among those illustrious Bishops of Constantinople, yet venture to claim the zeal and enthusiasm of a disciple. For I was admitted into the sacred ministry by the Bishop John, of blessed memory, and offered to God, and even though I am absent in body yet I am still there in heart: and though by actual presence I no longer mix with that most dear and honourable people of God, yet I am still joined to them in spirit. And hence it comes that condoling and sympathizing with them, I broke out just now into the utterance of our common grief and sorrow, and in my weakness cried out (which was all that I could do) by means of the dolorous lamentation of my works, as if for my own limbs and members: for if as the Apostle says, when the smaller part of the body is grieved, the greater part grieves and sympathizes with it, how much more should the smaller part sympathize when the greater part is grieved? It is indeed utterly inhuman for the smaller parts not to feel the sufferings of the greater in one and the same body, if the greater feel those of the smaller. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, you who live within the circuit of Constantinople, and who are my fellow-citizens through the love of my country, and my brothers through the unity of the faith; separate yourselves from that ravening wolf who (as it is written) devours the people of God, as if they were bread. Touch not, taste not anything of his, for all those things lead to death. Come out from the midst of him and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing. Remember your ancient teachers, and your priests; Gregory whose fame was spread through the world, Nectarius renowned for holiness, John a marvel of faith and purity. John, I say; that John who like John the Evangelist was indeed a disciple of Jesus and an Apostle; and so to speak ever reclined on the breast and heart of the Lord. Remember him, I say. Follow him. Think of his purity, his faith, his doctrine, and holiness. Remember him ever as your teacher and nurse, in whose bosom and embraces you as it were grew up. Who was the teacher in common both of you and of me: whose disciples and pupils we are. Read his writings. Hold fast his instruction. Embrace his faith and merits. For though to attain this is a hard and magnificent thing: yet even to follow is beautiful and sublime. For in the highest matters, not

merely the attainment, but even the attempt to copy is worthy of praise. For scarcely anyone entirely misses all parts in that to which he is trying to climb and reach. He then should ever be in your minds and almost in your sight: he should live in your hearts and in your thoughts. He would himself commend to you this that I have written, for it was he who taught me what I have written: and so do not think of this as mine, so much as his: for the stream comes from the spring, and whatever you think belongs to the disciple, ought all to be referred to the honour of the master. But, beyond and above all I pray with all my heart and voice, to Thee, O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou wouldest fill with the gift of Thy love whatever we have written by Thy bounteous grace. And because, as the Lord our God Thine Only Begotten Son Himself taught us, Thou hast so loved this world as to send Thine Only Begotten Son to save the world, grant to Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed that in the Incarnation of Thine Only Begotten Son they may perceive both Thy gift and His love: and that all may understand the truth that for us Thine Only Begotten, our Lord God, was born and suffered and rose again, and may so love it that the condescension of His glory may increase our love: and let not His Humility lead to a diminution of His honour in the hearts of all men, but let it ever produce an increase of love: and may we all rightly and wisely comprehend the blessings of His Sacred Compassion, so as to see that we owe the more to God, in proportion as for our sakes God humbled Himself yet lower.

▪ Back ▪ Index