

On the Life of Moses, II

Philo of Alexandria



Chapter I

The first volume of this treatise relates to the subject of the birth and bringing up of Moses, and also of his education and of his government of his people, which he governed not merely irreproachably, but in so exceedingly praiseworthy a manner; and also of all the affairs, which took place in Egypt, and in the travels and journeyings of the nation, and of the events which happened with respect to their crossing the Red Sea and in the desert, which surpass all power of description; and, moreover, of all the labours which he conducted to a successful issue, and of the inheritances which he distributed in portions to his soldiers. But the book which we are now about to compose relates to the affairs which follow those others in due order, and bear a certain correspondence and connection with them.

For some persons say, and not without some reason and propriety, that this is the only way by which cities can be expected to advance in improvement, if either the kings cultivate philosophy, or if philosophers exercise the kingly power. But Moses will be seen not only to have displayed all these powers — I mean the genius of the philosopher and of the king — in an extraordinary degree at the same time, but three other powers likewise, one of which is conversant about legislation, the second about the way of discharging the duties of high priest, and the last about the prophetic office;

and it is on these subjects that I have now been constrained to choose to enlarge; for I conceive that all these things have fitly been united in him, inasmuch as in accordance with the providential will of God he was both a king and a lawgiver, and a high priest and a prophet, and because in each office he displayed the most eminent wisdom and virtue. We must now show how it is that every thing is fitly united in him.

It becomes a king to command what ought to be done, and to forbid what ought not to be done; but the commanding what ought to be done, and the prohibition of what ought not to be done, belongs especially to the law, so that the king is at once a living law, and the law is a just king.

But a king and a lawgiver ought to pay attention not only to human things, but also to divine ones, for the affairs of neither kings nor subjects go on well except by the intervention of divine providence; on which account it was necessary that such a man as Moses should enjoy the first priesthood, in order

that he might with perfectly conducted sacrifices, and with a perfect knowledge of the proper way to serve God, entreat for a deliverance from evil and for a participation in good, both for himself and for the people whom he was governing, from the merciful God who listens favourably to prayers.

But since there is an infinite variety of both human and divine circumstances which are unknown both to king, and lawgiver, and chief priest, for a man is no less a created and mortal being from having all these offices, or because he is clothed with such a vast and boundless inheritance of honour and happiness, he was also of necessity invested with the gift of prophecy, in order that he might through the providence of God learn all those things which he was unable to comprehend by his own reason; for what the mind is unable to attain to, that prophecy masters.

Therefore the connection of these four powers is beautiful and harmonious, for being all connected together and united one to another, they unite in concert, receiving and imparting a reciprocity of benefits from and to one another, imitating the virgin graces with whom it is an immutable law of their nature that they cannot be disunited, with respect to whom one might fairly say, what is habitually said of the virtues, that he who has one has them all.

Chapter II

And first of all we must speak of the matters which relate to his character and conduct as a lawgiver. I am not ignorant that the man who desires to be an excellent and perfect lawgiver ought to exercise all the virtues in their complete integrity and perfection, since in the houses of his nation some are near relations and some distant, but still they are all related to one another. And in like manner we must look upon some of the virtues as connected more closely with some matters, and on others as being more removed from them.

Now these four qualities are closely connected with and related to the legislative power, namely, humility, the love of justice, the love of virtue, and the hatred of iniquity; for every individual who has any desire for exercising his talents as a lawgiver is under the influence of each of these feelings. It is the province of humanity to prepare for adoption such opinions as will benefit the common weal, and to teach the advantages which will proceed from them. It is the part of justice to point out how we ought to honour equality, and to

assign to every man his due according to his deserts. It is the part of the love of virtue to embrace those things which are by nature good, and to give to every one who deserves them facilities without limit for the most unrestrained enjoyment of happiness. It is also the province of the hatred of iniquity to reject all those who dishonour virtue, and to look upon them as common enemies of the human race.

Therefore it is a very great thing if it has fallen to the lot of any one to arrive at any one of the qualities before mentioned, and it is a marvellous thing, as it should seem, for any one man to have been able to grasp them all, which in fact Moses appears to have been the only person who has ever done, having given a very clear description of the aforesaid virtues in the commandments which he established.

And those who are well versed in the sacred scriptures know this, for if he had not had these principles innate within him he would never have compiled those scriptures at the promptings of God. And he gave to those who were worthy to use them the most admirable of all possessions, namely, faithful copies and imitations of the original examples which were consecrated and enshrined in the soul, which became the laws which he revealed and established, displaying in the clearest manner the virtues which I have enumerated and described above.

Chapter III

But that he himself is the most admirable of all the lawgivers who have ever lived in any country either among the Greeks or among the barbarians, and that his are the most admirable of all laws, and truly divine, omitting no one particular which they ought to comprehend, there is the clearest proof possible in this fact, the laws of other lawgivers,

if any one examines them by his reason, he will find to be put in motion in an innumerable multitude of pretexts, either because of wars, or of tyrannies, or of some other unexpected events which come upon nations through the various alterations and innovations of fortune; and very often luxury, abounding in all kind of superfluity and unbounded extravagance, has overturned laws, from the multitude not being able to bear unlimited prosperity, but having a tendency to become insolent through satiety, and

insolence is in opposition to law.

But the enactments of this lawgiver are firm, not shaken by commotions, not liable to alteration, but stamped as it were with the seal of nature herself, and they remain firm and lasting from the day on which they were first promulgated to the present one, and there may well be a hope that they will remain to all future time, as being immortal, as long as the sun and the moon, and the whole heaven and the whole world shall endure.

At all events, though the nation of the Hebrews experienced so many changes both in the direction of prosperity and of the opposite destiny, no one, no not even the very smallest and most unimportant of all his commandments was changed, since every one, as it seems, honoured their venerable and godlike character;

and what neither famine, nor pestilence, nor war, nor sovereign, nor tyrant, nor the rise of any passions or evil feelings against either soul or body, nor any other evil, whether inflicted by God or deriving its rise from men, ever dissolved, can surely never be looked upon by us in any other light than as objects of all admiration, and beyond all powers of description in respect of their excellence.

Chapter IV

But this is not so entirely wonderful, although it may fairly by itself be considered a thing of great intrinsic importance, that his laws were kept securely and immutably from all time; but this is more wonderful by far, as it seems, that not only the Jews, but that also almost every other nation, and especially those who make the greatest account of virtue, have dedicated themselves to embrace and honour them, for they have received this especial honour above all other codes of laws, which is not given to any other code.

And a proof of this is to be found in the fact that of all the cities in Greece and in the territory of the barbarians, if one may so say, speaking generally, there is not one single city which pays any respect to the laws of another state. In fact, a city scarcely adheres to its own laws with any constancy for ever, but continually modifies them, and adapts them to the changes of times and circumstances.

The Athenians rejected the customs and laws of the Lacedaemonians, and so did the Lacedaemonians repudiate the laws of the Athenians. Nor, again, in the countries of the barbarians do the Egyptians keep the laws of the Scythians, nor do the Scythians keep the laws of the Egyptians; nor, in short, do those who live in Asia attend to the laws which obtain in Europe, nor do the inhabitants of Europe respect the laws of the Asiatic nations. And, in short, it is very nearly an universal rule, from the rising of the sun to its extreme west, that every country, and nation, and city, is alienated from the laws and customs of foreign nations and states, and that they think that they are adding to the estimation in which they hold their own laws by despising those in use among other nations.

But this is not the case with our laws which Moses has given to us; for they lead after them and influence all nations, barbarians, and Greeks, the inhabitants of continents and islands, the eastern nations and the western, Europe and Asia; in short, the whole habitable world from one extremity to the other.

For what man is there who does not honour that sacred seventh day, granting in consequence a relief and relaxation from labour, for himself and for all those who are near to him, and that not to free men only, but also to slaves, and even to beasts of burden;

for the holiday extends even to every description of animal, and to every beast whatever which performs service to man, like slaves obeying their natural master, and it affects even every species of plant and tree; for there is no shoot, and no branch, and no leaf even which it is allowed to cut or to pluck on that day, nor any fruit which it is lawful to gather; but everything is at liberty and in safety on that day, and enjoys, as it were, perfect freedom, no one ever touching them, in obedience to a universal proclamation.

Again, who is there who does not pay all due respect and honour to that which is called “the fast,” and especially to that great yearly one which is of a more austere and venerable character than the ordinary solemnity at the full moon? on which, indeed, much pure wine is drunk, and costly entertainments are provided, and everything which relates to eating and drinking is supplied in the most unlimited profusion, by which the insatiable pleasures of the belly are inflamed and increased.

But on this fast it is not lawful to take any food or any drink, in order that no bodily passion may at all disturb or hinder the pure operations of the mind; but these passions are wont to be generated by fulness and satiety, so that at this time men feast, propitiating the Father of the universe with holy prayers, by which they are accustomed to solicit pardon for their former sins, and the acquisition and enjoyment of new blessings.

Chapter V

And that beauty and dignity of the legislation of Moses is honoured not among the Jews only, but also by all other nations, is plain, both from what has been already said and from what I am about to state.

In olden time the laws were written in the Chaldaean language, and for a long time they remained in the same condition as at first, not changing their language as long as their beauty had not made them known to other nations;

but when, from the daily and uninterrupted respect shown to them by those to whom they had been given, and from their ceaseless observance of their ordinances, other nations also obtained an understanding of them, their reputation spread over all lands; for what was really good, even though it may through envy be overshadowed for a short time, still in time shines again through the intrinsic excellence of its nature. Some persons, thinking it a scandalous thing that these laws should only be known among one half portion of the human race, namely, among the barbarians, and that the Greek nation should be wholly and entirely ignorant of them, turned their attention to their translation.

And since this undertaking was an important one, tending to the general advantage, not only of private persons, but also of rulers, of whom the number was not great, it was entrusted to kings and to the most illustrious of all kings.

Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, was the third in succession after Alexander, the monarch who subdued Egypt; and he was, in all virtues which can be displayed in government, the most excellent sovereign, not only of all those of his time, but of all that ever lived; so that even now, after the lapse of so many generations, his fame is still celebrated, as having left many instances and monuments of his magnanimity in the cities and districts of his kingdom,

so that even now it is come to be a sort of proverbial expression to call excessive magnificence, and zeal, for honour and splendour in preparation, Philadelphian, from his name;

and, in a word, the whole family of the Ptolemies was exceedingly eminent and conspicuous above all other royal families, and among the Ptolemies, Philadelphus was the most illustrious; for all the rest put together scarcely did as many glorious and praiseworthy actions as this one king did by himself, being, as it were, the leader of the herd, and in a manner the head of all the kings.

Chapter VI

He, then, being a sovereign of this character, and having conceived a great admiration for and love of the legislation of Moses, conceived the idea of having our laws translated into the Greek language; and immediately he sent out ambassadors to the high-priest and king of Judea, for they were the same person.

And having explained his wishes, and having requested him to pick him out a number of men, of perfect fitness for the task, who should translate the law, the high-priest, as was natural, being greatly pleased, and thinking that the king had only felt the inclination to undertake a work of such a character from having been influenced by the providence of God, considered, and with great care selected the most respectable of the Hebrews whom he had about him, who in addition to their knowledge of their national scriptures, had also been well instructed in Grecian literature, and cheerfully sent them.

And when they arrived at the king's court they were hospitably received by the king; and while they feasted, they in return feasted their entertainer with witty and virtuous conversation; for he made experiment of the wisdom of each individual among them, putting to them a succession of new and extraordinary questions; and they, since the time did not allow of their being prolix in their answers, replied with great propriety and fidelity as if they were delivering apophthegms which they had already prepared.

So when they had won his approval, they immediately began to fulfil the objects for which that honourable embassy had been sent; and considering among themselves how important the affair was, to translate laws which had

been divinely given by direct inspiration, since they were not able either to take away anything, or to add anything, or to alter anything, but were bound to preserve the original form and character of the whole composition, they looked out for the most completely purified place of all the spots on the outside of the city. For the places within the walls, as being filled with all kinds of animals, were held in suspicion by them by reason of the diseases and deaths of some, and the accursed actions of those who were in health.

The island of Pharos lies in front of Alexandria, the neck of which runs out like a sort of tongue towards the city, being surrounded with water of no great depth, but chiefly with shoals and shallow water, so that the great noise and roaring from the beating of the waves is kept at a considerable distance, and so mitigated.

They judged this place to be the most suitable of all the spots in the neighbourhood for them to enjoy quiet and tranquillity in, so that they might associate with the laws alone in their minds; and there they remained, and having taken the sacred scriptures, they lifted up them and their hands also to heaven, entreating of God that they might not fail in their object. And he assented to their prayers, that the greater part, or indeed the universal race of mankind might be benefited, by using these philosophical and entirely beautiful commandments for the correction of their lives.

Chapter VII

Therefore, being settled in a secret place, and nothing even being present with them except the elements of nature, the earth, the water, the air, and the heaven, concerning the creation of which they were going in the first place to explain the sacred account; for the account of the creation of the world is the beginning of the law; they, like men inspired, prophesied, not one saying one thing and another another, but every one of them employed the self-same nouns and verbs, as if some unseen prompter had suggested all their language to them.

And yet who is there who does not know that every language, and the Greek language above all others, is rich in a variety of words, and that it is possible to vary a sentence and to paraphrase the same idea, so as to set it forth in a great variety of manners, adapting many different forms of expression to it at

different times. But this, they say, did not happen at all in the case of this translation of the law, but that, in every case, exactly corresponding Greek words were employed to translate literally the appropriate Chaldaic words, being adapted with exceeding propriety to the matters which were to be explained;

for just as I suppose the things which are proved in geometry and logic do not admit any variety of explanation, but the proposition which was set forth from the beginning remains unaltered, in like manner I conceive did these men find words precisely and literally corresponding to the things, which words were alone, or in the greatest possible degree, destined to explain with clearness and force the matters which it was desired to reveal.

And there is a very evident proof of this; for if Chaldaeans were to learn the Greek language, and if Greeks were to learn Chaldaean, and if each were to meet with those scriptures in both languages, namely, the Chaldaic and the translated version, they would admire and reverence them both as sisters, or rather as one and the same both in their facts and in their language; considering these translators not mere interpreters but hierophants and prophets to whom it had been granted it their honest and guileless minds to go along with the most pure spirit of Moses.

On which account, even to this very day, there is every year a solemn assembly held and a festival celebrated in the island of Pharos, to which not only the Jews but a great number of persons of other nations sail across, reverencing the place in which the first light of interpretation shone forth, and thanking God for that ancient piece of beneficence which was always young and fresh.

And after the prayers and the giving of thanks some of them pitched their tents on the shore, and some of them lay down without any tents in the open air on the sand of the shore, and feasted with their relations and friends, thinking the shore at that time a more beautiful abode than the furniture of the king's palace.

In this way those admirable, and incomparable, and most desirable laws were made known to all people, whether private individuals or kings, and this too at a period when the nation had not been prosperous for a long time. And it is generally the case that a cloud is thrown over the affairs of those who are

not flourishing, so that but little is known of them;

and then, if they make any fresh start and begin to improve, how great is the increase of their renown and glory? I think that in that case every nation, abandoning all their own individual customs, and utterly disregarding their national laws, would change and come over to the honour of such a people only; for their laws shining in connection with, and simultaneously with, the prosperity of the nation, will obscure all others, just as the rising sun obscures the stars.

Chapter VIII

Now what has been here said is quite sufficient for the abundant praise of Moses as a lawgiver. But there is another more extensive praise which his own holy writings themselves contain, and it is to them that we must now turn for the purpose of exhibiting the virtue of him who compiled them.

Now these writings of Moses may be divided into several parts; one of which is the historical part, another is occupied with commands and prohibitions, respecting which part we will speak at some other time when we have first of all accurately examined that part which comes first in the order of our division.

Again, the historical part may be subdivided into the account of the creation of the world, and the genealogical part. And the genealogical part, or the history of the different families, may be divided into the accounts of the punishment of the wicked, and of the honours bestowed on the just; we must also explain on what account it was that he began his history of the giving of the law with these particulars, and placed the commandments and prohibitions in the second order;

for he was not like any ordinary compiler of history, studying to leave behind him records of ancient transactions as memorials to future ages for the mere sake of affording pleasure without any advantage; but he traced back the most ancient events from the beginning of the world, commencing with the creation of the universe, in order to make known two most necessary principles. First, that the same being was the father and creator of the world, and likewise the lawgiver of truth; secondly, that the man who adhered to these laws, and clung closely to a connection with and obedience to nature,

would live in a manner corresponding to the arrangement of the universe with a perfect harmony and union, between his words and his actions and between his actions and his words.

Chapter IX

Now of all other lawgivers, some the moment that they have promulgated positive commands as to what it is right to do and what it is right not to do, proceed to appoint punishments for those who transgress those laws; but others, who appear to have proceeded on a better plan, have not begun in this manner, but, having first of all built and established their city in accordance with reason, have then adapted to this city which they have built, that constitution which they have considered the best adapted and most akin to it, and have confirmed this constitution by the giving of laws.

But he, thinking the first of the two courses above mentioned to be tyrannical and despotic, as indeed it is, namely, that of laying positive commands on persons as if they were not free men but slaves, without offering them any alleviation; and that the second course was better indeed, but was not entirely to be commended, must appear to all judges to be superior in each of the above considerations.

For both in his commandments and also in his prohibitions he suggests and recommends rather than commands, endeavouring with many prefaces and perorations to suggest the greater part of the precepts that he desires to enforce, desiring rather to allure men to virtue than to drive them to it, and looking upon the foundation and beginning of a city made with hands, which he has made the commencement of his work a commencement beneath the dignity of his laws, looking rather with the most accurate eye of his mind at the importance and beauty of his whole legislative system, and thinking it too excellent and too divine to be limited as it were by any circle of things on earth; and therefore he has related the creation of that great metropolis, the world, thinking his laws the most fruitful image and likeness of the constitution of the whole world.

Chapter X

At all events if any one were inclined to examine with accuracy the powers of each individual and particular law, he will find them all aiming at the harmony of the universe, and corresponding to the law of eternal nature:

on which account those men who have had unbounded prosperity bestowed upon them, and all things tending to the production of health of body, and riches, and glory, and all other external parts of good fortune, but who have rejected virtue, and have chosen crafty wickedness, and all others kinds of vice, not through compulsion, but of their own spontaneous free will, looking upon that which is the greatest of all evils as the greatest possible advantage, he looks upon as enemies not of mankind only, but of the entire heaven and world, and says that they are awaiting, not any ordinary punishments, but new and extraordinary ones, which that constant assessor of God, justice, who detests wickedness, invents and inflicts terribly upon them, turning against them the most powerful elements of the universe, water and fire, so that at appointed times some are destroyed by deluges, others are burnt with fire, and perish in that manner.

The seas were raised up, and the rivers both such as flow everlastingly, and the winter torrents were swollen and washed away, and carried off all the cities in the plain; and those in the mountain country were destroyed by incessant and irresistible impetuosity of rain, ceasing neither by day nor by night,

and when at a subsequent period the race of mankind had again increased from those who had been spared, and had become very numerous, since the succeeding generations did not take the calamities which had befallen their ancestors as a lesson to teach themselves wisdom and moderation, but turned to acts of intemperance and became studiers of evil practices, God determined to destroy them with fire.

Therefore on this occasion, as the holy scriptures tell us, thunderbolts fell from heaven, and burnt up those wicked men and their cities; and even to this day there are seen in Syria monuments of the unprecedented destruction that fell upon them, in the ruins, and ashes, and sulphur, and smoke, and dusky flame which still is sent up from the ground as of a fire smouldering beneath;

and in this way it came to pass that those wicked men were punished with the aforesaid chastisements, while those who were eminent for virtue and piety were well off, receiving rewards worthy of their virtue.

But when the whole of that district was thus burnt, inhabitants and all, by the impetuous rush of the heavenly fire, one single man in the country, a sojourner, was preserved by the providence of God because he had never shared in the transgressions of the natives, though sojourners in general were in the habit of adopting the customs of the foreign nations, among which they might be settled, for the sake of their own safety, since, if they despised them, they might be in danger from the inhabitants of the land. And yet this man had not attained to any perfection of wisdom, so as to be thought worthy of such an honour by reason of the perfect excellence of his nature; but he was spared only because he did not join the multitude who were inclined to luxury and effeminacy, and who pursued every kind of pleasure and indulged every kind of appetite, gratifying them abundantly, and inflaming them as one might inflame fire by heaping upon it plenty of rough fuel.

Chapter XI

But in the great deluge I may almost say that the whole of the human race was destroyed, while the history tells us that the house of Noah alone was preserved free from all evil, inasmuch as the father and governor of the house was a man who had never committed any intentional or voluntary wickedness. And it is worth while to relate the manner of his preservation as the sacred scriptures deliver it to us, both on account of the extraordinary character of it, and also that it may lead to an improvement in our own dispositions and lives.

For he, being considered a fit man, not only to be exempted from the common calamity which was to overwhelm the world, but also to be himself the beginning of a second generation of men, in obedience to the divine commands which were conveyed to him by the word of God, built a most enormous fabric of wood, three hundred cubits in length, and fifty in width, and thirty in height, and having prepared a number of connected chambers within it, both on the ground floor and in the upper story, the whole building consisting of three, and in some parts of four stories, and having prepared food, brought into it some of every description of animals, beasts and also birds, both male and female, in order to preserve a means of propagating the different species in the times that should come hereafter;

for he knew that the nature of God was merciful, and that even if the subordinate species were destroyed, still there would be a germ in the entire genus which should be safe from destruction, for the sake of preserving a similitude to those animals which had hitherto existed, and of preventing anything that had been deliberately called into existence from being utterly destroyed.

and after they had all entered into the ark, if any one had beheld the entire collection, he would not have been wrong if he had said that it was a representation of the whole earth, containing, as it did, every kind of animal, of which the whole earth had previously produced innumerable species, and will hereafter produce such again.

And what was expected happened at no long period after; for the evil abated, and the destruction caused by the deluge was diminished every day, the rain being checked, and the water which had been spread over the whole earth, being partly dried up by the flame of the sun, and partly returning into the chasms and rivers, and other channels and receptacles in the earth; for, as if God had issued a command to that effect, every nature received back, as a necessary repayment of a loan, what it had lent, that is, every sea, and fountain, and river, received back their waters; and every stream returned into its appropriate channel.

But after the purification, in this way, of all the things beneath the moon, the earth being thus washed and appearing new again, and such as it appeared to be when it was at first created, along with the entire universe, Noah came forth out of his wooden edifice, himself and his wife, and his sons and their wives, and with his family there came forth likewise, in one company, all the races of animals which had gone in with them, in order to the generation and propagation of similar creatures in future.

These are the rewards and honours for pre-eminent excellence given to good men, by means of which, not only did they themselves and their families obtain safety, having escaped from the greatest dangers which were thus aimed against all men all over the earth, by the change in the character of the elements; but they became also the founders of a new generation, and the chiefs of a second period of the world, being left behind as sparks of the most excellent kind of creatures, namely, of men, man having received the

supremacy over all earthly creatures whatsoever, being a kind of copy of the powers of God, a visible image of his invisible nature, a created image of an uncreated and immortal Original.(yonge's translation includes a separate treatise title at this point: On the Life of Moses, That Is to Say, On the Theology and Prophetic Office of Moses, Book III. Accordingly, his next paragraph begins with roman numeral I (= XIII in the Loeb). Yonge's "treatise" concludes with number XXXIX (= LI in the Loeb). The publisher has elected to follow the Loeb numbering.)

Chapter XIII

We have already, then, gone through two parts of the life of Moses, discussing his character in his capacity of a king and of a lawgiver. We must now consider him in a third light, as fulfilling the office of the priesthood. Now this man, Moses, practised beyond all other men that which is the most important and most indispensable virtue in a chief priest, namely, piety, partly because he was endowed with most admirable natural qualities; and philosophy, receiving his nature like a fertile field, cultivated and improved it by the contemplation of excellent and beautiful doctrines, and did not dismiss it until all the fruits of virtue were brought to perfection in him, in respect of words and actions.

Therefore he, with a few other men, was dear to God and devoted to God, being inspired by heavenly love, and honouring the Father of the universe above all things, and being in return honoured by him in a particular manner. And it was an honour well adapted to the wise man to be allowed to serve the true and living God. Now the priesthood has for its duty the service of God. Of this honour, then, Moses was thought worthy, than which there is no greater honour in the whole world, being instructed by the sacred oracles of God in everything that related to the sacred offices and ministrations.

Chapter XIV

But, in the first place, before assuming that office, it was necessary for him to purify not only his soul but also his body, so that it should be connected with and defiled by no passion, but should be pure from everything which is of a mortal nature, from all meat and drink, and from all connection with

women.

And this last thing, indeed, he had despised for a long time, and almost from the first moment that he began to prophesy and to feel a divine inspiration, thinking that it was proper that he should at all times be ready to give his whole attention to the commands of God. And how he neglected all meat and drink for forty days together, evidently because he had more excellent food than that in those contemplations with which he was inspired from above from heaven, by which also he was improved in the first instance in his mind, and, secondly, in his body, through his soul, increasing in strength and health both of body and soul, so that those who saw him afterwards could not believe that he was the same person.

For, having gone up into the loftiest and most sacred mountain in that district in accordance with the divine commands, a mountain which was very difficult of access and very hard to ascend, he is said to have remained there all that time without eating any of that food even which is necessary for life; and, as I said before, he descended again forty days afterwards, being much more beautiful in his face than when he went up, so that those who saw him wondered and were amazed, and could no longer endure to look upon him with their eyes, inasmuch as his countenance shone like the light of the sun.

Chapter XV

And while he was still abiding in the mountain he was initiated in the sacred will of God, being instructed in all the most important matters which relate to his priesthood, those which come first in order being the commands of God respecting the building of a temple and all its furniture.

If, then, they had already occupied the country into which they were migrating, it would have been necessary for them to have erected a most magnificent temple of the most costly stone in some place unincumbered with wood, and to have built vast walls around it, and abundant and wellfurnished houses for the keepers of the temple, calling the place itself the holy city.

But, as they were still wandering in the wilderness, it was more suitable for people who had as yet no settled habitation to have a moveable temple, that so, in all their journeyings, and military expeditions, and encampments, they might be able to offer up sacrifices, and might not feel the want of any of the

things which related to their holy ministrations, and which those who dwell in cities require to have.

Therefore Moses now determined to build a tabernacle, a most holy edifice, the furniture of which he was instructed how to supply by precise commands from God, given to him while he was on the mount, contemplating with his soul the incorporeal patterns of bodies which were about to be made perfect, in due similitude to which he was bound to make the furniture, that it might be an imitation perceptible by the outward senses of an archetypal sketch and pattern, appreciable only by the intellect;

for it was suitable and consistent for the task of preparing and furnishing the temple to be entrusted to the real high priest, that he might with all due perfection and propriety make all his ministrations in the performance of his sacred duties correspond to the works which he was now to make.

Chapter XVI

Therefore the general form of the model was stamped upon the mind of the prophet, being accurately painted and fashioned beforehand invisibly without any materials, in species which were not apparent to the eye; and the completion of the work was made in the similitude of the model, the maker giving an accurate representation of the impression in material substances corresponding to each part of the model,

and the fashion of the building was as follows. There were eight and forty pillars of cedar, which is the most incorruptible of all woods, cut out of solid trunks of great beauty, and they were all veneered with gold of great thickness. Then under each pillar there were placed two silver pedestals to support it, and on the top of each was placed one golden capital;

and of these pillars the architect arranged forty along the length of the tabernacle, one half of them, or twenty, on each side, placing nothing between them, but arranging them and uniting them all in regular order, and close together, so that they might present the appearance of one solid wall; and he ranged the other eight along the inner breadth, placing six in the middle space, and two at the extreme corners, one on each side at the right and left of the centre. Again, at the entrance he placed four others, like the first in all other respects except that they had only one pedestal instead of two, as those

opposite to them had, and behind them he placed five more on the outside differing only in the pedestals, for the pedestals of these last were made of brass.

So that all the pillars of the tabernacle taken together, besides the two at the corners which could not be seen, were fifty-five in number, all conspicuous, being the number made by the addition of all the numbers from the unit to the complete and perfect decade.

And if any were inclined to count those five pillars of the outer vestibule in the open air separately, as being in the outer court as it was called, there will then be left that most holy number of fifty, being the power of a rectangular triangle, which is the foundation of the creation of the universe, and is here entirely completed by the pillars inside the tabernacle; there being first of all forty, twenty on either side, and those in the middle being six, without counting those which were out of sight and concealed at the corners, and those opposite to the entrance, from which the veil was suspended, being four;

and the reason for which I reckon the other five with the first fifty, and again why I separate them from the fifty, I will now explain. The number five is the number of the external senses, and the external sense in man at one time inclines towards external things, and at another time comes back again upon the mind, being as it were a kind of handmaid of the laws of its nature; on which account it is that the architect has here allotted a central position to the five pillars, for those which are inside of them leant towards the innermost shrine of the tabernacle, which under a symbol is appreciable only by the intellect; and the outermost pillars, which are in the open air, and in the outer courtyard, and which are also perceptible by the external senses,

in reference to which fact it is that they are said to have differed from the others only in the pedestals, for they were made of brass. But since the mind is the principal thing in us, having an authority over the external senses, and since that which is an object of the external senses is the extremity, and as it were the pedestal or foundation of it, the architect has likened the mind to gold, and the object of the external sense to brass.

And these are the measures of the pillars, they are ten cubits in length, and five cubits and a half in width, in order that the tabernacle may be seen to be of equal dimensions in all its parts.

Chapter XVII

Moreover the architect surrounded the tabernacle with very beautiful woven work of all kinds, employing work of hyacinth colour, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen for the tapestry; for he caused to be wrought ten cloths, which in the sacred scriptures he has called curtains, of the kinds which I have just mentioned, every one of them being eight and twenty cubits in length, and extending four cubits in width, in order that the complete number of the decade, and also the number four, which is the essence of the decade, and also the number twenty-eight, which is likewise a perfect number, being equal to its parts; and also the number forty, the most prolific and productive of all numbers, in which number they say that man was fashioned in the workshop of nature.

Therefore the eight and twenty cubits of the curtains have this distribution: there are ten along the roof, for that is the width of the tabernacle, and the rest are placed along the sides, on each side nine, which are extended so as to cover and conceal the pillars, one cubit from the floor being left uncovered in order that the beautiful and holy looking embroidery might not be dragged.

And of the forty which are included in the calculation and made up of the width of the ten curtains, the length takes thirty, for such is the length of the tabernacle, and the chamber behind takes nine. And the remaining one is in the outer vestibule, that it may be the bond to unite the whole circumference.

And the outer vestibule is overshadowed by the veil; and the curtains themselves are nearly the same as veils, not only because they cover the roof and the walls, but also because they are woven and embroidered by the same figures, and with hyacinth colour, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And the veil, and that thing, too, which was called the covering, was made of the same things. That which was within was placed along the five pillars, that the innermost shrine might be concealed; and that which was outside being placed along the five pillars, that no one of those who were not holy men might be able from any secret or distant place to behold the holy rites and ceremonies.

Chapter XVIII

Moreover, he chose the materials of this embroidery, selecting with great care what was most excellent out of an infinite quantity, choosing materials equal in number to the elements of which the world was made, and having a direct relation to them; the elements being the earth and the water, and the air and the fire. For the fine flax is produced from the earth, and the purple from the water, and the hyacinth colour is compared to the air (for, by nature, it is black), and the scarlet is likened to fire, because each is of a red colour; for it followed of necessity that those who were preparing a temple made by hands for the Father and Ruler of the universe must take essences similar to those of which he made the universe itself.

Therefore the tabernacle was built in the manner that has been here described, like a holy temple. And all around it a sacred precinct extended a hundred cubits in length and fifty cubits in width, having pillars all placed at an equal distance of five cubits from one another, so that there were in all sixty pillars; and they were divided so that forty were placed along the length and twenty along the breadth of the tabernacle, one half on each side.

And the material of which the pillars were composed was cedar within, and on the surface without silver; and the pedestals of all of them were made of brass, and the height was equal to five cubits. For it seemed to the architect to be proper to make the height of what was called the hall equal to one half of the entire length, that so the tabernacle might appear to be elevated to double its real height. And there were thin curtains fitted to the pillars along their entire length and breadth, resembling so many sails, in order that no one might be able to enter in who was not pure.

Chapter XIX

And the situation was as follows. In the middle was placed a tent, being in length thirty cubits and in width ten cubits, including the depth of the pillars. And it was distant from the centre space by three intervals of equal distance, two being at the sides and one along the back chamber. And the interval between was by measurement twenty cubits. But along the vestibule, as was natural, by reason of the number of those who entered, the distance between them was increased and extended to fifty cubits and more; for in this way the hundred pillars of the hall were intended to be made up, twenty being along

the chamber behind, and those which the tent contained, thirty in number, being included in the same calculation with the fifty at the entrances;

for the outer vestibule of the tabernacle was placed as a sort of boundary in the middle of the two fifties, the one, I mean, towards the east where the entrance was, and the other being on the west, in which direction the length of the tabernacle and the surrounding wall behind was.

Moreover, another outer vestibule, of great size and exceeding beauty, was made at the beginning of the entrance into the hall, by means of four pillars, along which was stretched the embroidered curtain in the same manner as the inner curtains were stretched along the tabernacle, and wrought also of similar materials;

and with this there were also many sacred vessels made, an ark, and a candlestick, and a table, and an altar of incense, and an altar of sacrifice. Now, the altar of sacrifice was placed in the open air, right opposite to the entrances of the tabernacle, being distant from it just so far as was necessary to give the ministering officers room to perform the sacrifices that were offered up every day.

Chapter XX

But the ark was in the innermost shrine, in the inaccessible holy of holies, behind curtains; being gilded in a most costly and magnificent manner within and without, the covering of which was like to that which is called in the sacred scriptures the mercy-seat.

Its length and width are accurately described, but its depth is not mentioned, being chiefly compared to and resembling a geometrical superficies; so that it appears to be an emblem, if looked at physically, of the merciful power of God; and, if regarded in a moral point of view, of a certain intellect spontaneously propitious to itself, which is especially desirous to contract and destroy, by means of the love of simplicity united with knowledge, that vain opinion which raises itself up to an unreasonable height and puffs itself up without any grounds.

But the ark is the depository of the laws, for in that are placed the holy oracles of God, which were given to Moses; and the covering of the ark, which

is called the mercy-seat, is a foundation for two winged creatures to rest upon, which are called, in the native language of the Hebrews, cherubim, but as the Greeks would translate the word, vast knowledge and science.

Now some persons say, that these cherubim are the symbols of the two hemispheres, placed opposite to and fronting one another, the one beneath the earth and the other above the earth, for the whole heaven is endowed with wings.

But I myself should say, that what is here represented under a figure are the two most ancient and supreme powers of the divine God, namely, his creative and his kingly power; and his creative power is called God; according to which he arranged, and created, and adorned this universe, and his kingly power is called Lord, by which he rules over the beings whom he has created, and governs them with justice and firmness;

for he, being the only true living God, is also really the Creator of the world; since he brought things which had no existence into being; and he is also a king by nature, because no one can rule over beings that have been created more justly than he who created them.

Chapter XXI

And in the space between the five pillars and the four pillars, is that space which is, properly speaking, the space before the temple, being cut off by two curtains of woven work, the inner one of which is called the veil, and the outer one is called the covering; and the remaining three vessels, of those which I have enumerated, were placed as follows: — The altar of incense was placed in the middle, between earth and water, as a symbol of gratitude, which it was fitting should be offered up, on account of the things that had been done for the Hebrews on both these elements, for these elements have had the central situation of the world allotted to them.

The candlestick was placed on the southern side of the tabernacle, since by it the maker intimates, in a figurative manner, the motions of the stars which give light; for the sun, and the moon, and the rest of the stars, being all at a great distance from the northern parts of the universe, make all their revolutions in the south. And from this candlestick there proceeded six branches, three on each side, projecting from the candlestick in the centre, so

as altogether to complete the number of seven;

and in all the seven there were seven candles and seven lights, being symbols of those seven stars which are called planets by those men who are versed in natural philosophy; for the sun, like the candlestick, being placed in the middle of the other six, in the fourth rank, gives light to the three planets which are above him, and to those of equal number which are below him, adapting to circumstances the musical and truly divine instrument.

Chapter XXII

And the table, on which bread and salt are laid, was placed on the northern side, since it is the north which is the most productive of winds, and because too all nourishment proceeds from heaven and earth, the one giving rain, and the other bringing to perfection all seeds by means of the irrigation of water;

for the symbols of heaven and earth are placed side by side, as the holy scripture shows, the candlestick being the symbol of heaven, and that which is truly called the altar of incense, on which all the fumigatory offerings are made, being the emblem of the things of earth.

But it became usual to call the altar which was in the open air the altar of sacrifice, as being that which preserved and took care of the sacrifices; intimating, figuratively, the consuming power of these things, and not the lambs and different parts of the victims which were offered, and which were naturally calculated to be destroyed by fire, but the intention of him who offered them;

for if the man who made the offerings was foolish and ignorant, the sacrifices were no sacrifices, the victims were not sacred or hallowed, the prayers were ill-omened, and liable to be answered by utter destruction, for even when they appear to be received, they produce no remission of sins but only a reminding of them.

But if the man who offers the sacrifice be bold and just, then the sacrifice remains firm, even if the flesh of the victim be consumed, or rather, I might say, even if no victim be offered up at all; for what can be a real and true sacrifice but the piety of a soul which loves God? The gratitude of which is blessed with immortality, and without being recorded in writing is engraved

on a pillar in the mind of God, being made equally everlasting with the sun, and moon, and the universal world.

Chapter XXIII

After these things the architect of the tabernacle next prepared a sacred dress for him who was to be appointed high priest, having in its embroidery a most exceedingly beautiful and admirable work; and the robe was two-fold; one part of which was called the under-robe, and the other the robe over the shoulders.

Now the under-robe was of a more simple form and character, for it was entirely of hyacinthine colours, except the lowest and exterior portions, and these were ornamented with golden pomegranates, and bells, and wreaths of flowers;

but the robe over the shoulders or mantle was a most beautiful and skilful work, and was made with most perfect skill of all the aforesaid kinds of material, of hyacinth colour, and purple, and fine linen, and scarlet, gold thread being entwined and embroidered in it. For the leaves were divided into fine hairs, and woven in with every thread,

and on the collar stones were fitted in, two being costly emeralds of exceeding value, on which the names of the patriarchs of the tribes were engraved, six on each, making twelve in all; and on the breast were twelve other precious stones, differing in colour like seals, in four rows of three stones each, and these were fitted in what was called the logeum

and the logeum was made square and double, as a sort of foundation, that it might bear on it, as an image, two virtues, manifestation and truth; and the whole was fastened to the mantle by fine golden chains, and fastened to it so that it might never get loose;

and a golden leaf was wrought like a crown, having four names engraved on it which may only be mentioned or heard by holy men having their ears and their tongues purified by wisdom, and by no one else at all in any place whatever.

And this holy prophet Moses calls the name, a name of four letters, making them perhaps symbols of the primary numbers, the unit, the number two, the

number three, the number four: since all things are comprised in the number four, namely, a point, and a line, and a superficies, and a solid, and the measures of all things, and the most excellent symphonies of music, and the diatessaron in the sesquialteral proportion, and the chord in fifths, in the ratio of one and a half to one, and the diapason in the double ratio, and the double diapason in the fourfold ratio. Moreover, the number four has an innumerable list of other virtues likewise, the greater part of which we have discussed with accuracy in our dissertation on numbers.

And in it there was a mitre, in order that the leaf might not touch the head; and there was also a cidaris made, for the kings of the eastern countries are accustomed to use a cidaris, instead of a diadem.

Chapter XXIV

Such, then, is the dress of the high priest. But we must not omit to mention the signification which it conceals beneath both in its whole and in its parts. In its whole it is a copy and representation of the world; and the parts are a representation of the separate parts of the world.

And we must begin with the long robe reaching down to the feet of the wearer. This tunic is wholly of the colour of a hyacinth, so as to be a representation of the air; for by nature the air is black, and in a measure it reaches down from the highest parts to the feet, being stretched from the parts about the moon, as far as the extremities of the earth, and being diffused everywhere. On which account also, the tunic reaches from the chest to the feet, and is spread over the whole body,

and unto it there is attached a fringe of pomegranates round the ankles, and flowers, and bells. Now the flowers are an emblem of the earth; for it is from the earth that all flowers spring and bloom; but the pomegranates (*rhoiskoi*) are a symbol of water, since, indeed, they derive their name from the flowing (*rhysis*) of water, being very appropriately named; and the bells are the emblem of the concord and harmony that exist between these things; for neither is the earth without the water, nor the water without the earthly substance, sufficient for the production of anything; but that can only be effected by the meeting and combination of both.

And the place itself is the most distinct possible evidence of what is here meant to be expressed; for as the pomegranates, and the flowers, and the bells, are placed in the hem of the garment which reaches to the feet, so likewise the things of which they are the symbols, namely, the earth and water, have had the lowest position in the world assigned to them, and being in strict accord with the harmony of the universe, they display their own particular powers in definite periods of time and suitable seasons.

Now of the three elements, out of which and in which all the different kinds of things which are perceptible by the outward senses and perishable are formed, namely, the air, the water and the earth, the garment which reached down to the feet in conjunction with the ornaments which were attached to that part of it which was about the ankles have been plainly shown to be appropriate symbols; for as the tunic is one, and as the aforesaid three elements are all of one species, since they all have all their revolutions and changes beneath the moon, and as to the garment are attached the pomegranates, and the flowers; so also in certain manner the earth and the water may be said to be attached to and suspended from the air, for the air is their chariot.

And our argument will be able to bring forth twenty probable reasons that the mantle over the shoulders is an emblem of heaven. For in the first place, the two emeralds on the shoulderblades, which are two round stones, are, in the opinion of some persons who have studied the subject, emblems of those stars which are the rulers of night and day, namely, the sun and moon; or rather, as one might argue with more correctness and a nearer approach to truth, they are the emblems of the two hemispheres; for, like those two stones, the portion below the earth and that over the earth are both equal, and neither of them is by nature adapted to be either increased or diminished like the moon.

And the colour of the stars is an additional evidence in favour of my view; for to the glance of the eye the appearance of the heaven does resemble an emerald; and it follows necessarily that six names are engraved on each of the stones, because each of the hemispheres cuts the zodiac in two parts, and in this way comprehends within itself six animals.

Then the twelve stones on the breast, which are not like one another in colour, and which are divided into four rows of three stones in each, what else

can they be emblems of, except of the circle of the zodiac? For that also is divided into four parts, each consisting of three animals, by which divisions it makes up the seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, distinguishing the four changes, the two solstices, and the two equinoxes, each of which has its limit of three signs of this zodiac, by the revolutions of the sun, according to that unchangeable, and most lasting, and really divine ratio which exists in numbers;

on which account they attached it to that which is with great propriety called the logeum. For all the changes of the year and the seasons are arranged by well-defined, and stated, and firm reason; and, though this seems a most extraordinary and incredible thing, by their seasonable changes they display their undeviating and everlasting permanence and durability.

And it is said with great correctness, and exceeding beauty also, that the twelve stones all differ in their colour, and that no one of them resembles the other; for also in the zodiac each animal produces that colour which is akin to and belongs to itself, both in the air, and in the earth, and in the water; and it produces it likewise in all the affections which move them, and in all kinds of animals and of plants.

Chapter XXV

And this logeum is described as double with great correctness; for reason is double, both in the universe and also in the nature of mankind, in the universe there is that reason which is conversant about incorporeal species which are like patterns as it were, from which that world which is perceptible only by the intellect was made, and also that which is concerned with the visible objects of sight, which are copies and imitations of those species above mentioned, of which the world which is perceptible by the outward senses was made. Again, in man there is one reason which is kept back, and another which finds vent in utterance: and the one is, as it were a spring, and the other (that which is uttered) flows from it; and the place of the one is the dominant part, that is, the mind; but the place of the one which finds vent in utterance is the tongue, and the mouth, and all the rest of the organs of the voice.

And the architect assigned a quadrangular form to the logeum, intimating under an exceedingly beautiful figure, that both the reason of nature, and also

that of man, ought to penetrate everywhere, and ought never to waver in any case; in reference to which, it is that he has also assigned to it the two virtues that have been already enumerated, manifestation and truth; for the reason of nature is true, and calculated to make manifest, and to explain everything; and the reason of the wise man, imitating that other reason, ought naturally, and appropriately to be completely sincere, honouring truth, and not obscuring anything through envy, the knowledge of which can benefit those to whom it would be explained;

not but what he has also assigned their two appropriate virtues to those two kinds of reason which exist in each of us, namely, that which is uttered and that which is kept concealed, attributing clearness of manifestation to the uttered one, and truth to that which is concealed in the mind; for it is suitable to the mind that it should admit of no error or falsehood, and to explanation that it should not hinder anything that can conduce to the most accurate manifestation.

Therefore there is no advantage in reason which expends itself in dignified and pompous language, about things which are good and desirable, unless it is followed by consistent practice of suitable actions; on which account the architect has affixed the logeum to the robe which is worn over the shoulder, in order that it may never get loose, as he does not approve of the language being separated from the actions; for he puts forth the shoulder as the emblem of energy and action.

Chapter XXVI

Such then are the figurative meanings which he desires to indicate by the sacred vestments of the high priest; and instead of a diadem he represents a cidaris on the head, because he thinks it right that the man who is consecrated to God, as his high priest, should, during the time of his exercising his office be superior to all men, not only to all private individuals, but even to all kings;

and above this cidaris is a golden leaf, on which an engraving of four letters was impressed; by which letters they say that the name of the living God is indicated, since it is not possible that anything that it in existence, should exist without God being invoked; for it is his goodness and his power combined with mercy that is the harmony and uniter of all things.

The high priest, then, being equipped in this way, is properly prepared for the performance of all sacred ceremonies, that, whenever he enters the temple to offer up the prayers and sacrifices in use among his nation, all the world may likewise enter in with him, by means of the imitations of it which he bears about him, the garment reaching to his feet, being the imitation of the air, the pomegranate of the water, the flowery hem of the earth, and the scarlet dye of his robe being the emblem of fire; also, the mantle over his shoulders being a representation of heaven itself; the two hemispheres being further indicated by the round emeralds on the shoulder-blades, on each of which were engraved six characters equivalent to six signs of the zodiac; the twelve stones arranged on the breast in four rows of three stones each, namely the logeum, being also an emblem of that reason which holds together and regulates the universe.

For it was indispensable that the man who was consecrated to the Father of the world, should have as a paraclete, his son, the being most perfect in all virtue, to procure forgiveness of sins, and a supply of unlimited blessings;

perhaps, also, he is thus giving a previous warning to the servant of God, even if he is unable to make himself worthy of the Creator, of the world, at least to labour incessantly to make himself worthy of the world itself; the image of which he is clothed in, in a manner that binds him from the time that he puts it on, to bear about the pattern of it in his mind, so that he shall be in a manner changed from the nature of a man into the nature of the world, and, if one may say so (and one may by all means and at all times speak the plain truth in sincerity), become a little world himself.

Chapter XXVII

Again, outside the outer vestibule, at the entrance, is a brazen laver; the architect having not taken any mere raw material for the manufacture of it, as is very common, but having employed on its formation vessels which had been constructed with great care for other purposes; and which the women contributed with all imaginable zeal and eagerness, in rivalry of one another, competing with the men themselves in piety, having determined to enter upon a glorious contest, and to the utmost extent of their power to exert themselves so as not to fall short of their holiness.

For though no one enjoined them to do so, they, of their own spontaneous zeal and earnestness, contributed the mirrors with which they had been accustomed to deck and set off their beauty, as the most becoming first fruits of their modesty, and of the purity of their married life, and as one may say of the beauty of their souls.

The maker then thought it well to accept these offerings, and to melt them down, and to make nothing except the laver of them, in order that the priests who were about to enter the temple might be supplied from it, with water of purification for the purpose of performing the sacred ministrations which were appointed for them; washing their feet most especially, and their hands, as a symbol of their irreproachable life, and of a course of conduct which makes itself pure in all kinds of praiseworthy actions, proceeding not along the rough road of wickedness which one may more properly call no road at all, but keeping straight along the level and direct path of virtue.

Let him remember, says he, let him who is about to be sprinkled with the water of purification from this laver, remember that the materials of which this vessel was composed were mirrors, that he himself may look into his own mind as into a mirror; and if there is perceptible in it any deformity arising from some agitation unconnected with reason or from any pleasure which would excite us, and raise us up in hostility to reason, or from any pain which might mislead us and turn us from our purpose of proceeding by the straight road, or from any desire alluring us and even dragging us by force to the pursuit of present pleasures, he seeks to relieve and cure that, desiring only that beauty which is genuine and unadulterated.

For the beauty of the body consists in symmetry of parts, and in a good complexion, and a healthy firmness of flesh, having also but a short period during which it is in its prime; but the beauty of the mind consists in a harmony of doctrines and a perfect accord of virtues, which do not fade away or become impaired by lapse of time, but as long as they endure at all are constantly acquiring fresh vigour and renewed youth, being set off by the preeminent complexion of truth, and the agreement of its words with its actions, and of its actions with its words, and also of its designs with both.

Chapter XXVIII

And when he had been taught the patterns of the sacred tabernacle, and had in turn himself taught those who were gifted with acute comprehension, and well-qualified by nature for the comprehension and execution of those works, which it was indispensably necessary should be made; then, as was natural, when the temple had been built and finished, it was fitting also, that most suitable persons should be appointed as priests, and should be instructed in what manner it was proper for them to offer up their sacrifices, and perform their sacred ministrations.

Accordingly, Moses selected his brother, choosing him out of all men, because of his superior virtue, to be high priest, and his sons he appointed priests, not giving precedence to his own family, but to the piety and holiness which he perceived to exist in those men; and what is the clearest proof of this is, that he did not think either of his sons worthy of this honour (and he had two); while he must inevitably have appointed both of them, if he had attached any importance to love for his family;

and he appointed them with the unanimous consent of the whole nation, as the sacred scriptures have recorded, which was a most novel mode of proceeding, and one especially worthy of being mentioned; and, in the first place, he washed them all over with the most pure and vivifying water of the fountain; and then he gave them their sacred vestments, giving to his brother the robe which reached down to his feet, and the mantle which covered the shoulders, as a sort of breast-plate, being an embroidered robe, adorned with all kinds of figures, and a representation of the universe. And to all his nephews he gave linen tunics, and girdles, and trowsers;

the girdles, in order that the wearers might be unimpeded and ready for all their sacred ministrations, were fastened up tight round the loose waists of the tunics; and the breeches, that nothing which ought to be hidden might be visible, especially when they were going up to the altar, or coming down from the high place, and doing everything with earnestness and celerity.

For if their equipment had not been so accurately attended to for the sake of guarding against the uncertain future, and for the sake of providing for an energetic promptness in the sacred ministrations, the men would have appeared naked, not being able to preserve the becoming order necessary to holy men dedicated to the service of God.

Chapter XXIX

And when he had thus furnished them with proper vestments, he took very fragrant ointment, which had been made by the skill of the perfumer, and first of all he anointed the altar in the open air, and the laver, sprinkling it with the perfume seven times; after that he anointed the tabernacle and every one of the sacred vessels, the ark, and the candlestick, and the altar of incense, and the table, and the censers, and the vials, and all the other things which were either necessary or useful for the sacrifices; and last of all bringing the high priest close to himself, he anointed his head with abundant quantities of oil.

When he had done all this, he then, in strict accordance with what was holy, commanded a heifer and two rams to be brought; the one that he might sacrifice it for the remission of sins, intimating by a figure that to sin is congenital with every created being, however good it may be, inasmuch as it is created, and that therefore it is indispensable that God should be propitiated in its behalf by means of prayers and sacrifices, that he may not be provoked to chastise it.

And of the rams, one he required for a whole burnt-offering of gratitude for the successful arrangement of all those things, of which every individual has such a share as is suited to him, deriving benefit from all the elements, enjoying the earth for his abode and in respect of the nourishment which is derived from it; the water for drinking, and washing, and sailing on; the air for breathing and for the comprehension of those things which are the objects of our outward senses (since the air is the medium in which they all are exerted), and for the seasons of the year; enjoying fire both of that kind which is used for cooking food and for warming one's self, and also that heavenly kind which is serviceable for light and for all the objects of sight.

The other ram he employed for the complete accomplishment of the purification of the priests, which he appropriately called the ram of perfection, since the priests were intended to exercise their office in teaching proper and convenient rites and ceremonies to the servants and ministers of God.

And he took the blood, and with some of it he poured a libation all round the altar, and part he took, holding a vial under it to catch it, and with it he anointed three parts of the body of the initiated priests, the tip of the ear, the extremity of the hand, and the extremity of the foot, all on the right side,

signifying by this action that the perfect man must be pure in every word and action, and in his whole life, for it is the hearing which judges of his words, and the hand is the symbol of action, and the foot of the way in which a man walks in life;

and since each of these members is an extremity of the body, and is likewise on the right side, we must imagine that it is here indicated by a figure that improvement in every thing is to be arrived at by a certain dexterity, being a portion of supreme felicity, and being the true aim in life, which a man must necessarily labour to attain, and to which he ought to refer all his actions, aiming at them in his life, as in the practice of archery men aim at a target.

Chapter XXX

Accordingly, he first of all anointed the three parts before mentioned of the bodies of the priests with the unmixed blood of one of the victims, that, namely, which was called the ram of perfection; and afterwards, taking some of the blood which was upon the altar, being the blood of all the victims mingled together, and some also of the unguent which has already been mentioned, which the ointment makers had prepared, and mixing some of the oil with the mingled blood of the different victims, he sprinkled some upon the priests and upon their garments, with the intention that they should have a share not only in that purity which was external and in the open air, but also of that which was in the inmost shrine, since they were about to minister within the temple. And all the things within the temple were anointed with oil.

And when they had brought forward other sacrifices in addition to the former ones, partly the priests sacrificing for themselves, and partly the elders sacrificing on behalf of the whole nation, then Moses entered into the tabernacle, leading his brother by the hand (and it was the eighth and last day of the festival, for the seven previous days had been devoted to the initiation of the hierophants), he now initiated both him and his nephews. And when he had entered in he taught him as a learned teacher might instruct an ignorant pupil, in what way the high priest ought to perform the ministrations which are performed inside the temple.

Then, when they had both come out and held up their hands in front of their head, they, with a pure and holy mind, offered up such prayers as were suitable and becoming for the nation. And while they were still praying a most marvellous prodigy happened; for from out of the inmost shrine, whether it was a portion of the purest possible aether, or whether the air, according to some natural change of the elements, had become dissolved with fire, on a sudden a body of flame shone forth, and with impetuous violence descended on the altar and consumed all that was thereon, with the view, as I imagine, of showing in the clearest manner that none of the things which had been done had been done without the especial providence of God.

For it was natural that an especial honour should be assigned to the holy place, not only by means of those things in which men are the workmen employed, but also by that purest of all essences, fire, in order that the ordinary fire which is used by men might not touch the altar; perhaps by reason of its being defiled by ten thousand impurities.

For it is concerned not only with irrational animals when they are roasted or boiled for the unjust appeasing of our miserable bellies, but also in the case of men who are slain by hostile attack, not merely in a small body of three or four, but in numerous hosts.

At all events, before now, arrows charged with fire have been aimed at vast naval fleets and have burnt them; and fire has destroyed whole cities, which have blazed away till they have been consumed down to their very foundations and reduced to ashes, so that no trace whatever has remained of their former situation.

It appears to me that this was the reason for which God rejected from his sacred altar the fire which is applied to common uses, as being defiled; and that, instead of it, he rained down celestial flame from heaven, in order to make a distinction between holy and profane things, and to separate the things belonging to man from the things belonging to God; for it was fitting that a more incorruptible essence of fire than that which served the common purposes of life should be set apart for sacrifices.

Chapter XXXI

And as many sacrifices were of necessity offered up every day, and especially on all days of solemn assembly and festival, both on behalf of each individual separately and in common for the whole nation, for innumerable and various reasons, inasmuch as the nation was very populous and very pious, there was a need also of a multitude of keepers of the temple for the sacred and subordinate ministrations.

And, again, the election of these officers was conducted in a novel and not in the ordinary manner. God chose out one of the twelve tribes, having selected it for its superior excellence, and appointed that to furnish the keepers of the temple, giving it rewards and peculiar honours in return for its pious acting. And the action which it had to perform was of this kind.

When Moses had gone up into the neighbouring mountain and had remained several days alone with God, the fickle-minded among the people, thinking that his absence was a favourable opportunity, as if they had no longer any ruler at all, rushed unrestrainedly to impiety, and, forgetting the holiness of the living God, became eager imitators of the Egyptian inventions.

Then, having made a golden calf in imitation of that which appeared to be the most sacred animal in that district, they offered up unholy sacrifices, and instituted blasphemous dances, and sang hymns which differed in no respect from dirges, and, being filled with strong wine, gave themselves up to a twofold intoxication, the intoxication of wine and that of folly, revelling and devoting the night to feasting, and, having no foresight as to the future, they spent their time in pleasant sins, though justice had her eye upon them, who saw them while they would not see, and decided what punishments they deserved.

But when the continued outcries in the camp, from men collected in numerous and dense crowds, reached over a great distance, so that the sound penetrated even to the summit of the mountain, Moses, hearing the uproar, was in great perplexity, as being at the same time a devout worshipper of God and a friend to mankind, not being able to bring his mind to quit the society of God with whom he was conversing, and in which he, being alone with him, was conferring with him by himself, nor, on the other hand, could he be indifferent to the multitude thus full of anarchy and wickedness;

for he recognised the tumult, since he was a very shrewd man at conjecturing, from inarticulate sounds of no distinct meaning, the passions of the soul which were inaccessible to and out of the reach of the conjectures of others, because he perceived at once that the noise proceeded partly from intoxication, since intemperance had produced satiety and a disposition to insult the law.

And being drawn both ways, and under strong attraction in both directions, he fluctuated this way and that way, and did not know what he ought to do; and while he was considering the matter the following command was given to him. "Go down quickly; descend from this place, the people have turned with haste to lawlessness, having fashioned a god made with hand sin the form of a bull, they are falling down before that which is no god, and sacrificing unto him, forgetting all the things that they have seen, and all that they have heard, which might lead them to piety."

So Moses, being amazed, and being also constrained by this command, believes those incredible events, and springs down to be a mediator and reconciler; not however, in a moment, for first of all he addressed supplications and prayers on behalf of his nation to God, entreating God that he would pardon these their sins; then, this governor of and intercessor for his people, having appeased the Ruler of the universe, went down at the same time rejoicing and feeling sorrowful; he rejoiced indeed that God had admitted his supplication, but he was full of anxiety and depression, being greatly indignant at the lawless transgression of the multitude.

Chapter XXXII

And when he came into the middle of the camp, and marvelled at the sudden way in which the multitude had forsaken all their ancient habits, and at the vast amount of falsehood which they had embraced instead of truth, he, seeing that the disease had not extended among them all, but that some were still sound, and still cherished a disposition which loathed wickedness; wishing to distinguish those who were incurable from those who felt indignation at what had taken place, and to know also whether any of those who had offended repented them of their sin, caused a proclamation to be made; and it was indeed a shrewd test of the inclination of each individual, to see how he

was disposed to holiness, or to the contrary.

“Whoever,” said he, “is on the side of the Lord, let him come to me.” It was but a brief sentence which he thus uttered, but the meaning concealed under it was important; for what was intimated by his words was the following sense: “If any one does not think anything whatever that is made by hands, or anything that is created, a god, but believes that there is one ruler of the universe only, let him come to me.”

Now of the others, some resisted by reason of the admiration which they had conceived for the Egyptian pride, and they did not attend to what he said; others wanted courage to come nearer to him, perhaps out of fear of punishment; or else perhaps they dreaded punishment at the hand of Moses, or a rising up against them on the part of the people; for the multitude invariably attack those who do not share in their frenzy.

But that single tribe of the whole number which was called the tribe of Levi, when they heard the proclamation, as if by one preconcerted agreement, ran with great haste, displaying their earnestness by their promptness and rapidity, and proving the keenness of the desire of their soul for piety;

and, when Moses saw them rushing forward as if starting from the goal in a race, he said, “Surely it is not with your bodies alone that you are hastening to come unto me, but you shall soon bear witness with your minds to your eagerness; let every one of you take a sword, and slay those men who have done things worthy of ten thousand deaths, who have forsaken the true God, and made for themselves false gods, of perishable and created substances, calling them by the name which belongs only to the uncreated and everlasting God; let every one, I say, slay those men, whether it be his own kinsmen or his friends, looking upon nothing to be either friendship or kindred but the holy fellowship of good men.”

And the tribe of Levi, outrunning his command with the most eager readiness, since they were already alienated from those men in their minds, almost from the first moment that they beheld the beginning of their lawless iniquity, killed them all to a man, to the number of three thousand, though they had been but a short time before their dearest friends; and as the corpses were lying in the middle of the place of the assembly of the people, the multitude beholding them pitied them, and fearing the still fervid, and angry,

and indignant disposition of those who had slain them, reprov'd them out of fear;

but Moses, gladly approving of their exceeding virtue, devised in their favour and confirm'd to them an honour which was appropriate to their exploit, for it was fitting that those who had undertaken a voluntary war for the sake of the honour of God, and who had carried it out successfully in a short time, should be thought worthy to receive the priesthood and charge of officiating in his service.

Chapter XXXIII

But, since there is not one order only of consecrated priests, but since to some of them the charge is committed of attending to all the prayers, and sacrifices, and other most sacred ceremonies, being allowed to enter into the inmost and most holy shrine; while others are not permitted to do any of these things, but have the duty of taking care of and guarding the temple and all that is therein, both day and night, whom some call keepers of the temple; a sedition arose respecting the precedency in honour, which was to many persons in many ways the cause of infinite evils, and it broke out now from the keepers of the temple attacking the priests, and endeavouring to deprive them of the honour which belonged to them; and they thought that they should be able easily to succeed in their object, since they were many times more numerous than the others.

But for the sake of not appearing to be planning any innovations of their own heads, they persuaded also the eldest of the twelve tribes to embrace their opinions, which last tribe was followed by many of the more fickle of the populace, as thinking it entitled to the precedence and to the principal share of authority over the whole host.

Moses now knew that a great plot was in agitation against him; for he had appointed his brother high priest in accordance with the will of God, which had been declared to him. And now false accusations were brought against him, as if he had falsified the oracles of God, and as if he had done so and made the appointment by reason of his family affection and goodwill towards his brother.

And he, being very naturally grieved at this, inasmuch as he was not only distrusted by such accusations while exhibiting his own good faith in a most genuine manner, but he was also grieved at those actions of his being calumniated which had for their object the honour of God, and which were of such a nature as to deserve by themselves that even such a man who had in other respects shown an insincere disposition should be looked upon as behaving in this case with truth; for truth is the invariable attendant of God. But he did not think fit to give any explanation by words respecting his appointment of his brother, knowing that it was difficult to endeavour to persuade those who were previously possessed by contrary opinions to change their minds; but he besought God to give the people a visible demonstration that he had in no respect behaved with dishonesty respecting the appointment to the priesthood.

And he, therefore, commanded that twelve rods should be taken, so as to be equal in number to the tribes of the nation; and he commanded further that the names of the other patriarchs of the tribes should be written on eleven of the rods, but on the remaining one the name of his brother, the high priest, and then that they should all be carried into the temple as far as the inmost shrine; and the officer who did what he had been commanded waited in expectation to see the result.

And on the next day, in obedience to a command from God, he went into the temple, while all the people were standing around, and brought out the rods, the others differing in no respect from the state in which they were when they were put in; but the one on which the name of his brother was written had undergone a miraculous change; for like a fine plant it suddenly put forth shoots all over, and was weighed down with the abundance of its crop of fruit.

Chapter XXXIV

And the fruit were almonds, which is a fruit of a different character from any other. For in most fruit, such as grapes, olives, and apples, the seed and the eatable part differ from one another, and being different are separated as to their position, for the eatable part is outside, and the seed is shut up within; but in the case of this fruit the seed and the eatable part are the same, both of them being comprised in one species, and their position is one and the same,

being without strongly protected and fortified with a twofold fence, consisting partly of a very thick bark, and partly of what appears in no respect short of a wooden case,

by which perfect virtue is figuratively indicated. For as in the almond the beginning and the end are the same, the beginning as far as it is seed, and the end as far as it is fruit; so also is it the case with the virtues; for each one of them is at the same time both beginning and end, a beginning, because it proceeds not from any other power, but from itself; and an end, because the life in accordance with nature hastens towards it.

This is one reason; and another is also mentioned, more clear and emphatic than the former; for the part of the almond which looks like bark is bitter, but that which lies inside the bark, like a wooden case, is very hard and impenetrable, so that the fruit, being enclosed in these two coverings, is not very easily to be got at.

This is an emblem of the soul which is inclined to the practice of meditation, from which he thinks it is proper to turn it to virtue by showing it that it is necessary first of all to encounter danger. But labour is a bitter, and distasteful, and harsh thing, from which good is produced, for the sake of which one must not yield to effeminate indolence;

for he who seeks to avoid labour is also avoiding good. And he, again, who encounters what is disagreeable to be borne with fortitude and manly perseverance, is taking the best road to happiness; for it is not the nature of virtue to abide with those who are given up to delicacy and luxury, and who have become effeminate in their souls, and whose bodies are enervated by the incessant luxury which they practise every day; but it is subdued by such conduct, and determined to change its abode, having first of all arranged its departure so as to depart to, and abide with, the ruler of right reason.

But, if I must tell the truth, the most sacred company of prudence, and temperance, and courage, and justice seeks the society of those who practise virtue, and of those who admire a life of austerity and rigid duty, devoting themselves to fortitude and self-denial, with wise economy and abstinence; by means of which virtues the most powerful of all the principles within us, namely, reason, improves and attains to a state of perfect health and vigour, overthrowing the violent attacks of the body, which the moderate use of wine,

and epicurism, and licentiousness, and other insatiable appetites excite against it, engendering a fulness of flesh which is the direct enemy of shrewdness and wisdom.

Moreover, it is said, that of all the trees that are accustomed to blossom in the spring, the almond is the first to flourish, bringing as it were good tidings of abundance of fruit; and that afterwards it is the last to lose its leaves, extending the yearly old age of its verdure to the longest period; in each of which particulars it is an emblem of the tribe of the priesthood, as Moses intimates under the figure of this tree that this tribe shall be the first of the whole human race to flourish, and likewise the last; as long as it shall please God to liken our life to the revolutions of the spring, destroying covetousness that most treacherous of passions, and the fountain of all unhappiness.

Chapter XXXV

Since, therefore, I have now stated that in the absolutely perfect governor there ought to be four things, royal power, the legislative disposition, and the priesthood, and the prophetic office (in order that by his legislative disposition he may command such things as are right to be done, and forbid such things as are not proper to be done, and that by his priesthood he may arrange not only all human but likewise all divine things; and that by his prophetic office he may predict those things which cannot be comprehended by reason): having fully discussed the first three, and having shown that Moses as a most excellent king, and lawgiver, and high priest, I come in the last place to show that he was also the most illustrious of prophets.

I am not unaware then that all the things which are written in the sacred books are oracles delivered by him; and I will set forth what more peculiarly concerns him, when I have first mentioned this one point, namely, that of the sacred oracles some are represented as delivered in the person of God by his interpreter, the divine prophet, while others are put in the form of question and answer, and others are delivered by Moses in his own character as a divinely-prompted lawgiver possessed by divine inspiration.

Therefore, all the earliest oracles are manifestations of the whole of the divine virtues, and especially of that merciful and bounteous character by means of which he trains all men to virtue, and especially the race which is

devoted to his service, to which he lays open the road leading to happiness.

The second class have a sort of admixture and communication in them, the prophet asking information on the subjects as to which he is in difficulty, and God answering him and instructing him. The third sort are attributed to the lawgiver, God having given him a share of his prescient power, by means of which he will be able to foretell the future.

Therefore, we must for the present pass by the first; for they are too great to be adequately praised by any man, as, indeed, they could scarcely be panegyrised worthily by the heaven itself and the nature of the universe; and they are also uttered by the mouth, as it were, of an interpreter. But interpretation and prophecy differ from one another. And concerning the second kind I will at once endeavour to explain the truth, connecting with them the third species also, in which the inspired character of the speaker is shown, according to which it is that he is most especially and appropriately looked upon as a prophet.

Chapter XXXVI

And we must here begin with the promise. There are four places where the oracles are given by way of question and answer, being contained in the exposition of the law, and having a mixed character. For, first, the prophet feels inspiration and asks questions, and then the father prophesies to him, giving him a share of his discourse and replies. And the first case where this occurs is one which would have irritated, not only Moses, who was the most holy and pious man that ever lived, but even any one who had only had a slight taste of piety.

A certain man, illegitimately born of two unequal parents, namely, an Egyptian father and a Jewish mother, and who disregarded the national and hereditary customs which he had learnt from her, as it is reported, inclined to the Egyptian impiety, being seized with admiration for the ungodly practices of the men of that nation;

for the Egyptians, almost alone of all men, set up the earth as a rival of the heaven considering the former as entitled to honours equal with those of the gods, and giving the latter no especial honour, just as if it were proper to pay respect to the extremities of a country rather than to the king's palace. For in

the world the heaven is the most holy temple, and the further extremity is the earth; though this too is in itself worthy of being regarded with honour; but if it is brought into comparison with the air, is as far inferior to it as light is to darkness, or night to day, or corruption to immortality, or a mortal to God.

For, since that country is not irrigated by rain as all other lands are, but by the inundations of the river which is accustomed every year to overflow its banks; the Egyptians, in their impious reason, make a god of the Nile, as if it were a copy and a rival of heaven, and use pompous language about the virtue of their country.

Chapter XXXVII

Accordingly, this man of mixed race, having had a quarrel with some one of the consecrated and well-instructed house of Israel, becoming carried away by his anger, and unable to restrain himself, and being also an admirer and follower of the impiety of the Egyptians, extended his impiety from earth to heaven, cursing it with his accursed, and polluted, and defiled soul, and with his wicked tongue, and with the whole power of all his vocal organs in the superfluity of his ungodliness; though it ought to be blessed and praised, not by all men, indeed, but only by those who are most virtuous and pious, as having received perfect purification.

Wherefore Moses, marvelling at his insanity and at the extravagance of his audacity, although he was filled with a noble impetuosity and indignation, and desired to slay the man with his own hand, nevertheless feared lest he should be inflicting on him too light a punishment; for he conceived that no man could possibly devise any punishment adequate to such enormous impiety.

And since it followed of necessity that a man who did not worship God could not honour his father either, or his mother, or his country, or his benefactors, this man, in addition to not reverencing them, dared to speak ill of them. And then what extravagance of wickedness did he fall short of? And yet evil-speaking, if compared with cursing, is the lighter evil of the two. But when intemperate language and an unbridled tongue are subservient to lawless folly, then inevitably and invariably some iniquitous conduct must follow.

O man! does any one curse God? What other god can he invoke to ratify and confirm his curse? Is it not plain that he must invoke God to give effect to his curses against himself? Away with such profane and impious ideas! It would be well to cleanse that miserable soul which has been insulted by the voice, and which has sued the ears for ministers, keeping the external senses blind.

And was not either the tongue of the man who uttered such impiety loosened, or the ears of him who was destined to hear such things closed up? unless, indeed, that was done in consequence of some providential arrangement of justice, which does not think that either any extraordinary good or that any enormous evil ought to be kept in darkness, but that such should be revealed in order to the most complete manifestation of virtue or vice, so that it may adjudge the one to be worthy of acceptance and the other of punishment.

On this account Moses ordered the man to be thrown into prison and bound with chains; and then he addressed propitiatory prayers to God, begging him to be merciful to the necessities of the external senses (by means of which we both see what it is not proper to see, and hear what it is not lawful to hear), and to point out what the author of such a strange and unprecedented blasphemy and impiety ought to suffer.

And God commanded him to be stoned, considering, as I imagine, the punishment of stoning to be a suitable and appropriate one for a man who had a stony and hardened heart, and wishing at the same time that all his fellow countrymen should have a share in inflicting punishment on him, as he knew that they were very indignant and eager to slay him; and the only punishment which so many myriads of men could possibly join in was that which was inflicted by throwing stones.

But after the punishment of this impious murderer, a new commandment was enacted, which had never before been thought worthy of being reduced to writing; but unexpected innovations cause new laws to be devised for the repression of their evils. At all events, the following law was immediately introduced: "Whoever curses God shall be guilty of sin, and whoever names the name of the Lord shall Die."

Well done, O all-wise man! You alone have drunk of the cup of unalloyed wisdom. You have seen that it was worse to name God than even to curse him; for you would never have treated lightly a man who had committed the heaviest of all impieties, and inflicted the heaviest punishment possible on those who committed the slightest faults; but you fixed death, which is the very greatest punishment imaginable, as the penalty for the man who appeared to have committed the heaviest crime.

Chapter XXXVIII

But, as it seems, he is not now speaking of that God who was the first being who had any existence, and the Father of the universe, but of those who are accounted gods in the different cities; and they are falsely called gods, being only made by the arts of painters and sculptors, for the whole inhabited world is full of statues and images, and erections of that kind, of whom it is necessary however to abstain from speaking ill, in order that no one of the disciples of Moses may ever become accustomed at all to treat the appellation of God with disrespect; for that name is always most deserving to obtain the victory, and is especially worthy of love.

But if any one were, I will not say to blaspheme against the Lord of gods and men, but were even to dare to utter his name unseasonably, he must endure the punishment of death;

for those persons who have a proper respect for their parents do not lightly bring forward the names of their parents, though they are but mortal, but they avoid using their proper names by reason of the reverence which they bear them, and call them rather by the titles indicating their natural relationship, that is, father and mother, by which names they at once intimate the unsurpassable benefits which they have received at their hands, and their own grateful disposition.

Therefore these men must not be thought worthy of pardon who out of volubility of tongue have spoken unseasonably, and being too free of their words have repeated carelessly the most holy and divine name of God.

Chapter XXXIX

Moreover, in accordance with the honour due to the Creator of the universe, the prophet hallowed the sacred seventh day, beholding with eyes of more acute sight than those of mortals its pre-eminent beauty, which had already been deeply impressed on the heaven and the whole universal world, and had been borne about as an image by nature itself in her own bosom;

for first of all Moses found that day destitute of any mother, and devoid of all participation in the female generation, being born of the Father alone without any propagation by means of seed, and being born without any conception on the part of any mother. And then he beheld not only this, that it was very beautiful and destitute of any mother, neither being born of corruption nor liable to corruption; and then, in the third place, he by further inquiry discovered that it was the birthday of the world, which the heaven keeps as a festival, and the earth and all the things in and on the earth keep as a festival, rejoicing and delighting in the all-harmonious number of seven, and in the sabbath day.

For this reason the all-great Moses thought fit that all who were enrolled in his sacred polity should follow the laws of nature and meet in a solemn assembly, passing the time in cheerful joy and relaxation, abstaining from all work, and from all arts which have a tendency to the production of anything; and from all business which is connected with the seeking of the means of living, and that they should keep a complete truce, abstaining from all laborious and fatiguing thought and care, and devoting their leisure, not as some persons scoffingly assert, to sports, or exhibitions of actors and dancers, for the sake of which those who run madly after theatrical amusements suffer disasters and even encounter miserable deaths, and for the sake of these the most dominant and influential of the outward senses, sight and hearing, make the soul, which should be the heavenly nature, the slave of these senses.

But, giving up their time wholly to the study of philosophy, not of that sort of philosophy which wordcatchers and sophists, seek to reduce to a system, selling doctrines and reasonings as they would any other vendible thing in the market. Men who (O you earth and sun!) employ philosophy against philosophy, and yet never wear a blush on their countenance; but who, applying themselves to the kindred philosophy, which they make up of these component parts, namely, of intention, and words, and actions, all united into one species, in order to the acquisition and enjoyment of happiness.

Now some one disregarding this injunction, even while he yet had the sacred words of God respecting the holy seventh day still ringing in his ears, which God had uttered without the intervention of the prophet, and, what is the most wonderful thing of all, by a visible voice which affected the eyes of those who were present even more than their ears, went forth through the middle of the camp to pick up sticks, well knowing that all the people in the camp were perfectly quiet and doing nothing, and even while he was committing the iniquity was seen and detected, all disguise being impossible;

for some persons, having gone forth out of the gates to some quiet spot, that they might pray in some retired and peaceful place, seeing a most unholy spectacle, namely this man carrying a faggot of sticks, and being very indignant, were about to put him to death; but reasoning with themselves they restrained the violence of their wrath, that they might not appear, as they were only private persons, to chastise any one rather than the magistrates, and that too uncondemned; though indeed in other respects the transgression was manifest and undeniable, wishing also that no pollution arising from an execution, even though most righteously inflicted, should defile the sacred day. But they apprehended him, and led him away to the magistrate, with whom the priests were sitting as assessors; and the whole multitude collected together to hear the trial;

for it was invariably the custom, as it was desirable on other days also, but especially on the seventh day, as I have already explained, to discuss matters of philosophy; the ruler of the people beginning the explanation, and teaching the multitude what they ought to do and to say, and the populace listening so as to improve in virtue, and being made better both in their moral character and in their conduct through life;

in accordance with which custom, even to this day, the Jews hold philosophical discussions on the seventh day, disputing about their national philosophy, and devoting that day to the knowledge and consideration of the subjects of natural philosophy; for as for their houses of prayer in the different cities, what are they, but schools of wisdom, and courage, and temperance, and justice, and piety, and holiness, and every virtue, by which human and divine things are appreciated, and placed upon a proper footing?

Chapter XL

On this day, then, the man who had done this deed of impiety was led away to prison; and Moses being at a loss what ought to be done to the man (for he knew that he had committed a crime worthy of death, but did not know what was the most suitable manner for the punishment to be inflicted upon him), came with his invisible soul to the invisible judgment seat, and asked of that Judge who heareth everything before it is related to him what his sentence was.

And that Judge delivered his sentence that the man ought to die, and in no other way than being stoned, since in his case, as in that of the criminal mentioned above, his mind had been changed to a dumb stone, and he had committed the most complete of offences, in which nearly every other sin is comprised which can be committed against the laws enacted respecting the reverence due to the seventh day.

Why so? Because, not only mere handicraft trades, but also nearly all other acts and businesses, and especially all such as have reference to any providing of or seeking for the means of life, are either carried on by means of fire themselves, or, at all events, not without those instruments which are made by fire. On which account Moses, in many places, forbids any one to handle a fire on the sabbath day, inasmuch as that is the most primary and efficient source of things and the most ancient and important work; and if that is reduced to a state of tranquillity, he thought that it would be probable that all particular works would be at a stand-still likewise.

And wood is the material of fire, so that a man who is picking up wood is committing a crime which is akin to and nearly connected with that of burning fire, doubling his transgression, in fact, partly in that he was collecting what it was commanded should remain unmoved, and partly that what he was collecting was that which is the material of fire, the beginning of all arts.

Therefore both those instances which I have mentioned comprise the punishments of wicked men, appointed and confirmed by question and answer. And there are two other instances, not of the same, but of a different character; the one of which has reference to the succession of an inheritance; the other, as far at least as it appears to me, to a sacrifice which was performed at an unseemly time. And we must first discuss the latter of the two.

Moses puts down the beginning of the vernal equinox as the first month of the year, attributing the chief honour, not as some persons do to the periodical revolutions of the year in regard of time, but rather to the graces and beauties of nature which it has caused to shine upon men; for it is through the bounty of nature that the seeds which are sown to produce the necessary food of mankind are brought to perfection. And the fruit of trees in their prime, which is second in importance only to the necessary crops, is engendered by the same power, and as being second in importance it also ripens late; for we always find in nature that those things which are not very necessary are second to those which are indispensable.

Now wheat and barley are among the things which are very necessary; as, likewise, are all the other species of food, without which it is impossible to live. But oil, and wine, and almonds are not among necessities, since men often live without them to the very extremity of old age, extending their life over a number of years.

Accordingly, in this month, about the fourteenth day of the month, when the orb of the moon is usually about to become full, the public universal feast of the passover is celebrated, which in the Chaldaic language is called pascha; at which festival not only do private individuals bring victims to the altar and the priests sacrifice them, but also, by a particular ordinance of this law, the whole nation is consecrated and officiates in offering sacrifice; every separate individual on this occasion bringing forward and offering up with his own hands the sacrifice due on his own behalf.

Therefore all the rest of the people rejoiced and was of joyful countenance, every one thinking that he himself was honoured by this participation in the priesthood. But the others passed the time of the festival amid tears and groans, their own relations having lately died, whom they were now mourning for, and were overwhelmed with a two fold sorrow, having, in addition to their grief for their relations who were slain, the pain also which arose from being deprived of the pleasure and honour which accrue from the offering up of sacrifice, as they were not purified or cleansed on that day, inasmuch as their mourning had not yet lasted beyond the appointed and legitimate period of lamentation.

These men coming, after the assembly was over, to the ruler of the people, being full of melancholy and depression, related to him what had happened, namely, “that the recent death of their relations was an unavoidable affliction to which they could not help yielding, and that it was a further grief that, on that account, they were unable to bear their share in the sacrifice of the passover.

And then they besought him that they too might make their offerings no less than the others, and that the misfortune which had befallen them in the death of their kinsmen might not be reckoned against them as an iniquity of theirs, so as to produce them punishment instead of compassion; for that they thought that they were worse off than even the people who were dead, since these last had, indeed, no sense of the grievous privation, but they who continued live would appear to die the death perceptible to the outward sense.”

When he heard this he saw that the justification which they alleged was not inconsistent with reason and truth, and that the excuse which they alleged for not having previously offered their sacrifice was founded in necessity, and that they were entitled to merciful consideration. And while he as wavering in his opinion, and inclining this way and that way as if in the balance of a scale, for compassion and justice inclined him one way, and on the other side the law of the sacrifice of the passover weighed him down, in which the first month and the fourteenth day of the month are appointed for the offering of the sacrifice; accordingly, Moses, being perplexed and balancing between consent and refusal, besought God to decide the question and to announce his decision to him by an oracular command.

And God listened to his entreaty and gave him an oracle bearing not only on the circumstances which had taken place, but on all such as should hereafter happen with reference to the same subject, if people should ever again find themselves in a similar case. He likewise, out of the abundance of his providence, gave further and general directions with respect to other individuals who at any time, for one reason or other, should be unable to offer up their sacrifice with the whole of the rest of the nation.

We must now, therefore, proceed to relate the oracular commands which were thus given by God with reference to these Cases. He says, “The

mourning for a relation is a necessary sorrow to those who are related by blood, and it is not set down as a piece of guilty indifference.

As long, therefore, as it lasts, until the time that is appointed by law for it to cease, let the man be repelled from the sacred precincts, which must be kept pure, not only from all intentional pollution, but likewise from all such as is involuntary. But when the legal time for mourning is expired, then let the mourners be no longer deprived of an equal share in the performance of the sacrifices, that those who are alive may not become an adjunct to those who are dead. And let them, as if they were in a second class, come again in the second month, on the fourteenth day of the month, and let them sacrifice in the same manner as the former sacrificers, and let them adopt the sacrifice in the same way as they did, in a similar manner and under similar rules.”

Also, let the same regulations be observed with respect to those who are hindered, not by mourning, but by a distant journey, from offering up their sacrifice in common with and at the same time with the whole nation. “For those who are travelling in a foreign land, or dwelling in some other country, do no wrong, so as to deserve to be deprived of equal honour with the rest, especially since one country will not contain the entire nation by reason of its great numbers, but has sent out colonies in every direction.”

Having now, then, given this account of those who were too late to sacrifice the festival of the passover with the rest of the nation by reason of some unexpected circumstances, but who were desirous to fulfil the duty which had thus been omitted, even though late, still in the necessary manner, I now proceed to the last injunction relating to the succession to inheritances; that being, in like manner, of a mixed character, and consisting of question and answer.

There was a certain man, named Shalpaath, a man of high character and of a distinguished tribe. He had four daughters, but not a single son. And after the death of their father the daughters, being afraid that they should be deprived of their father’s inheritance, because the allotments of such inheritances were given to the male heirs, came to the ruler of the people with the modesty befitting maidens, not because they were eager for riches, but because they desired to preserve the name and reputation of their father.

And they said to Moses, "Our father is dead; and he died without having been mixed up in any of those seditions in which it has happened that so many thousands have been slain; but he was a cultivator of a life free from trouble and notoriety; unless, indeed, it is to be considered as a crime that he was without male offspring. And we are now here orphans in appearance, but in real fact desiring to find a father in you; for a lawful ruler is as closely connected with his subjects as a Father."

And Moses marvelled at the wisdom of the maidens, and at their affection for their father, nevertheless he hesitated, being biased in some degree by other thoughts in accordance with which it seemed proper for men to divide the inheritances among themselves, that so they might receive the due reward of their military services and of the wars which they had gone through. But nature, which has given to woman protection from all such contests, does likewise by so doing plainly deprive them of their right to a share in what is put forward as a reward for encountering them.

On which account the mind of Moses was very naturally in a state of indecision, and was dragged different ways, so that Moses laid his perplexities before God, whom he knew to be the only being who could with true and unerring judgment decide such delicate differences with a complete display of truth and justice.

But the Creator of the universe, the Father of the world, who holds together earth and heaven, and the water and the air, and everything which is composed of any one of these things, and who rules the whole world, the King of gods and men, did not think it unbecoming for him to take upon himself the part of arbitrator respecting these orphan maidens. And, as arbitrator, he, in my opinion, did more for them than if he had been merely a judge of the law, inasmuch as he is merciful and beneficent, and has filled all things everywhere with his beneficent power for he gave great praise to the maidens.

O! Master how can any one sing your praises adequately, with what mouth, with what tongue, with what organisation of voice? Can the stars become a chorus and pour forth any melody which shall be worthy of the subject? Even if the whole of the heaven were to be dissolved into voice, would it be able to recount even a portion of your virtues? "Very rightly," says God, "have the daughters of Shalpaath spoken."

Who is there who can fail to perceive how great a praise this is when God bears witness in their favour? Come, now, ye who are violent; ye, who give yourselves airs because of your virtuous actions; ye, who hold up your hands higher than nature justifies, and who raise your eyebrows; ye, among whom the widowhood of woman is a cause for laughter, though it is a most pitiable evil; and in whose thoughts the desolation of orphan children is ridiculed even more shamefully than the distress before mentioned.

So now, seeing that those who appeared in such a low and unfortunate condition were not marked by God among the neglected and obscure, though all the kingdoms of the whole habitable world are the most insignificant portion of his dominion, because the whole circumference and space of the world is but the extremity of his works, learn a necessary lesson from this fact.

But Moses, having praised the conversation of the maidens, did not either leave them without their due honour and reward, nor yet, on the other hand, did he raise them to an equal degree of honour with the men on whom the brunt of the war falls; but to the latter he allotted the inheritances as the prizes which belonged to them as a reward for the gallant exploits which they had performed. But the former he thought worthy of grace and kindness, not of reward; as he showed most plainly by the expressions which he used, speaking of “gifts” and “presents,” but not of “requital” or “recompense.” For the one form of language is suited to those who receive what they have a right to, and the other belongs to those who are treated with gratuitous favour.

And having given his divine directions respecting the petitions which the orphan maidens had preferred, he proceeds to lay down a more general law concerning the succession to inheritances, summoning the sons in the first instance to the sharing of the paternal property; and, if there should be no sons, then the daughters in the second place, to whom he says that it is proper to attach the inheritance as an external and adventitious ornament, but not as a possession belonging to and rightly connected with them; for that which is attached to anything has no actual relationship to that which is adorned by it, inasmuch as it is devoid of all harmony and union with it.

And, after the daughters, then he invites the brothers to share it in the third place; and, in the fourth place, he assigns the property to the uncles on the father’s side, showing under this figure that the fathers might, if alive be the

heirs of their sons. For it is a very foolish idea to imagine that when he allots the inheritance of the nephew to his father's brother, out of a regard to his relationship to his father, he has excluded the father himself from the succession.

But since the law permits the property of parents to be inherited by the children, but does not allow the parents themselves to inherit, he has abstained from any express mention of the subject as one to be deprecated and of evil omen, in order that the father and mother might not seem to receive any gain from the inconsolable affliction of the loss of children dying prematurely; but he indirectly intimated their right to be invited to such an inheritance when he conceded it to the uncles, in order that in this way he might attain the best objects of cultivating propriety and of avoiding the improper alienation of the estate. And, after the uncles, the fifth class of inheritors was to be composed of the nearest relations, to the first of whom he invariably assigns the inheritance.

Having now, as I was forced to do, gone through the entire account of those sacred commands referring to a mixed possession of an inheritance, I shall now proceed to show the oracles which were divinely given by the inspiration of the prophet; for this was a subject which I promised to explain. Now the beginning of his divine inspiration, which was also the commencement of prosperity to his nation, arose when he was sent out of Egypt to dwell as a settler in the cities of Syria, with many thousands of his countrymen;

for both men and women, having accomplished together a long and desolate journey through the wilderness, destitute of any beaten road, at last arrived at the sea which is called the Red Sea. Then, as was natural, they were in great perplexity, neither being able to cross over by reason of their want of vessels, nor thinking it safe to return back by the way by which they had come.

And while they were all in this state of mind, a still greater evil was impending over them; for the king of the Egyptians, having collected a power which was far from contemptible, a vast army of cavalry and infantry, sallied forth in pursuit of them, and made haste to overtake them, that he might avenge himself on them for the departure which he had been compelled by undeniable communications from God to permit them to take. But, as it should seem, the disposition of wicked men is unstable, so that, like any thing

in a lightly-balanced scale, it inclines on very slight causes to different directions at different times.

So now, the Hebrews being intercepted between their enemies and the sea, despaired of their safety, some looking on the most miserable death as a blessing to be prayed for; and others thinking it better to perish by the agency of the parts of nature than to become a laughing-stock to their enemies, were inclined to throw themselves into the sea; and now, being laden with heavy burdens, they sat down on the sea shore, that when they saw the enemy near they might more readily leap into the sea.

For now, by reason of the necessity which environed them, and from which they saw no means of extricating themselves, they were in great agitation, being full of expectation of a miserable death.

“The fear is necessary, and the terror is inevitable, and the danger is great; in front of us is the widely open sea, there is no retreat to which we can flee, we have no vessels, behind are the phalanxes of the enemy ready to attack us, which march on and pursue us, never stopping to take breath. Where shall any one turn? Which way can any one look to escape? Every thing from every quarter has unexpectedly become hostile to us, the sea, the land, men, and the elements of nature.

But be ye of good cheer; do not faint; stand still without wavering in your minds; await the invincible assistance of God; it will be present immediately of its own accord; it will fight in our behalf without being seen. Before now you have often had experience of it, defending you in an invisible manner. I see it now preparing to take part in the contest; casting halters round the necks of the enemy, who are now, as if violently dragged onward, going down into the depths of the sea like lead. You now see them while still alive; but I conceive the idea of them as dead. And this very day you yourselves shall also behold them Dead.”

He then now said these things to them, things greater than any hopes that could have been formed. And they very speedily experienced in the real facts the truth of his divine words; for what he thus predicted by means of the power divinely given to him, came to pass in a manner more marvellous than can be well expressed. The sea was broken asunder, each portion retired back, there was a consolidation of the waves along each brokenoff fragment

throughout the whole breadth and depth, so that the waves stood up like the strongest walls; and there was a straight line cut of a road thus miraculously made, which was a path for the Hebrews between the congealed waters,

so that the whole nation without any danger passed on foot through the sea, as if on a dry road and on a stony soil; for the sand was dried up, and its usually fine grains were now united into one compact substance. Then, also, there was a rush onwards of their enemies pursuing them, without stopped to take breath, hastening to their own destruction, and a driving forward of the cloud that guarded the rear of the Hebrews, on which there was a certain divine appearance of fire emitting a brilliant blaze, and a reflux of the sea, which up to that moment had been cut in two parts and stood asunder, and a sudden returning of the part which had been cut off and dried up into its original channel,

and an utter destruction of the enemy, whom the walls the sea, which had been congealed and which now turned back again, overwhelmed, and the sea pouring down and hurrying into what had just been a road, as if into some deep ravine, washed away every thing, and there was evidence of the completeness of the destruction in the bodies which floated on the waters, and which strewed the surface of the sea; and a great agitation of the waves, by which all the dead were cast up into a heap on the opposite shore, becoming a necessary spectacle to those who had been delivered, and to whom it had been granted not merely to escape from their dangers, but also to behold their enemies punished, in a manner too marvellous for description, by no human but by a divine power.

For this mercy Moses very naturally honoured his Benefactor with hymns of gratitude. For having divided the host into two choruses, one of men and one of women, he himself became the leader of that of the men, and appointed his sister to be the chief of that of the women, that they might sing hymns to their father and Creator, joining in harmonies responsive to one another, by a combination of dispositions and melody, the former being eager to offer the same requital for the mercies which they had received, and the latter consisting of a symphony of the deep male with the high female voices, for the tones of men are deep and those of women are high; and when there is a perfect and harmonious combination of the two a most delightful and thoroughly harmonious melody is effected.

And he persuaded all those myriads of men and women to be of one mind, and to sing in concert the same hymn at the same time in praise of those marvellous and mighty works which they had beheld, and which I have been just now relating. At which the prophet rejoicing, and seeing also the exceeding joy of his nation, and being himself too unable to contain his delight, began the song. And they who heard him being divided into two choruses, sang with him, taking the words which he uttered.

This is the beginning and preface of the prophecies of Moses under the influence of inspiration. After this he prophesied about the first and most necessary of all things, namely, food, which the earth did not produce, for it was barren and unfruitful; and the heaven rained down not once only, but every day for forty years, before the dawn of day, an ethereal fruit under the form of a dew very like millet seed.

And Moses, when he saw it, commanded them to collect it; and being full of inspiration, said: "You must believe in God, inasmuch as you have already had experience of his mercies and benefits in matters beyond all your hopes. This food may not be treasured up or laid up in garners. Let no one leave any portion of it till the morning."

When they heard this, some of those who had no firm piety, thinking perhaps that what was now said to them was not an oracle from God, but merely the advice of their leader, left some till the next day. And it putrefied, and at first filled all the camp around with its foul smell, and then it turned to worms, the origin of which always is from corruption.

And Moses, when he saw this, was naturally indignant with those who were thus disobedient; for how could he help being so, when those who had beheld such numerous and great actions which could not possibly be perverted into mere fictitious and well contrived appearances, but which had been easily accomplished by the divine providence, did not only doubt, but even absolutely disbelieved, and were the hardest of all man to be convinced?

But the Father established the oracle of his prophet by two most conspicuous manifestations, the one of which he gave immediately by the destruction of what had been left, and by the evil stench which arose, and by the change of it into worms, the vilest of animals; and the other demonstration he afforded subsequently, for that which was over and above after that which

had been collected by the multitude, was always melted away by the beams of the sun, and consumed, and destroyed in that manner.

He gave a second instance of his prophetic inspiration not long afterwards in the oracle which he delivered about the sacred seventh day. For though it had had a natural precedence over all other days, not only from the time that the world was created, but even before the origination of the heaven and all the objects perceptible to the outward senses, men still knew it not, perhaps because, by reason of the continued and uninterrupted destructions which had taken place by water and fire, succeeding generations had not been able to receive from former ones any traditions of the arrangement and order which had been established in the connection of preceding times, which, as it was not known, Moses, now being inspired, declared to his people in an oracle which was borne testimony to by a visible sign from heaven.

And the sign was this. A small portion of food descended from the air on the previous days, but a double portion on the day before the seventh day. And on the previous days, if any portion was left it became liquefied and melted away, until it was entirely changed into dew, and so consumed; but on this day it endured no alteration, but remained in the same state as before, and when this was reported to him, and beheld by him, Moses did not so much conjecture as receive the impulse of divine inspiration under which he prophesied of the seventh day.

I omit to mention that all such conjectures are akin to prophecy; for the mind could never make such correct and felicitous conjectures, unless it were a divine spirit which guided their feet into the way of truth;

and the miraculous nature of the sign was shown, not merely in the fact of the food being double in quantity, nor in that of its remaining unimpaired, contrary to the usual customs, but in both these circumstances taking place on the sixth day, from the day on which this food first began to be supplied from heaven, from which day the most sacred number of seven begun to be counted, so that if any one reckons he will find that this heavenly food was given in exact correspondence with the arrangement instituted at the creation of the world. For God began to create the world on the first day of a week of six days: and he began to rain down the food which has just been mentioned on the same first day;

and the two images are alike; for as he produced that most perfect work, the world, bringing it out of non-existence into existence, so in the same manner did he produce plenty in the wilderness, changing the elements with reference to the pressing necessity, that, instead of the earth, the air might bestow food without labour, and without trouble, to those who had no opportunity of providing themselves with food at their leisure.

After this he delivered to the people a third oracle of the most marvellous nature, namely that on the seventh day the air would not afford the accustomed food, and that not the very slightest portion would fall upon the earth, as it did on other days;

and this turned out to be the case in point of fact; for he delivered this prediction on the day before; but some of those who were unstable in their dispositions, went forth to collect it, and being deceived in their expectations, returned unsuccessful, reproaching themselves for their unbelief, and calling the prophet the only true prophet, the only one who knew the will of God, and the only one who had any foreknowledge of what was uncertain and future.

Such then are the predictions which he delivered, under the influence of inspiration, respecting the food which came down from heaven; but he also delivered others in succession of great necessity, though they appeared to resemble recommendations rather than actual oracles; one of which is that prediction, which he delivered respecting their greatest abandonment of their national customs, of which I have already spoken, when they made a golden calf in imitation of the Egyptian worship and folly, and established dances and prepared an altar, and offered up sacrifices, forgetful of the true God and discarding the noble disposition of their ancestors, which had been increased by piety and holiness,

at which Moses as very indignant, first of all, at all the people having thus suddenly become blind, which but a short time before had been the most sharp-sighted of all nations; and secondly, at a vain invention of fable being able to extinguish such exceeding brilliancy of truth, which even the sun in its eclipse or the whole company of the stars could never darken; for it is comprehended by its own light, appreciable by the intellect and incorporeal, in comparison of which the light, which is perceptible by the external senses, is

like night if compared to day.

And, moved by this cause, he no longer continued as before, but leaped as it were out of his former appearance and disposition, and became inspired, and said, "Who is there who has not consented to this error, and who has not given sanction to what ought not to be sanctioned? Let all such come over to Me."

And when one tribe had come over to him, and not less with their minds than with their bodies, who indeed had some time before been eager for the slaughter of the impious and wicked doers, and who had sought for a leader and chief of their host who would justly point out to them the opportunity and proper manner of repressing their wickedness; then he, seeing that they were enraged and full of good confidence and courage, was inspired still more than before, and said, "Let every one of you take a sword, and go swiftly through the whole army, and slay not only strangers, but also those who are nearest and dearest to him of his own friends and relations, attacking them all, judging his action to be a most holy one, as being in the defence of truth and of the honour due to God, to fight for which, and to be the champion of which objects, is the lightest of labours."

So they rushed forth with a shout, and slew three thousand, especially those who were the leaders of this impiety, and not only were excused themselves from having had any participation in the wicked boldness of the others, but were also enrolled among the most noble of valiant men, and were thought worthy of an honour and reward most appropriate to their action, to wit the priesthood. For it was inevitable that those men should be ministers of holiness, who had shown themselves valiant in defence of it, and had warred bravely as its champions.

Chapter L

I have also another still more marvellous and prodigy-like oracle to report, which indeed I have mentioned before, when I was relating the circumstances of the high priesthood of the prophet, one which he himself uttered when fully inspired by the divine spirit, and which received its accomplishment at no long period afterwards, but at the very moment that it was delivered.

There were two classes of ministrations concerning the temple; the higher one belonging to the priests, and the lower one to the keepers of the temple; and there were at this time three priests, but many thousand keepers of the temple.

These men, being puffed up at the exceeding greatness of their own numbers, despised the scanty numbers of the priests; and so they concerted two impious attempts at the same time, the one of which was the destruction of those who were superior to them, and the other was the promotion of the inferior body, the subjects as it were attacking the leaders, to the confusion and overthrow of that most excellent and most beneficial thing for the people, namely order.

Then, joining together and assembling in one place, they cried out upon the prophet as if he had given the priesthood to his brother, and to his nephews, out of consideration for their relationship to him, and had given a false account of their appointment, as if it had not taken place under the direction of divine providence, as we have represented.

And Moses, being vexed and grieved beyond measure at these things, although he was the meekest and mildest of men, was not so excited to a just anger by his disposition, which hated iniquity, that he besought God to reject their sacrifice. Not because there was any chance of that most righteous Judge receiving the unholy offerings of wicked men, but because the soul of the man who loved God could not be silent for his part, so eager was it that the wicked should not prosper, but should always fail in their purpose;

and while he was still boiling over and inflamed with anger by this lawful indignation he became inspired, and changed into a prophet, and uttered the following oracles. "Apostacy is an evil thing, but these faithless men shall be taught, not only by words but also by actions; they shall, by personal suffering, learn my truth and good faith, since they would not learn it by ordinary instruction;

and this shall be discerned in the end of their life: for it they receive the ordinary death according to nature, then I have invented these oracles; but if they experience a new and unprecedented destruction, then my truth will be testified to; for I see chasms of the earth opening against them, and widened to the greatest extent, and numbers of men perishing in them, dragged down into

the gulf with all their kindred, and their very houses swallowed up, and the men going down alive into hell.”

And when he ceased speaking the earth was cloven asunder, being shaken by an earthquake, and it was burst open, especially where the tents of those wicked men were so that they were all swallowed up together, and so hidden from sight. For the parts which were rent asunder came together again as soon as the purpose for which they had been divided was accomplished.

And a little after this thunderbolts fell on a sudden from heaven, and slew two hundred men, the leaders of this sedition, and destroyed them all together, not leaving any portion of their bodies to receive burial.

And the rapid and unintermittent character of the punishment, and the magnitude of each infliction, rendered the piety of the prophet conspicuous and universally celebrated, as he thus brought God forward as a witness of the truth of his oracular denunciations.

We must also not overlook this circumstance, that both earth and heaven, which are the first principles of the universe, bore their share in the punishment of these wicked men, for they had rooted their wickedness in the earth, and extended it up to the sky, raising it to that vast height,

on which account each of the elements contributed its part to their chastisement, the earth, so as to drag down and swallow up those who were at that time weighing it down, bursting asunder and dividing; and the heaven, by tearing up and destroying them, raining down a mighty storm of much fire, a most novel kind of rain, and the end was the same,

both to those who were swallowed up by the earth and to those who were destroyed by the thunderbolts, for neither of them were seen any more; the one body being concealed by the earth, the chasm being united again and meeting as before, so as to make solid ground; and the other people being consumed entirely by the fire of the thunderbolts.

Chapter LI

And some time afterwards, when he was about to depart from hence to heaven, to take up his abode there, and leaving this mortal life to become immortal, having been summoned by the Father, who now changed him,

having previously been a double being, composed of soul and body, into the nature of a single body, transforming him wholly and entirely into a most sun-like mind; he then, being wholly possessed by inspiration, does not seem any longer to have prophesied comprehensively to the whole nation altogether, but to have predicted to each tribe separately what would happen to each of them, and to their future generations, some of which things have already come to pass, and some are still expected, because the accomplishment of those predictions which have been fulfilled is the clearest testimony to the future.

For it was very appropriate that those who were different in the circumstances of their birth and in the mothers, from whom they were descended, should differ also in the variety of their designs and counsels, and also in the excessive diversity of their pursuits in life, and should therefore have for their inheritance, as it were, a different distribution of oracles and predictions.

These things, therefore, are wonderful; and most wonderful of all is the end of his sacred writings, which is to the whole book of the law what the head is to an animal.

For when he was now on the point of being taken away, and was standing at the very starting-place, as it were, that he might fly away and complete his journey to heaven, he was once more inspired and filled with the Holy Spirit, and while still alive, he prophesied admirably what should happen to himself after his death, relating, that is, how he had died when he was not as yet dead, and how he was buried without any one being present so as to know of his tomb, because in fact he was entombed not by mortal hands, but by immortal powers, so that he was not placed in the tomb of his forefathers, having met with particular grace which no man ever saw; and mentioning further how the whole nation mourned for him with tears a whole month, displaying the individual and general sorrow on account of his unspeakable benevolence towards each individual and towards the whole collective host, and of the wisdom with which he had ruled them.

Such was the life and such was the death of the king, and lawgiver, and high priest, and prophet, Moses, as it is recorded in the sacred scriptures.