

Augustine of Hippo:

The City of God (Book XX) (397-400 A.D.)

Concerning the last judgment, and the declarations regarding it in the old and new testaments.

Chapter 1.— That Although God is Always Judging, It is Nevertheless Reasonable to Confine Our Attention in This Book to His Last Judgment.

Intending to speak, in dependence on God's grace, of the day of His final judgment, and to affirm it against the ungodly and incredulous, we must first of all lay, as it were, in the foundation of the edifice the divine declarations. Those persons who do not believe such declarations do their best to oppose to them false and illusive sophisms of their own, either contending that what is adduced from Scripture has another meaning, or altogether denying that it is an utterance of God's. For I suppose no man who understands what is written, and believes it to be communicated by the supreme and true God through holy men, refuses to yield and consent to these declarations, whether he orally confesses his consent, or is from some evil influence ashamed or afraid to do so; or even, with an opinionativeness closely resembling madness, makes strenuous efforts to defend what he knows and believes to be false against what he knows and believes to be true.

That, therefore, which the whole Church of the true God holds and professes as its creed, that Christ shall come from heaven to judge quick and dead, this we call the last day, or last time, of the divine judgment. For we do not know how many days this judgment may occupy; but no one who reads the Scriptures, however negligently, need be told that in them day is customarily used for time. And when we speak of the day of God's judgment, we add the word last or final for this reason, because even now God judges, and has judged from the beginning of human history, banishing from paradise, and excluding from the tree of life, those first men who perpetrated so great a sin. Yea, He was certainly exercising judgment also when He did not spare the angels who sinned, whose prince, overcome by envy, seduced men after being himself seduced. Neither is it without God's profound and just judgment that the life of demons and men, the one in the air, the other on earth, is filled with misery, calamities, and mistakes. And even though no one had sinned, it could only have been by the good and right judgment of God that the whole rational creation could have been maintained in eternal blessedness by a persevering adherence to its Lord. He judges, too, not only in the mass, condemning the race of devils and the race of men to be miserable on account of the original sin of these races, but He also judges the voluntary and personal acts of individuals. For even the devils pray that they may not be tormented, Matthew 8:29 which proves that without injustice they might either be spared or tormented according to their deserts. And men are punished by God for their sins often visibly, always secretly, either in this life or after death, although no man acts rightly save by the assistance of divine aid; and no man or devil acts unrighteously save by the permission of the divine and most just judgment. For, as the apostle says, There is no unrighteousness with God; Romans 9:14 and as he elsewhere says, His judgments are inscrutable, and His ways past

finding out. Romans 11:33 In this book, then, I shall speak, as God permits, not of those first judgments, nor of these intervening judgments of God, but of the last judgment, when Christ is to come from heaven to judge the quick and the dead. For that day is properly called the day of judgment, because in it there shall be no room left for the ignorant questioning why this wicked person is happy and that righteous man unhappy. In that day true and full happiness shall be the lot of none but the good, while deserved and supreme misery shall be the portion of the wicked, and of them only.

Chapter 2.— That in the Mingled Web of Human Affairs God's Judgment is Present, Though It Cannot Be Discerned.

In this present time we learn to bear with equanimity the ills to which even good men are subject, and to hold cheap the blessings which even the wicked enjoy. And consequently, even in those conditions of life in which the justice of God is not apparent, His teaching is salutary. For we do not know by what judgment of God this good man is poor and that bad man rich; why he who, in our opinion, ought to suffer acutely for his abandoned life enjoys himself, while sorrow pursues him whose praiseworthy life leads us to suppose he should be happy; why the innocent man is dismissed from the bar not only unavenged, but even condemned, being either wronged by the iniquity of the judge, or overwhelmed by false evidence, while his guilty adversary, on the other hand, is not only discharged with impunity, but even has his claims admitted; why the ungodly enjoys good health, while the godly pines in sickness; why ruffians are of the soundest constitution, while they who could not hurt any one even with a word are from infancy afflicted with complicated disorders; why he who is useful to society is cut off by premature death, while those who, as it might seem, ought never to have been so much as born have lives of unusual length; why he who is full of crimes is crowned with honors, while the blameless man is buried in the darkness of neglect. But who can collect or enumerate all the contrasts of this kind? But if this anomalous state of things were uniform in this life, in which, as the sacred Psalmist says, Man is like to vanity, his days as a shadow that passes away, — so uniform that none but wicked men won the transitory prosperity of earth, while only the good suffered its ills — this could be referred to the just and even benign judgment of God. We might suppose that they who were not destined to obtain those everlasting benefits which constitute human blessedness were either deluded by transitory blessings as the just reward of their wickedness, or were, in God's mercy, consoled by them, and that they who were not destined to suffer eternal torments were afflicted with temporal chastisement for their sins, or were stimulated to greater attainment in virtue. But now, as it is, since we not only see good men involved in the ills of life, and bad men enjoying the good of it, which seems unjust, but also that evil often overtakes evil men, and good surprises the good, the rather on this account are God's judgments unsearchable, and His ways past finding out. Although, therefore, we do not know by what judgment these things are done or permitted to be done by God, with whom is the highest virtue, the highest wisdom, the highest justice, no infirmity, no rashness, no unrighteousness, yet it is salutary for us to learn to hold cheap such things, be they good or evil, as attach indifferently to good men and bad, and to covet those good things which belong only to good men, and flee those evils which belong only to evil men. But when we shall have come to that judgment, the date of which is called peculiarly the day of judgment, and sometimes the day of the Lord, we shall then recognize the justice of all God's judgments, not only of such as shall then be pronounced, but, of all which take effect from the beginning, or may take effect before that time. And in that day we shall also recognize with what justice so many, or almost all, the just judgments of God in the present life

defy the scrutiny of human sense or insight, though in this matter it is not concealed from pious minds that what is concealed is just.

Chapter 3.— What Solomon, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, Says Regarding the Things Which Happen Alike to Good and Wicked Men.

Solomon, the wisest king of Israel, who reigned in Jerusalem, thus commences the book called Ecclesiastes, which the Jews number among their canonical Scriptures: Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit has a man of all his labor which he has taken under the sun? And after going on to enumerate, with this as his text, the calamities and delusions of this life, and the shifting nature of the present time, in which there is nothing substantial, nothing lasting, he bewails, among the other vanities that are under the sun, this also, that though wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness, and though the eyes of the wise man are in his head, while the fool walks in darkness, Ecclesiastes 2:13-14 yet one event happens to them all, that is to say, in this life under the sun, unquestionably alluding to those evils which we see befall good and bad men alike. He says, further, that the good suffer the ills of life as if they were evil doers, and the bad enjoy the good of life as if they were good. There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men unto whom it happens according to the work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men, to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said, that this also is vanity. Ecclesiastes 8:14 This wisest man devoted this whole book to a full exposure of this vanity, evidently with no other object than that we might long for that life in which there is no vanity under the sun, but verity under Him who made the sun. In this vanity, then, was it not by the just and righteous judgment of God that man, made like to vanity, was destined to pass away? But in these days of vanity it makes an important difference whether he resists or yields to the truth, and whether he is destitute of true piety or a partaker of it — important not so far as regards the acquirement of the blessings or the evasion of the calamities of this transitory and vain life, but in connection with the future judgment which shall make over to good men good things, and to bad men bad things, in permanent, inalienable possession. In fine, this wise man concludes this book of his by saying, Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is every man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every despised person, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 What truer, terser, more salutary enunciation could be made? Fear God, he says, and keep His commandments: for this is every man. For whosoever has real existence, is this, is a keeper of God's commandments; and he who is not this, is nothing. For so long as he remains in the likeness of vanity, he is not renewed in the image of the truth. For God shall bring into judgment every work,— that is, whatever man does in this life —whether it be good or whether it be evil, with every despised person, — that is, with every man who here seems despicable, and is therefore not considered; for God sees even him and does not despise him nor pass him over in His judgment.

Chapter 4.— That Proofs of the Last Judgment Will Be Adduced, First from the New Testament, and Then from the Old.

The proofs, then, of this last judgment of God which I propose to adduce shall be drawn first from the New Testament, and then from the Old. For although the Old Testament is prior in point of time, the New

has the precedence in intrinsic value; for the Old acts the part of herald to the New. We shall therefore first cite passages from the New Testament, and confirm them by quotations from the Old Testament. The Old contains the law and the prophets, the New the gospel and the apostolic epistles. Now the apostle says By the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; now the righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ upon all them that believe. Romans 3:20-22 This righteousness of God belongs to the New Testament, and evidence for it exists in the old books, that is to say, in the law and the prophets. I shall first, then state the case, and then call the witnesses. This order Jesus Christ Himself directs us to observe, saying, The scribe instructed in the kingdom of God is like a good householder, bringing out of his treasure things new and old. Matthew 13:52 He did not say old and new, which He certainly would have said had He not wished to follow the order of merit rather than that of time.

Chapter 5.— The Passages in Which the Saviour Declares that There Shall Be a Divine Judgment in the End of the World.

The Saviour Himself, while reproofing the cities in which He had done great works, but which had not believed, and while setting them in unfavorable comparison with foreign cities, says, But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. Matthew 11:22 And a little after He says, Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you. Matthew 11:24 Here He most plainly predicts that a day of judgment is to come. And in another place He says, The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the utter most parts of the earth to hear the words of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. Matthew 12:41-42 Two things we learn from this passage, that a judgment is to take place, and that it is to take place at the resurrection of the dead. For when He spoke of the Ninevites and the queen of the south, He certainly spoke of dead persons, and yet He said that they should rise up in the day of judgment. He did not say, They shall condemn, as if they themselves were to be the judges, but because, in comparison with them, the others shall be justly condemned.

Again, in another passage, in which He was speaking of the present intermingling and future separation of the good and bad — the separation which shall be made in the day of judgment — He adduced a comparison drawn from the sown wheat and the tares sown among them, and gave this explanation of it to His disciples: He that sows the good seed is the Son of man, etc. Here, indeed, He did not name the judgment or the day of judgment, but indicated it much more clearly by describing the circumstances, and foretold that it should take place in the end of the world.

In like manner He says to His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28 Here we learn that Jesus shall judge with His

disciples. And therefore He said elsewhere to the Jews, If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. Matthew 12:27 Neither ought we to suppose that only twelve men shall judge along with Him, though He says that they shall sit upon twelve thrones; for by the number twelve is signified the completeness of the multitude of those who shall judge. For the two parts of the number seven (which commonly symbolizes totality), that is to say four and three, multiplied into one another, give twelve. For four times three, or three times four, are twelve. There are other meanings, too, in this number twelve. Were not this the right interpretation of the twelve thrones, then since we read that Matthias was ordained an apostle in the room of Judas the traitor, the Apostle Paul, though he labored more than them all, 1 Corinthians 15:10 should have no throne of judgment; but he unmistakably considers himself to be included in the number of the judges when he says, Do you not know that we shall judge angels? 1 Corinthians 6:3 The same rule is to be observed in applying the number twelve to those who are to be judged. For though it was said, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, the tribe of Levi, which is the thirteenth, shall not on this account be exempt from judgment, neither shall judgment be passed only on Israel and not on the other nations. And by the words in the regeneration, He certainly meant the resurrection of the dead to be understood; for our flesh shall be regenerated by incorruption, as our soul is regenerated by faith.

Many passages I omit, because, though they seem to refer to the last judgment, yet on a closer examination they are found to be ambiguous, or to allude rather to some other event — whether to that coming of the Saviour which continually occurs in His Church, that is, in His members, in which comes little by little, and piece by piece, since the whole Church is His body, or to the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem. For when He speaks even of this, He often uses language which is applicable to the end of the world and that last and great day of judgment, so that these two events cannot be distinguished unless all the corresponding passages bearing on the subject in the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are compared with one another — for some things are put more obscurely by one evangelist and more plainly by another — so that it becomes apparent what things are meant to be referred to one event. It is this which I have been at pains to do in a letter which I wrote to Hesychius of blessed memory, bishop of Salon, and entitled, Of the End of the World.

I shall now cite from the Gospel according to Matthew the passage which speaks of the separation of the good from the wicked by the most efficacious and final judgment of Christ: When the Son of man, he says, shall come in His glory, . . . then shall He say also unto them on His left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Then He in like manner recounts to the wicked the things they had not done, but which He had said those on the right hand had done. And when they ask when they had seen Him in need of these things, He replies that, inasmuch as they had not done it to the least of His brethren, they had not done it unto Him, and concludes His address in the words, And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Moreover, the evangelist John most distinctly states that He had predicted that the judgment should be at the resurrection of the dead. For after saying, The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father: he that honors not the Son, honors not the Father which has sent Him; He immediately adds, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my

word and believes in Him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death to life. John 5:22-24 Here He said that believers on Him should not come into judgment. How, then, shall they be separated from the wicked by judgment, and be set at His right hand, unless judgment be in this passage used for condemnation? For into judgment, in this sense, they shall not come who hear His word, and believe in Him that sent Him.

Chapter 6.— What is the First Resurrection, and What the Second.

After that He adds the words, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself. John 5:25-26 As yet He does not speak of the second resurrection, that is, the resurrection of the body, which shall be in the end, but of the first, which now is. It is for the sake of making this distinction that He says, The hour is coming, and now is. Now this resurrection regards not the body, but the soul. For souls, too, have a death of their own in wickedness and sins, whereby they are the dead of whom the same lips say, Suffer the dead to bury their dead, Matthew 8:22 — that is, let those who are dead in soul bury them that are dead in body. It is of these dead, then — the dead in ungodliness and wickedness— that He says, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. They that hear, that is, they who obey, believe, and persevere to the end. Here no difference is made between the good and the bad. For it is good for all men to hear His voice and live, by passing to the life of godliness from the death of ungodliness. Of this death the Apostle Paul says, Therefore all are dead, and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 Thus all, without one exception, were dead in sins, whether original or voluntary sins, sins of ignorance, or sins committed against knowledge; and for all the dead there died the one only person who lived, that is, who had no sin whatever, in order that they who live by the remission of their sins should live, not to themselves, but to Him who died for all, for our sins, and rose again for our justification, that we, believing in Him who justifies the ungodly, and being justified from ungodliness or quickened from death, may be able to attain to the first resurrection which now is. For in this first resurrection none have a part save those who shall be eternally blessed; but in the second, of which He goes on to speak, all, as we shall learn, have a part, both the blessed and the wretched. The one is the resurrection of mercy, the other of judgment. And therefore it is written in the psalm, I will sing of mercy and of judgment: unto You, O Lord, will I sing.

And of this judgment He went on to say, And has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. Here He shows that He will come to judge in that flesh in which He had come to be judged. For it is to show this He says, because He is the Son of man. And then follow the words for our purpose: Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment. John 5:28-29 This judgment He uses here in the same sense as a little before, when He says, He that hears my word, and believes in Him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death to life; i.e., by having a part in the first resurrection, by which a transition from death to life is made in this present time, he shall not come into

damnation, which He mentions by the name of judgment, as also in the place where He says, but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment, i.e., of damnation. He, therefore, who would not be damned in the second resurrection, let him rise in the first. For the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live, i.e., shall not come into damnation, which is called the second death; into which death, after the second or bodily resurrection, they shall be hurled who do not rise in the first or spiritual resurrection. For the hour is coming (but here He does not say, and now is, because it shall come in the end of the world in the last and greatest judgment of God) when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth. He does not say, as in the first resurrection, And they that Hear shall live. For all shall not live, at least with such life as ought alone to be called life because it alone is blessed. For some kind of life they must have in order to hear, and come forth from the graves in their rising bodies. And why all shall not live He teaches in the words that follow: They that have done good, to the resurrection of life,— these are they who shall live; but they that have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment, — these are they who shall not live, for they shall die in the second death. They have done evil because their life has been evil; and their life has been evil because it has not been renewed in the first or spiritual resurrection which now is, or because they have not persevered to the end in their renewed life. As, then, there are two regenerations, of which I have already made mention — the one according to faith, and which takes place in the present life by means of baptism; the other according to the flesh, and which shall be accomplished in its incorruption and immortality by means of the great and final judgment — so are there also two resurrections — the one the first and spiritual resurrection, which has place in this life, and preserves us from coming into the second death; the other the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the world, and which is of the body, not of the soul, and which by the last judgment shall dismiss some into the second death, others into that life which has no death.

Chapter 7.— What is Written in the Revelation of John Regarding the Two Resurrections, and the Thousand Years, and What May Reasonably Be Held on These Points.

The evangelist John has spoken of these two resurrections in the book which is called the Apocalypse, but in such a way that some Christians do not understand the first of the two, and so construe the passage into ridiculous fancies. For the Apostle John says in the foresaid book, And I saw an angel come down from heaven. . . . Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Those who, on the strength of this passage, have suspected that the first resurrection is future and bodily, have been moved, among other things, specially by the number of a thousand years, as if it were a fit thing that the saints should thus enjoy a kind of Sabbath-rest during that period, a holy leisure after the labors of the six thousand years since man was created, and was on account of his great sin dismissed from the blessedness of paradise into the woes of this mortal life, so that thus, as it is written, One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, 2 Peter 3:8 there should follow on the completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day Sabbath in the succeeding thousand years; and that it is for this purpose the saints rise, viz., to celebrate this Sabbath. And this opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God; for I myself, too, once held this opinion. But, as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with

an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them are called by the spiritual Chiliasts, which we may literally reproduce by the name Millenarians. It were a tedious process to refute these opinions point by point: we prefer proceeding to show how that passage of Scripture should be understood.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man — meaning by the strong man the devil, because he had power to take captive the human race; and meaning by his goods which he was to take, those who had been held by the devil in various sins and iniquities, but were to become believers in Himself. It was then for the binding of this strong one that the apostle saw in the Apocalypse an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a chain in his hand. And he laid hold, he says, on the dragon, that old serpent, which is called the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,— that is, bridled and restrained his power so that he could not seduce and gain possession of those who were to be freed. Now the thousand years may be understood in two ways, so far as occurs to me: either because these things happen in the sixth thousand of years or sixth millennium (the latter part of which is now passing), as if during the sixth day, which is to be followed by a Sabbath which has no evening, the endless rest of the saints, so that, speaking of a part under the name of the whole, he calls the last part of the millennium — the part, that is, which had yet to expire before the end of the world — a thousand years; or he used the thousand years as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fullness of time. For a thousand is the cube of ten. For ten times ten makes a hundred, that is; the square on a plane superficies. But to give this superficies height, and make it a cube, the hundred is again multiplied by ten, which gives a thousand. Besides, if a hundred is sometimes used for totality, as when the Lord said by way of promise to him that left all and followed Him He shall receive in this world an hundredfold; Matthew 19:29 of which the apostle gives, as it were, an explanation when he says, As having nothing, yet possessing all things, 2 Corinthians 6:10 — for even of old it had been said, The whole world is the wealth of a believer — with how much greater reason is a thousand put for totality since it is the cube, while the other is only the square? And for the same reason we cannot better interpret the words of the psalm, He has been mindful of His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, than by understanding it to mean to all generations.

And he cast him into the abyss, — i.e., cast the devil into the abyss. By the abyss is meant the countless multitude of the wicked whose hearts are unfathomably deep in malignity against the Church of God; not that the devil was not there before, but he is said to be cast in there, because, when prevented from harming believers, he takes more complete possession of the ungodly. For that man is more abundantly possessed by the devil who is not only alienated from God, but also gratuitously hates those who serve God. And shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled. Shut him up,— i.e., prohibited him from going out, from doing what was forbidden. And the addition of set a seal upon him seems to me to mean that it was designed to keep it a secret who belonged to the devil's party and who did not. For in this world this is a secret, for we cannot tell whether even the man who seems to stand shall fall, or whether he who seems to lie shall rise

again. But by the chain and prison-house of this interdict the devil is prohibited and restrained from seducing those nations which belong to Christ, but which he formerly seduced or held in subjection. For before the foundation of the world God chose to rescue these from the power of darkness, and to translate them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, as the apostle says. Colossians 1:13 For what Christian is not aware that he seduces nations even now, and draws them with himself to eternal punishment, but not those predestined to eternal life? And let no one be dismayed by the circumstance that the devil often seduces even those who have been regenerated in Christ, and begun to walk in God's way. For the Lord knows them that are His, 2 Timothy 2:19 and of these the devil seduces none to eternal damnation. For it is as God, from whom nothing is hid even of things future, that the Lord knows them; not as a man, who sees a man at the present time (if he can be said to see one whose heart he does not see), but does not see even himself so far as to be able to know what kind of person he is to be. The devil, then, is bound and shut up in the abyss that he may not seduce the nations from which the Church is gathered, and which he formerly seduced before the Church existed. For it is not said that he should not seduce any man, but that he should not seduce the nations — meaning, no doubt, those among which the Church exists — till the thousand years should be fulfilled,— i.e., either what remains of the sixth day which consists of a thousand years, or all the years which are to elapse till the end of the world.

The words, that he should not seduce the nations till the thousand years should be fulfilled, are not to be understood as indicating that afterwards he is to seduce only those nations from which the predestined Church is composed, and from seducing whom he is restrained by that chain and imprisonment; but they are used in conformity with that usage frequently employed in Scripture and exemplified in the psalm, So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us, — not as if the eyes of His servants would no longer wait upon the Lord their God when He had mercy upon them. Or the order of the words is unquestionably this, And he shut him up and set a seal upon him, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and the interposed clause, that he should seduce the nations no more, is not to be understood in the connection in which it stands, but separately, and as if added afterwards, so that the whole sentence might be read, And He shut him up and set a seal upon him till the thousand years should be fulfilled, that he should seduce the nations no more,— i.e., he is shut up till the thousand years be fulfilled, on this account, that he may no more deceive the nations.

Chapter 8.— Of the Binding and Loosing of the Devil.

After that, says John, he must be loosed a little season. If the binding and shutting up of the devil means his being made unable to seduce the Church, must his loosing be the recovery of this ability? By no means. For the Church predestined and elected before the foundation of the world, the Church of which it is said, The Lord knows them that are His, shall never be seduced by him. And yet there shall be a Church in this world even when the devil shall be loosed, as there has been since the beginning, and shall be always, the places of the dying being filled by new believers. For a little after John says that the devil, being loosed, shall draw the nations whom he has seduced in the whole world to make war against the Church, and that the number of these enemies shall be as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil who seduced them was cast into the lake

of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Revelation 20:9-10 This relates to the last judgment, but I have thought fit to mention it now, lest any one might suppose that in that short time during which the devil shall be loose there shall be no Church upon earth, whether because the devil finds no Church, or destroys it by manifold persecutions. The devil, then, is not bound during the whole time which this book embraces — that is, from the first coming of Christ to the end of the world, when He shall come the second time — not bound in this sense, that during this interval, which goes by the name of a thousand years, he shall not seduce the Church, for not even when loosed shall he seduce it. For certainly if his being bound means that he is not able or not permitted to seduce the Church, what can the loosing of him mean but his being able or permitted to do so? But God forbid that such should be the case! But the binding of the devil is his being prevented from the exercise of his whole power to seduce men, either by violently forcing or fraudulently deceiving them into taking part with him. If he were during so long a period permitted to assail the weakness of men, very many persons, such as God would not wish to expose to such temptation, would have their faith overthrown, or would be prevented from believing; and that this might not happen, he is bound.

But when the short time comes he shall be loosed. For he shall rage with the whole force of himself and his angels for three years and six months; and those with whom he makes war shall have power to withstand all his violence and stratagems. And if he were never loosed, his malicious power would be less patent, and less proof would be given of the steadfast fortitude of the holy city: it would, in short, be less manifest what good use the Almighty makes of his great evil. For the Almighty does not absolutely seclude the saints from his temptation, but shelters only their inner man, where faith resides, that by outward temptation they may grow in grace. And He binds him that he may not, in the free and eager exercise of his malice, hinder or destroy the faith of those countless weak persons, already believing or yet to believe, from whom the Church must be increased and completed; and he will in the end loose him, that the city of God may see how mighty an adversary it has conquered, to the great glory of its Redeemer, Helper, Deliverer. And what are we in comparison with those believers and saints who shall then exist, seeing that they shall be tested by the loosing of an enemy with whom we make war at the greatest peril even when he is bound? Although it is also certain that even in this intervening period there have been and are some soldiers of Christ so wise and strong, that if they were to be alive in this mortal condition at the time of his loosing, they would both most wisely guard against, and most patiently endure, all his snares and assaults.

Now the devil was thus bound not only when the Church began to be more and more widely extended among the nations beyond Judea, but is now and shall be bound till the end of the world, when he is to be loosed. Because even now men are, and doubtless to the end of the world shall be, converted to the faith from the unbelief in which he held them. And this strong one is bound in each instance in which he is spoiled of one of his goods; and the abyss in which he is shut up is not at an end when those die who were alive when first he was shut up in it, but these have been succeeded, and shall to the end of the world be succeeded, by others born after them with a like hate of the Christians, and in the depth of whose blind hearts he is continually shut up as in an abyss. But it is a question whether, during these three years and

six months when he shall be loose, and raging with all his force, any one who has not previously believed shall attach himself to the faith. For how in that case would the words hold good, Who enters into the house of a strong one to spoil his goods, unless first he shall have bound the strong one? Consequently this verse seems to compel us to believe that during that time, short as it is, no one will be added to the Christian community, but that the devil will make war with those who have previously become Christians, and that, though some of these may be conquered and desert to the devil, these do not belong to the predestinated number of the sons of God. For it is not without reason that John, the same apostle as wrote this Apocalypse, says in his epistle regarding certain persons, They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us. 1 John 2:19 But what shall become of the little ones? For it is beyond all belief that in these days there shall not be found some Christian children born, but not yet baptized, and that there shall not also be some born during that very period; and if there be such, we cannot believe that their parents shall not find some way of bringing them to the laver of regeneration. But if this shall be the case, how shall these goods be snatched from the devil when he is loose, since into his house no man enters to spoil his goods unless he has first bound him? On the contrary, we are rather to believe that in these days there shall be no lack either of those who fall away from, or of those who attach themselves to the Church; but there shall be such resoluteness, both in parents to seek baptism for their little ones, and in those who shall then first believe, that they shall conquer that strong one, even though unbound — that is, shall both vigilantly comprehend, and patiently bear up against him, though employing such wiles and putting forth such force as he never before used; and thus they shall be snatched from him even though unbound. And yet the verse of the Gospel will not be untrue, Who enters into the house of the strong one to spoil his goods, unless he shall first have bound the strong one? For in accordance with this true saying that order is observed — the strong one first bound, and then his goods spoiled; for the Church is so increased by the weak and strong from all nations far and near, that by its most robust faith in things divinely predicted and accomplished, it shall be able to spoil the goods of even the unbound devil. For as we must own that, when iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold, Matthew 24:12 and that those who have not been written in the book of life shall in large numbers yield to the severe and unprecedented persecutions and stratagems of the devil now loosed, so we cannot but think that not only those whom that time shall find sound in the faith, but also some who till then shall be without, shall become firm in the faith they have hitherto rejected and mighty to conquer the devil even though unbound, God's grace aiding them to understand the Scriptures, in which, among other things, there is foretold that very end which they themselves see to be arriving. And if this shall be so, his binding is to be spoken of as preceding, that there might follow a spoiling of him both bound and loosed; for it is of this it is said, Who shall enter into the house of the strong one to spoil his goods, unless he shall first have bound the strong one?

Chapter 9.— What the Reign of the Saints with Christ for a Thousand Years Is, and How It Differs from the Eternal Kingdom.

But while the devil is bound, the saints reign with Christ during the same thousand years, understood in the same way, that is, of the time of His first coming. For, leaving out of account that kingdom concerning which He shall say in the end, Come, you blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you, Matthew 25:34 the Church could not now be called His kingdom or the kingdom of heaven unless His saints were even now reigning with Him, though in another and far

different way; for to His saints He says, Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Matthew 28:20 Certainly it is in this present time that the scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, and of whom we have already spoken, brings forth from his treasure things new and old. And from the Church those reapers shall gather out the tares which He suffered to grow with the wheat till the harvest, as He explains in the words The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered together and burned with fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all offenses. Matthew 13:39-41 Can He mean out of that kingdom in which are no offenses? Then it must be out of His present kingdom, the Church, that they are gathered. So He says, He that breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but he that does and teaches thus shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:19 He speaks of both as being in the kingdom of heaven, both the man who does not perform the commandments which He teaches — for to break means not to keep, not to perform — and the man who does and teaches as He did; but the one He calls least, the other great. And He immediately adds, For I say unto you, that unless your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees,— that is, the righteousness of those who break what they teach; for of the scribes and Pharisees He elsewhere says, For they say and do not; Matthew 23:3 — unless therefore, your righteousness exceed theirs that is, so that you do not break but rather do what you teach, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20 We must understand in one sense the kingdom of heaven in which exist together both he who breaks what he teaches and he who does it, the one being least, the other great, and in another sense the kingdom of heaven into which only he who does what he teaches shall enter. Consequently, where both classes exist, it is the Church as it now is, but where only the one shall exist, it is the Church as it is destined to be when no wicked person shall be in her. Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter; and yet, though the tares grow in the Church along with the wheat, they do not reign with Him. For they reign with Him who do what the apostle says, If you be risen with Christ, mind the things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Seek those things which are above, not the things which are on the earth. Colossians 3:1-2 Of such persons he also says that their conversation is in heaven. Philippians 3:20 In fine, they reign with Him who are so in His kingdom that they themselves are His kingdom. But in what sense are those the kingdom of Christ who, to say no more, though they are in it until all offenses are gathered out of it at the end of the world, yet seek their own things in it, and not the things that are Christ's? Philippians 2:21

It is then of this kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy is still maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts, or government laid upon them as they yield, until we come to that most peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without an enemy, and it is of this first resurrection in the present life, that the Apocalypse speaks in the words just quoted. For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the Church in those days, in the words, And I saw seats and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given. It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment, but to the seats of the rulers and to the rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed. And no better interpretation of judgment being given can be produced than that which we have in the words, What you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matthew 18:18 Whence the apostle says, What have I to do with judging them that are without? Do you not judge them that are

within? 1 Corinthians 5:12 And the souls, says John, of those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God,— understanding what he afterwards says, reigned with Christ a thousand years, Revelation 20:4 — that is, the souls of the martyrs not yet restored to their bodies. For the souls of the pious dead are not separated from the Church, which even now is the kingdom of Christ; otherwise there would be no remembrance made of them at the altar of God in the partaking of the body of Christ, nor would it do any good in danger to run to His baptism, that we might not pass from this life without it; nor to reconciliation, if by penitence or a bad conscience any one may be severed from His body. For why are these things practised, if not because the faithful, even though dead, are His members? Therefore, while these thousand years run on, their souls reign with Him, though not as yet in conjunction with their bodies. And therefore in another part of this same book we read, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth and now, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works do follow them. Revelation 14:13 The Church, then, begins its reign with Christ now in the living and in the dead. For, as the apostle says, Christ died that He might be Lord both of the living and of the dead. Romans 14:9 But he mentioned the souls of the martyrs only, because they who have contended even to death for the truth, themselves principally reign after death; but, taking the part for the whole, we understand the words of all others who belong to the Church, which is the kingdom of Christ.

As to the words following, And if any have not worshipped the beast nor his image, nor have received his inscription on their forehead, or on their hand, we must take them of both the living and the dead. And what this beast is, though it requires a more careful investigation, yet it is not inconsistent with the true faith to understand it of the ungodly city itself, and the community of unbelievers set in opposition to the faithful people and the city of God. His image seems to me to mean his simulation, to wit, in those men who profess to believe, but live as unbelievers. For they pretend to be what they are not, and are called Christians, not from a true likeness but from a deceitful image. For to this beast belong not only the avowed enemies of the name of Christ and His most glorious city, but also the tares which are to be gathered out of His kingdom, the Church, in the end of the world. And who are they who do not worship the beast and his image, if not those who do what the apostle says, Be not yoked with unbelievers? 2 Corinthians 6:14 For such do not worship, i.e., do not consent, are not subjected; neither do they receive the inscription, the brand of crime, on their forehead by their profession, on their hand by their practice. They, then, who are free from these pollutions, whether they still live in this mortal flesh, or are dead, reign with Christ even now, through this whole interval which is indicated by the thousand years, in a fashion suited to this time.

The rest of them, he says, did not live. For now is the hour when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; and the rest of them shall not live. The words added, until the thousand years are finished, mean that they did not live in the time in which they ought to have lived by passing from death to life. And therefore, when the day of the bodily resurrection arrives, they shall come out of their graves, not to life, but to judgment, namely, to damnation, which is called the second death. For whosoever has not lived until the thousand years be finished, i.e., during this whole time in which the first resurrection is going on — whosoever has not heard the voice of the Son of God, and passed from death to life — that man shall certainly in the second resurrection, the resurrection of the flesh, pass with

his flesh into the second death. For he goes to say This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection, or who experiences it. Now he experiences it who not only revives from the death of sin, but continues in this renewed life. In these the second death has no power. Therefore it has power in the rest, of whom he said above, The rest of them did not live until the thousand years were finished; for in this whole intervening time called a thousand years, however lustily they lived in the body, they were not quickened to life out of that death in which their wickedness held them, so that by this revived life they should become partakers of the first resurrection, and so the second death should have no power over them.

Chapter 10.— What is to Be Replied to Those Who Think that Resurrection Pertains Only to Bodies and Not to Souls.

There are some who suppose that resurrection can be predicated only of the body, and therefore they contend that this first resurrection (of the Apocalypse) is a bodily resurrection. For, say they, to rise again can only be said of things that fall. Now, bodies fall in death. There cannot, therefore, be a resurrection of souls, but of bodies. But what do they say to the apostle who speaks of a resurrection of souls? For certainly it was in the inner and not the outer man that those had risen again to whom he says, If you have risen with Christ, mind the things that are above. Colossians 3:1 The same sense he elsewhere conveyed in other words, saying, That as Christ has risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4 So, too, Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. Ephesians 5:14 As to what they say about nothing being able to rise again but what falls, whence they conclude that resurrection pertains to bodies only, and not to souls, because bodies fall, why do they make nothing of the words, You that fear the Lord, wait for His mercy; and go not aside lest you fall; Sirach 2:7 and To his own Master he stands or falls; Romans 14:4 and He that thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall? 1 Corinthians 10:12 For I fancy this fall that we are to take heed against is a fall of the soul, not of the body. If, then, rising again belongs to things that fall, and souls fall, it must be owned that souls also rise again. To the words, In them the second death has no power, are added the words, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years; and this refers not to the bishops alone, and presbyters, who are now specially called priests in the Church; but as we call all believers Christians on account of the mystical chrism, so we call all priests because they are members of the one Priest. Of them the Apostle Peter says, A holy people, a royal priesthood. 1 Peter 2:9 Certainly he implied, though in a passing and incidental way, that Christ is God, saying priests of God and Christ, that is, of the Father and the Son, though it was in His servant-form and as Son of man that Christ was made a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. But this we have already explained more than once.

Chapter 11.— Of Gog and Magog, Who are to Be Roused by the Devil to Persecute the Church, When He is Loosed in the End of the World.

And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed from his prison, and shall go out to seduce the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, and shall draw them to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. This then, is his purpose in seducing them, to draw them to

this battle. For even before this he was wont to use as many and various seductions as he could continue. And the words he shall go out mean, he shall burst forth from lurking hatred into open persecution. For this persecution, occurring while the final judgment is imminent, shall be the last which shall be endured by the holy Church throughout the world, the whole city of Christ being assailed by the whole city of the devil, as each exists on earth. For these nations which he names Gog and Magog are not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the world, whether the Getæ and Massagetæ, as some conclude from the initial letters, or some other foreign nations not under the Roman government. For John marks that they are spread over the whole earth, when he says, The nations which are in the four corners of the earth, and he added that these are Gog and Magog. The meaning of these names we find to be, Gog, a roof, Magog, from a roof,— a house, as it were, and he who comes out of the house. They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil was shut up as in an abyss, and the devil himself coming out from them and going forth, so that they are the roof, he from the roof. Or if we refer both words to the nations, not one to them and one to the devil, then they are both the roof, because in them the old enemy is at present shut up, and as it were roofed in; and they shall be from the roof when they break forth from concealed to open hatred. The words, And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city, do not mean that they have come, or shall come, to one place, as if the camp of the saints and the beloved city should be in some one place; for this camp is nothing else than the Church of Christ extending over the whole world. And consequently wherever the Church shall be — and it shall be in all nations, as is signified by the breadth of the earth,— there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all nations — that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in the straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty, which is signified by the word camp.

Chapter 12.— Whether the Fire that Came Down Out of Heaven and Devoured Them Refers to the Last Punishment of the Wicked.

The words, And fire came down out of heaven and devoured them, are not to be understood of the final punishment which shall be inflicted when it is said, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire; Matthew 25:41 for then they shall be cast into the fire, not fire come down out of heaven upon them. In this place fire out of heaven is well understood of the firmness of the saints, wherewith they refuse to yield obedience to those who rage against them. For the firmament is heaven, by whose firmness these assailants shall be pained with blazing zeal, for they shall be impotent to draw away the saints to the party of Antichrist. This is the fire which shall devour them, and this is from God; for it is by God's grace the saints become unconquerable, and so torment their enemies. For as in a good sense it is said, The zeal of Your house has consumed me, so in a bad sense it is said, Zeal has possessed the uninstructed people, and now fire shall consume the enemies. Isaiah 26:11 And now, that is to say, not the fire of the last judgment. Or if by this fire coming down out of heaven and consuming them, John meant that blow wherewith Christ in His coming is to strike those persecutors of the Church whom He shall then find alive upon earth, when He shall kill Antichrist with the breath of His mouth, 2 Thessalonians 2:8 then even this is not the last judgment of the wicked; but the last judgment is that which they shall suffer when the bodily resurrection has taken place.

Chapter 13.— Whether the Time of the Persecution or Antichrist Should Be Reckoned in the Thousand Years.

This last persecution by Antichrist shall last for three years and six months, as we have already said, and as is affirmed both in the book of Revelation and by Daniel the prophet. Though this time is brief, yet not without reason is it questioned whether it is comprehended in the thousand years in which the devil is bound and the saints reign with Christ, or whether this little season should be added over and above to these years. For if we say that they are included in the thousand years, then the saints reign with Christ during a more protracted period than the devil is bound. For they shall reign with their King and Conqueror mightily even in that crowning persecution when the devil shall now be unbound and shall rage against them with all his might. How then does Scripture define both the binding of the devil and the reign of the saints by the same thousand years, if the binding of the devil ceases three years and six months before this reign of the saints with Christ? On the other hand, if we say that the brief space of this persecution is not to be reckoned as a part of the thousand years, but rather as an additional period, we shall indeed be able to interpret the words, The priests of God and of Christ shall reign with Him a thousand years; and when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison; for thus they signify that the reign of the saints and the bondage of the devil shall cease simultaneously, so that the time of the persecution we speak of should be contemporaneous neither with the reign of the saints nor with the imprisonment of Satan, but should be reckoned over and above as a superadded portion of time. But then in this case we are forced to admit that the saints shall not reign with Christ during that persecution. But who can dare to say that His members shall not reign with Him at that very juncture when they shall most of all, and with the greatest fortitude, cleave to Him, and when the glory of resistance and the crown of martyrdom shall be more conspicuous in proportion to the hotness of the battle? Or if it is suggested that they may be said not to reign, because of the tribulations which they shall suffer, it will follow that all the saints who have formerly, during the thousand years, suffered tribulation, shall not be said to have reigned with Christ during the period of their tribulation, and consequently even those whose souls the author of this book says that he saw, and who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, did not reign with Christ when they were suffering persecution, and they were not themselves the kingdom of Christ, though Christ was then pre-eminently possessing them. This is indeed perfectly absurd, and to be scouted. But assuredly the victorious souls of the glorious martyrs having overcome and finished all griefs and toils, and having laid down their mortal members, have reigned and do reign with Christ till the thousand years are finished, that they may afterwards reign with Him when they have received their immortal bodies. And therefore during these three years and a half the souls of those who were slain for His testimony, both those which formerly passed from the body and those which shall pass in that last persecution, shall reign with Him till the mortal world come to an end, and pass into that kingdom in which there shall be no death. And thus the reign of the saints with Christ shall last longer than the bonds and imprisonment of the devil, because they shall reign with their King the Son of God for these three years and a half during which the devil is no longer bound. It remains, therefore, that when we read that the priests of God and of Christ shall reign with Him a thousand years; and when the thousand years are finished, the devil shall be loosed from his imprisonment, that we understand either that the thousand years of the reign of the saints does not terminate, though the imprisonment of the devil does — so that both parties have their thousand years, that is, their complete time, yet each with a different actual duration appropriate to itself, the kingdom of the saints being longer, the imprisonment of

the devil shorter, — or at least that, as three years and six months is a very short time, it is not reckoned as either deducted from the whole time of Satan's imprisonment, or as added to the whole duration of the reign of the saints, as we have shown above in the sixteenth book regarding the round number of four hundred years, which were specified as four hundred, though actually somewhat more; and similar expressions are often found in the sacred writings, if one will mark them.

Chapter 14.— Of the Damnation of the Devil and His Adherents; And a Sketch of the Bodily Resurrection of All the Dead, and of the Final Retributive Judgment.

After this mention of the closing persecution, he summarily indicates all that the devil, and the city of which he is the prince, shall suffer in the last judgment. For he says, And the devil who seduced them is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, in which are the beast and the false prophet, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. We have already said that by the beast is well understood the wicked city. His false prophet is either Antichrist or that image or figment of which we have spoken in the same place. After this he gives a brief narrative of the last judgment itself, which shall take place at the second or bodily resurrection of the dead, as it had been revealed to him: I saw a throne great and white, and One sitting on it from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away, and their place was not found. He does not say, I saw a throne great and white, and One sitting on it, and from His face the heaven and the earth fled away, for it had not happened then, i.e., before the living and the dead were judged; but he says that he saw Him sitting on the throne from whose face heaven and earth fled away, but afterwards. For when the judgment is finished, this heaven and earth shall cease to be, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. For this world shall pass away by transmutation, not by absolute destruction. And therefore the apostle says, For the figure of this world passes away. I would have you be without anxiety. 1 Corinthians 7:31-32 The figure, therefore, passes away, not the nature. After John had said that he had seen One sitting on the throne from whose face heaven and earth fled, though not till afterwards, he said, And I saw the dead, great and small: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of the life of each man: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. He said that the books were opened, and a book; but he left us at a loss as to the nature of this book, which is, he says, the book of the life of each man. By those books, then, which he first mentioned, we are to understand the sacred books old and new, that out of them it might be shown what commandments God had enjoined; and that book of the life of each man is to show what commandments each man has done or omitted to do. If this book be materially considered, who can reckon its size or length, or the time it would take to read a book in which the whole life of every man is recorded? Shall there be present as many angels as men, and shall each man hear his life recited by the angel assigned to him? In that case there will be not one book containing all the lives, but a separate book for every life. But our passage requires us to think of one only. And another book was opened, it says. We must therefore understand it of a certain divine power, by which it shall be brought about that every one shall recall to memory all his own works, whether good or evil, and shall mentally survey them with a marvellous rapidity, so that this knowledge will either accuse or excuse conscience, and thus all and each shall be simultaneously judged. And this divine power is called a book, because in it we shall as it were read all that it causes us to remember. That he may show who the dead, small and great, are who are to be judged, he recurs to this which he had omitted or rather deferred, and says, And the sea presented the dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them. This

of course took place before the dead were judged, yet it is mentioned after. And so, I say, he returns again to what he had omitted. But now he preserves the order of events, and for the sake of exhibiting it repeats in its own proper place what he had already said regarding the dead who were judged. For after he had said, And the sea presented the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them, he immediately subjoined what he had already said, and they were judged every man according to their works. For this is just what he had said before, And the dead were judged according to their works.

Chapter 15.— Who the Dead are Who are Given Up to Judgment by the Sea, and by Death and Hell.

But who are the dead which were in the sea, and which the sea presented? For we cannot suppose that those who die in the sea are not in hell, nor that their bodies are preserved in the sea; nor yet, which is still more absurd, that the sea retained the good, while hell received the bad. Who could believe this? But some very sensibly suppose that in this place the sea is put for this world. When John then wished to signify that those whom Christ should find still alive in the body were to be judged along with those who should rise again, he called them dead, both the good to whom it is said, For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, Colossians 3:3 and the wicked of whom it is said, Let the dead bury their dead. Matthew 8:22 They may also be called dead, because they wear mortal bodies, as the apostle says, The body indeed is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness; Romans 8:10 proving that in a living man in the body there is both a body which is dead, and a spirit which is life. Yet he did not say that the body was mortal, but dead, although immediately after he speaks in the more usual way of mortal bodies. These, then, are the dead which were in the sea, and which the sea presented, to wit, the men who were in this world, because they had not yet died, and whom the world presented for judgment. And death and hell, he says, gave up the dead which were in them. The sea presented them because they had merely to be found in the place where they were; but death and hell gave them up or restored them, because they called them back to life, which they had already quitted. And perhaps it was not without reason that neither death nor hell were judged sufficient alone, and both were mentioned — death to indicate the good, who have suffered only death and not hell; hell to indicate the wicked, who suffer also the punishment of hell. For if it does not seem absurd to believe that the ancient saints who believed in Christ and His then future coming, were kept in places far removed indeed from the torments of the wicked, but yet in hell, until Christ's blood and His descent into these places delivered them, certainly good Christians, redeemed by that precious price already paid, are quite unacquainted with hell while they wait for their restoration to the body, and the reception of their reward. After saying, They were judged every man according to their works, he briefly added what the judgment was: Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire; by these names designating the devil and the whole company of his angels, for he is the author of death and the pains of hell. For this is what he had already, by anticipation, said in clearer language: The devil who seduced them was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone. The obscure addition he had made in the words, in which were also the beast and the false prophet, he here explains, They who were not found written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire. This book is not for reminding God, as if things might escape Him by forgetfulness, but it symbolizes His predestination of those to whom eternal life shall be given. For it is not that God is ignorant, and reads in the book to inform Himself, but rather His infallible prescience is the book of life in which they are written, that is to say, known beforehand.

Chapter 16.— Of the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Having finished the prophecy of judgment, so far as the wicked are concerned, it remains that he speak also of the good. Having briefly explained the Lord's words, These will go away into everlasting punishment, it remains that he explain the connected words, but the righteous into life eternal. Matthew 25:46 And I saw, he says, a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away; and there is no more sea. Revelation 21:1 This will take place in the order which he has by anticipation declared in the words, I saw One sitting on the throne, from whose face heaven and earth fled. For as soon as those who are not written in the book of life have been judged and cast into eternal fire — the nature of which fire, or its position in the world or universe, I suppose is known to no man, unless perhaps the divine Spirit reveal it to some one — then shall the figure of this world pass away in a conflagration of universal fire, as once before the world was flooded with a deluge of universal water. And by this universal conflagration the qualities of the corruptible elements which suited our corruptible bodies shall utterly perish, and our substance shall receive such qualities as shall, by a wonderful transmutation, harmonize with our immortal bodies, so that, as the world itself is renewed to some better thing, it is fitly accommodated to men, themselves renewed in their flesh to some better thing. As for the statement, And there shall be no more sea, I would not lightly say whether it is dried up with that excessive heat, or is itself also turned into some better thing. For we read that there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, but I do not remember to have anywhere read anything of a new sea, unless what I find in this same book, As it were a sea of glass like crystal. Revelation 15:2 But he was not then speaking of this end of the world, neither does he seem to speak of a literal sea, but as it were a sea. It is possible that, as prophetic diction delights in mingling figurative and real language, and thus in some sort veiling the sense, so the words And there is no more sea may be taken in the same sense as the previous phrase, And the sea presented the dead which were in it. For then there shall be no more of this world, no more of the surgings and restlessness of human life, and it is this which is symbolized by the sea.

Chapter 17.— Of the Endless Glory of the Church.

And I saw, he says, a great city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but neither shall there be any more pain: because the former things have passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. Revelation 21:2-5 This city is said to come down out of heaven, because the grace with which God formed it is of heaven. Wherefore He says to it by Isaiah, I am the Lord that formed you. Isaiah 45:8 It is indeed descended from heaven from its commencement, since its citizens during the course of this world grow by the grace of God, which comes down from above through the laver of regeneration in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But by God's final judgment, which shall be administered by His Son Jesus Christ, there shall by God's grace be manifested a glory so pervading and so new, that no vestige of what is old shall remain; for even our bodies shall pass from their old corruption and mortality to new incorruption and immortality. For to refer this promise to the present time, in which the saints are reigning with their King a thousand years, seems

to me excessively barefaced, when it is most distinctly said, God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but there shall be no more pain. And who is so absurd, and blinded by contentious opinionativeness, as to be audacious enough to affirm that in the midst of the calamities of this mortal state, God's people, or even one single saint, does live, or has ever lived, or shall ever live, without tears or pain — the fact being that the holier a man is, and the fuller of holy desire, so much the more abundant is the tearfulness of his supplication? Are not these the utterances of a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem: My tears have been my meat day and night; and Every night shall I make my bed to swim; with my tears shall I water my couch; and My groaning is not hid from You; and My sorrow was renewed? Or are not those God's children who groan, being burdened, not that they wish to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life? 2 Corinthians 5:4 Do not they even who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their body? Romans 8:23 Was not the Apostle Paul himself a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and was he not so all the more when he had heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for his Israelitish brethren? Romans 9:2 But when shall there be no more death in that city, except when it shall be said, O death, where is your contention? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin. Obviously there shall be no sin when it can be said, Where is — But as for the present it is not some poor weak citizen of this city, but this same Apostle John himself who says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8 No doubt, though this book is called the Apocalypse, there are in it many obscure passages to exercise the mind of the reader, and there are few passages so plain as to assist us in the interpretation of the others, even though we take pains; and this difficulty is increased by the repetition of the same things, in forms so different, that the things referred to seem to be different, although in fact they are only differently stated. But in the words, God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but there shall be no more pain, there is so manifest a reference to the future world and the immortality and eternity of the saints — for only then and only there shall such a condition be realized — that if we think this obscure, we need not expect to find anything plain in any part of Scripture.

Chapter 18.— What the Apostle Peter Predicted Regarding the Last Judgment.

Let us now see what the Apostle Peter predicted concerning this judgment. There shall come, he says, in the last days scoffers. . . . Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. There is nothing said here about the resurrection of the dead, but enough certainly regarding the destruction of this world. And by his reference to the deluge he seems as it were to suggest to us how far we should believe the ruin of the world will extend in the end of the world. For he says that the world which then was perished, and not only the earth itself, but also the heavens, by which we understand the air, the place and room of which was occupied by the water. Therefore the whole, or almost the whole, of the gusty atmosphere (which he calls heaven, or rather the heavens, meaning the earth's atmosphere, and not the upper air in which sun, moon, and stars are set) was turned into moisture, and in this way perished together with the earth, whose former appearance had been destroyed by the deluge. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Therefore the heavens and the earth, or the world which was preserved from the water to stand in place of that world which perished in the flood, is itself reserved to fire at last in the day of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men. He

does not hesitate to affirm that in this great change men also shall perish: their nature, however, shall notwithstanding continue, though in eternal punishments. Some one will perhaps put the question, If after judgment is pronounced the world itself is to burn, where shall the saints be during the conflagration, and before it is replaced by a new heavens and a new earth, since somewhere they must be, because they have material bodies? We may reply that they shall be in the upper regions into which the flame of that conflagration shall not ascend, as neither did the water of the flood; for they shall have such bodies that they shall be wherever they wish. Moreover, when they have become immortal and incorruptible, they shall not greatly dread the blaze of that conflagration, as the corruptible and mortal bodies of the three men were able to live unhurt in the blazing furnace.

Chapter 19.— What the Apostle Paul Wrote to the Thessalonians About the Manifestation of Antichrist Which Shall Precede the Day of the Lord.

I see that I must omit many of the statements of the gospels and epistles about this last judgment, that this volume may not become unduly long; but I can on no account omit what the Apostle Paul says, in writing to the Thessalonians, We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.

No one can doubt that he wrote this of Antichrist and of the day of judgment, which he here calls the day of the Lord, nor that he declared that this day should not come unless he first came who is called the apostate — apostate, to wit, from the Lord God. And if this may justly be said of all the ungodly, how much more of him? But it is uncertain in what temple he shall sit, whether in that ruin of the temple which was built by Solomon, or in the Church; for the apostle would not call the temple of any idol or demon the temple of God. And on this account some think that in this passage Antichrist means not the prince himself alone, but his whole body, that is, the mass of men who adhere to him, along with him their prince; and they also think that we should render the Greek more exactly were we to read, not in the temple of God, but for or as the temple of God, as if he himself were the temple of God, the Church. Then as for the words, And now you know what withholds, i.e., you know what hindrance or cause of delay there is, that he might be revealed in his own time; they show that he was unwilling to make an explicit statement, because he said that they knew. And thus we who have not their knowledge wish and are not able even with pains to understand what the apostle referred to, especially as his meaning is made still more obscure by what he adds. For what does he mean by For the mystery of iniquity does already work: only he who now holds, let him hold until he be taken out of the way: and then shall the wicked be revealed? I frankly confess I do not know what he means. I will nevertheless mention such conjectures as I have heard or read.

Some think that the Apostle Paul referred to the Roman empire, and that he was unwilling to use language more explicit, lest he should incur the calumnious charge of wishing ill to the empire which it was hoped would be eternal; so that in saying, For the mystery of iniquity does already work, he alluded to Nero, whose deeds already seemed to be as the deeds of Antichrist. And hence some suppose that he shall rise again and be Antichrist. Others, again, suppose that he is not even dead, but that he was concealed that he

might be supposed to have been killed, and that he now lives in concealment in the vigor of that same age which he had reached when he was believed to have perished, and will live until he is revealed in his own time and restored to his kingdom. But I wonder that men can be so audacious in their conjectures. However, it is not absurd to believe that these words of the apostle, Only he who now holds, let him hold until he be taken out of the way, refer to the Roman empire, as if it were said, Only he who now reigns, let him reign until he be taken out of the way. And then shall the wicked be revealed: no one doubts that this means Antichrist. But others think that the words, You know what withholds, and The mystery of iniquity works, refer only to the wicked and the hypocrites who are in the Church, until they reach a number so great as to furnish Antichrist with a great people, and that this is the mystery of iniquity, because it seems hidden; also that the apostle is exhorting the faithful tenaciously to hold the faith they hold when he says, Only he who now holds, let him hold until he be taken out of the way, that is, until the mystery of iniquity which now is hidden departs from the Church. For they suppose that it is to this same mystery John alludes when in his epistle he says, Little children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. 1 John 2:18-19 As therefore there went out from the Church many heretics, whom John calls many antichrists, at that time prior to the end, and which John calls the last time, so in the end they shall go out who do not belong to Christ, but to that last Antichrist, and then he shall be revealed.

Thus various, then, are the conjectural explanations of the obscure words of the apostle. That which there is no doubt he said is this, that Christ will not come to judge quick and dead unless Antichrist, His adversary, first come to seduce those who are dead in soul; although their seduction is a result of God's secret judgment already passed. For, as it is said his presence shall be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all seduction of unrighteousness in them that perish. For then shall Satan be loosed, and by means of that Antichrist shall work with all power in a lying though a wonderful manner. It is commonly questioned whether these works are called signs and lying wonders because he is to deceive men's senses by false appearances, or because the things he does, though they be true prodigies, shall be a lie to those who shall believe that such things could be done only by God, being ignorant of the devil's power, and especially of such unexampled power as he shall then for the first time put forth. For when he fell from heaven as fire, and at a stroke swept away from the holy Job his numerous household and his vast flocks, and then as a whirlwind rushed upon and smote the house and killed his children, these were not deceitful appearances, and yet they were the works of Satan to whom God had given this power. Why they are called signs and lying wonders, we shall then be more likely to know when the time itself arrives. But whatever be the reason of the name, they shall be such signs and wonders as shall seduce those who shall deserve to be seduced, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. Neither did the apostle scruple to go on to say, For this cause God shall send upon them the working of error that they should believe a lie. For God shall send, because God shall permit the devil to do these things, the permission being by His own just judgment, though the doing of them is in pursuance of the devil's unrighteous and malignant purpose, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Therefore, being judged, they shall be seduced, and, being seduced, they shall be judged. But, being judged, they shall be seduced by those secretly just and justly secret judgments of God, with which He has never ceased to judge since the first sin of the rational creatures; and, being seduced, they shall be judged in that last and manifest judgment

administered by Jesus Christ, who was Himself most unjustly judged and shall most justly judge.

Chapter 20.— What the Same Apostle Taught in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians Regarding the Resurrection of the Dead.

But the apostle has said nothing here regarding the resurrection of the dead; but in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians he says, We would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16 etc. These words of the apostle most distinctly proclaim the future resurrection of the dead, when the Lord Christ shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

But it is commonly asked whether those whom our Lord shall find alive upon earth, personated in this passage by the apostle and those who were alive with him, shall never die at all, or shall pass with incomprehensible swiftness through death to immortality in the very moment during which they shall be caught up along with those who rise again to meet the Lord in the air? For we cannot say that it is impossible that they should both die and revive again while they are carried aloft through the air. For the words, And so shall we ever be with the Lord, are not to be understood as if he meant that we shall always remain in the air with the Lord; for He Himself shall not remain there, but shall only pass through it as He comes. For we shall go to meet Him as He comes, not where He remains; but so shall we be with the Lord, that is, we shall be with Him possessed of immortal bodies wherever we shall be with Him. We seem compelled to take the words in this sense, and to suppose that those whom the Lord shall find alive upon earth shall in that brief space both suffer death and receive immortality: for this same apostle says, In Christ shall all be made alive; 1 Corinthians 15:22 while, speaking of the same resurrection of the body, he elsewhere says, That which you sow is not quickened, except it die. 1 Corinthians 15:36 How, then, shall those whom Christ shall find alive upon earth be made alive to immortality in Him if they die not, since on this very account it is said, That which you sow is not quickened, except it die? Or if we cannot properly speak of human bodies as sown, unless in so far as by dying they do in some sort return to the earth, as also the sentence pronounced by God against the sinning father of the human race runs, Earth you are, and unto earth shall you return, Genesis 3:19 we must acknowledge that those whom Christ at His coming shall find still in the body are not included in these words of the apostle nor in those of Genesis; for, being caught up into the clouds, they are certainly not sown, neither going nor returning to the earth, whether they experience no death at all or die for a moment in the air.

But, on the other hand, there meets us the saying of the same apostle when he was speaking to the Corinthians about the resurrection of the body, We shall all rise, or, as other manuscripts read, We shall all sleep. 1 Corinthians 15:51 Since, then, there can be no resurrection unless death has preceded, and since we can in this passage understand by sleep nothing else than death, how shall all either sleep or rise again if so many persons whom Christ shall find in the body shall neither sleep nor rise again? If, then, we believe that the saints who shall be found alive at Christ's coming, and shall be caught up to meet Him, shall in that same ascent pass from mortal to immortal bodies, we shall find no difficulty in the words of the apostle, either when he says, That which you sow is not quickened, except it die, or when he

says, We shall all rise, or all sleep, for not even the saints shall be quickened to immortality unless they first die, however briefly; and consequently they shall not be exempt from resurrection which is preceded by sleep, however brief. And why should it seem to us incredible that that multitude of bodies should be, as it were, sown in the air, and should in the air immediately revive immortal and incorruptible, when we believe, on the testimony of the same apostle, that the resurrection shall take place in the twinkling of an eye, and that the dust of bodies long dead shall return with incomprehensible facility and swiftness to those members that are now to live endlessly? Neither do we suppose that in the case of these saints the sentence, Earth you are, and unto earth shall you return, is null, though their bodies do not, on dying, fall to earth, but both die and rise again at once while caught up into the air. For You shall return to earth means, You shall at death return to that which you were before life began. You shall, when exanimate, be that which you were before you were animate. For it was into a face of earth that God breathed the breath of life when man was made a living soul; as if it were said, You are earth with a soul, which you were not; you shall be earth without a soul, as you were. And this is what all bodies of the dead are before they rot; and what the bodies of those saints shall be if they die, no matter where they die, as soon as they shall give up that life which they are immediately to receive back again. In this way, then, they return or go to earth, inasmuch as from being living men they shall be earth, as that which becomes cinder is said to go to cinder; that which decays, to go to decay; and so of six hundred other things. But the manner in which this shall take place we can now only feebly conjecture, and shall understand it only when it comes to pass. For that there shall be a bodily resurrection of the dead when Christ comes to judge quick and dead, we must believe if we would be Christians. But if we are unable perfectly to comprehend the manner in which it shall take place, our faith is not on this account vain. Now, however, we ought, as we formerly promised, to show, as far as seems necessary, what the ancient prophetic books predicted concerning this final judgment of God; and I fancy no great time need be spent in discussing and explaining these predictions, if the reader has been careful to avail himself of the help we have already furnished.

Chapter 21.— Utterances of the Prophet Isaiah Regarding the Resurrection of the Dead and the Retributive Judgment.

The prophet Isaiah says, The dead shall rise again, and all who were in the graves shall rise again; and all who are in the earth shall rejoice: for the dew which is from You is their health, and the earth of the wicked shall fall. Isaiah 26:19 All the former part of this passage relates to the resurrection of the blessed; but the words, the earth of the wicked shall fall, is rightly understood as meaning that the bodies of the wicked shall fall into the ruin of damnation. And if we would more exactly and carefully scrutinize the words which refer to the resurrection of the good, we may refer to the first resurrection the words, the dead shall rise again, and to the second the following words, and all who were in the graves shall rise again. And if we ask what relates to those saints whom the Lord at His coming shall find alive upon earth, the following clause may suitably be referred to them; All who are in the earth shall rejoice: for the dew which is from You is their health. By health in this place it is best to understand immortality. For that is the most perfect health which is not repaired by nourishment as by a daily remedy. In like manner the same prophet, affording hope to the good and terrifying the wicked regarding the day of judgment, says, Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will flow down upon them as a river of peace, and upon the glory of the Gentiles as a rushing torrent; their sons shall be carried on the shoulders, and shall be comforted on the knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so shall I comfort you; and you shall be comforted in

Jerusalem. And you shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall rise up like a herb; and the hand of the Lord shall be known by His worshippers, and He shall threaten the contumacious. For, behold, the Lord shall come as a fire, and as a whirlwind His chariots, to execute vengeance with indignation, and wasting with a flame of fire. For with fire of the Lord shall all the earth be judged, and all flesh with His sword: many shall be wounded by the Lord. In His promise to the good he says that He will flow down as a river of peace, that is to say, in the greatest possible abundance of peace. With this peace we shall in the end be refreshed; but of this we have spoken abundantly in the preceding book. It is this river in which he says He shall flow down upon those to whom He promises so great happiness, that we may understand that in the region of that felicity, which is in heaven, all things are satisfied from this river. But because there shall thence flow, even upon earthly bodies, the peace of incorruption and immortality, therefore he says that He shall flow down as this river, that He may as it were pour Himself from things above to things beneath, and make men the equals of the angels. By Jerusalem, too, we should understand not that which serves with her children, but that which, according to the apostle, is our free mother, eternal in the heavens. Galatians 4:26 In her we shall be comforted as we pass toilworn from earth's cares and calamities, and be taken up as her children on her knees and shoulders. Inexperienced and new to such blandishments, we shall be received into unwonted bliss. There we shall see, and our heart shall rejoice. He does not say what we shall see; but what but God, that the promise in the Gospel may be fulfilled in us, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God? Matthew 5:8 What shall we see but all those things which now we see not, but believe in, and of which the idea we form, according to our feeble capacity, is incomparably less than the reality? And you shall see, he says, and your heart shall rejoice. Here you believe, there you shall see.

But because he said, Your heart shall rejoice, lest we should suppose that the blessings of that Jerusalem are only spiritual, he adds, And your bones shall rise up like a herb, alluding to the resurrection of the body, and as it were supplying an omission he had made. For it will not take place when we have seen; but we shall see when it has taken place. For he had already spoken of the new heavens and the new earth, speaking repeatedly, and under many figures, of the things promised to the saints, and saying, There shall be new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind; but they shall find in it gladness and exultation. Behold, I will make Jerusalem an exultation, and my people a joy. And I will exult in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her; Isaiah 65:17-19 and other promises, which some endeavor to refer to carnal enjoyment during the thousand years. For, in the manner of prophecy, figurative and literal expressions are mingled, so that a serious mind may, by useful and salutary effort, reach the spiritual sense; but carnal sluggishness, or the slowness of an uneducated and undisciplined mind, rests in the superficial letter, and thinks there is nothing beneath to be looked for. But let this be enough regarding the style of those prophetic expressions just quoted. And now, to return to their interpretation. When he had said, And your bones shall rise up like a herb, in order to show that it was the resurrection of the good, though a bodily resurrection, to which he alluded, he added, And the hand of the Lord shall be known by His worshippers. What is this but the hand of Him who distinguishes those who worship from those who despise Him? Regarding these the context immediately adds, And He shall threaten the contumacious, or, as another translator has it, the unbelieving. He shall not actually threaten then, but the threats which are now uttered shall then be fulfilled in effect. For behold, he says, the Lord shall come as a fire, and as a whirlwind His chariots, to execute vengeance with indignation, and wasting with a flame of fire. For with fire of the Lord shall all

the earth be judged, and all flesh with His sword: many shall be wounded by the Lord. By fire, whirlwind, sword, he means the judicial punishment of God. For he says that the Lord Himself shall come as a fire, to those, that is to say, to whom His coming shall be penal. By His chariots (for the word is plural) we suitably understand the ministration of angels. And when he says that all flesh and all the earth shall be judged with His fire and sword, we do not understand the spiritual and holy to be included, but the earthly and carnal, of whom it is said that they mind earthly things, Philippians 3:19 and to be carnally minded is death, Romans 8:6 and whom the Lord calls simply flesh when He says, My Spirit shall not always remain in these men, for they are flesh. Genesis 6:3 As to the words, Many shall be wounded by the Lord, this wounding shall produce the second death. It is possible, indeed, to understand fire, sword, and wound in a good sense. For the Lord said that He wished to send fire on the earth. Luke 12:49 And the cloven tongues appeared to them as fire when the Holy Spirit came. Acts 2:3 And our Lord says, I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword. Matthew 10:34 And Scripture says that the word of God is a doubly sharp sword, Hebrews 4:12 on account of the two edges, the two Testaments. And in the Song of Songs the holy Church says that she is wounded with love, Song of Songs 2:5 — pierced, as it were, with the arrow of love. But here, where we read or hear that the Lord shall come to execute vengeance, it is obvious in what sense we are to understand these expressions.

After briefly mentioning those who shall be consumed in this judgment, speaking of the wicked and sinners under the figure of the meats forbidden by the old law, from which they had not abstained, he summarily recounts the grace of the new testament, from the first coming of the Saviour to the last judgment, of which we now speak; and herewith he concludes his prophecy. For he relates that the Lord declares that He is coming to gather all nations, that they may come and witness His glory. Isaiah 66:18 For, as the apostle says, All have sinned and are in want of the glory of God. Romans 3:23 And he says that He will do wonders among them, at which they shall marvel and believe in Him; and that from them He will send forth those that are saved into various nations, and distant islands which have not heard His name nor seen His glory, and that they shall declare His glory among the nations, and shall bring the brethren of those to whom the prophet was speaking, i.e., shall bring to the faith under God the Father the brethren of the elect Israelites; and that they shall bring from all nations an offering to the Lord on beasts of burden and waggons (which are understood to mean the aids furnished by God in the shape of angelic or human ministry), to the holy city Jerusalem, which at present is scattered over the earth, in the faithful saints. For where divine aid is given, men believe, and where they believe, they come. And the Lord compared them, in a figure, to the children of Israel offering sacrifice to Him in His house with psalms, which is already everywhere done by the Church; and He promised that from among them He would choose for Himself priests and Levites, which also we see already accomplished. For we see that priests and Levites are now chosen, not from a certain family and blood, as was originally the rule in the priesthood according to the order of Aaron, but as befits the new testament, under which Christ is the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, in consideration of the merit which is bestowed upon each man by divine grace. And these priests are not to be judged by their mere title, which is often borne by unworthy men, but by that holiness which is not common to good men and bad.

After having thus spoken of this mercy of God which is now experienced by the Church, and is very

evident and familiar to us, he foretells also the ends to which men shall come when the last judgment has separated the good and the bad, saying by the prophet, or the prophet himself speaking for God, For as the new heavens and the new earth shall remain before me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain, and there shall be to them month after month, and Sabbath after Sabbath. All flesh shall come to worship before me in Jerusalem, said the Lord. And they shall go out, and shall see the members of the men who have sinned against me: their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be for a spectacle to all flesh. Isaiah 66:22-24 At this point the prophet closed his book, as at this point the world shall come to an end. Some, indeed, have translated carcasses instead of members of the men, meaning by carcasses the manifest punishment of the body, although carcass is commonly used only of dead flesh, while the bodies here spoken of shall be animated, else they could not be sensible of any pain; but perhaps they may, without absurdity, be called carcasses, as being the bodies of those who are to fall into the second death. And for the same reason it is said, as I have already quoted, by this same prophet, The earth of the wicked shall fall. It is obvious that those translators who use a different word for men do not mean to include only males, for no one will say that the women who sinned shall not appear in that judgment; but the male sex, being the more worthy, and that from which the woman was derived, is intended to include both sexes. But that which is especially pertinent to our subject is this, that since the words All flesh shall come, apply to the good, for the people of God shall be composed of every race of men — for all men shall not be present, since the greater part shall be in punishment — but, as I was saying, since flesh is used of the good, and members or carcasses of the bad, certainly it is thus put beyond a doubt that that judgment in which the good and the bad shall be allotted to their destinies shall take place after the resurrection of the body, our faith in which is thoroughly established by the use of these words.

Chapter 22.— What is Meant by the Good Going Out to See the Punishment of the Wicked.

But in what way shall the good go out to see the punishment of the wicked? Are they to leave their happy abodes by a bodily movement, and proceed to the places of punishment, so as to witness the torments of the wicked in their bodily presence? Certainly not; but they shall go out by knowledge. For this expression, go out, signifies that those who shall be punished shall be without. And thus the Lord also calls these places the outer darkness, Matthew 25:30 to which is opposed that entrance concerning which it is said to the good servant, Enter into the joy of your Lord, that it may not be supposed that the wicked can enter there and be known, but rather that the good by their knowledge go out to them, because the good are to know that which is without. For those who shall be in torment shall not know what is going on within in the joy of the Lord; but they who shall enter into that joy shall know what is going on outside in the outer darkness. Therefore it is said, They shall go out, because they shall know what is done by those who are without. For if the prophets were able to know things that had not yet happened, by means of that indwelling of God in their minds, limited though it was, shall not the immortal saints know things that have already happened, when God shall be all in all? 1 Corinthians 15:28 The seed, then, and the name of the saints shall remain in that blessedness, — the seed, to wit, of which John says, And his seed remains in him; 1 John 3:9 and the name, of which it was said through Isaiah himself, I will give them an everlasting name. Isaiah 56:5 And there shall be to them month after month, and Sabbath after Sabbath, as if it were said, Moon after moon, and rest upon rest, both of which they shall themselves be when they shall pass from the old shadows of time into the new lights of eternity. The worm that dies not, and the

fire that is not quenched, which constitute the punishment of the wicked, are differently interpreted by different people. For some refer both to the body, others refer both to the soul; while others again refer the fire literally to the body, and the worm figuratively to the soul, which seems the more credible idea. But the present is not the time to discuss this difference, for we have undertaken to occupy this book with the last judgment, in which the good and the bad are separated: their rewards and punishments we shall more carefully discuss elsewhere.

Chapter 23.— What Daniel Predicted Regarding the Persecution of Antichrist, the Judgment of God, and the Kingdom of the Saints.

Daniel prophesies of the last judgment in such a way as to indicate that Antichrist shall first come, and to carry on his description to the eternal reign of the saints. For when in prophetic vision he had seen four beasts, signifying four kingdoms, and the fourth conquered by a certain king, who is recognized as Antichrist, and after this the eternal kingdom of the Son of man, that is to say, of Christ, he says, My spirit was terrified, I Daniel in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me, etc. Some have interpreted these four kingdoms as signifying those of the Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans. They who desire to understand the fitness of this interpretation may read Jerome's book on Daniel, which is written with a sufficiency of care and erudition. But he who reads this passage, even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of Antichrist shall fiercely, though for a short time, assail the Church before the last judgment of God shall introduce the eternal reign of the saints. For it is patent from the context that the time, times, and half a time, means a year, and two years, and half a year, that is to say, three years and a half. Sometimes in Scripture the same thing is indicated by months. For though the word times seems to be used here in the Latin indefinitely, that is only because the Latins have no dual, as the Greeks have, and as the Hebrews also are said to have. Times, therefore, is used for two times. As for the ten kings, whom, as it seems, Antichrist is to find in the person of ten individuals when he comes, I own I am afraid we may be deceived in this, and that he may come unexpectedly while there are not ten kings living in the Roman world. For what if this number ten signifies the whole number of kings who are to precede his coming, as totality is frequently symbolized by a thousand, or a hundred, or seven, or other numbers, which it is not necessary to recount?

In another place the same Daniel says, And there shall be a time of trouble, such as was not since there was born a nation upon earth until that time: and in that time all Your people which shall be found written in the book shall be delivered. And many of them that sleep in the mound of earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting confusion. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and many of the just as the stars forever. Daniel 12:1-3 This passage is very similar to the one we have quoted from the Gospel, John 5:28 at least so far as regards the resurrection of dead bodies. For those who are there said to be in the graves are here spoken of as sleeping in the mound of earth, or, as others translate, in the dust of earth. There it is said, They shall come forth; so here, They shall arise. There, They that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment; here, Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting confusion. Neither is it to be supposed a difference, though in place of the expression in the Gospel, All who are in their graves, the prophet does not say all, but many of them that sleep in the mound of earth.

For many is sometimes used in Scripture for all. Thus it was said to Abraham, I have set you as the father of many nations, though in another place it was said to him, In your seed shall all nations be blessed. Of such a resurrection it is said a little afterwards to the prophet himself, And come and rest: for there is yet a day till the completion of the consummation; and you shall rest, and rise in your lot in the end of the days. Daniel 12:13

Chapter 24.— Passages from the Psalms of David Which Predict the End of the World and the Last Judgment.

There are many allusions to the last judgment in the Psalms, but for the most part only casual and slight. I cannot, however, omit to mention what is said there in express terms of the end of this world: In the beginning have You laid the foundations of the earth, O Lord; and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They shall perish, but You shall endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; and as a vesture You shall change them, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail. Why is it that Porphyry, while he lauds the piety of the Hebrews in worshipping a God great and true, and terrible to the gods themselves, follows the oracles of these gods in accusing the Christians of extreme folly because they say that this world shall perish? For here we find it said in the sacred books of the Hebrews, to that God whom this great philosopher acknowledges to be terrible even to the gods themselves, The heavens are the work of Your hands; they shall perish. When the heavens, the higher and more secure part of the world, perish, shall the world itself be preserved? If this idea is not relished by Jupiter, whose oracle is quoted by this philosopher as an unquestionable authority in rebuke of the credulity of the Christians, why does he not similarly rebuke the wisdom of the Hebrews as folly, seeing that the prediction is found in their most holy books? But if this Hebrew wisdom, with which Porphyry is so captivated that he extols it through the utterances of his own gods, proclaims that the heavens are to perish, how is he so infatuated as to detest the faith of the Christians partly, if not chiefly, on this account, that they believe the world is to perish?— though how the heavens are to perish if the world does not is not easy to see. And, indeed, in the sacred writings which are peculiar to ourselves, and not common to the Hebrews and us — I mean the evangelic and apostolic books — the following expressions are used: The figure of this world passes away; 1 Corinthians 7:31 The world passes away; 1 John 2:17 Heaven and earth shall pass away, Matthew 24:35 — expressions which are, I fancy, somewhat milder than They shall perish. In the Epistle of the Apostle Peter, too, where the world which then was is said to have perished, being overflowed with water, it is sufficiently obvious what part of the world is signified by the whole, and in what sense the word perished is to be taken, and what heavens were kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 2 Peter 3:6 And when he says a little afterwards, The day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great rush, and the elements shall melt with burning heat, and the earth and the works which are in it shall be burned up and then adds, Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be? 2 Peter 3:10-11 — these heavens which are to perish may be understood to be the same which he said were kept in store reserved for fire; and the elements which are to be burned are those which are full of storm and disturbance in this lowest part of the world in which he said that these heavens were kept in store; for the higher heavens in whose firmament are set the stars are safe, and remain in their integrity. For even the expression of Scripture, that the stars shall fall from heaven, Matthew 24:29 not to mention that a different interpretation is much preferable, rather shows that the

heavens themselves shall remain, if the stars are to fall from them. This expression, then, is either figurative, as is more credible, or this phenomenon will take place in this lowest heaven, like that mentioned by Virgil —

A meteor with a train of light

Athwart the sky gleamed dazzling bright,

Then in Idæan woods was lost.

But the passage I have quoted from the psalm seems to except none of the heavens from the destiny of destruction; for he says, The heavens are the works of Your hands: they shall perish; so that, as none of them are excepted from the category of God's works, none of them are excepted from destruction. For our opponents will not condescend to defend the Hebrew piety, which has won the approbation of their gods, by the words of the Apostle Peter, whom they vehemently detest; nor will they argue that, as the apostle in his epistle understands a part when he speaks of the whole world perishing in the flood, though only the lowest part of it, and the corresponding heavens were destroyed, so in the psalm the whole is used for a part, and it is said They shall perish, though only the lowest heavens are to perish. But since, as I said, they will not condescend to reason thus, lest they should seem to approve of Peter's meaning, or ascribe as much importance to the final conflagration as we ascribe to the deluge, whereas they contend that no waters or flames could destroy the whole human race, it only remains to them to maintain that their gods lauded the wisdom of the Hebrews because they had not read this psalm.

It is the last judgment of God which is referred to also in the 50th Psalm in the words, God shall come manifestly, our God, and shall not keep silence: fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call the heaven above, and the earth, to judge His people. Gather His saints together to Him; they who make a covenant with Him over sacrifices. This we understand of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we look for from heaven to judge the quick and the dead. For He shall come manifestly to judge justly the just and the unjust, who before came hiddenly to be unjustly judged by the unjust. He, I say, shall come manifestly, and shall not keep silence, that is, shall make Himself known by His voice of judgment, who before, when he came hiddenly, was silent before His judge when He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and, as a lamb before the shearer, opened not His mouth as we read that it was prophesied of Him by Isaiah, Isaiah 53:7 and as we see it fulfilled in the Gospel. Matthew 26:63 As for the fire and tempest, we have already said how these are to be interpreted when we were explaining a similar passage in Isaiah. As to the expression, He shall call the heaven above, as the saints and the righteous are rightly called heaven, no doubt this means what the apostle says, We shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 For if we take the bare literal sense, how is it possible to call the heaven above, as if the heaven could be anywhere else than above? And the following expression, And the earth to judge His people, if we supply only the words, He shall call, that is to say, He shall call the earth also, and do not supply above, seems to give us a meaning in accordance with sound doctrine, the heaven symbolizing those who will judge along with Christ, and

the earth those who shall be judged; and thus the words, He shall call the heaven above, would not mean, He shall catch up into the air, but He shall lift up to seats of judgment. Possibly, too, He shall call the heaven, may mean, He shall call the angels in the high and lofty places, that He may descend with them to do judgment; and He shall call the earth also would then mean, He shall call the men on the earth to judgment. But if with the words and the earth we understand not only He shall call, but also above, so as to make the full sense be, He shall call the heaven above, and He shall call the earth above, then I think it is best understood of the men who shall be caught up to meet Christ in the air, and that they are called the heaven with reference to their souls, and the earth with reference to their bodies. Then what is to judge His people, but to separate by judgment the good from the bad, as the sheep from the goats? Then he turns to address the angels: Gather His saints together unto Him. For certainly a matter so important must be accomplished by the ministry of angels. And if we ask who the saints are who are gathered unto Him by the angels, we are told, They who make a covenant with Him over sacrifices. This is the whole life of the saints, to make a covenant with God over sacrifices. For over sacrifices either refers to works of mercy, which are preferable to sacrifices in the judgment of God, who says, I desire mercy more than sacrifices, Hosea 6:6 or if over sacrifices means in sacrifices, then these very works of mercy are the sacrifices with which God is pleased, as I remember to have stated in the tenth book of this work; and in these works the saints make a covenant with God, because they do them for the sake of the promises which are contained in His new testament or covenant. And hence, when His saints have been gathered to Him and set at His right hand in the last judgment, Christ shall say, Come, you blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat, Matthew 25:34 and so on, mentioning the good works of the good, and their eternal rewards assigned by the last sentence of the Judge.

Chapter 25.— Of Malachi's Prophecy, in Which He Speaks of the Last Judgment, and of a Cleansing Which Some are to Undergo by Purifying Punishments.

The prophet Malachi or Malachias, who is also called Angel, and is by some (for Jerome tells us that this is the opinion of the Hebrews) identified with Ezra the priest, others of whose writings have been received into the canon, predicts the last judgment, saying, Behold, He comes, says the Lord Almighty; and who shall abide the day of His entrance? . . . for I am the Lord your God, and I change not. Malachi 3:1-6 From these words it more evidently appears that some shall in the last judgment suffer some kind of purgatorial punishments; for what else can be understood by the word, Who shall abide the day of His entrance, or who shall be able to look upon Him? For He enters as a moulder's fire, and as the herb of fullers: and He shall sit fusing and purifying as if over gold and silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like gold and silver? Similarly Isaiah says, The Lord shall wash the filthiness of the sons and daughters of Zion, and shall cleanse away the blood from their midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning. Isaiah 4:4 Unless perhaps we should say that they are cleansed from filthiness and in a manner clarified, when the wicked are separated from them by penal judgment, so that the elimination and damnation of the one party is the purgation of the others, because they shall henceforth live free from the contamination of such men. But when he says, And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like gold and silver, and they shall offer to the Lord sacrifices in righteousness; and the sacrifices of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord, he declares that those who shall be purified shall then please the Lord with sacrifices of righteousness, and consequently

they themselves shall be purified from their own unrighteousness which made them displeasing to God. Now they themselves, when they have been purified, shall be sacrifices of complete and perfect righteousness; for what more acceptable offering can such persons make to God than themselves? But this question of purgatorial punishments we must defer to another time, to give it a more adequate treatment. By the sons of Levi and Judah and Jerusalem we ought to understand the Church herself, gathered not from the Hebrews only, but from other nations as well; nor such a Church as she now is, when if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, 1 John 1:8 but as she shall then be, purged by the last judgment as a threshing-floor by a winnowing wind, and those of her members who need it being cleansed by fire, so that there remains absolutely not one who offers sacrifice for his sins. For all who make such offerings are assuredly in their sins, for the remission of which they make offerings, that having made to God an acceptable offering, they may then be absolved.

Chapter 26.— Of the Sacrifices Offered to God by the Saints, Which are to Be Pleasing to Him, as in the Primitive Days and Former Years.

And it was with the design of showing that His city shall not then follow this custom, that God said that the sons of Levi should offer sacrifices in righteousness — not therefore in sin, and consequently not for sin. And hence we see how vainly the Jews promise themselves a return of the old times of sacrificing according to the law of the old testament, grounding on the words which follow, And the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord, as in the primitive days, and as in former years. For in the times of the law they offered sacrifices not in righteousness but in sins, offering especially and primarily for sins, so much so that even the priest himself, whom we must suppose to have been their most righteous man, was accustomed to offer, according to God's commandments, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. And therefore we must explain how we are to understand the words, as in the primitive days, and as in former years; for perhaps he alludes to the time in which our first parents were in paradise. Then, indeed, intact and pure from all stain and blemish of sin, they offered themselves to God as the purest sacrifices. But since they were banished thence on account of their transgression, and human nature was condemned in them, with the exception of the one Mediator and those who have been baptized, and are as yet infants, there is none clean from stain, not even the babe whose life has been but for a day upon the earth. Job 14:4 But if it be replied that those who offer in faith may be said to offer in righteousness, because the righteous lives by faith, Romans 1:17 — he deceives himself, however, if he says that he has no sin, and therefore he does not say so, because he lives by faith — will any man say this time of faith can be placed on an equal footing with that consummation when they who offer sacrifices in righteousness shall be purified by the fire of the last judgment? And consequently, since it must be believed that after such a cleansing the righteous shall retain no sin, assuredly that time, so far as regards its freedom from sin, can be compared to no other period, unless to that during which our first parents lived in paradise in the most innocent happiness before their transgression. It is this period, then, which is properly understood when it is said, as in the primitive days, and as in former years. For in Isaiah, too, after the new heavens and the new earth have been promised, among other elements in the blessedness of the saints which are there depicted by allegories and figures, from giving an adequate explanation of which I am prevented by a desire to avoid prolixity, it is said, According to the days of the tree of life shall be the days of my people. Isaiah 65:22 And who that has looked at Scripture does not know where God planted the tree of life, from whose fruit He excluded our first parents when their own

iniquity ejected them from paradise, and round which a terrible and fiery fence was set?

But if any one contends that those days of the tree of life mentioned by the prophet Isaiah are the present times of the Church of Christ, and that Christ Himself is prophetically called the Tree of Life, because He is Wisdom, and of wisdom Solomon says, It is a tree of life to all who embrace it; Proverbs 3:18 and if they maintain that our first parents did not pass years in paradise, but were driven from it so soon that none of their children were begotten there, and that therefore that time cannot be alluded to in words which run, as in the primitive days, and as in former years, I forbear entering on this question, lest by discussing everything I become prolix, and leave the whole subject in uncertainty. For I see another meaning, which should keep us from believing that a restoration of the primitive days and former years of the legal sacrifices could have been promised to us by the prophet as a great boon. For the animals selected as victims under the old law were required to be immaculate, and free from all blemish whatever, and symbolized holy men free from all sin, the only instance of which character was found in Christ. As, therefore, after the judgment those who are worthy of such purification shall be purified even by fire, and shall be rendered thoroughly sinless, and shall offer themselves to God in righteousness, and be indeed victims immaculate and free from all blemish whatever, they shall then certainly be, as in the primitive days, and as in former years, when the purest victims were offered, the shadow of this future reality. For there shall then be in the body and soul of the saints the purity which was symbolized in the bodies of these victims.

Then, with reference to those who are worthy not of cleansing but of damnation, He says, And I will draw near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against evildoers and against adulterers; and after enumerating other damnable crimes, He adds, For I am the Lord your God, and I am not changed. It is as if He said, Though your fault has changed you for the worse, and my grace has changed you for the better, I am not changed. And he says that He Himself will be a witness, because in His judgment He needs no witnesses; and that He will be swift, either because He is to come suddenly, and the judgment which seemed to lag shall be very swift by His unexpected arrival, or because He will convince the consciences of men directly and without any prolix harangue. For, as it is written, in the thoughts of the wicked His examination shall be conducted. Wisdom 1:9 And the apostle says, The thoughts accusing or else excusing, in the day in which God shall judge the hidden things of men, according to my gospel in Jesus Christ. Romans 2:15-16 Thus, then, shall the Lord be a swift witness, when He shall suddenly bring back into the memory that which shall convince and punish the conscience.

Chapter 27.— Of the Separation of the Good and the Bad, Which Proclaim the Discriminating Influence of the Last Judgment.

The passage also which I formerly quoted for another purpose from this prophet refers to the last judgment, in which he says, They shall be mine, says the Lord Almighty, in the day in which I make up my gains, etc. When this diversity between the rewards and punishments which distinguish the righteous from the wicked shall appear under that Sun of righteousness in the brightness of life eternal — a

diversity which is not discerned under this sun which shines on the vanity of this life — there shall then be such a judgment as has never before been.

Chapter 28.— That the Law of Moses Must Be Spiritually Understood to Preclude the Damnable Murmurs of a Carnal Interpretation.

In the succeeding words, Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded to him in Horeb for all Israel, Malachi 4:4 the prophet opportunely mentions precepts and statutes, after declaring the important distinction hereafter to be made between those who observe and those who despise the law. He intends also that they learn to interpret the law spiritually, and find Christ in it, by whose judgment that separation between the good and the bad is to be made. For it is not without reason that the Lord Himself says to the Jews, Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me; for he wrote of me. John 5:46 For by receiving the law carnally without perceiving that its earthly promises were figures of things spiritual, they fell into such murmurings as audaciously to say, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked suppliantly before the face of the Lord Almighty? And now we call aliens happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up. Malachi 3:14-15 It was these words of theirs which in a manner compelled the prophet to announce the last judgment, in which the wicked shall not even in appearance be happy, but shall manifestly be most miserable; and in which the good shall be oppressed with not even a transitory wretchedness, but shall enjoy unsullied and eternal felicity. For he had previously cited some similar expressions of those who said, Every one that does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and such are pleasing to Him. Malachi 2:17 It was, I say, by understanding the law of Moses carnally that they had come to murmur thus against God. And hence, too, the writer of the 73d Psalm says that his feet were almost gone, his steps had nearly slipped, because he was envious of sinners while he considered their prosperity, so that he said among other things, How does God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High? And again, Have I sanctified my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency? He goes on to say that his efforts to solve this most difficult problem, which arises when the good seem to be wretched and the wicked happy, were in vain until he went into the sanctuary of God, and understood the last things. For in the last judgment things shall not be so; but in the manifest felicity of the righteous and manifest misery of the wicked quite another state of things shall appear.

Chapter 29.— Of the Coming of Elias Before the Judgment, that the Jews May Be Converted to Christ by His Preaching and Explanation of Scripture.

After admonishing them to give heed to the law of Moses, as he foresaw that for a long time to come they would not understand it spiritually and rightly, he went on to say, And, behold, I will send to you Elias the Tishbite before the great and signal day of the Lord come: and he shall turn the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his next of kin, lest I come and utterly smite the earth. Malachi 4:5-6 It is a familiar theme in the conversation and heart of the faithful, that in the last days before the judgment the Jews shall believe in the true Christ, that is, our Christ, by means of this great and admirable prophet Elias who shall expound the law to them. For not without reason do we hope that before the coming of our Judge and Saviour Elias shall come, because we have good reason to believe that he is now alive; for,

as Scripture most distinctly informs us, 2 Kings 2:11 he was taken up from this life in a chariot of fire. When, therefore, he has come, he shall give a spiritual explanation of the law which the Jews at present understand carnally, and shall thus turn the heart of the father to the son, that is, the heart of fathers to their children; for the Septuagint translators have frequently put the singular for the plural number. And the meaning is, that the sons, that is, the Jews, shall understand the law as the fathers, that is, the prophets, and among them Moses himself, understood it. For the heart of the fathers shall be turned to their children when the children understand the law as their fathers did; and the heart of the children shall be turned to their fathers when they have the same sentiments as the fathers. The Septuagint used the expression, and the heart of a man to his next of kin, because fathers and children are eminently neighbors to one another. Another and a preferable sense can be found in the words of the Septuagint translators, who have translated Scripture with an eye to prophecy, the sense, viz., that Elias shall turn the heart of God the Father to the Son, not certainly as if he should bring about this love of the Father for the Son, but meaning that he should make it known, and that the Jews also, who had previously hated, should then love the Son who is our Christ. For so far as regards the Jews, God has His heart turned away from our Christ, this being their conception about God and Christ. But in their case the heart of God shall be turned to the Son when they themselves shall turn in heart, and learn the love of the Father towards the Son. The words following, and the heart of a man to his next of kin, — that is, Elias shall also turn the heart of a man to his next of kin — how can we understand this better than as the heart of a man to the man Christ? For though in the form of God He is our God, yet, taking the form of a servant, He condescended to become also our next of kin. It is this, then, which Elias will do, lest, he says, I come and smite the earth utterly. For they who mind earthly things are the earth. Such are the carnal Jews until this day; and hence these murmurs of theirs against God, The wicked are pleasing to Him, and It is a vain thing to serve God.

Chapter 30.— That in the Books of the Old Testament, Where It is Said that God Shall Judge the World, the Person of Christ is Not Explicitly Indicated, But It Plainly Appears from Some Passages in Which the Lord God Speaks that Christ is Meant.

There are many other passages of Scripture bearing on the last judgment of God — so many, indeed, that to cite them all would swell this book to an unpardonable size. Suffice it to have proved that both Old and New Testament enounce the judgment. But in the Old it is not so definitely declared as in the New that the judgment shall be administered by Christ, that is, that Christ shall descend from heaven as the Judge; for when it is therein stated by the Lord God or His prophet that the Lord God shall come, we do not necessarily understand this of Christ. For both the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the Lord God. We must not, however, leave this without proof. And therefore we must first show how Jesus Christ speaks in the prophetic books under the title of the Lord God, while yet there can be no doubt that it is Jesus Christ who speaks; so that in other passages where this is not at once apparent, and where nevertheless it is said that the Lord God will come to that last judgment, we may understand that Jesus Christ is meant. There is a passage in the prophet Isaiah which illustrates what I mean. For God says by the prophet, Hear me, Jacob and Israel, whom I call. I am the first, and I am for ever: and my hand has founded the earth, and my right hand has established the heaven. I will call them, and they shall stand together, and be gathered, and hear. Who has declared to them these things? In love of you I have done your pleasure upon Babylon, that I might take away the seed of the Chaldeans. I have spoken, and I have called: I have brought him, and have made his way prosperous. Come near to me, and hear this. I have not

spoken in secret from the beginning; when they were made, there was I. And now the Lord God and His Spirit has sent me. Isaiah 48:12-16 It was Himself who was speaking as the Lord God; and yet we should not have understood that it was Jesus Christ had He not added, And now the Lord God and His Spirit has sent me. For He said this with reference to the form of a servant, speaking of a future event as if it were past, as in the same prophet we read, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, Isaiah 53:7 not He shall be led; but the past tense is used to express the future. And prophecy constantly speaks in this way.

There is also another passage in Zechariah which plainly declares that the Almighty sent the Almighty; and of what persons can this be understood but of God the Father and God the Son? For it is written, Thus says the Lord Almighty, After the glory has He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you; for he that touches you touches the apple of His eye. Behold, I will bring mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and you shall know that the Lord Almighty has sent me. Zechariah 2:8-9 Observe, the Lord Almighty says that the Lord Almighty sent Him. Who can presume to understand these words of any other than Christ, who is speaking to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? For He says in the Gospel, I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matthew 15:24 which He here compared to the pupil of God's eye, to signify the profoundest love. And to this class of sheep the apostles themselves belonged. But after the glory, to wit, of His resurrection — for before it happened the evangelist said that Jesus was not yet glorified, John 7:39 — He was sent unto the nations in the persons of His apostles; and thus the saying of the psalm was fulfilled, You will deliver me from the contradictions of the people; You will set me as the head of the nations, so that those who had spoiled the Israelites, and whom the Israelites had served when they were subdued by them, were not themselves to be spoiled in the same fashion, but were in their own persons to become the spoil of the Israelites. For this had been promised to the apostles when the Lord said, I will make you fishers of men. Matthew 4:19 And to one of them He says, From henceforth you shall catch men. Luke 5:10 They were then to become a spoil, but in a good sense, as those who are snatched from that strong one when he is bound by a stronger. Matthew 12:29

In like manner the Lord, speaking by the same prophet, says, And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and mercy; and they shall look upon me because they have insulted me, and they shall mourn for Him as for one very dear, and shall be in bitterness as for an only-begotten. Zechariah 12:9-10 To whom but to God does it belong to destroy all the nations that are hostile to the holy city Jerusalem, which come against it, that is, are opposed to it, or, as some translate, come upon it, as if putting it down under them; or to pour out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and mercy? This belongs doubtless to God, and it is to God the prophet ascribes the words; and yet Christ shows that He is the God who does these so great and divine things, when He goes on to say, And they shall look upon me because they have insulted me, and they shall mourn for Him as if for one very dear (or beloved), and shall be in bitterness for Him as for an only-begotten. For in that day the Jews— those of them, at least, who shall receive the spirit of grace and mercy — when they see Him coming in His majesty, and recognize that it is He whom they, in the person of their parents, insulted when He came before in His humiliation, shall repent of insulting Him in His passion: and their parents themselves, who were the perpetrators of this huge impiety, shall see Him when

they rise; but this will be only for their punishment, and not for their correction. It is not of them we are to understand the words, And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and mercy, and they shall look upon me because they have insulted me; but we are to understand the words of their descendants, who shall at that time believe through Elias. But as we say to the Jews, You killed Christ, although it was their parents who did so, so these persons shall grieve that they in some sort did what their progenitors did. Although, therefore, those that receive the spirit of mercy and grace, and believe, shall not be condemned with their impious parents, yet they shall mourn as if they themselves had done what their parents did. Their grief shall arise not so much from guilt as from pious affection. Certainly the words which the Septuagint have translated, They shall look upon me because they insulted me, stand in the Hebrew, They shall look upon me whom they pierced. And by this word the crucifixion of Christ is certainly more plainly indicated. But the Septuagint translators preferred to allude to the insult which was involved in His whole passion. For in point of fact they insulted Him both when He was arrested and when He was bound, when He was judged, when He was mocked by the robe they put on Him and the homage they did on bended knee, when He was crowned with thorns and struck with a rod on the head, when He bore His cross, and when at last He hung upon the tree. And therefore we recognize more fully the Lord's passion when we do not confine ourselves to one interpretation, but combine both, and read both insulted and pierced.

When, therefore, we read in the prophetic books that God is to come to do judgment at the last, from the mere mention of the judgment, and although there is nothing else to determine the meaning, we must gather that Christ is meant; for though the Father will judge, He will judge by the coming of the Son. For He Himself, by His own manifested presence, judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son; John 5:22 for as the Son was judged as a man, He shall also judge in human form. For it is none but He of whom God speaks by Isaiah under the name of Jacob and Israel, of whose seed Christ took a body, as it is written, Jacob is my servant, I will uphold Him; Israel is mine elect, my Spirit has assumed Him: I have put my Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor cease, neither shall His voice be heard without. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: but in truth shall He bring forth judgment. He shall shine and shall not be broken, until He sets judgment in the earth: and the nations shall hope in His name. Isaiah 42:1-4 The Hebrew has not Jacob and Israel; but the Septuagint translators, wishing to show the significance of the expression my servant, and that it refers to the form of a servant in which the Most High humbled Himself, inserted the name of that man from whose stock He took the form of a servant. The Holy Spirit was given to Him, and was manifested, as the evangelist testifies, in the form of a dove. John 1:32 He brought forth judgment to the Gentiles, because He predicted what was hidden from them. In His meekness He did not cry, nor did He cease to proclaim the truth. But His voice was not heard, nor is it heard, without, because He is not obeyed by those who are outside of His body. And the Jews themselves, who persecuted Him, He did not break, though as a bruised reed they had lost their integrity, and as smoking flax their light was quenched; for He spared them, having come to be judged and not yet to judge. He brought forth judgment in truth, declaring that they should be punished did they persist in their wickedness. His face shone on the Mount, Matthew 17:1-2 His fame in the world. He is not broken nor overcome, because neither in Himself nor in His Church has persecution prevailed to annihilate Him. And therefore that has not, and shall not, be brought about which His enemies said or say, When shall He die, and His name perish? until He set judgment in the earth. Behold, the hidden thing which we were seeking is discovered. For this is the last

judgment, which He will set in the earth when He comes from heaven. And it is in Him, too, we already see the concluding expression of the prophecy fulfilled: In His name shall the nations hope. And by this fulfillment, which no one can deny, men are encouraged to believe in that which is most impudently denied. For who could have hoped for that which even those who do not yet believe in Christ now see fulfilled among us, and which is so undeniable that they can but gnash their teeth and pine away? Who, I say, could have hoped that the nations would hope in the name of Christ, when He was arrested, bound, scourged, mocked, crucified, when even the disciples themselves had lost the hope which they had begun to have in Him? The hope which was then entertained scarcely by the one thief on the cross, is now cherished by nations everywhere on the earth, who are marked with the sign of the cross on which He died that they may not die eternally.

That the last judgment, then, shall be administered by Jesus Christ in the manner predicted in the sacred writings is denied or doubted by no one, unless by those who, through some incredible animosity or blindness, decline to believe these writings, though already their truth is demonstrated to all the world. And at or in connection with that judgment the following events shall come to pass, as we have learned: Elias the Tishbite shall come; the Jews shall believe; Antichrist shall persecute; Christ shall judge; the dead shall rise; the good and the wicked shall be separated; the world shall be burned and renewed. All these things, we believe, shall come to pass; but how, or in what order, human understanding cannot perfectly teach us, but only the experience of the events themselves. My opinion, however, is, that they will happen in the order in which I have related them.

Two books yet remain to be written by me, in order to complete, by God's help, what I promised. One of these will explain the punishment of the wicked, the other the happiness of the righteous; and in them I shall be at special pains to refute, by God's grace, the arguments by which some unhappy creatures seem to themselves to undermine the divine promises and threatenings, and to ridicule as empty words statements which are the most salutary nutriment of faith. But they who are instructed in divine things hold the truth and omnipotence of God to be the strongest arguments in favor of those things which, however incredible they seem to men, are yet contained in the Scriptures, whose truth has already in many ways been proved; for they are sure that God can in no wise lie, and that He can do what is impossible to the unbelieving.

Source: Marcus Dodds, Trans. *From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 2. Ed. by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.)