

On the Change of Names

Philo of Alexandria

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Chapter I

“Abraham was ninety and nine years old; and the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said unto him, I am thy God.” The number of nine, when added to the number ninety, is very near to a hundred; in which number the self-taught race shone forth, namely Isaac, the most excellent joy of all enjoyments; for he was born when his father was a hundred years old.

Moreover the first fruits of the tribe of Levi are given up to the priests; for they having taken tithes, offer up other tenths from them as from their own fruits, which thus comprise the number of a hundred; for the number ten is the symbol of improvement, and the number a hundred is the symbol of perfection; and he that is in the middle is always striving to reach the extremity, exerting the inborn goodness of his nature, by which he says, that the Lord of the universe has appeared to him.

But do not thou think that this appearance presented itself to the eyes of the body, for they see no things but such as are perceptible to the outward senses; but those objects of the outward senses are compounded ones, full of destruction; but the Deity is not a compound object, and is indestructible: but the eye which receives the impression of the divine appearance is the eye of the soul;

for besides this, those things which it is only the eyes of the body that see, are only seen by them because they take light as a coadjutor, and light is different, both from the object seen and from the things which see it. But all these things which the soul sees of itself, and through its own

power, it sees without the cooperation of any thing or any one else; for the things which the soul does thus comprehend are a light to themselves,

and in the same way also we learn the sciences; for the mind, applying its never-closing and never-slumbering eye to their doctrines and speculations, sees them by no spurious light, but by that genuine light which shines forth from itself.

When therefore you hear that God has been seen by man, you must consider that this is said without any reference to that light which is perceptible by the external senses, for it is natural that that which is appreciable only by the intellect should be presented to the intellect alone; and the fountain of the purest light is God; so that when God appears to the soul he pours forth his beams without any shade, and beaming with the most radiant brilliancy.

Chapter II

Do not, however, think that the living God, he who is truly living, is ever seen so as to be comprehended by any human being; for we have no power in ourselves to see any thing, by which we may be able to conceive any adequate notion of him; we have no external sense suited to that purpose (for he is not an object which can be discerned by the outward sense), nor any strength adequate to it: therefore, Moses, the spectator of the invisible nature, the man who really saw God (for the sacred scriptures say that he entered "into the Darkness," by which expression they mean figuratively to intimate the invisible essence), having investigated every part of every thing, sought to see clearly the much-desired

and only God;

but when he found nothing, not even any appearance at all resembling what he had hoped to behold; he, then, giving up all idea of receiving instruction on that point from any other source, flies to the very being himself whom he was seeking, and entreats him, saying, "Show my thyself that I may see thee so as to know Thee." But, nevertheless, he fails to obtain the end which he had proposed to himself, and which he had accounted the most all-sufficient gift for the most excellent race of creation, mankind, namely a knowledge of those bodies and things which are below the living God.

For it is said unto him, "Thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be beheld by Thee." As if it were meant to answer him: Those bodies and things which are beneath the living God may come within thy comprehension, even though every thing would not be at once comprehended by thee, since that one being is not by his nature capable of being beheld by man.

And what wonder is there if the living God is beyond the reach of the comprehension of man, when even the mind that is in each of us is unintelligible and unknown to us? Who has ever beheld the essence of the soul? the obscure nature of which has given rise to an infinite number of contests among the sophists who have brought forward opposite opinions, some of which are inconsistent with any kind of nature.

It was, therefore, quite consistent with reason that no proper name could with propriety be assigned to him who is

in truth the living God. Do you not see that to the prophet who is really desirous of making an honest inquiry after the truth, and who asks what answer he is to give to those who question him as to the name of him who has sent him, he says, "I am that I Am," which is equivalent to saying, "It is my nature to be, not to be described by name:"

but in order that the human race may not be wholly destitute of any appellation which they may give to the most excellent of beings, I allow you to use the word Lord as a name; the Lord God of three natures — of instruction, and of holiness, and of the practice of virtue; of which Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob are recorded as the symbols. For this, says he, is the everlasting name, as if it has been investigated and discerned in time as it exists in reference to us, and not in that time which was before all time; and it is also a memorial not placed beyond recollection or intelligence, and again it is addressed to persons who have been born, not to uncreated natures.

For these men have need of the complete use of the divine name who come to a created or mortal generation, in order that, if they cannot attain to the best thing, they may at least arrive at the best possible name, and arrange themselves in accordance with that; and the sacred oracle which is delivered as from the mouth of the Ruler of the universe, speaks of the proper name of God never having been revealed to any one, when God is represented as saying, "For I have not shown them my Name;" for by a slight change in the figure of speech here used, the meaning of what is said would be something of this kind: "My proper name I have not revealed to them," but only

that which is commonly used, though with some misapplication, because of the reasons abovementioned.

And, indeed, the living God is so completely indescribable, that even those powers which minister unto him do not announce his proper name to us. At all events, after the wrestling match in which the practicer of virtue wrestled for the sake of the acquisition of virtue, he says to the invisible Master, "Tell me thy Name;" but he said, "Why askest thou me my name?" And he does not tell him his peculiar and proper name, for says he, it is sufficient for thee to be taught my ordinary explanations. But as for names which are the symbols of created things, do not seek to find them among immortal natures.

Chapter III

Therefore do not doubt either whether that which is more ancient than any existing thing is indescribable, when his very word is not to be mentioned by us according to its proper name. So that we must understand that the expression, "The Lord was seen by Abraham," means not as if the Cause of all things had shone forth and become visible, (for what human mind is able to contain the greatness of his appearance?) but as if some one of the powers which surround him, that is to say, his kingly power, had presented itself to the sight, for the appellation Lord belongs to authority and sovereignty.

But when our mind was occupied with the wisdom of the Chaldaeans, studying the sublime things which exist in the world, it made as it were the circuit of all the efficient powers as causes of what existed; but when it emigrated

from the Chaldaean doctrines, it then knew that it was moving under the guidance and direction of a governor, of whose authority it perceived the appearance.

On which account it is said, "The Lord," not the living God, "was seen;" as if it had been meant to say, the king appeared, he who was from the beginning, but who was not as yet recognized by the soul, which, indeed, was late in learning, but which did not continue for ever in ignorance, but received a notion of there being an authority and governing power among existing things.

And when the ruler has appeared, then he in a still greater degree benefits his disciple and beholder, saying, "I am thy God;"(genesis 17:2.) for I should say to him, "What is there of all the things which form a part of creation of which thou art not the God?" But his word, which is his interpreter, will teach me that he is not at present speaking of the world, of which he is by all means the creator and the God, but about the souls of men, which he has thought worthy of a different kind of care;

for he thinks fit to be called the Lord and Master of bad men, but the God of those who are in a state of advancement and improvement; and of those which are the most excellent and the most perfect, both Lord and God at once. On which account, having made Pharaoh the very extreme instance of impiety, he has never once called himself his Lord or his God; but he calls the wise Moses so, for he says to him, "Behold I give thee as a god to Pharaoh." But he has in many passages of the sacred oracles delivered by him, called himself Lord.

For instance, we read such a passage as this: "Thus says the Lord;" and at the very beginning we read, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I am the Lord, say unto Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, all the things which I say unto Thee."

And Moses, in another place, says, "Behold, when I go forth out of the city I will spread out my hands unto the Lord, and the sounds shall cease, and the hail, and there shall be no more rain, that thou mayest know that the earth is the Lord's;" that is to say, every thing that is made of body or of earth, "and that thou," that is the mind which bears in itself the images of things, "and thy servants," that is the particular reasonings which act as body-guards to the mind, "for I know that ye do not yet fear the Lord;" by which he means not the Lord who is spoken of commonly and in different senses, but him who is truly the Master of all things.

For there is in truth no created Lord, not even a king shall have extended his authority and spread it from one end of the world even to the other end, but only the uncreated God, the real governor, whose authority he who reverences and fears receives a most beneficial reward, namely, the admonitions of God, but utterly miserable destruction awaits the man who despises him;

therefore he is held forth as the Lord of the foolish, striking them with a terror which is appropriate to him as ruler. But he is the God of those who are improved; as we read now, "I am thy God, I am thy God, be thou increased and Multiplied." And in the case of those who are perfect, he is both together, both Lord and God; as we read in the ten commandments, "I am the Lord thy God." And in

another passage it is written, "The Lord God of our Fathers."

For he thinks it right for the wicked man to be governed by a master as by a lord; that, being in a state of alarm and groaning, he may have the fear of a master suspended over him; but him who is advancing in improvement he thinks deserving to receive benefits as from God in order that by means of these benefits he may arrive at perfection; and him who is complete and perfect he thinks should be both governed as by the Lord, and benefited as by God; for the last man remains for ever unchangeable, and he is, by all means and in all respects, the man of God:

and this is especially shown to be the fact in the case of Moses; for, says the scripture, "This is the blessing which Moses, the man of God, Blessed." O the man that thus thought worthy of this all-beautiful and sacred recompense, to give himself as a requital for the divine Providence!

But do not thou think that he is in the same sense a man and the man of God; for he is said to be a man as being a possession of God, but the man of God as boasting in and being benefited by him. And if thou wishest to have God as the inheritance of thy mind, then do thou in the first place labour to become yourself an inheritance worthy of him, and thou wilt be such if thou avoidest all laws made by hands and voluntary.

Chapter IV

But it is not right to be ignorant of this thing either, that the statement, "I am thy God," is made by a certain figurative misuse of language rather than with strict

propriety; for the living God, inasmuch as he is living, does not consist in relation to anything; for he himself is full of himself, and he is sufficient for himself, and he existed before the creation of the world, and equally after the creation of the universe;

for he is immovable and unchangeable, having no need of any other thing or being whatever, so that all things belong to him, but, properly speaking, he does not belong to anything. And of the powers which he has extended towards creation for the advantage of the world which is thus put together, some are spoken of, as it were, in relation to these things; as for instance his kingly and his beneficent power; for he is the king of something, and the benefactor of something there being inevitably something which is ruled over and which receives the benefits.

Akin to these powers is the creative power which is called God: for by means of this power the Father, who begot and created all things, did also disperse and arrange them; so that the expression, "I am thy God," is equivalent to, "I am thy maker and creator;"

and it is the greatest of all possible gifts to have him for one's maker, who has also been the maker of the whole world. The soul, indeed, of the wicked man he did not make, for wickedness is hateful to God; and the soul, which is between good and bad, he made not by himself alone, according to the most sacred historian Moses, since that, like wax, was about to receive the different impressions of good and evil.

On which account it is said in the scriptures, "Let us make man in our own image," that if it receives a bad impression it may appear to be the work of others, but if it receives a good impression it may then appear to be the work of him who is the Creator only of what is beautiful and good. By all means, therefore, that must be a good man to whom he says, "I am thy God," as he has had him alone for his creator without the cooperation of any other being.

Moreover he brings up with this that doctrine which is established in many other passages, showing that God is the creator only of those men who are virtuous and wise; and the whole of this company has voluntarily deprived itself of the abundant possession of external things, and has neglected those things which are dear to his flesh.

For the athletes of vigorous health and high spirit have erected their servile bodies as a sort of fortification against the soul, but those men who have been devoted to the pursuit of instruction, and who are pale, and weak, and emaciated, having overloaded the vigour of the body with the power of the soul, and if one must tell the plain truth, being entirely dissolved into one species of soul, have through the energy of their minds become quite disentangled from the body.

Therefore that which is earthly is very naturally destroyed and overwhelmed when the entire mind resolves in every particular to make itself acceptable to God. But the race of these persons is rare and scarcely to be found, and one may almost say is unable to exist; and the following oracle, which is given with respect to Enoch, proves this: "Enoch pleased God, and he was not Found;"

for by what kind of contemplation could a man attain to this good thing? What seas must he cross over? What islands, or what continents, must he visit? Must he dwell among Greeks or among the barbarians?

Are there not even to the present day some of those persons who have attained to perfection in philosophy, who say that there is no such thing as wisdom in the world, since there is also no such thing as a wise man? for that from the very beginning of the creation of mankind up to the present moment, there has never been any one who could be considered entirely blameless, for that it is impossible for a man who is bound up in a mortal body to be entirely and altogether happy.

Now whether these things are said correctly we will consider at the proper time: but at present let us stick to the subject before us, and follow the scripture, and say that there is such a thing as wisdom existing, and that he who loves wisdom is wise. But though the wise man has thus an actual existence he has escaped the notice of us who are wicked: for what is good will not unite with what is bad.

On this account it is that "the disposition which pleased God was not found;" as if in truth it has a real existence, but was concealed and had fled away to avoid any meeting in the same place with us, since it is said to have been translated; the meaning of which expression is that it emigrated and departed from its sojourn in this mortal life, to an abode in immortal life.

Chapter V

These men then, being mad with this divinely inspired madness, were made more ferocious; but there are others who are companions of a more manageable and humanised wisdom. By those men piety is practised to a most eminent degree, and the observance due to man is not neglected. And the sacred oracles are witnesses of this in which Abraham is addressed (the words being put in the mouth of God), "Thou shalt be pleasing in my Sight," that is to say, thou shalt be pleasing, not only to me but also to my works, in my eyes as judge, and overseer, and superintendant;

for if you honour your parents, or show mercy to the poor, or do good to your friends, or fight in defence of your country, or pay proper attention to the common principles of justice towards all men, you most certainly are pleasing to those with whom you associate, and you are also acceptable in the sight of God: for he sees all things with an eye which never slumbers, and he unites to himself with especial favour all that is good, and that he accepts and embraces.

Therefore the practicer of virtue, even while praying, proves the very same thing, saying, "The God to whom my fathers were Acceptable," and he adds the words "before him," for the sake of giving you to know the difference, the real practical difference between the expression, "to please God," by itself, and the same words with the addition of the sentence, "before him." For the one expression gives both meanings, and the other only one.

Thus also Moses, in his exhortatory admonitions, recommends his disciples such and such things, saying, "Thou shalt do what is pleasing before the Lord thy God," as

if he were to say, Do such things as we shall be worthy to appear before God, and what he when he sees them will accept. And these things are wont to appear equally pure both externally and Internally.(this passage is given up by Mangey as corrupt and quite unintelligible. Mangey corrects it and gives a Latin translation which I have followed.)

And proceeding onwards from thence he wove the tent of the tabernacle with two boundaries of space, placing a veil between the two, in order to separate what is within from what is without. And also he gilded the sacred ark, the place wherein the laws were kept, both within and without; and he gave the great high priest two robes, the inner one made of linen, and the other one beautifully embroidered, with one robe reaching to the feet.

For these and such things as these are symbols of the soul which in its inner parts shows itself pure towards God, and in its exterior parts shows itself without reproach in reference to the world which is perceptible to the outward senses and to this life: with great felicity therefore was this said to the victorious wrestler, when he was about to have his brows crowned with the garlands of victory: and the declaration made with respect to him was of the following tenor, "You have been mightily powerful both with God and with Men;"

for to have a good reputation with both classes, namely, with the uncreated God and with the creature, is the task of no small mind, but, if one must say the truth, it is one fit for that which is in the confines between the world and God. In short, it is necessary that the good man should be an

attendant of God, for the creature is an object of care to the Ruler and Father of the universe;

for who is there who does not know, that even before the creation of the world God was himself sufficient to himself, and that he remained as much a friend as before after the creation of the world, without having undergone any change? Why then did he make what did not exist before? Because he was good and bounteous. Shall we not then, we who are slaves, follow our master, admiring, in an exceeding degree, the great first Cause of all things, and not altogether despising our own nature?

Chapter VI

But after he has said, "Be thou pleasing to me before me," he adds further, "and be thou blameless," using here a natural consequence and connection of the previous sentence. Do thou therefore all the more apply thyself to what is good that thou mayest be pleasing; and if thou canst not be pleasing, at all events abstain from open sins, that thou mayest not incur reproach. For he who does right is praiseworthy, and he who avoids doing wrong is not to be blamed.

And the most important prize is assigned to those who do right, namely, the prize of feeling that they are acceptable to God: but the second prize belongs to those who do no sin, that, namely, of avoiding blame; and, perhaps, in the case of the mortal race of mankind, the doing no sin is set down as equivalent to doing right; for who, as Job says is "pure from pollution, even if his life be but one single day Long?"

In fact, the things which pollute the soul are infinite in number, and it is impossible completely to wash them away and to efface their stains; for there are, of necessity, left disasters which are akin to every mortal man, which it is natural indeed to weaken, but impossible wholly to eradicate.

Does any one therefore seek a just, or prudent, or temperate, or, in short, any perfectly good man, in this confused life? Be content if you find one who is not wholly unjust, or foolish, or intemperate, or cowardly, or who is not utterly worthless; for the avoidance of evil is a thing with which to be content, but the complete acquisition of the virtues is unattainable to any man, such as is endowed with our nature.

It was therefore with great reason that it was said, "and be thou blameless," the speaker thinking that it is a great addition towards a happy life to live without sin and without reproach; but the man who has deliberately chosen this way of life, promises to leave his inheritance in accordance with the covenant, such as is becoming to God to give, and to a wise man to accept,

for he says, "I will place my covenant between me and between Thee;" and covenants and testaments are written for the advantage of those who are worthy of the gift, so that a testament is a symbol of grace, which God has placed between himself who proffers it and man who receives it;

and this is the very extravagance of beneficence, that there is nothing between God and the soul except his own virgin grace. And I have written two commentaries on the

whole discussion concerning testaments, and for that reason I now deliberately pass over that subject, for the sake of not appearing to repeat what I have said before; and also at the same time, because I do not wish here to interrupt the connected course of this discussion.

Chapter VII

And immediately afterwards it is said, "And Abraham fell on his face:" was he not about, in accordance with the divine promises, to recognize himself and the nothingness of the race of mankind, and so to fall down before him who stood firm, by way of displaying the conception which he entertained of himself and of God? Forsooth that God, standing always in the same place, moves the whole composition of the world, not by means of his legs, for he has not the form of a man, but by showing his unalterable and immovable essence.

But man, being never settled firmly in the same place, admits of different changes at different times, and being tripped up, miserable man that he is (for, in fact, his whole life is one continued stumble), he meets with a terrible fall;

but he who does this against his will is ignorant, and he who does it voluntarily is docile; on which account he is said to fall on his face, that is to say, in his outward senses, in his speech, in his mind, all but crying out loudly and shouting that the outward sense has fallen, inasmuch as it was unable, by itself, to feel as it should, if it had not been aroused by the providence of the Saviour, to take hold of the bodies which lay in its way. And speech too has fallen, being unable to give a proper explanation of anything in existence,

unless he who originally made and adapted the organ of the voice, having opened its mouth and enabled its tongue to articulate, should strike it so as to produce harmonious sounds. Moreover, the king of all the mind has fallen, being deprived of its comprehension, unless the Creator of all living things were again to raise it up and re-establish it, and furnishing it with the most acutely seeing eyes, to lead it to a sight of incorporeal things.

Chapter VIII

Therefore admiring this same disposition when thus taking to flight, and submitting to a voluntary fall by reason of the confession which it had made respecting the living God, namely, that he stands in truth and is one only, while all other things beneath him are subject to all kinds of motions and alterations, he speaks to it, and allows it to enter into conversation with him, saying, "And I, behold my covenant is with Thee."

And this expression conceals beneath its figurative words such a meaning as this: There are very many kinds of covenants, which distribute graces and gifts to those who are worthy to receive them; but the highest kind of covenant of all is I myself: for God, having displayed himself as far as it was possible for that being to be displayed who cannot be shown by the words which he has used, adds further, "And I too, behold my covenant;" the beginning and fountain of all graces is I myself.

For on some persons God is in the habit of bestowing his graces by the intervention of others; as, for instance, through the medium of earth, water, air, the sun, the moon,

heaven, and other incorporeal powers. But he bestows them on others through himself alone, exhibiting himself as the inheritance of those who receive him, whom from that he thinks worthy of another appellation:

for it is said in the scripture, "Thy name shall not be called Abram, but Abraham shall thy name be." Some, then, of those persons who are fond of disputes, and who are always eager to affix a stain upon what is irreproachable, on things as well as bodies, and who wage an implacable war against sacred things, while they calumniate everything which does not appear to preserve strict decorum in speech, being the symbols of nature which is always fond of being concealed, perverting it all so as to give it a worse appearance after a very accurate investigation, do especially find fault with the changes of names.

And it is only lately that I heard an ungodly and impious man mocking and ridiculing these things, who ventured to say, "Surely they are great and exceeding gifts which Moses says that the Ruler of the universe offers, who, by the addition of one element, the one letter alpha, a superfluous element; (the text here is very corrupt. Mangey adopts the emendations of Markland, and I have followed his translation.) and then again adding another element, the letter rho, appears to have bestowed upon men a most marvellous and great benefit; for he has called the wife of Abram Sarrah instead of Sarah, doubling the Rho," and connecting a number of similar arguments without drawing breath, and joking and mocking, he went through many instances.

But at no distant period he suffered a suitable punishment for his insane, wickedness; for on a very slight and ordinary provocation he hanged himself, in order that so polluted and impure a person might not die by a pure and unpolluted death.

God does not bestow on men mutes and vowels, or, in short, nouns and verbs; since when he created plants and animals, he summoned them before man as their governor, that he might give each of them their appropriate names by a reference to the knowledge which he had of all things; for, says the scripture, "Whatever Adam called any thing, that was the name Thereof."(genesis 2:19.)

Therefore since God did not think fit to take upon himself even the active imposition of the names, but entrusted the task to a wise man, the author of the whole race of mankind, it is reasonable to suppose that he himself gave and arranged the different parts, and syllables, and letters of nouns, disposing not only the vowels, but even the mutes, and that he did this too to make a show of liberality and exceeding beneficence? It is impossible to say so.

But such things as these are the characteristic marks of different powers; small marks of great powers, marks perceptible by the outward senses of powers which are indistinct; and the powers themselves are discerned in most excellent doctrines, in true and pure conceptions, in the improvement of souls. And it is easy to see a proof of this if we make a beginning with the man who is here spoken of as having his name changed;

for the name Abram, being interpreted, means “sublime father,” but Abraham means the “elect father of sound;” and how these names differ from one another we shall know more clearly if we first of all read what is exhibited under each of them.

Now using allegorical language, we call that man sublime who raises himself from the earth to a height, and who devotes himself to the inspection of high things; and we also call him a haunter of high regions, and a meteorologist, inquiring what is the magnitude of the sun, what are his motions, how he influences the seasons of the year, advancing as he does and retreating back again, with revolutions of equal speed, and investigating as he does the subjects of the radiance of the moon, of its shape, of its waning, of its increase, and of the motion of the other stars, whether fixed or wandering;

for the inquiry into these matters belongs not to an ill-conditioned or barren soul, but to one which is eminently endowed by nature, and which is able to produce an entire and perfect offspring; on which account the scripture calls the meteorologist, “father,” inasmuch as he is not unproductive of wisdom.

Chapter X

Now the symbols represented by the name of Abram are thus accurately defined; those conveyed under the name of Abraham are such as we shall proceed to demonstrate. The meanings now are three, “the father,” and “elect,” and “of sound.” Now by the word “sound” here, we mean uttered speech; for the sounding organ of the living animal is the

organ of speech. Of this faculty we say that the father is the mind, for it is from the mind, as from a fountain, that the stream of speech proceeds. The word "elect" belongs to the mind of the wise man, for whatever is most excellent is found in him;

therefore the man devoted to learning and occupied in the contemplation of sublime subjects, was sketched out according to the former characteristic marks, but the philosopher, or I should rather say the wise man, was exhibited in accordance with those of which we have just given an outline. Think not, then, any longer that the Deity bestows a change of names, but consider that what he gives is a correction of the moral character by means of symbols;

for having invited the nature of heaven, and whom some call a mathematician, to a participation in virtue, he made him wise and called him so. For having given an appropriate name to his transformed disposition, he named him, as the Hebrews would call it, "Abraham," but in the language of the Greeks, "the elect father of sound;"

for says he, On what account dost thou investigate the motions and periods of the stars? and why hast thou bounded up so high from the earth to the heavens? Is it merely that you may indulge your curiosity with respect to those matters? And what advantage could accrue to you from all this curiosity? What destruction of pleasure would it cause? What defeat of appetite? What dissolution of pain or fear? What eradication of the passions which disturb and agitate the soul?

For as there is no advantage in trees unless they are productive of fruit, so in the same way there is no use in the study of natural philosophy unless it is likely to confer upon a man the acquisition of virtue, for that is its proper fruit.

On which account some of the ancients have compared the discussion and consideration of philosophy to a field, and have likened the physical portion of it to the plants, the logical part to the hedges and fences, the moral part to the fruit,

thinking that the walls which are built around for the sake of protecting the fruit have been erected by the possessors of the land, and that the plants have been created for the sake of the production of fruit; thus, therefore, they said that in philosophy it is requisite for the consideration of the physical and the logical part of philosophy to be referred to the moral part, by which the moral character is improved, which as a desire at the same time for both the acquisition and the use of virtue.

This is the lesson which we have been taught concerning the man who in word indeed had his name changed, but who in reality changed his nature from the consideration of natural to that of moral philosophy, and who abandoned the contemplation of the world itself for the knowledge of the Being who created the world; by which knowledge he acquired piety, the most excellent of all possessions.

Chapter XI

We will now speak of his wife, Sarah, for she too had her name changed to Sarrah by the addition of the one element, the letter rho. These, then, are the names, and we must now

explain what they mean. Sarah, being interpreted, signifies “my authority,” but Sarrah signifies “princess;” the former name,

therefore, is a symbol of specific virtue, but the latter of generic virtue. But in proportion as genus is superior to species in regard of quantity, in the same proportion does the latter name excel the former; for species is something small and perishable, but genus is numerous and immortal,

and the intention of God is to bestow great and immortal things instead of such as are small and perishable, and this is a task suited to his dignity. Now the prudence which exists in the virtuous man is the authority of himself alone, and he who has it would not err if he were to say, my authority is the prudence which is in me; but that which has stretched out this authority is generic prudence, not any longer the authority of this or that person, but absolute intrinsic authority; therefore that which exists only in species will perish at the same time with its possessor, but that which, like a seal, has stamped it with an impression, is free from all mortality, and will remain for ever and ever imperishable.

Thus also those arts which exist only in species perish along with those who have acquired them, such as geometricians, grammarians, and musicians, but the generic arts remain exempt from destruction. And, again, he gives an additional sketch of his meaning when he teaches by the same name that every virtue is a princess, and a queen, and a ruler of all the affairs of life.

Chapter XII

But it has also happened that Jacob had his name changed to Israel; and this, too, was a felicitous alteration. Why so? Because the name Jacob means “a supplanter,” but the name Israel signifies “the man who sees God.” Now it is the employment of a supplanter, who practices virtue, to move, and disturb, and upset the foundations of passion on which it is established, and whatever there is of any strength which is founded on them. But these things are not brought about without a struggle or without severe labour; but only when any one, having gone through all the labours of prudence, then proceeds to practise himself in the exercises of the soul and to wrestle against the reasonings which are hostile to it, and which seek to torment it; but it is the part of him who sees God not to depart from the sacred contest without the crown of victory, but rather to carry off the prize of triumph.

And what more flourishing and more suitable crown could be woven for the victorious soul than one by which it will be able acutely and clearly to behold the living God? At least a beautiful prize is thus proposed for the soul which delights in the practice of virtue, namely, the being endowed with sight adequate to the clear comprehension of the only thing which is really worth beholding.

Chapter XIII

And it is worth while here to raise the question why Abraham, from the time that his name was changed, is always thought worthy of this same appellation, and is no longer called by his former name; but Jacob, who is also called Israel, is nevertheless called Jacob too, as he was

before the change of his name; and, indeed, is called Jacob oftener than Israel. We must say, then, that these facts are characters by which it is seen that the virtue which is taught differs from that which is acquired by practice;

for the man who is improved by instruction, having received a happy and virtuous nature, uses that virtue alone which, by means of memory co-operating with it, implants in him an absence of forgetfulness, so that he comprehends and takes firm hold of all the things which he has once learnt; but he who practices virtue, since he is continually exercising himself, stops to take breath, and relaxes his efforts for a while, collecting himself and recovering the vigour which was a little impaired by his exertions, just as those men do who have oiled their bodies for the contests in the arena. For these men, also, labouring at their training exercises, in order to prevent their powers being utterly broken down, anoint themselves with oil on account of the violent and continued nature of their exercise.

Then the man who is improved by instruction, having an immortal monitor, receives from him a harmonious and imperishable advantage, without suffering any change; but the practiser of virtue is impelled to action by his own inclination alone, and he exercises himself in it, and labours at it in order to change that passion, which is akin to a created being; and even if he attains to perfection, he still, being fatigued, returns to his ancient kind of labour;

for he is more inclined to endure toil, but the other is more fortunate, for he has another person as a teacher. But this man, by his own unassisted efforts, investigates, and inquires, and pushes his examination, investigating the

mysteries of nature with great earnestness, and exerting continual and incessant labour.

For this reason God, who never changes, altered the name of Abraham, since he was about to remain in a similar condition, in order that that which was to be firmly established might be confirmed by him who was standing firmly, and who was remaining in the same state in the same manner. But it was an angel who altered the name of Jacob, being the Word, the minister of God; in order that it might be confessed and ascertained, that there is none of the things whose existence is subsequent to that of the living God, which is the cause of unchangeable and unvarying firmness. ... but of that harmony which, as in a musical instrument, contains the intensity and relaxation of sounds so as to produce an artistical combination of melody.

Chapter XIV

But, there being three leaders and authors of this race, the two at each extremity of it had their names changed, namely Abraham and Jacob: but the one in the middle, Isaac, always retained the same appellation. Why was this? Because both that virtue which is derived from teaching and that which is attained to by practice, admit of improvement and advancement: for the man who receives instruction desires a knowledge of those matters of which he is ignorant and he who applies himself to practice desires the crowns of victory, and the prizes which are proposed to his industrious and contemplation-loving soul. But the race which is self-taught and which derives all its learning from its own diligence inasmuch as it exists rather by nature than

by study, was at the very beginning introduced as equal, and perfect, and even, there being no number whatever deficient of those which tend to completeness.

Nor indeed does Joseph have any such need, he who is the president of the necessities of the body; for he also changes his name, being called Psonthomphanech by the king of the country. And what the meaning of these names is we must explain; the name Joseph, being interpreted, signifies "an addition." For things which are put by the side are an addition to those which exist by nature; for instance, gold, silver, possessions, revenues, the ministrations of servants, abundant treasure of heirlooms, and furniture, and other superfluities, and the infinite multitude of the different efficient of pleasure which some persons possess;

the provider and superintendant of which was called Joseph, or addition, by a very felicitous nomenclature: since he had undertaken the superintendence of the things which were to be brought in from without, and added to the natural things previously existing in the course of nature. And the sacred scriptures testify that this is the case, showing that he was the purveyor of the food of all the corporeal region, Egypt, having stored it up in his treasure-houses.

Chapter XV

Such a person as this, then, Joseph is recognized as being by his distinctive marks and name. Let us now see what sort of person is indicated by the name Psonthomphanech. Now this name being interpreted means, "a mouth judging in an answer;" for every foolish person thinks that the man who is

very rich and overflowing with external possessions, must at once be wise and sensible, competent to give an answer to any question which any one puts to him, and competent also of his own head to deliver advantageous and sagacious opinions. And, in short, by such men prudence is supposed to be identical with good fortune, while one ought, on the contrary, to consider good fortune as consisting in being prudent; for it is fitting that what is unstable should be under the direction of that which stands firmly.

And indeed his father gave to his own uterine brother the name of Benjamin: but his mother called him the son of her sorrow, speaking most completely in accordance with nature. For the name Benjamin being interpreted means, "the son of days:" and the day is illuminated by the light of the sun which is perceptible by the outward senses: and to this we liken vain glory.

For that has a certain brilliancy appreciable by the outward senses in the praises which it receives from the multitude and from the common herd of men, in formally enrolled decrees, in the erection of statues and images, in purple robes and golden crowns, in chariots and teams of four horses, and processions of the multitude. He therefore who is an admirer and desirer of such things is very appropriately called a son of days: that is to say, of that light which is perceptible by the outward senses and of the brilliancy which attends vain glory.

This felicitous and appropriate name the elder word and real father imposes on him; but the soul which has suffered gives him a name suited to what she has suffered. For she calls him the son of her sorrow. Why so? Because those men

who are borne about by vain glory are supposed indeed to be happy, but in real truth are unhappy.

For the things which oppose their happiness are numerous, envy, discontent, emulation, continual strife, irreconcilable enmities lasting till death, hostilities handed down in succession to one's children's children — a destiny not at all to be desired.

Very necessarily therefore did the divinely inspired prophet represent that vain glory as dying in the very act of bringing forth; for says he, "Rachel died, having had a bad Delivery." Since, in truth and reality, the sowing and generation of vain glory perceptible by the outward senses is the death of the soul.

Chapter XVI

And what shall we say of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh? Are they not, in strict accordance with nature, compared to the two eldest sons of Jacob, Reuben and Simeon? For the scripture says, "Thy two sons who were born in Egypt, before that I came into Egypt, belong to me; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be to me as Reuben and as Simeon." Let us now then see in what manner the one pair are likened to the other pair.

Reuben is the symbol of a good natural disposition, for the name being interpreted means, "A seeing son;" since every one who is endowed with tolerable acuteness of mind and a good disposition is capable of seeing; and Ephraim, as we have already frequently said in other places, is a symbol of memory, for his name being interpreted signifies, "productiveness of fruit," and the most excellent fruit of the

soul is memory; and there is no one thing so nearly akin to another as remembering is to a man of good natural endowments.

Again, the name of Simeon is a symbol of learning and instruction; for, being interpreted, it signifies "listening," and it is the especial part of a learner to listen and attend to what is said. But Manasseh is a symbol of "recollection," for thus that art is called, from forgetfulness;

for it must of necessity happen to the man who has advanced out of forgetfulness to recollect, and recollecting especially belongs to learning, for very often his notions escape from the man who is learning, as out of weakness he is unable to retain them, and then again they return to him as at the beginning. The condition therefore which arises from this escaping of his notions is denominated forgetfulness, and that which arises from their returning to him is called recollection.

Now is not memory very naturally spoken of as connected with good natural endowments, and recollection as akin to learning? And, indeed, the same relation which Simeon bears to Reuben, that is to say, learning to natural endowment, the same does Manasseh bear to Ephraim, and the same does recollection bear to memory.

For as the man of good natural endowments is better than he who is only a learner, for the one resembles the sense of seeing, the other that of hearing, and hearing is always reckoned as entitled to a lesser honour than seeing; so also, he who is endowed with a good memory is at all times superior to him who only recollects, because the one is

combined with forgetfulness, but the other continues unalloyed and unadulterated from beginning to end.

Chapter XVII

And indeed the scriptures at one time call the father-in-law of the first prophets Jother, and at another time Raguel-Jother, when pride is flourishing and at its height; for the name Jother being interpreted means “superfluous,” and pride is superfluous in an honest and sincere life, turning into ridicule, as it does, all that is equal and necessary to life, and honouring the unequal things of excess and covetousness.

This passion honours human things above divine, and customs above laws, and profane above sacred things, and mortal above immortal things, and, in short, appearances above reality; and it even ventures of its accord to pass on into the rank of counsellors, suggesting to the wise man not to teach those things which alone are worthy to be known, namely, “the commandments of God, and the Law,” but to study the covenants and contracts of men with one another, which are almost the causes of the society which exists among them being so little sociable. But the great man is obedient in all things, thinking that little things are adapted to little people, and that great things are justly added to the great;

but very often this man who is wise in his own conceit, and who, passing over from the herds which the blind had assigned to him for him to guide, having sought out the divine herd, becomes no small portion of it; admiring the leader of nature, and marvelling at his way of leading which

he employs in his care of his own flocks, for the name Raguel being interpreted, signifies the "pastoral care of God."

Chapter XVIII

The main part has now been explained; we will now proceed to adduce the proofs. In the first place the scripture represents him as the cultivator of judgment and of justice, for the name Midian, being interpreted, means "out of judgment." And this is said in a twofold sense, for some times it signifies both selection and rejection, such as usually happens to those who are competitors in those contests which are called sacred; for numbers as they appear not qualified, are rejected by the masters of the games.

These are the men who have been initiated in the unholy rites of Beelphegor, and having widened all the mouths of the body to enable them to receive the streams which are poured into them from without, for the name Beelphegor is interpreted "the mouth above the skin," for they have overwhelmed the mind, the governor of the body, and have sunk it down to the lowest depth, so that it can never emerge, nor even hold up its head in ever so slight a degree.

And it suffered this until Phineas, the lover of peace and manifest priest of God, came as a champion of his own accord, being by nature a hater of all that is evil, and filled with an admiration and desire for what is good; and as he took a coadjutor, that is to say, the well sharpened and sharp-edged sword, competent to investigate and examine everything, he could not be deceived, but exerting a

vigorous strength, he pierced passion through her womb, that it might not hereafter bring forth any divinely caused evil.

Now between these men and the seeing race there is a terrible war, in which no one of the combatants differed in language, but each returned home unwounded and safe, crowned with the garlands of victory.

Chapter XIX

This now is one of the things which are shown by the name of Midian; another is that more excellent and judicial species which by the affinity of marriage is connected with the prophetic race. The scripture then says, "The priest of judgment and justice" (that is to say, of Midian) "has seven Daughters;"

by which seven daughters are frequently intimated the powers of the irrational part of the soul, the power of generation and the voice, and the five outward senses, tending the flocks of their father; for by means of these seven powers it is that all the progresses and increases of their father, the mind, exist in the perceptions which are produced from him. These, then, coming each to its appropriate object, the power of sight to colours and shapes, the sense of hearing to sounds, the faculty of smelling to scents, taste to flavours, and all the other faculties to those objects which are adapted for their exercise do in a manner imbibe some of the external objects of the outward senses, until they have filled all the channels of the soul, and from these channels they give drink to the sheep of their father; I mean by these sheep that most pure

flock of the reason which bears safety and ornament at the same time.

But the companions of envy and jealousy, the leaders of the wicked herd coming up, drive them away from that use of their powers which is in accordance with nature, for some conduct these things which are without, inwards to the mind as to a judge and a king, in order that they may do well from having the most excellent of governors;

but others take the opposite side, pursuing and proclaiming the exact contrary, while it is possible for the mind to be drawn towards them, and to give up the flock which was entrusted to it to Feed.(this passage is very corrupt in the original. I have followed Mangey in adopting the corrections of Marsland.) Until the good disposition, devoted to virtue and inspired by God, which for awhile has appeared to be resting in inactivity, by name Moses, holds his shield over them and defends them from those who would attack them, nourishing the flock of his father on wholesome words,

and they having escaped the attack of the enemies of intellect who admire only the external appendages, like people in tragedies, go no longer to Jother but to Raguel, for they have abandoned all connections with pride, and having connected themselves with lawful persuasion, choosing to become a portion of the sacred flock, of which the divine word is the leader, as his name shows, for it signifies the pastoral care of God.

Chapter XX

But while he is taking care of his own flock, all kinds of good things are given all at once to those of the sheep who are obedient, and who do not resist his will; and in the Psalms we find a song in these words, "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore shall I lack Nothing;"(psalm 23:1.)

therefore the mind which has had the royal shepherd, the divine word, for its instructor, will very naturally ask of his seven daughters, "Why is it that you have contended with such great haste to come hither this Day?" for formerly, when you met with the objects of the outward sense, remaining a long time outside, you were a long time in returning again by reason of the manner in which you were allured by them, but now I do not know what it is that has happened to you, but you are speedy in your return, contrary to your usual custom.

Therefore they will say that there were not the same causes why they should run back with such exceeding speed, making the double course from the objects of the outward sense and to the objects of the outward sense, without stopping to take breath, and with excessive impetuosity; but that the cause was rather the man who delivered them from the shepherds of the wild flock. And they call Moses an Egyptian, a man who was not only a Hebrew, but even a Hebrew of the very purest race, of the only tribe which is consecrated, because they are unable to rise above their own nature;

for the outward senses, being on the confines between the objects of the intellect and those of the outward senses, we must be content if they aim at both of them, and are not allured by the objects of the outward sense alone. And to

think that they are inclined only to attend to the things which are purely objects of the intellect is great folly; on which account they give him both these names, since when they call him a man, they indicate the things which are within the province of reason alone to contemplate, and when they call him an Egyptian, they indicate the objects of the external senses.

When they had heard this, he will again inquire, "Where is the man?" In what part of you is the reasonable species dwelling? Why have you left it so easily, and have not rather after having once met with it, preserved that which was the most beautiful of possessions, and the most advantageous for yourselves?

But even if you have not done so before, at least call it to you now, that it may eat of and be supported by your improvement and your close connection with him; for perhaps he will even dwell with you, and will bring with him the winged, and divinely inspired, and prophetic race by name Zipporah.

Chapter XXI

Thus much we have thought fit to say on this subject. But, moreover, Moses also changes the name of Hosea into that of Joshua; displaying by his new name the distinctive qualities of his character;

for the name Hosea is interpreted, "what sort of a person is this?" but Joshua means "the salvation of the Lord," being the name of the most excellent possible character; for the habits are better with respect to those persons who are of such and such qualities from being influenced by them: as,

for instance, music is better in a musician, physic in a physician, and each art of a distinctive quality in each artist, regarded both in its perpetuity, and in its power, and in its unerring perfection with regard to the objects of its speculation. For a habit is something everlasting, energising, and perfect; but a man of such and such a quality is mortal, the object of action, and imperfect. And what is imperishable is superior to what is mortal, the efficient cause is better than that which is the object of action; and what is perfect is preferable to what is imperfect.

In this way the coinage of the above mentioned description was changed and received the stamp of a better kind of appearance. And Caleb himself was changed wholly and entirely; "For," as the scripture says, "a new spirit was in Him;" as if the dominant part in him had been changed into complete perfection; for the name Caleb, being interpreted, means "the whole heart."

And a proof of this is to be gathered from the fact that the mind is changed, not by being biassed and inclining in one particular direction or the other, but wholly and entirely in the direction which is good; and that, even if there is any thing which is not very praiseworthy indeed, it makes that to depart by arguments conducive to repentance; for, having in this manner washed off all the defilements which polluted it, and having availed itself of the baths and purifications of wisdom, it must inevitably look brilliant.

Chapter XXII

But it happens to the arch-prophet to have many names: for when he interprets and explains the oracles which are delivered by God, he is called Moses; and when he prays for and blesses the people, he is called the man of God; and when Egypt is paying the penalty of its impious actions, he is then denominated the god of him who is the king of the country, namely, of Pharaoh. And why is all this?

Because to alter a code of laws for the advantage of those who are to use them is the part of a man who is always handling divine things, and having them in his hands; and who is called a lawgiver by the allknowing God, and who has received from him a great gift — the interpretation of the sacred laws, and the spirit of prophecy in accordance with them. For the name Moses, being translated, signifies “gain,” and it also means handling, for the reasons which I have already enumerated.

But to pray and to bless are not the duties of any ordinary man, but they belong to one who has not admitted any connection with created things, but who has devoted himself to God, the governor and the father of all men.

And any one must be content to whom it has been allowed to use the privilege of blessing. And to be able also to procure good for others belongs to a greater and more perfect soul, and is the

for the Ruler of the universe, even though some persons are about to be punished for intolerable acts of wickedness, nevertheless is willing to admit some intercessors to mediate on their behalf, who, in imitation of the merciful power of the father, exercise their power of punishment

with more moderation and humanity; but to do good is the peculiar attribute of God.

Chapter XXIII

Having now discussed at sufficient length the subject of change and alteration of names, we will turn to the matters which come next in order in our proposed examination. Immediately after the events which we have just mentioned, came the birth of Isaac; for after God had given to his mother the name of Sarrah instead of Sarah, he said to Abraham, "I will give unto thee a Son." We must consider each of the things here indicated particularly.

Now he who is properly said to give any thing whatever must by all means be giving what is his own private property. And if this is true beyond controversy, then it would follow that Isaac must not have been a man, but a being synonymous with that most exquisite joy of all pleasures, namely, laughter, the adopted son of God, who gave him as a soother and cheerer to the most peace-loving souls;

for it is absurd to suppose that there was one who was a man, and another of whom bastard and illegitimate offspring were descended: and, indeed, Moses calls the man of an intellect devoted to virtue a god, when he says, "The Lord, seeing that Leah was hated, opened her Womb."

For having felt compassion and pity for virtue as being hated by the race of mankind, and for the soul which loves virtue, he makes the nature which loves beauty barren, but opens the fountain of fecundity and gives it a prosperous labour.

But Tamar, when she became pregnant of divine seeds, and did not know who it was who had sown them (for it is said that at that time "she had covered her face," as Moses did when he turned away, having a reverential fear of beholding God), still when she saw the tokens and the evidences and decided within herself that it was not a mortal man who gave these things, cried out, "To whomsoever these things belong, it is by him that I am with Child."

Whose was the ring, or the pledge, or the seal of the whole, or the archetypal appearance, according to which all the things, though devoid of species and of distinctive quality, were all stamped and marked? And whose again was the armlet, or the ornament; that is to say, destiny, the link and analogy of all things which have an indissoluble connection? Whose, again, was the staff, the thing of strong support, which wavers not, which is not moved; that is to say, admonition, correction, instruction? Whose is the sceptre, the kingly power?

does it not belong to God alone? Therefore, the disposition inclined to confession, that is to say, Judah, being pleased at her possessed and inspired condition, speaks freely, saying, "She has spoken justly, because I gave her in marriage to no mortal Man;" thinking it an impious thing to pollute divine with profane things.

Chapter XXIV

And wisdom, which, after the fashion of a mother, has conceived and brought fourth the self-taught race, points out that it is God who is the sower of it; for, after the

offspring is brought forth, she speak magnificently, saying, "The Lord has caused me Laughter;" an expression equivalent to, he has fashioned, he has made, he has begotten Isaac, since Isaac is the same with laughter.

But it does not belong to every one to hear this sound, since the evil of superstition is very widely spread among us, and has overwhelmed many unmanly and ignoble souls; on which account she adds, "For whoever hears this will not rejoice with me." As if those persons were very few whose ears are opened and pricked up so as to be inclined to the reception of these sacred words, which teach that it is the peculiar employment of the only God to sow and to beget what is good; to which words all other persons are deaf.

And I know that this illustrious oracle was formerly delivered from the mouth of the prophet. "Thy fruit has been found from me: who is wise and will understand these things? who is prudent and will know Them?" But I have observed, and comprehended, and admired him who causes to resound, and who himself, invisible as he is, does in an invisible manner strike the organ of the voice; being amazed also at the same time at what was uttered.

For if there be any good thing among existing things, that, or I should rather say the whole heaven and the whole world, if one must tell the truth, is the fruit of God; being preserved upon his eternal and everflourishing nature as upon a tree. But it belongs to wise and understanding men to understand and to confess such things as these, and not to the ignorant.

Chapter XXV

We have now then explained what is meant by the words, "I will give unto thee." We must now explain the words, "out of her." Some now have understood them as meaning that which exists out of her, thinking that it has been most correctly decided by right reason that the soul never displays any peculiar beauty of its own, but only such as comes to it from without, in accordance with the greatness of the good will of God who showers his graces upon it.

But others understand these words to mean instant rapidity; for that the words (*ex auteus*, which we have translated) "out of her," are here equivalent to, "at once, immediately, without any delay, without hesitation." And it is in this way that the gifts of God usually come to men, outstripping the differences of time. There is a third class of persons who say, that virtue is the mother of all created good, without having received the seed of it from any mortal man;

and to those who ask, whether she who is barren has an offspring (for the holy scriptures, which some time ago represented Sarrah as barren, now confess that she will become a mother); this answer must be given, that a woman who is barren cannot, in the course of nature, bring forth an offspring, just as a blind man cannot see, nor a deaf man hear; but that the soul, which is barren of bad things, and which is unproductive of immoderate license of the passions and vices, is alone very nearly attaining to a happy delivery, bringing forth objects worthy of love, namely, the number seven, according to the hymn which is sung by Grace, that is, by Hannah, who says, "she who was barren hath born seven, and she who had many children has become weak."

and what she means by, "She who has many children," is the mind, which being pregnant of mixed and promiscuous reasonings, from all quarters confused together, by reason of the multitudes which crowd around her, and of the disorder which they cause, brings forth incurable evils; and by "she who was barren," she means that the mind which had never received any mortal seed, as if it were productive of offspring, but has avoided and shunned all association and all connection with the wicked, and clings to the seventh, and to the most peaceful numbers in accordance with it, for it deserves to be pregnant of it, and to be called its mother.

Chapter XXVI

This then is the meaning of the words, "out of her." We must now consider the third point, namely, what that is which is called her son. In the first place, then, there is this worthy of our admiration, that God does not say that he will give her many children, but that he will give her one only. And why is this? Because it is the nature of what is good to be investigated, not so much with respect to its number or magnitude, as with respect to its power;

for musical precepts, to take them for an instance, or rules of grammar, or of geometry, or of justice, or of wisdom, or of manly courage, or of temperance, are very numerous indeed; but the science itself of music, or grammar, or geometry, and still more the virtue of justice, or temperance, or wisdom, or manly courage, is only one thing, the loftiest perfection, in no respect differing from the archetypal model, after which all those numerous and

countless precepts were formed.

And this is why he only says that he will give her one son. And now he called it a son, not speaking carelessly or inconsiderately, but for the sake of showing that it is not a foreign, or a supposititious, nor an adopted, nor an illegitimate child, but a legitimate child, a proper citizen, inasmuch as a foreign child cannot be the offspring of a truly citizen soul, for the Greek word teknon (son), is derived from tokos (bringing forth), by way of showing the kindred by which children are, by nature, united to their parents.

Chapter XXVII

And, says God, "I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of Nations;"(genesis 17:16.) because, not only is generic virtue divided into its proximate species, and into individuals subordinate to the species, as if into nations; but also because, as there are nations of living animals, so in a manner are there nations of things, to which virtue is a very great advantage;

for all things which are devoid and destitute of wisdom are mischievous, just as all places upon which the sun does not shine are of necessity dark; for it is by virtue that a farmer is able to pay better attention to his crops, and by virtue that a charioteer drives his chariot in the horse-races so as to avoid falling; and by virtue too, that a pilot and a steersman guides his vessel in its voyage.

Virtue again has caused houses, and cities, and countries to be inhabited in a better manner, making men competent to manage houses and cities, and fit to associate with one

another. Virtue has also introduced most excellent laws, and has sown the seeds of peace everywhere; since, from the contrary habit, things of a contrary character do naturally arise — war, lawlessness, bad constitutions, confusion, unnecessary voyages, overthrows, that which, in science, is the most grievous of all diseases, namely, cunning, from which, instead of art, all kinds of evil artifice has flowed. Very necessarily, therefore, will virtue be divided among all nations, which are large and collected systems of living beings and things taken together, for the advantage of those who receive her.

Chapter XXVIII

Immediately afterwards it is said, “And kings of the nations shall be born of her.” For those with whom she is pregnant and whom she brings forth are all rulers; not because they have been elected as such for a short period by lot, which is an uncertain thing, or by the show of hands of men who are for the most part bribed, but because they have been destined and appointed so for everlasting by nature herself.

And these are not my words only, but those of the most holy scriptures, in which certain persons are introduced as saying to Abraham, “Thou art a king from God among Us;” not out of consideration for his resources (for what resources could a man have who was an emigrant and who had no city to inhabit, but who was wandering over a great extent of impassable country?), but because they saw that he had a royal disposition in his mind, so that they confessed, in the words of Moses, that he was the only wise

king.

For in real truth the wise man is the king of those who are foolish, since he knows what he ought and what he ought not to do; and the temperate man is the king of the intemperate, as he has attained to no careless or inaccurate knowledge of what relates to choice and avoidance. Also the brave man is king over the cowardly, inasmuch as he has thoroughly learnt what he ought to endure and what he ought not. So too the just man is king of the unjust, as he is possessed of the knowledge of undeviating equality as to what is to be distributed. And the holy man is king over the unholy, as he is possessed with the most just and excellent notions of God.

Chapter XXIX

It was natural then for the mind, being puffed up by these promises, to be elated and raised to an undue height in its own estimation; and accordingly, by way of producing conviction in us, who were accustomed to hold up our heads at the slightest trifles, "it falls down and immediately laughs the laughter of the soul," looking mournful as to its face, but smiling in its mind a great and unmixed joy having entered into it:

and both these feelings, namely, to laugh and also to fall, do at the same time occur to a wise man who inherits good things beyond his expectation; the one being his fate, as a proof that he is not over-proud because of his thorough knowledge of his mortal nothingness; and the other, by way of a confirmation of his piety on account of his looking upon God as the sole cause of all graces and of all good things.

Let, then, the creature fall down and wear a melancholy countenance very naturally; for it has no stability in its own nature, and as far as that goes is easily dissolved; but let it be raised up again by God, and laugh, for he alone is the support and joy of it.

And here any one may reasonably express a doubt how it is possible for any one to laugh when laughter had not as yet come among one branch of the creation; for Isaac is laughter, who, according to the account under our consideration at present, was not yet born. For just as it is impossible to see without eyes, or to hear without ears, or to smell without nostrils, or to exert any other of the external senses without the organs adapted to each respectively, or to comprehend without the reason, so also it is not likely that a person can have laughed, if laughter had not as yet been made.

What, then, are we to say? Nature foreshows many of the things which are hereafter to happen by certain symbols. Do you not see how the young bird, before it commits itself to the air, is fond of fluttering its wings and shaking its pinions, giving a previous happy indication of its hope that it will be able to fly?

And have you never seen a lamb, or a kid, or an ox, while still young, and before his horns are as yet grown and noticed, if by chance any one irritates him, how he opposes him, and moves forward to defend himself with those parts in which nature has planted his arms for defence?

And in the battles which take place with wild beasts, the bulls do not at once gore the adversaries who are opposed

to them, but standing well apart, and relaxing their neck in a moderate degree and bending their heads on one side, and looking fierce, as it were, they then, after a truce, rush on with the determination of persevering in the contest. And this sort of conduct those who are in the habit of inventing new words call "sparring," being a sort of sham attack before the real one.

Chapter XXX

And the soul is subject to many things of much the same kind. For when something good is hoped for it rejoices beforehand, so that in a manner it rejoices before its joy, and is delighted before its delight. And one may also compare this to what happens with respect to plants; for they, too, when they are about to bear fruit, bud beforehand and flower previously, and are green previously.

Look at the cultivated vine, how marvellously it is furnished by nature with young shoots, and tendrils, and suckers, and leaves redolent of wine, which, though they utter no voice, do nevertheless indicate the joy of the tree at the coming fruit. And the day also laughs in anticipation of the early dawn, when the sun is about to rise; for one ray is a messenger of another, and one beam of light, as the forerunner of another though more obscure, is still a herald of that which shall be brighter.

Therefore, joy accompanies a good when it is already arrived, and hope while it is expected. For we rejoice when it is come, and we hope while it is coming; just as in the case also with the contrary feelings; for the presence of evil brings us grief, and the expectation of evil generates fear,

and fear is nothing more than grief before grief, as hope is joy before joy. For the same relation that, I imagine, fear bears to grief, that same does hope bear to joy.

And the external senses afford very manifest proofs of what has now been said; for smell, sitting as it were in front of taste, pronounces judgment beforehand on almost every thing which is eaten and drunk; from which fact some persons have very felicitously named it the foretaster, having a regard to its employment. And so hope is by nature adapted to have as it were a foretaste of the coming good: and to represent it to the soul, which is to have a firm possession of it.

Moreover, when any one who is engaged in a journey is hungry or thirsty, if he on a sudden sees a fountain or all kinds of trees weighed down with eatable fruits, he is at once filled with a hope of enjoyment, not only before he has either eaten or drunk, but before he has either come near them or gathered of them. And do we then think that we are able to feast on the nourishment of the body before we receive it, but that the food of the mind is not able to render us cheerful beforehand, even when we are on the very point of feasting on it?

Chapter XXXI

He laughed then very naturally, even though laughter did not as yet appear to have been scattered among the human race: and not only did he laugh but the woman also laughed; for it is said presently, "And Sarrah laughed in herself, saying, There has never up to the present time come any good unto me of its own accord without care on my part; but

he who has promised is my Lord, and is older than all creation, and him I must of necessity believe."

And at the same time it also teaches us that virtue is naturally a thing to be rejoiced at, and that he who possesses it is at all times rejoiced; and, on the contrary, that vice is a painful thing, and that he who possesses that is most miserable. And do we even now marvel at those philosophers who affirm that virtue consists in apathy?

For, behold, Moses is found to be the leader of this wise doctrine, as he represents the good man as rejoicing and laughing. And in other passages he not only speaks of him in that way, but also of all those who come to the same place with him; for he says, "And when he seeth thee he will rejoice in Himself;" as if the bare sight of a good man were by itself sufficient to fill the mind with cheerfulness while the soul would cast off its most fearful burden, sorrow.

But it is not allowed to every wicked man to rejoice, as it is said in the predictions of the prophet, "There is no rejoicing for the wicked, says God." For this is truly a divine saying and oracle, that the life of every wicked man is melancholy, and sad, and full of unhappiness, even if with his face he pretends to feel happiness;

for I should not say that the Egyptians rejoiced in reality when they heard that the brethren of Joseph were come, but that they only feigned joy, putting on a false appearance like hypocrites; for no convictor, when standing by and pressing upon a foolish man is a pleasure to him, just as no physician is to an intemperate man who is sick; for labour attends on what is useful, and laziness on what is hurtful. And those

who prefer laziness to labour are very naturally hated by those who advise them to a course which will be useful and laborious.

When, therefore, you hear that "Pharaoh and all his servants rejoiced on account of the arrival of Joseph's Brethren," do not think that they rejoiced in reality, unless perhaps in this sense, that they expected that he would become changed from the good things of the soul in which he had been brought up, and would come over to the profitless appetites of the body, having adulterated the ancient and hereditary coinage of that virtue which was akin to him.

Chapter XXXII

The mind, then, which is devoted to pleasure, having entertained these hopes, does not think that it is sufficient to attract the younger men, and those who are as yet only attending the school of temperance, by its allurements; but it looks upon it as a terrible thing, if it cannot also bring over the elder reasoning, the more impetuous passions of which have now passed their prime;

for in a subsequent passage Joseph says to them, proposing injuries to them as though they were benefits, "Now, therefore, bringing with you your father and all your possessions, come hither to Me;" speaking in this way of Egypt and of that terrible king who drags back all our paternal inheritance and the good things which really belong to us and which have advanced beyond the body (for by nature they are free), endeavoring by force to surrender them to a very bitter prison, having, as the holy scripture

tells us, “appointed as guardian of the prison Pentaphres, the eunuch and chief Cook,” who was a man in great want of all that is good, and who had been deprived of the generative parts of the soul; and who was also unable to sow and to plant any of those things which bear upon instruction; but who like a cook slew the living animals, and cut them up and divided them in different portions limb by limb, and who wallowed about in dead and lifeless bodies and things equally, and who, by his superfluous preparations and refinements, excited and stirred up the appetites of the profitless passions, while it was natural to expect that those who were able to tame them should mollify.

And he also says, “I will give unto you all the good things of Egypt, and you shall eat of the marrow of the Earth.” But we will say unto him, We who keep our eyes fixed on the good things of the soul do not desire those of the body. For that most delicious desire of the former things, when once implanted in the mind, is well calculated to engender a forgetfulness of all those things which are dear to the flesh.

Chapter XXXIII

Something like this, then, is the falsely named joy of the foolish. But the true joy has already been described, which is adapted only to the virtuous, “Therefore, falling down he Laughed.” Not falling from God, but from himself; for he stood near the unchangeable God, but he fell from his own vain opinion.

On which account that pride which was wise in its own conceit, having been thrown down, and the feeling which is

devoted to God having been raised in its place, and been established around the only unalterable being, he, immediately laughing, said in his mind, "Shall a child be born to one who is a hundred years old, and shall Sarrah, who is ninety years old, have a child?"

Do not fancy, my good friend, that the word, "he said" not with his mouth but "in his Mind," has been added for no especial use; on the contrary, it is inserted with great accuracy and propriety. Why so? Because it seems by his saying, "Shall a child be born to him who is a hundred years old?" that he had a doubt about the birth of Isaac, in which he was previously stated to believe; as what was predicted a little before showed, speaking thus, "This child shall not be thy heir, but he who shall come out of thee;" and immediately afterward he says, "Abraham believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

Since then it was not consistent for one who had already believed to doubt, he has represented the doubt as of no long continuance, extending only as far as the mouth of the tongue, and stopping there at the mind which is endowed with such celerity of motion; for, says the scripture, "he said in his mind," which nothing, and no person ever so celebrated for swiftness of foot, could ever be able to outstrip, since it outruns even all the winged natures;

on which account the most illustrious of all of the Greek poets appears to me to have said: —

For the fervid and glowing heat of that region does not suffer to rest tranquil; on which account, overleaping many things, it is borne far beyond every boundary

perceptible by the outward senses, to that which is compounded of ideas and appearances by the law of kindred. On which account in the good man there is a slight change, indivisible, unapportionable, not perceptible by the outward senses, but only by the intellect, and being in a manner independent of them.

Chapter XXXIV

But, perhaps, some one may say, What then? is he who has once believed bound never to admit the slightest trace, or shadow, or moment of incredulity at all? But this man appears to me to have nothing else in his mind except an idea of proving the creature uncreated, and the mortal immortal, and the corruptible incorruptible, and man, if it be lawful to say so, God.

For he says that the belief which man has once conceived ought to be so firm as in no respect to differ from that which is entertained of the truly living God and which is complete in every part; for Moses, in his greater hymn, says, "God is faithful, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." (deuteronomy 32:4.)

And it is great folly to fancy that the soul of man is able to contain the virtues of God, which never vary and which are established on the most solid footing; for it is sufficient, and one must be content to have been able to acquire the images of them, though they are inferior to the archetypal patterns by many and large numbers.

And is not this reasonable? for it follows of necessity that the virtues of God must be pure and unmixed, since God is not a compound being, inasmuch as he is a single nature; on

the other hand, the virtues of men must be mixed with some alloy, since we ourselves are compounds, the divine and human nature being combined in us, and adapted together according to the principles of perfect music; and that which is composed of many separate things has a natural attraction to each of its parts.

But he is happy to whom it has happened that for the greater portion of his life he has inclined towards the more excellent and more divine part; for that he should have done so all his life is impossible, since at times the mortal weight which is opposed to him has preponderated in the opposite scale, and impending over his mind, has kept watch for the opportunities of coming upon his reason at an unfavourable time, so as to drag it back again.

Chapter XXXV

Abraham therefore believed in God; but he believed as a man; that you may be aware of the peculiar attribute of mortals, and may learn that his fall did not happen to him in any other way than in consequence of the ordinances of nature. And if it was of short duration and only momentary, it is a thing to be thankful for: for many other men have been so overturned by the violence and impetuosity of error, and by its irresistible force, that they have been utterly destroyed for ever.

For know, my good man, that, according to the most holy Moses, virtue is not perfect in the human body, but it suffers something like torpor, and is often ever so little lame. For says the scripture, "The broader part of his thigh became torpid, on which he was lame."(genesis 32:25.)

And perhaps some man of an over-confident disposition may come forward and say that this is not the language of one who disbelieves, but of one praying, so that if that most excellent of all the happy feelings were about to be produced, it would not be brought forth according to any other number than that of ninety years, that so the perfect good might arrive at its production according to perfect numbers.

But the aforesaid numbers are perfect, and especially according to the sacred scriptures. And let us consider each of them: now first of all there is the son of the just Noah and the ancestor of the seeing race, and he is said to have been a hundred years old when he begat Arphaxad, and the meaning of the name of Arphaxad is, "he disturbed sorrow." At all events it is a good thing that the offspring of the soul should confuse, and disorder, and destroy that miserable thing iniquity, so full of evils.

But Abraham also planted a field, using the ratio of an hundred for the measurement of the ground: and Isaac found some barley yielding a hundred Fold. And Moses also made the vestibule of the sacred tabernacle in a hundred arches, measuring out the distance towards the east and towards the west.

Moreover the ratio of a hundred is the first fruit of the first fruit which the Levites assign to those who are consecrated to the priesthood; for after they have taken the tenth from the nation they are enjoined to give unto the priests a sacred tenth of the whole share, as if from their own possessions.

And if a person were to consider, he might find many other instances to the praise of the aforesaid number brought forward in the law of Moses, but for the present what have been enumerated are sufficient. But if from the hundred you set aside the tenth part as a sacred first fruit to God who produces, and increases, and brings to perfection the fruit of the soul — for how can it be anything but perfect, inasmuch as it is on the confines between the first and the tenth, in the same manner in which the Holy of Holies is separated by the veil in the middle. [...] (there is an hiatus in the text here.) by which those things which are of the same genus are divided according to the differences in species?

Chapter XXXVI

Therefore the good man was speaking and saying things which were really good in his mind. But the bad man at times interprets good things in a very excellent manner, but nevertheless does shameful things in a most shameful one, as Shechem does who is the offspring of folly. For he is the son of Hamon his father, and the name Hamon, being translated, means “an ass,” but the Shechem means “a shoulder” when interpreted, the symbol of labour. But that labour of which folly is the parent is miserable and full of suffering, as, on the other hand, that labour is useful to which prudence is related.

Accordingly the holy scriptures tell us that, “Shechem spake according to the mind of the virgin, having first humbled Her.” It is not said then, with great purpose and accuracy, that he spake according to the mind of the

damsel, for the purpose of showing distinctly that he acted in a contrary manner to that in which he spoke? For Dinah means "incorruptible judgment:" justice the attribute seated by God, the everlasting virgin; for the name Dinah, being interpreted, means either thing, "judgment" or "justice."

Fools, then, laying violent hands upon and attempting to defile her, by means of their daily designs and practices, by their plausibility of speech escape conviction. Therefore they must either act in a manner consistent with the language that they hold, or else they must hold their tongues while committing iniquity. For it is said, "Silence is one half of evil:" as Moses says when rebuking the man who accounted the creature worthy of the principal honour, and the immortal God worthy only of the second place, "Thou has sinned, be silent."

For to use bombastic language, and to boast of one's evil deeds, is a double sin: and men in general are very prone to this; for they are constantly saying what is pleasing to the ever-virgin virtue, and such things as are just: but they never omit any opportunity of insulting and violating her when they are able. For what city is there which is not full of those who are continually celebrating the praises of virtue? —

men who weary the ears of those who hear them by everlastingly dwelling on such subjects as these; wisdom is a necessary good; folly is pernicious; temperance is desirable; intemperance is hateful; courage is a thing proper to be cultivated; cowardice must be avoided; justice is advantageous; injustice is disadvantageous; holiness is

honourable; unholiness is shameful; piety towards the gods is praiseworthy; impiety is blameable; that which is most akin to the nature of man is to design, and to act, and to speak virtuously; that which is most alien from his nature is to do the contrary of all these things.

By continually stringing together these and similar aphorisms they deceive the courts of justice, and the council chambers, and the theatres, and every assembly and company which they meet; as men who put beautiful masks on ugly faces, with the intention of not being discovered by those who see them.

But it is of no use; for some persons will come endowed with great vigour, and occupied with a real zeal and admiration for virtue, and who will strip them of all their coverings, and disguises, and appendages which they had woven round themselves by the evil artifice of plausible speeches, and will display their soul naked by itself as it really is, and will make themselves acquainted with the secret things of their nature which are hidden as it were in recesses. And then having brought to light all its shame and all the reproaches to which it is liable, they will display them in broad daylight to every one, and show what sort of thing it is, how disgraceful and ridiculous, and what a spurious kind of beauty it has disguised itself with by means of its appendages and coverings.

And those who are prepared to avenge themselves on such profane and impure dispositions are Simeon and Levi, two indeed in number, but only one in mind; on which account, in his blessings of his sons, their father numbers them together under one classification, on account of the

harmonious character of their unanimity and of their violence in one and the same direction. But Moses does not make any mention of them afterwards as a pair, but classes the whole tribe of Simeon under that of Levi, combining together two essences, of which he made one impressed as it were with one idea and appearance, hearing to doing.

Chapter XXXVII

When, therefore, the virtuous man knew that the promise was uttering things full of reverence and prudent caution, according to his own mind, he admitted both these feelings into his breast, namely, faith in God, and incredulity as to the creature. Very naturally therefore he says, using the language of entreaty, "Would that this Ishmael might live before Thee," using each word of those which he utters here with deliberate propriety, namely, the "this," the "might live," the "before thee."

For it is no small number of persons who have been deceived by the similarity of the names of different things, and we had better examine here what I am saying. The name of Ishmael, being interpreted, means "the hearing of God," but some men listen to the divine doctrines to their benefit, and others listen to both his admonitions and to those of others only to their destruction. Do you recollect the case of the soothsayer Balaam? He is represented as hearing the oracles of God, and as having received knowledge from the Most High,

but what advantage did he reap from such hearing, and what good accrued to him from such knowledge? In his intention he endeavored to injure the most excellent eye of

the soul, which alone has received such instruction as to be able to behold God, but he was unable to do so by reason of the invincible power of the Saviour; therefore, being overthrown by his own insane wickedness, and having received many wounds, he perished amid the heaps of wounded, because he had stamped beforehand the divinely inspired prophecies with the sophistry of the soothsayers.

Very righteously, therefore, does the good man pray that this his only son, Ishmael, may be sound in mind and health, because of those persons who do not listen in a sincere spirit to the sacred admonitions, whom Moses has expressly forbidden to come into the assembly of the Ruler of the universe,

for those men are broken as to the generative parts of their minds, or are even rendered completely impotent in that respect, who magnify their own minds, and their external sense, as the only causes of all the events which take place among men; and there are others who are lovers of a system of polytheism, and who honour the company which is devoted to the service of many gods, being the sons of a harlot, having no knowledge of the one husband and father of the virtue-loving soul, namely, God; and are not all these men very properly driven away and banished from the assembly of God?

They appear to me very much to resemble those parents who accuse their sons of intemperance in wine, for they say, "This our son is Disobedient," indicating, by the addition of the word "this," that they have other sons likewise who are temperate and self-denying, and who obey the injunctions of right reason and instruction; for these are the most genuine

parents, by whom it is a most disgraceful thing to be accused, and a most glorious thing to be praised.

Then as to the words, "This is Aaron and Moses, whom God directed to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt," and the expression, "These are those who conversed with Pharaoh the king." Let us not think that they are used superfluously, or that they do not convey some intimations beyond the mere open meaning of the words;

for since Moses is the purest mind, and Aaron is his speech, and moreover, since the mind has been taught to think of divine things in a divine manner, and since the speech has learnt to interpret holy things in holy language, the sophists imitating them, and adulterating the genuine coinage, say, that they also conceive rightly, and speak in a praiseworthy manner about what is most excellent. In order, therefore, that we may not be deceived by a placing of the base money in juxtaposition with the good, by reason of the similitude of the impression, he has given us a test by which they may be distinguished.

What then is the test? To bring out of the region of the body the mind, endowed with the power of seeing, fond of contemplation and philosophical; for he who can do this is the same Moses; and he who is unable really to do so, but who is only said to be able, and who makes professions with infinite pomp and magnitude of language, is laughed at. But he prays that Ishmael may live, not meaning to refer to the life in conjunction with the body, but he prays that the divine voice, dwelling for evermore in his soul, may awaken and vivify it.

Chapter XXXVIII

And he indeed prays that the hearing of sacred words and the learning of sacred doctrine may live, as has been already said; but Jacob, the practiser of virtue, prays that the good natural disposition may live; for he says, "May Reuben live and not Die," does he then here pray for immortality for him, a thing impossible for man to attain to?

Surely not, we must then explain what it is which he intends to signify. All the lessons and all the admonitions of instruction are built up and established on the nature which is calculated to receive instruction, as on a foundation previously laid; but if there is no natural foundation previously in existence, everything is useless; for men, by nature destitute of sense, would not appear at all to differ from a stock or a lifeless stone; for nothing could possibly be adapted to them so as to cleave to them, but everything would rebound and spring back as from some hard body.

But on the other hand, we may see the souls of those who are well endowed by nature, like a well-smooth waxen tablet, neither too solid nor too tender, moderately tempered, and easily receiving all admonitions and all lessons, and themselves giving an accurate representation of any impression which has been stamped upon them, being a sort of distinct image of memory.

It was therefore indispensable to pray that a good natural disposition, free from all disease and from all mortality, should be joined to the rational race; for they are but few who partake of the life according to virtue, which is the most real and genuine life. I do not mean of the common

herd of men only, for of them there is not one who partakes of real life: but even of those to whom it has been granted to shun the objects of human desire, and to live to God alone.

On which account the practiser of virtue, that courageous man, marvelled greatly, if any one being borne along the middle of the stream of life, was not dragged down by any violence, but was able to withstand the flow of abundant wealth coming over him, and to stem the impetuosity of immoderate pleasure, and to avoid being carried away by the whirlwind of vain opinion.

At all events Jacob does not speak to Joseph more than the sacred scripture speaks to every one who is vigorous in his body, and who is seen to be immersed amid abundant treasures, and riches, and superfluities, and to be overcome by none of them, when he says, "For still thou livest," uttering a most marvellous sentiment, and one which is quite beyond the daily life of us who, if we have fallen in with ever so slight a breeze which bears us towards the good fortune, immediately set all sail and became greatly elated, and being full of great and high spirits, hurry forward with all our speed to the indulgence of our passions, and never will check our unbridled and immoderately excited desires until we run ashore and are wrecked as to the whole vessel of our souls.

Chapter XXXIX

Very beautifully therefore, do we pray that this Ishmael may live. Therefore, Abraham adds, "May he live before God," looking upon it as the perfection of all happiness for the mind to be accounted worthy of him who is the most

excellent of all beings, as its inspector and overseer;

for if, while the teacher is present the pupil cannot go wrong, and if a monitor being at hand is of service to the learner, and if while an elder person is present the younger man is adorned by modesty and temperance, and if the presence of his father or of his mother have often prevented a son when about to commit sin, even though they are only beheld by him in silence, then what excess of good must we imagine that man to enjoy, who believes that he is always watched and beheld by God? for while he fears and reverences and looks up to the dignity of him as being present, he will flee from committing iniquity with all his might.

But when he prays that Ishmael may live, he does not despair of the birth of Isaac, as I have already said, but he believes in God; for it does not follow that what it is possible for God to give, it is also possible for man to receive, since to God it is easy to give the most numerous and important benefits, but to us it is not easy to accept of the gifts which are proffered to us;

for we must be content, if, by means of labour and diligence, we obtain a share of those good things which are familiar and customary to us. But there is no hope that we can attain to those which come of their own accord, and from some ever ready and previously prepared source, without any art, or in short, any human contrivance whatever; for inasmuch as these things are divine, they must of necessity be found out by more divine and unadulterated natures, such as have no connection with any mortal body.

And Moses has shown that every one, to the best of his power, ought to make grateful acknowledgments for benefits received; for instance, that the clever man ought to offer up as a sacrifice his acuteness and wisdom; the eloquent man should consecrate all his excellences of speech, by means of psalms and a regular enumeration of the greatness and panegyric on the living God; and to proceed with each species, he who is a natural philosopher should offer up his natural philosophy; he who is a moral philosopher should make an offering of his ethical philosophy; he who is skilful in any art or science should dedicate to God his knowledge of the arts and sciences.

Thus again a sailor and a pilot should dedicate their successful voyage; the agricultural farmer, his productive crops; the stock-farmer, the prolific increase of his flocks and herds; the physician, the good health of his patients; the commander of an army, his success in war; the magistrate or the king will offer up his administration of the laws or his sovereign power. And, in short, the man who is not blinded by self-love, looks upon the only true maker of all things, God, as the cause of all the good things affecting his soul, or body, or his external circumstances.

Let no one therefore, of those who seem to be somewhat obscure and humble, from a despair of any better hope, hesitate to become a suppliant to God. But even if he no longer looks forward to any great advantages, still let him, to the best of his power, give God thanks for the blessings which he has already received,

and in effect, those which he has received are countless; his birth, his life, his soul, his food, his outward senses, his

imagination, his inclinations, his reason; and reason is a very short word, but a most perfect and admirable thing, a fragment of the soul of the universe, or, as it is more pious to say for those who study philosophy according to Moses, a very faithful copy of the divine image.

Chapter XL

It is right also to praise those inquirers after truth, who have endeavored to tear up and carry off the whole trunk of virtue, root and branch: but since they have not been able to do it, have at least taken either a single shoot, or a single bunch of fruit, as a specimen and portion of the whole tree, being all that they were able to Bear.

It is a desirable thing, indeed, to associate at once with the entire company of the virtues; but if this be too great an indulgence to be granted to human nature, let us be content if it has fallen to our lot to be connected with any one of the particular virtues, as a portion of the whole band, such as temperance, or courage, or justice, or humanity; for the soul may produce and bring forth some good from even one of them, and so avoid being barren and unproductive of any.

But will you impose any such injunctions as these on your own son? Unless you treat your servants with gentleness, do not treat those of the same rank as yourself socially. Unless you behave decorously to your wife, never bear yourself respectfully to your parents. If you neglect your father and your mother, be impious also towards God. If you delight in pleasure, you must not keep aloof from covetousness. Do you desire great riches? Then be also eager for vain-glory.

For what more need we add? Need you not desire to be moderate in some things unless you are able to be so in all? Would not your son say to you in such a case, My father, what do you mean? Do you wish your son to become either perfectly good or perfectly bad, and will you not be content if he keeps the middle path between the two extremes?

Was it not for this reason that Abraham also, at the time of the destruction of Sodom, began at fifty and ended at Ten? Therefore, propitiating and supplicating God, entreat him that if there could be found among his creatures a complete remission so as to give them liberty, of which the sacred number of fifty is a symbol, at least the intermediate instruction which is equal in number to the decade, might be accepted for the sake of the deliverance of the soul which was about to be condemned.

But those who are instructed have many more opportunities of prayer than those who are destitute of teachers, and those who are well initiated in encyclical accomplishments have more opportunities than those who are unmusical and illiterate, inasmuch as they from their childhood almost have been imbued with all the lessons of virtue, and temperance, and all kinds of excellence. Wherefore, even if they have not entirely got rid of and effaced old marks of iniquity so as to wear a completely clean appearance, at least they have purified themselves in a reasonable and moderate degree.

And it is something like this that Esau seems to have said to his father, "Have you not one blessing for me, O my father? Bless me, bless me, also, O my Father!" For different blessings have been set apart for different

persons, perfect blessings for the perfect, and moderate blessings for the imperfect. As is the case also with bodies; for there are different exercises appropriate to those which are in health, and to those which are sick. And also different regimens of food, and different systems of living, and not the same. But some things are suitable to the one kind that they may not become at all diseased; and other things are good for the other sort, they they may be changed and rendered more healthy.

Since, therefore, there are many good things existing in nature, give me that which appears to be best adapted to my circumstances, even if it be the most trifling thing possible; looking at this one point alone, whether I shall be able to bear what is given me with equanimity, and not, like a wretched person, sink under and be overwhelmed by it.

Again, what do we imagine to be meant by the words, "Will not the hand of the Lord be Sufficient?" Do they not signify that the powers of the living God penetrate everywhere for the purpose of conferring benefits, not only on those who are noble, but on those also who appear to be in a more obscure condition, to whom also God gives such things as are suitable to the measure and weight of the soul of each individual, conjecturing and measuring in his own mind with perfect equality what is proportionate to the circumstances and requirements of each.

But what makes an impression on me in no ordinary degree is the law which is enacted with respect to those who put off their sins and seem to be repentant. For this law commands that the first victim which such persons offer shall be a female sheep without spot. But, if it proceeds,

“his hand is not strong enough to bring a sheep, then for the trespass which he has committed he shall bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons, one for his trespass and one for a burnt offering;

and if his hand cannot find a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons, then he shall bring as his gift the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not pour oil upon it, nor shall he place any frankincense thereon, because it is a sin offering; and he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest having taken it from him shall take a full handful of it, and place it as a memorial on the Altar.”

God therefore here is propitiated by three different kinds of repentance, by the aforesaid beasts, or by the birds, or by the while flour, according, in short, to the ability of him who is being purified and who repents. For small offences do not require great purifications, nor are small purifications fit for great crimes; but they should be equal, and similar, and in due proportion.

It is worth while, therefore, to examine what is meant by this purification which may be accomplished in three ways. Now it may almost be said that both offences and good actions are perceived to exist in three things; in intention, or in words, or in actions. On which account Moses, teaching in his hortatory admonitions that the attainment of good is not impossible nor even very difficult, says,

“It is not necessary to soar up to heaven, nor to go to the borders of the earth and sea, for the attainment of it, but it is near, yea, and very Near.” And then in a subsequent passage he shows it all but to the naked eye as one may say,

where he says, "Every action is in thy mouth, or in thy heart, or in thy Hands:" meaning under this symbolical expression, in thy words, or in thy designs, or in thy actions. For he means that human happiness consists in wise design, and good language, and righteous actions, just as the unhappiness arises from the contrary course.

For both well-doing and wrong-doing exist in the same regions, in the heart, or in the mouth, or in the hand; for some persons decide in the most righteous, and sagacious manner, some speak most excellently, some do only what ought to be done: again, of the three sources of error the most unimportant is to design to do what ought not to be done, the most grievous is to do what is iniquitous, the middle evil is to speak improperly.

But it often happens that even what is least important is the most difficult to be removed; for it is very hard to bring an agitated state of the soul to tranquillity; and one may more easily check the impetuosity of a torrent than the perversion of the soul which is hurrying in a wrong direction, without restraint. For innumerable notions coming one upon the other like the waves of a stormy sea, bearing everything along with them, and throwing everything into confusion, overturn the whole soul with irresistible violence.

Therefore the most excellent, and most perfect kind of purification is this, not to admit into one's mind any improper notions, but to regulate it in peace and obedience to law, the ruler of which principles is justice. The next kind is, not to offend in one's language either by speaking falsely, or by swearing falsely, or by deceiving, or by

practicing sophistry, or by laying false informations; or, in short, by letting loose one's mouth and tongue to the injury of any one, as it is better to put a bridle and an insuperable chain on those members.

But why it is a more grievous offence to say what is wrong than only to think it, is very easy to see. For some times a person thinks without any deliberate previous intention of so thinking, but inconsiderately: for he is compelled to admit ideas in his mind which he does not wish to admit; and nothing which is involuntary is blameable:

but a man speaks intentionally, so that if he utters words which are not proper he is unhappy and is committing offence, since he does not even by chance choose to say anything that is proper, and it would be more for his advantage to adopt that safest expedient of silence: and, in the second place, anyone who is not silent can be silent if he pleases.

But what is even a still more grievous offence than speaking wrongly, is unjust action. For the word, as it is said, is the shadow of the deed; and how can an injurious deed help being more mischievous than a shadow of the same character? On this account Moses released the mind, even when it yielded to many involuntary perversions and errors, from accusations and from penalties, thinking that it was rather acted upon by notions which forced their way into it, than was itself acting. But whatever goes out through the mouth that he makes the utterer responsible for and brings him before the tribunal, since the act of speaking is one which is in our own power.

But the investigation to which words are subject is a much more moderate one, and that with which words are united is a more vigorous one. For he imposes severe punishments on those who commit gross offences, and who carry out in action, and utter with hasty tongues what they have been designed in their unjust minds.

Therefore he has called the purifying victims which are to be offered up for the three offenders, the mind, speech, and the action, a sheep, and a pair of turtle doves or pigeons, and the tenth part of a sacred measure of fine flour; thinking it fit that the mind should be purified by a sheep, the speech by winged creatures, and the action by fine flour: Why is this?

Because, as the mind is the most excellent thing in us, so also is the sheep the most excellent among irrational animals, inasmuch as it is most gentle, and also as it gives forth a yearly produce in its fleece, for the use and also for the ornament of mankind. For clothes keep off all injury from both cold and heat, and also they conceal the unmentionable parts of nature, and in this way they are an ornament to those who use them:

therefore the sheep, as being the most excellent of animals, is a symbol of the purification of the most excellent part of man, the mind. And birds are an emblem of the purification of speech: for speech is a light thing, and winged by nature, flying and penetrating in every direction more swiftly than an arrow. For what is once said can never be re-called; (this resembles what is said by Horace in A. P. 390 and in Epist. I. 18.71.) but being borne abroad, and running on with great swiftness, it strikes the ears and

penetrates every sense of hearing, resounding loudly: but speech is of two kinds, one true and the other false;

on which account it appears to me to be here compared to a pair of turtle doves or young pigeons: and of these birds one he says is to be looked upon as a sin offering, since the speech which is true is wholly and in all respects sacred and perfect, but that which is false is very wrong and requires correction.

Again, as I have already said, fine flour is a symbol of the purification of activity, but it is sorted from the commoner sort by the hands of the bakers, who make the business their study. On which account the law says, "And the priest having taken an entire handful, shall place it on the altar as a memorial of them," by the word handful, indicating both the endeavor and the action.

And he speaks with exceeding accuracy with respect to the sheep, when he says, "And if his hand be not strong enough to supply a sheep;" but with respect to the birds he says, "And if he cannot find a bird." Why is this? Because it is a sign of very great strength and of excessive power, to get rid of the errors of the mind: but it does not require any great strength, to check the errors of words;

for, as I have said already, silence is a remedy for all the offences that can be committed by the voice, and every one may easily practise silence; but yet, by reason of their chattering habits and want of moderation in their language, many people cannot find out how to impose a limitation on their speech.

Since the, the virtuous man has been bred up among and practised in these and similar divisions and discriminations of things, does he not rightly appear to pray that Ishmael may live, if he is not as yet able to become the father of Isaac?

What then does the merciful God say? To him who asks for one thing he gives two, and on him who prays for what is less he bestows what is greater; for, says the historian, he said unto Abraham, "Yea, behold, Sarrah thy wife shall bring forth a Son." Very felicitous and significant is this answer, "Yea;" for what can be more suitable to and more like the character of God, than to promise good things and to ratify that promise with all speed!

But what God promises every foolish man repudiates; therefore the sacred scriptures represent Leah as hated, and on this account it is that she received that name; for Leah, being interpreted, means "repudiating and labouring," because we all turn away from virtue and think it a laborious thing, by reason of its very often imposing commands on us which are not pleasant.

But nevertheless, she is thought worthy of such an honourable reception from the prince, that her womb is opened by him, so as to receive the seed of divine generation, in order to cause the production of honourable pursuits and actions. Learn therefore, O soul, that Sarrah, that is, virtue, will bring forth to thee a son; and that Hagar, or intermediate instruction, is not the only one who will do so; for her offspring is one which has its knowledge from teaching, but the offspring of the other is entirely self-taught.

And do not wonder, if God, who brings forth all good things, has also brought forth this race, which, though rare upon the earth, is very numerous in heaven. And you may learn this also from other things of which man consists: do the eyes see from having been taught to do so? And what do the nostrils do? Do they smell by reason of their having learnt? And do the hands touch, or the feet advance, in accordance with the commands or recommendations of instructors?

Again, do the appetites and imaginations (and these are the first moving powers and persuasions of the soul) exist in consequence of teaching? And has our mind gone as a pupil to any sophist, in order to learn to think and to comprehend? All these things repudiate all kinds of instruction, and avail themselves only of the spontaneous gifts of nature to exert their appropriate energies.

Why then do you any longer wonder if God showers upon men virtue, unaccompanied by any labour or suffering, such as stand in need of no superintending care or instruction, but is from the very beginning entire and perfect? And if you wish to receive any testimony in corroboration of this view, can you find any more trustworthy than that of Moses? And he says that the rest of mankind derive their food from earth, but that he alone who is endowed with the power of sight, derives his from heaven.

And men occupied in agriculture co-operate to produce the food from the earth; but God, the only cause and giver, rains down the food from heaven without the cooperation of any other being. And, indeed, we read in the scriptures, "Behold, I rain upon you bread from Heaven." Now what

nourishment can the scriptures properly say is rained down, except heavenly wisdom?

which God sends from above upon those souls which have a longing for virtue, God who possesses a great abundance and exceeding treasure of wisdom, and who irrigates the universe, and especially so on the sacred seventh day which he calls the sabbath; for then, he says, that there is an influx of spontaneous good things, not rising from any kind of art, but shooting up by their own spontaneous and self-perfecting nature, and bearing appropriate fruit.

Virtue, therefore, will bring thee forth a legitimate male child, far removed from all effeminate passions; and thou shalt call the name of thy son by the name of the passion which thou feelest in regard to him; and thou wilt by all means feel joy; so that thou shalt give him a name which is an emblem of joy, namely, Laughter.

As grief and fear have their appropriate expressions which the passion, when more than usually violent and predominant, gives utterance to; so also, good counsels and happiness compel a man to employ a natural expression of them, for which no one could find out more appropriate and felicitous names, even if he were very skilful in the imposition of names.

On which account God says, "I have blessed him, I will increase him, I will multiply him, he shall beget twelve Nations;" that is to say, he shall beget the whole circle and ring of the sophistical preliminary branches of education; but I will make my covenant with Israel, that the race of mankind may receive each kind of virtue, the weaker part of

them receiving both that which is taught by others, and that which is learnt by one's self, and the stronger part that which is ready and prepared.

"And at that time," says he, "she shall bring forth a son to Thee;" that is to say, wisdom shall bring forth joy. What time, O most marvellous being, are you pointing out? Is it that which cannot be indicated by the thing brought forth? For that must be the real time, the rising of the universe, the prosperity and happiness of the whole earth, and of heaven, and of all intermediate natures, and of all animals, and of all plants.

On which account Moses also took courage to say to those who had run away, and who did not dare to enter upon a war in the cause of virtue against those who were arrayed against it, "The Lord has departed from them, but the Lord is in Us;" for he here almost confesses in express words that God is time, who stands aloof and at a distance from every impious person, but walks among those souls which cultivate virtue.

"For," says he, "I will walk among you, and I will be your God." (leviticus 26:12.) But those who say that what is meant by time is only the seasons of the year are misapplying the names with great inaccuracy, like men who have not studied the nature of things with any care, but have gone on to a great degree at random.

But by way of amplifying the beauty of the creature to be born, he says that it shall be born the next year, indicating by the term, "the next Year," not a difference of time, such as is measured by lunar or solar periods, but that which is

truly marvellous, and strange, and new, being an age which is very different from those which are visible to the eyes and perceptible to the outward senses, being investigated in incorporeal things appreciable only by the intellect, which, in fact, is the model and archetype of time. But an age is a name given to the life of the world, intelligible only by the intellect, as time is that given to the life of the world, perceptible by the outward senses.

And in this year the man who had sown the graces of God so as to produce many more good things, in order that the greatest possible number of persons worthy to share them might participate in them, finds also the barley producing a Hundredfold. But he who has sown does usually also reap.

And he sowed, displaying the virtue, the enemy of envy and wickedness; he is, however, here said to find, not to reap. For he who has made the ear of his good deeds more productive and full, was a different person, having laid up an abundance of greater hopes well prepared, and he also proposed more abundant advantages to all those who sought them, encouraging them to hope to find them.

And the words, "He finished speaking to Him," are equivalent to saying, he made his hearer perfect, though he was devoid of wisdom before, and he filled him with immortal lessons. But when his disciple became perfect, the Lord went up and departed from Abraham, showing, not that he separated himself from him; for the wise man is naturally an attendant of God, not wishing to represent the spontaneous inclination of the disciple in order that as he had learnt while his teacher was no longer standing by him, and without any necessity urging him, giving of his own

accord a specimen of himself, and displaying a voluntary and spontaneous eagerness to learn, he might for the future exert his energies by himself; for the teacher assigns a model to him who has learnt by voluntary study without any suggestions from other quarters, stamping on him a most durable species of indelible recollection.