

## RULE OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

**praef.** Matthew, observing the rule of righteousness, starts by listing Christ's origin from Abraham. He is the father of faith and to him, as a faithful believer, it was reckoned as righteousness.<sup>1</sup> Matthew therefore follows the order of righteousness. For example, he says: *Whoever receives a righteous person in the name of a righteous person [5] will receive the reward of the righteous.*<sup>2</sup> Because Matthew shows Christ's origin, the Gospel according to Matthew is the face of a human from the four living creatures shown first by Ezekiel and later in the Apocalypse of John.<sup>3</sup>

Luke,<sup>4</sup> observing the rule of law, starts his account from the priesthood of Zechariah. He also mentions the fatted calf slaughtered for joy at the return of the prodigal son, namely [10] the younger one who received from his father a robe and a ring (...) and ordered to dine.<sup>5</sup> The Gospel according to Luke is the face of a calf, plainly from those four indicated living creatures, as it was mentioned above.

Mark, observing the rule of prophecy, starts as follows: *As is it written in Isaiah the prophet: Behold, I send my angel before your face.*<sup>6</sup> The Gospel according to [15] Mark is therefore the face of an eagle, which is the likeness of the Holy Spirit. The prophets, when filled with this, prophesied continually.

John, observing the rule of the beginning of the Son of God himself, Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, therefore starts as follows: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God.*<sup>7</sup> The Gospel according to John is therefore [20] the face of a lion from among those four indicated living creatures, as it was mentioned above. But why of a lion? Just as the lion achieved dominion among all beasts and wild animals, so our Lord is also called the lion of Judah in Jacob's blessing.<sup>8</sup> It is not inappropriate that the evangelist John is likened to a lion and has his figure from the four indicated living creatures, as it was mentioned above. For he starts to explain the origin of the Word from the beginning, [25] and says that this Word was God and that the same Word was made human: *And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,*<sup>9</sup> namely our Saviour Christ, whom Isaiah had said would be conceived by a virgin and called

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1 Cf. Genesis 15:6 (Romans 4:3).

2 Matthew 10:41.

3 Cf. Ezekiel 1:5–14; Revelation 4:6–8.

4 Fortunatianus uses the early Latin form *Lucanus* rather than *Lucas*.

5 Cf. Luke 15:22–23. The symbol (...) indicates a lacuna in the Latin text (see p. XXIV).

6 Mark 1:2.

7 John 1:1–2. Fortunatianus has the standard Latin word order in John 1:1, the last phrase of which could alternatively be translated as “God was the Word”.

8 Cf. Genesis 49:9.

9 John 1:14.

Emmanuel, *which is translated 'God with us'*.<sup>10</sup> Father and God ⟨...⟩ in the beginning with the same God the Father through whom all things were made.

[30] The Gospels also preserve the scheme of history. For in the first place was righteousness, as was said concerning Abraham. It has already been shown above that Matthew observes this rule, who drew his beginning from righteousness, that is, from Abraham. After righteousness (that is, after Abraham), the Law was given to Moses, and this Law is put in second place: Luke observes this rule, as it was said, and starts from priesthood. After the Law given to Moses, [35] prophecy is put in third place, the scheme of the rule which Mark followed. Indeed, it is because of the fact that prophecy is put in third place that Mark alone, in accordance with the style of the scheme he had begun, recorded that the Lord suffered at the third hour.<sup>11</sup> After prophecy, in fourth place, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ was proclaimed by John. For John, in order to show what the Saviour was before he received human form and the way in which he took on human form, speaks as follows, [40] as was already said above: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was made nothing.*<sup>12</sup> And what follows? *And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we saw his glory, glory as of the only-begotten sent from the Father.*<sup>13</sup> The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom John calls both God and the Word of God, is thus in fourth place. [45] The angel Gabriel therefore carried him down into the womb of the Virgin Mary, that he should form himself as a human in her womb and so that the prophecy should be fulfilled in which Isaiah says: *The Lord himself will give a sign. What sign? A virgin will conceive in her womb and bear a son and he will be called Emmanuel.*<sup>14</sup> This, then, is the meaning of *The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*: Emmanuel, that is 'God with us'. Through this Word, therefore, that is through the Son who evidently came forth inexpressibly from the heart of the Father before all ages, [50] that is through our Lord Jesus Christ did the almighty Father accomplish everything. For Scripture shows this in the character of the Father speaking to the Son: *Let us make man. And God made man: to the image of God he made him.*<sup>15</sup>

It was therefore shown long ago in figures that there would be four Gospels. For example, Scripture states in Genesis: [55] *A spring comes out of Eden to water paradise, and from there it is divided into four sources.*<sup>16</sup> That spring, then, is our Lord

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Mark 15:25.

<sup>12</sup> John 1:1–3.

<sup>13</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 7:14.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 1:26–27.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 2:10.

Jesus Christ, from whom come four rivers, meaning the four Gospels. As the evangelist John says: *From his stomach will flow rivers of living water.*<sup>17</sup>

JOHN. *The name of one river is Fison, which flows around the land of Evilat.*<sup>18</sup> *That land has [60] fine gold, and there is ruby and emerald there.*<sup>19</sup> *Fine gold* demonstrates a royal appearance; the Magi too offer gold as to a king, among other gifts. *Ruby* is understood as the Holy Spirit, which our Lord Jesus Christ gave to the apostles after his Resurrection, saying *Receive the Holy Spirit, and he breathed into them.*<sup>20</sup> *Fison*, therefore, comes from the breathing, because *fisa* in Greek means ‘to breathe’. None of the [65] evangelists speaks of the spirit given through breathing except John alone, who is the figure of the river Fison. *Emerald* is the figure of baptism because of its colour: it was thus needful that the figure of the Holy Spirit too should not be lacking, as baptism is necessary.

LUKE. *The name for the second river is Geon, which flows around the land of Ethiopia.*<sup>21</sup> [70] The Ethiopians are considered to be dark men. Therefore, the image of the river Geon is the Gospel according to Luke, because he wrote in accordance with the Law. For, through not observing the instructions of the Law, the Jews are marked out as dark Ethiopians: plainly, they are much stained by their sins, through putting to death the prophets and the righteous. Finally, too, as the climax of their evils they raged against the Lord himself. They even said to Pilate, as he countered them, *The blood of this man be upon us and [75] upon our children and We have no king but Caesar.*<sup>22</sup> Therefore it is by these deeds that they are most evidently taken as Ethiopians. *Geon* is the word for land;<sup>23</sup> what else does this mean but that nothing other than the Promised Land is given to the Jews? Plainly, these are earthly things to an earthly people, but to the heavenly people is promised the kingdom of the heavens.

MATTHEW. *The name for the third river is Tigris: this is the one which goes opposite the Assyrians.*<sup>24</sup> [80] Assyrians are interpreted as oppressors, for they are Persians. Just as a wild tigress is striped, so this shows that all nations, but chiefly the Persians, have great stripes of sin because they do that which is unlawful.<sup>25</sup> They sleep with their mothers and sisters, which is a serious crime, for it is incest. It therefore says *opposite the Assyrians*, meaning ‘against the Assyrians’: Matthew, whose

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<sup>17</sup> John 7:38.

<sup>18</sup> The standard spelling of the proper nouns is Pishon and Havilah, but Fortunatianus’ orthography is preserved here in the light of its etymological role below.

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 2:11–12.

<sup>20</sup> John 20:22.

<sup>21</sup> Genesis 2:13.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 27:25; John 19:15.

<sup>23</sup> Compare Greek ἡ γῆ (*ge*).

<sup>24</sup> Genesis 2:14.

<sup>25</sup> Despite Fortunatianus’ wordplay between the name Tigris and the noun *tigris* (“tigress”), he seems to have a cheetah or other spotted animal in mind in subsequent references to the spots or stains of sin. In the translation, however, the language of “stripe” has been adopted for consistency.

image [85] was in the river Tigris, journeyed to Persia and preached there against those stripes in order to purify them. This, then, is the river *which goes opposite the Assyrians*, in accordance with spiritual understanding.

MARK. *The name for the fourth river is Euphrates*<sup>26</sup> yet it did not say into which land (...) for it is understood, because it was the image of the Gospel according to Mark (which is the figure of prophecy) that prophecy was proclaimed to the whole earth by the teaching and preaching of the apostles, [90] as David says of them: *Their sound is gone out into every land and their words to the ends of the globe.*<sup>27</sup>

We<sup>28</sup> may also understand that the order of the Gospels was shown and prefigured on the robe of Aaron<sup>29</sup> the priest (...) four rows having three gemstones each.<sup>30</sup> These four rows are without doubt understood as the four Gospels, the triple gemstones the perfect Trinity (...) [95] and the four rows of triple gemstones meaning the twelve Apostles: because Christ is the rock,<sup>31</sup> they are accordingly called precious stones from him. They are also the twelve stone knives in the Book of Joshua, instituted to circumcise the children of Israel for a second time.<sup>32</sup> Where the Trinity is, then, that is the triple row of stones, where the four Gospels are,<sup>33</sup> the twelve apostles were also shown in the twelve springs in Elim and indicated in the twelve warm breads in the Tabernacle.<sup>34</sup> [100] For in the staff of Aaron the priest, too, which blossomed after it was placed in the Holy of Holies,<sup>35</sup> the walnut was shown as a figure of the Gospels (...) in the four-sectioned walnut itself is also shown a cross, which is the wooden part within the nut itself that divides it into four sections. But through the taste of the nut, because it has just one flavour, it signified even then that four Gospels would tell of our one Lord Jesus Christ and proclaim his Passion, [105] which is taken as the wood in the middle of the nut, meaning the cross. Moreover, it showed the two Testaments in the two shells which enclose the body:<sup>36</sup> on the outside, it has a bitter bark, which is the most bitter iniquity of the Jews, plainly those who crucified the Lord. Also in the twelve calves made by Solomon under the bronze sea, arranged in threes in four groups, their backs to the Temple, their heads to the four winds, are shown the four Gospels [110] and, as they are three, the perfect

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Genesis 2:14.

<sup>27</sup> Psalm 19:4.

<sup>28</sup> This section, which appears to suffer from numerous lacunae, is largely repeated in the following, equally complicated paragraph: the confused state of the transmitted text defies editorial order.

<sup>29</sup> Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Aron* throughout.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Exodus 28:17–20; 39:8–13.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Joshua 5:2–3.

<sup>33</sup> The words translated as “where the four Gospels are” are corrupt.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Exodus 15:27; 25:30; 2 Chronicles 4:19.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Numbers 17:8.

<sup>36</sup> The Latin for “shell” is *testa*, offering a connection with *testamenta*.

Trinity, and, as twelve, also the twelve apostles.<sup>37</sup> The sea proclaims the world, out of which all nations have come to belief from the four corners of the earth through the apostolic preaching.

In<sup>38</sup> order to show more carefully and evidently that the four Gospels have been indicated in figures and images, the robe of Aaron the priest too and the composition of its ornaments [115] must not be passed over, and the shoulder-mantle too.<sup>39</sup> In this shoulder-mantle there are four rows of precious stones, each row having three gemstones: the four rows are the four Gospels, the triple gemstones are most evidently understood as the Trinity. Fourfold threes, however, make twelve: without doubt this means the twelve apostles, since Christ is the rock<sup>40</sup> from which the apostles are identified as precious stones. They are also the twelve stone knives in the Book of Joshua, [120] instituted to circumcise the children of Israel for a second time:<sup>41</sup> the first time, Moses circumcised with iron, and then Joshua with stone. They are also the twelve springs in Elim and the twelve warm breads in the Tabernacle and the twelve stones taken from the Jordan.<sup>42</sup> In the staff of Aaron, too, which blossomed when placed in the Holy of Holies,<sup>43</sup> the walnut proclaims the four Gospels shown figuratively, as we have explained above<sup>44</sup> ⟨...⟩ [125] thus it shows that the four Gospels have spoken of one God, the Son of God, and are consistent with each other; and just as there is one flavour in the four sections of the walnut, so the four Gospels speak of a single power of our Lord and God, even if they have said differing things. Moreover, the nut, with its two shells enclosing the body of the nut, shows the two Testaments; the bark on the outside of the nut itself shows the bitter iniquity of the Jews, who gave our Lord bitter gall to drink [130] and did not hesitate to crucify him. You will also find this in the twelve calves which have already been explained above:<sup>45</sup> as it says that their backs were to the Temple, it demonstrates that the apostles turned away from the synagogue and set out instead towards the Gentiles.

END OF THIS PART.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. 1 Kings 7:23–25.

<sup>38</sup> On the relationship of this paragraph to the preceding one, see note 28 on p. 4 above.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Exodus 28:17–20; 35:27; 39:8–13.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Joshua 5:2–3.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Exodus 15:27; 25:30; 2 Chronicles 4:19; Joshua 4:20.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Numbers 17:8.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. lines 101–107.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. lines 108–112.

<sup>46</sup> *Explicit feliciter* is a common scribal indication of the end of a book or section. A literal translation would be “It finishes happily”.

**M. long. I.** *And from the exile in Babylon up to Christ fourteen generations.*<sup>47</sup> [135] Yet only thirteen are found.<sup>48</sup> The reason for this matter is explained and this problem of the generations resolved according to the principle of the rule. It is written in the Law that if anyone dies without children, his brother or nearest relative should take his wife and produce offspring in the name of the dead man.<sup>49</sup> Joseph, therefore, is the son of two men: one according to the flesh, meaning Jacob, and one according to the Law, meaning Heli.<sup>50</sup> When Heli had died, Jacob, being his nearest relative, therefore took his wife [140] and fathered Joseph. For this reason, Matthew, when listing the generations, calls him the son of Jacob, but Luke, writing his Gospel according to the Law and maintaining the principle of his rule, calls him the son of Heli. This is clearly in accordance with what had been instructed long before in the Law, that offspring should be produced in the name of a dead man who had passed away without children. The children were deemed to be in the name of the dead man, just as Joseph here is deemed to be the son of Heli. But the Law only represented the character of truth: [145] then, when the time had come, the former representation vanished, and truth stood fixed in its place. Therefore, to show more fully that no-one has been fathered in the name of a dead man except for the one for whom the real thing was prepared, Jacob fathered a son and did not name him Heli but Joseph. It now remains that we should consider all the apostles as if they were a single man. They were called brothers by the Lord: *Now I shall not call you slaves but brothers*,<sup>51</sup> taking on the Church [150] after the Lord's death, that is after his Passion. A child was indeed fathered by them in the name of a dead man, meaning Christ: this is the Christian people, which truly takes its name from the name of the dead man.

Matthew begins his Gospel as follows: *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.*<sup>52</sup> The reason that he calls Christ the son of David is because in many places the same Christ [155] is called David, and because Mary and Joseph were from the same tribe as David, the tribe of Judah. But because King David was from the same tribe, for this reason Christ is also named the true and eternal king and is called David.<sup>53</sup> Many interpreters want the genealogy Matthew lists to be deemed as that of Joseph and the genealogy Luke lists to be deemed as that of Mary

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<sup>47</sup> Matthew 1:17.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Matthew 1:12–16.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Deuteronomy 25:5–6.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Matthew 1:16; Luke 3:23.

<sup>51</sup> John 15:15.

<sup>52</sup> Matthew 1:1. In order to maintain the connections made by Fortunatianus, “generation” has been used for the Latin singular *generatio* in this biblical passage.

<sup>53</sup> The latter half of this sentence could be translated in several ways, but line 164 confirms the interpretation adopted here.

so that, because the man is said to be the head of the woman,<sup>54</sup> her genealogy is also named from the male side. [160] But this does not match the rule and problem which has been most accurately resolved above, where the principle of the genealogies is demonstrated. As it was said above that Christ is the son of David, so is he son of David, of Abraham, of Adam, of God, because the genealogy starting from Adam reaches Abraham and from Abraham to King David. As it was said above, this shows that Christ is the true and eternal king, just as the prophets [165] said. But so that it can be understood more evidently why Judah, even though he was born in fourth place, received the benediction and not the first-born, the reason was this: since it is the custom in the Law for no-one else to receive the benediction except the one who is oldest and who has the rights of the first-born, Reuben the first-born did not receive it for the reason that he committed incest with his father's concubine; Simeon and Levi for the reason that, when they took offence at the rape of their sister [170] Dinah carried out by Shechem, son of Hamor, they slaughtered with swords the men of the town who were still in pain from being circumcised, a deed which did not confer the benediction on them either.<sup>55</sup> The benediction is given to Judah, the fourth in line, because that is the total at which the Saviour, who alone has the full benediction, came after righteousness and law and prophecy. Just as Judah, who was fourth, received the benediction and was called a lion and the cub of a lion,<sup>56</sup> [175] so Christ was then called a lion on account of his strength, since he emerges as victor and conqueror of the devil and even of death itself.

I go on, with quite some anxiety and trepidation, to explain why the most holy Matthew adopted such a beginning. For he says: *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham*. What, then, is the reason for this beginning? Why did he start in this manner, when Luke [180] began to write his Gospel after having set out a certain reason? But because the series of old scriptures pays attention to what is new, and whatever the Old Testament contains figuratively the New has fulfilled through the very reason of truth, not inappropriately did the most holy Matthew begin by saying *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ*. For it had been foretold long before by the most holy David: *In the beginning of the book it is written concerning me*.<sup>57</sup> [185] The significance of *In the beginning of the book it is written concerning me* is that the Spirit, who knows the future, was speaking of the book of the Gospel which would contain the birth of the Son of God. Also, it is because the Hebrews evidently know that Christ will come and because they do not believe that he has already come that Matthew adopts such a beginning, saying *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ* and so on. Christ is therefore called the son of David for the

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. Ephesians 5:23.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Genesis 49:3–12; 35:22; 34:1–31.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Genesis 49:9.

<sup>57</sup> Psalm 40:7.

reason that he was to come from the stock of David through the Virgin Mary. He [190] is the one whom the most holy Jacob declared to be a lion and the cub of a lion in the benediction of Judah. The most holy Moses, too, says: *The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from your brothers; you will listen to him as to me. But any soul which does not listen to that prophet will be uprooted from his people.*<sup>58</sup> Also, Isaiah said that Emmanuel, meaning ‘God with us’, would come through a virgin,<sup>59</sup> and Jeremiah says: *This is our God [195] and no other will be held in consideration. He was seen on the land and he conversed with humans.*<sup>60</sup> This, then, is in opposition to the Hebrews in order to demonstrate to them with complete certainty that the one whom they hope will come has in fact already come. And, so that there would not be any excuse, the most holy Matthew adopted such a beginning: *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David.* He plainly wrote about his bodily birth because it was proclaimed by the prophets that he would come in this manner, meaning from David, because the Virgin Mary comes [200] from the lineage of David. Not inappropriately does the prophet say: *There will arise a branch from the root of Jesse and a flower from the branch.*<sup>61</sup> The branch is Mary,<sup>62</sup> the flower from the branch is Christ the Lord. *Son of Abraham:* before he was circumcised, Abraham believed God, as the scripture affirms: *Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.*<sup>63</sup> Therefore Abraham was righteous, who by believing emerges as the father of faith. Indeed, all faithful people are invited to his company and embrace. [205] As for the words *son of David, son of Abraham*, Christ our Lord took flesh from the Virgin Mary, through David, in the succession of the generations, from the tribe of Judah through Abraham. For this reason, he is called son of David, as the same Son of God is called David through the prophets; David too is called son of Abraham, from whom the beginning of the generations is taken up by the most holy Matthew the evangelist for the sake of righteousness. Therefore, because the Son of God is righteous, who judges rightly [210] and loves righteousness and is everlasting king, the most holy Matthew appropriately began his genealogy according to the flesh from Abraham. Yet because through the lineage he also made mention of King David, he shows that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is also King. Righteousness and royal succession are appropriately ascribed to him according to the flesh.

Having gone through the generations and shown them, Matthew recapitulates again, saying: [215] *From Abraham to David fourteen generations, and from David to the exile in Babylon fourteen generations, and from the exile in Babylon to Christ four-*

<sup>58</sup> Acts 3:22–23 (Deuteronomy 18:15–19).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Isaiah 7:14.

<sup>60</sup> Baruch 3:36, 38.

<sup>61</sup> Isaiah 11:1.

<sup>62</sup> The Latin plays on *virga* (“branch”) and *virgo* (“virgin”).

<sup>63</sup> Genesis 15:6 (cf. Romans 4:3).



*teen generations*.<sup>64</sup> He creates three rows: three sets of fourteen, which make forty-two. We find that he did not write this without reason: after seeking the reason for his style more carefully and discussing it with great attention, the mystery of the rows which he creates will, [220] with the help of God, be laid open to us. The evidence relevant to this matter will plainly be considered and investigated. For, in the parable of the good seed, we find it expressed by the same Matthew, when he plainly begins from the hundredfold fruit to the sixtyfold, and from the sixtyfold to the thirtyfold, which make three rows.<sup>65</sup> Up to this point the rows are to be understood literally. The hundredfold fruit is perfect faith, just as Isaac was born to the hundred-year-old Abraham,<sup>66</sup> [225] the father of faith; also, one hundred are held in the right hand, which belongs to the right side just as the lambs are found placed at the right side by the shepherd.<sup>67</sup> Matthew, then, begins to recount the generations from Abraham, who is the father of faith. The sixtyfold fruit is the second row, of virgins. For the first row goes up to David; the second row from David to the exile. The row of virgins is therefore appropriately proclaimed from David, [230] plainly in the sixtyfold fruit, because the Virgin Mary from whom our Lord Christ took flesh, is from David. But the thirtyfold fruit, matching the third row from the exile in Babylon up to Christ, is because Christ, our God and Lord, as Luke the evangelist says, *Jesus himself was around the beginning of his thirtieth year, and was thought to be the son of Joseph*.<sup>68</sup> After reaching this total of years, our Lord Jesus Christ suffered. [235] We see, then, that all this may be considered spiritually with regard to the Son of God, our God and Lord, in whom perfect righteousness and virginal abstinence and power are found to be accomplished. Because the most holy Matthew strives to introduce the descent of the Son of God from the heavens to the earth, when he saw fit to come and put on humanity for our sake, therefore he goes from the hundredfold to the thirtyfold, which is from the greater height to the lesser: [240] this is how he demonstrates that the Son of God descended from that heavenly glory to put on a human body. From the hundredfold to the sixtyfold is because Christ came from heaven to a virgin, through whom he was born; reaching the age of thirty years is the time when he suffered. The evangelist Mark, however, lists his Passion and Ascension and sitting at the right hand of the Father starting from the thirtyfold fruit, the number of years at which he suffered, and moves on to the sixtyfold, [245] which is the untainted flesh of a virgin:<sup>69</sup> rising from the dead, the Lord carried this with him to the heavens (...) but the hundredfold fruit is the fulfillment of faith and

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<sup>64</sup> Matthew 1:17.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Matthew 13:8.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Genesis 21:5.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Genesis 17:17–18; Matthew 25:33. In the old Roman system of finger-reckoning, 100 was shown with the right hand and 99 with the left one.

<sup>68</sup> Luke 3:23.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Mark 4:8.

Christ's martyrdom, when it was evident that he had taken his seat at the right hand of the Father with power and perfect strength. It is not inappropriate that the evangelist Luke, listing the generations of Christ upwards through Joseph,<sup>70</sup> that is from a human going all the way through to God, demonstrates most truly his Ascension: [250] from Joseph through David, and through Abraham and through Adam, he finally arrives at God. The one whom Luke had said *was thought to be the son of Joseph* is, he says, the Son of God. Therefore, because faith or martyrdom indicates the hundredfold fruit, and virginity the sixtyfold and power the thirtyfold, these all match and correspond to the Son of God by the degrees we have set out: in everything, he emerges as perfect God. [255] Yet because Matthew moves down from the hundredfold to the sixtyfold, and from there to the thirtyfold, he shows the descent of our Lord Jesus Christ: in fact, he described Christ's nativity according to the flesh. But Mark, because he proceeds from the thirtyfold to the sixtyfold and from there to the hundredfold, demonstrates the Passion, as was said above: this means the strength by which Christ conquered the devil through the cross and (...) of the unsullied flesh which [260] he established in the heavens, when it had been resurrected. It therefore emerges that Mark rises upwards from a smaller to a greater number. As we explained above, it is not inappropriate that he bears the image of an eagle, since he demonstrates that Christ flew to heaven. And because three rows are listed in the fruits, which we have briefly demonstrated, three rows are also marked out in the generations and assigned to a fixed total: these three rows of generations [265] and seeds without doubt demonstrate the Trinity of Father and of Son and of Holy Spirit.

But because the very final point says that there are fourteen generations from the exile in Babylon up to Christ and only thirteen are found, a certain uneasiness strikes readers, as if Matthew were accused as the defendant of a lie or the remover of one generation, since it is found that the total stated before is not complete. It is therefore necessary [270] to explain and discuss this with care, too, and lay bare the truth. Because, then, the total of one generation creates a problem for us, as it says fourteen yet thirteen are found, it is spiritual understanding which finds that generation which is not found in the reckoning. Plainly, when the generations are counted according to the flesh, it is found that, for the literal understanding, a single one has been removed. But, as I have said, as soon as the spiritual understanding [275] is found, what conforms to the total becomes apparent. In this way, the truth of the evangelist, who is not permitted to lie or deceive, begins to grow bright with the full light. He therefore says that there are fourteen generations up to Christ, yet thirteen are found. But a spiritual generation follows which, although it may be counted among the fleshly ones, is, however, not found in their total. For it is fitting that that generation which is not from the world should not be found with the generations of the world. [280] Appropriately, thirteen are found: but the fourteenth generation is

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. Luke 3:23–38.

spiritual, which Matthew relates in the following way, by saying: *But the generation of Christ was as follows.*<sup>71</sup> But the generation of Christ is understood as the Church. And David appropriately says: *But God is in the righteous generation.*<sup>72</sup> This is the generation of Christ, meaning the Church, in which the Son of God is found to abide. Therefore the Church of God, reborn through a spiritual birth, is not in the world, plainly having [285] a heavenly behaviour. Solomon, imagining this in the form of a ship, says that he does not perceive the way of a sailing ship:<sup>73</sup> this means that the behaviour and the generation of the Church cannot be found in the world, since indeed its activity and birth are spiritual. The righteous generation, in which the Son of God is present, is the Church, about which it was said *But the generation of Christ was as follows*. The way in which this generation was initiated by the apostles has, [290] in my opinion, been adequately discussed and shown in the problem of the generations.<sup>74</sup>

**M. long. II.** *When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, before they lived together, she was found to have conceived in her womb from the Holy Spirit.*<sup>75</sup> The most holy prophet Isaiah related most fully that Mary would conceive by saying: *The Lord himself will give a sign. What sign? A virgin will conceive in her womb and will bear a son and he will be called [295] Emmanuel.*<sup>76</sup> Not inappropriately did the evangelist Luke, describing the same birth, most fully demonstrate that the angel Gabriel would arrive, saying *At that same time the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee, whose name was Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, from the house of David. The name of the virgin was Mary. And having come inside to her, the angel of the Lord blessed her and said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is [300] with you. Blessed are you among women. But she, when she saw him, was dumbstruck by his entrance and was pondering why he blessed her in this way. And the angel of the Lord said to her: Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found grace in the sight of God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you will call his name Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign in the house of Jacob for eternity and there will be no end to his kingdom. [305] But Mary said to the angel: How will this be, because I have not been intimate with a man? And the angel said to her in reply: The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High*

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<sup>71</sup> Matthew 1:18.

<sup>72</sup> Psalm 14:5.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Proverbs 30:19.

<sup>74</sup> See lines 148–152.

<sup>75</sup> Matthew 1:18.

<sup>76</sup> Isaiah 7:14. The word “virgin” has been used here in the light of Fortunatianus’ comments at line 324.

*will overshadow you. Therefore, too, that which will be born will be called holy, the Son of God.*<sup>77</sup>

Joseph therefore pondered what he should do with her, since he had still not received any information from the angel on this subject. As Luke says: *But Joseph, her husband, as he was a righteous man and [310] did not wish to expose her to shame, decided to send her away privately.*<sup>78</sup> Afterwards, when Joseph tries to carry out his plan, he is prevented by an angel.

Next it says: *As he pondered this, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife! That which is born of her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son and you will give him the name Jesus. He [315] will save his people from their sins.*<sup>79</sup> For the name Jesus is translated as ‘saviour’. Because Joseph was a righteous man and knew that it was written by the prophets that the Saviour would come, the Son of God born of a virgin, he not only believed the words of the angel of God but also soon carried out the orders. The most holy Matthew therefore made use of the quotation from the prophet Isaiah when he introduced the virgin birth and conception.<sup>80</sup> For Isaiah had said that God himself [320] would give a sign and, as if he had been questioned what that sign was, he replied: *Behold, a virgin will conceive in her womb and she will bear a son and so on.*<sup>81</sup> After the seventy-two translators had translated the whole Law from Hebrew into Greek at the order of Ptolemy, working separately but as if with one voice and account, some corruptors and scriptural interpolators from among the Jews made this paragraph read not ‘virgin’ but ‘young woman’.<sup>82</sup> For what sign would the Lord be said to give, [325] if a young woman was with child from a man? This is the way of nature. But the Lord promised a sign, that a virgin would have to give birth to Emmanuel, which is ‘God with us’. Jeremiah also speaks about this as follows: *This is our God and no other will be held in consideration. He was seen on the land and he conversed with humans.*<sup>83</sup> This, therefore, is Emmanuel, ‘God with us’, whom the Virgin Mary produced. Joseph was taught by the angel [330] without delay what he should do about this matter, and he carried it out.

Next it says: *And rising from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord instructed him and he accepted his wife and was not intimate with her until she gave birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus.*<sup>84</sup> As for the words *He was not intimate with her until she*

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<sup>77</sup> Luke 1:26–35.

<sup>78</sup> Matthew 1:19.

<sup>79</sup> Matthew 1:20–21.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Matthew 1:23.

<sup>81</sup> Isaiah 7:14.

<sup>82</sup> The traditional story of the miraculous translation of the Septuagint is told in the Letter of Aristeas, and often repeated in Christian literature.

<sup>83</sup> Baruch 3:36, 38.

<sup>84</sup> Matthew 1:24–25.

*gave birth*, these strike many with unease, although only those of the flesh, not those of the spirit, [335] as if, because it had said ‘until’, Joseph was intimate with her after Jesus was born. But whoever is of a sound mind, and spiritual, ought not to suppose that Joseph, a righteous man who both saw visions of angels and learnt what he should do from the information of an angel, would have been able to defile Mary. He had learnt that from her the Son of God would be born, to whom the angel also told him to give the name Jesus, meaning ‘Saviour’. How could it have been the case that the righteous man Joseph, who [340] is found to be appointed as Mary’s custodian, who held onto the sign which the prophets said would come to pass among the people, that such a man should put Mary to the test for the sake of desire? For it is evident that angels have always appeared to holy and chaste men. Therefore, had Joseph not set his steps firmly on the path of virtue, I think that he would never have been able to see visions of angels and have learnt what he should do from their suggestion. [345] What is more, if this claim were true, Jesus would surely never have said to Mary his mother in the middle of his Passion *Behold your son* with regard to the disciple John, and to John himself *Behold your mother*. *And that disciple took her in to his home from that day.*<sup>85</sup> It is therefore agreed that the most holy Mary remained so after having given birth to Jesus, and that she always followed him and later devoted herself to prayers with the apostles, as is found in the Acts [350] of the Apostles: *All these people were single-mindedly devoting themselves to prayer, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers.*<sup>86</sup> We see here too that the character of Mary is set apart: if she were considered a woman of the same sort as the others, she would undoubtedly have been included with them. But when it says *with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus*, we see that Mary surpasses women, just as we find in the story of Moses and Aaron: *But Mary, going before*, [355] *saying ‘Let us sing to the Lord’* and so on.<sup>87</sup> She went before women for the reason that she was a virgin. Thus this Mary, too, who was a woman in that she gave birth, was a virgin so far as a man is concerned. It is not inappropriate that she is not listed among the women but is treated separately, and it says *with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus*. We believe that, in accordance with the prophecy of Simeon, she was put to death by the sword, because he said to her: *And a sword will pass through your own soul.*<sup>88</sup> [360] For the reason that James and Jude are called the brothers of the Lord is undoubtedly not because they were born of Mary, but they were sons of Joseph from another wife. They were called the brothers of the Lord by normal custom because of Joseph, since he was from the same tribe, or Mary, since she was called the wife of Joseph. So far as the Jews are concerned, they

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<sup>85</sup> John 19:26–27.

<sup>86</sup> Acts 1:14.

<sup>87</sup> Exodus 15:21. The Latin form of “Mary” and “Miriam” is identical (*Maria*).

<sup>88</sup> Luke 2:35. This unusual interpretation is also mentioned (but rejected) by Ambrose in his Commentary on Luke (2.61). See also chapter L. II on p. 96 below.

not only said that Jesus had brothers and sisters, but they even said that he was the son of Joseph the craftsman. They never stopped repeating this, putting him to the test while he was teaching them: [365] *Behold, your brothers are standing outside, wishing to speak with you.*<sup>89</sup> Elsewhere, when they noticed the miracles of his powers, which without doubt could not have been performed by a human, they said in wonder: *Isn't this the son of Joseph the craftsman, whose brothers we know and whose sisters were with us?*<sup>90</sup> So they were astounded at his wonders, not understanding the sayings of the prophets that the Son of God would do such things when he came.

[370] In order to demonstrate more fully the glorification of the most holy Mary, who for this reason could not have been known by Joseph until she had given birth, she was not known to be carrying the Lord of glory and of all strength in her womb. If the face of the most holy Moses was so glorified when he spoke with God that the children of Israel could not gaze on him but he placed a veil on his face when he spoke to them, how much more could the most holy Mary [375] not be recognised or contemplated who, as we said, had in her womb the Lord of strength, Emmanuel?<sup>91</sup> The angel Gabriel spoke more fully about this very matter when he said to Mary: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will enshadow you.*<sup>92</sup> We should therefore understand this enshadowing of the power of the Most High not as obscurity but as infinite brilliance. Just as our own sight is obscured by excessive brilliance and our vision impaired when we choose to gaze directly on the rays of the sun, [380] leaving us completely unable to see, so then the most holy Mary, overshadowed by the brilliance of the power of the Most High, could not be known by Joseph until she gave birth. So it was not until after the birth, as we have said, that she was found to be recognised by Joseph, plainly through the appearance of her face, and not through the touch of desire.

**M. long. III.** Having finished the problem of the generation of Jesus Christ, we will begin to explain the third chapter more fully. [385] You will find here a more careful treatment of what I have noted briefly to be read in its own place.<sup>93</sup> The third chapter begins: *Therefore, when Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea.*<sup>94</sup> Jesus, as we have already said, is a Hebrew word, *soter* in Greek, which is translated as *salvator* (Saviour) in Latin. It was therefore ordered by the Lord that the son of Nun should be called by this name, Joshua, as he was a disciple of Moses.<sup>95</sup> When

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<sup>89</sup> Matthew 12:47

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Mark 6:3.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Exodus 34:33–35.

<sup>92</sup> Luke 1:35.

<sup>93</sup> This appears to be a reference to Fortunatianus' exegesis of Matthew 2:1 in the latter part of the commentary at lines 767–778.

<sup>94</sup> Matthew 2:1.

<sup>95</sup> The Latin name *Iesus* corresponds both to Jesus and Joshua, which are also identical in Greek; the Book of Joshua in Latin is usually called *Liber Iesu Nave* ("the book of Joshua son of Nun").

Moses, then, who was considered a type of the Law, [390] had not been able to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land at that time, he climbed a mountain and looked over the land yet did not enter it. His successor Joshua son of Nun, however, allocated to all the children of Israel the land which had long ago been promised to Abraham and his offspring. Jesus the Son of God, the Saviour, who at that point was shown in the figure of the time to come, fulfilled this spiritually: for just as Joshua son of Nun brought into the Promised Land the children of Israel who had been led out of Egypt [395] through the desert, so Jesus the Son of God takes humans from the world and its enslavement (which is Egypt) and leads them through to the true Promised Land, meaning that he establishes them in the Church, where all promises are obtained. For this is the true land, meaning that it was promised to spiritual people. It is not inappropriate that we are called both children and offspring of Abraham, *because we are the children of God*.<sup>96</sup> For Abraham has the figure of faith, [400] because through faith *he believed God*.<sup>97</sup> Therefore we too, who believe through faith, are called his children. Bethlehem comes from Hebrew; in Latin *domus panis* (house of bread). This is where Jesus is born, who is the true Saviour, plainly the bread coming from heaven, as he himself says: *I am the bread of life who came down from heaven: whoever eats of this bread will not die for eternity*.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, just as the true bread who came down from heaven is the Son of God, so also the Church is the true house of God, [405] founded by his power and the preaching of the apostles.

Next follows: *In the days of Herod the king*.<sup>99</sup> For at the same time, Herod was ruling in Judea. He was from the sect of the Sadducees: thus, when we read *the Pharisees and the Sadducees*,<sup>100</sup> elsewhere it says *the Pharisees and the Herodians*.<sup>101</sup> The Herodians, in fact, were disciples of the Sadducees, *who say there is no Resurrection (...)* but the Pharisees acknowledge both.<sup>102</sup>

[410] *Behold, Magi came to Jerusalem from the East, saying: Where is he who is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East; we have come to worship him*.<sup>103</sup> *Magi*: Gentiles from Persia, clever people who think they know the governing principle of the heaven, and because everything which has been done is written about in the histories of the kings, in accordance with the secular practice of the acts of kings and the annals of deeds.<sup>104</sup> This, then, is why the Magi had knowledge

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**96** Romans 8:16.

**97** Romans 4:3 (cf. Genesis 15:6).

**98** John 6:51.

**99** Matthew 2:1.

**100** Matthew 3:7.

**101** Mark 3:6.

**102** Acts 23:8.

**103** Matthew 2:1–2.

**104** The words translated as “in accordance with the secular practice” are corrupt.

of the appearance of the star. When Balak the king had sent out Balaam [415] to curse the children of Israel, the latter *having received his utterance, said: Balaam son of Beor says this, a man who sees rightly, hearing the words of God, knowing instruction from the Most High and seeing the vision of God in a dream with his eyes open: I will show him and not yet, I call him blessed and he has not yet approached. A star will rise from Jacob and a man will arise from Israel and he will break the leaders of Moab and plunder all the children of Seth.*<sup>105</sup> Who better than the Jews to see a star rise and a man arise? [420] Yet the Magi saw, who are the figure of all Gentiles. They say: *Where is he who is born king of the Jews? For we have seen the star.* This star, foretold to arise from Jacob, is Christ the Lord, who would take on flesh from the same stock: *A man will arise from Israel.* So the Magi follow the star, knowing the time at which the Saviour, the King of the Jews, was born, [425] and they come and enquire in Jerusalem. *Jerusalem: a city of sacrifices which was formerly called Jebus; after the Ark of the Covenant and the whole record of the Law had been brought there, it was called Jerusalem.*<sup>106</sup> For it was there that the children of Israel, meeting from every part, used to celebrate on their feast days what had been passed down to them through the Law. The Magi come here; they seek the public place of the Law in which everything seemed to be celebrated. Spiritually, however, [430] Jerusalem is understood as the Church.<sup>107</sup> As David says: *I was glad in the words which were said to me: we will go in the house of the Lord. Our feet were standing in the halls of Jerusalem, Jerusalem which is being built as a city.*<sup>108</sup> The Magi are the figure of all Gentiles who will believe; coming to Jerusalem is to the Church; seeking the newborn king means the Son of God, the eternal king.

[435] *Hearing this, King Herod was worried, and all Jerusalem with him. He summoned the leaders and the scribes of the people; he questioned them about where Christ was to be born. They said: In Bethlehem of Judea, according to the prophet.*<sup>109</sup> The king, an abominable heretic as we have said before, when he hears it said that the King of the Jews has been born and the star has been seen, therefore grows worried, fearing an inheritor of his earthly kingdom. He is worried, and Jerusalem is worried with him, plainly at this unexpected turn of events. [440] He enquires: *Where is the Christ born?* He is informed by the testimony of the prophet, which (...) of his worry since it would come to pass that both the kingdom and the priesthood of the Jews were to be overthrown after the Passion of Christ.

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**105** Numbers 24:15–17; the Old Latin version based on a Greek translation is at some remove from the standard Hebrew text.

**106** Cf. Judges 19:10.

**107** In this sentence and the following quotation, Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Hierusalem* rather than *Hierosolyma* (the form he uses elsewhere).

**108** Psalm 122:1–3.

**109** Matthew 2:3–5.



*You are not least among the leaders of Judea,*<sup>110</sup> because the tribe of Judah ruled this city.<sup>111</sup> For it says: *Out of you will come a leader, who will rule [445] my people Israel.* This leader is the Son of God, our God and Lord, who came from the tribe of Judah, when he took flesh, and in this way the sayings of the prophets are understood to be completed, since what they said is clearly seen to be accomplished in his birth.

*Then Herod privately calls the Magi.*<sup>112</sup> He enquires about the time of the star; he sends them out and says to them: *Ask careful questions about the boy* and so on. Herod, as is natural for a heretic, here deceitfully enquires [450] about the time of the star. He was questioning them while plotting one thing with his evil mind and proposing something else in his question. He enquires about the time the star was seen, wanting to know its extent. So that the Magi would put their faith in him, he continued with a deception, saying *So that I too may come and worship him.*<sup>113</sup> For he was worried by the unexpected turn of events and said this so that (if it were possible) he could crush just this infant. For how could it have been that a heretical unbeliever, puffed up with greed for his kingdom, [455] would worship an infant still set in its cradle?

*Hearing the king, they left. And behold, the star which they had seen in the East went ahead of them and came and stopped above the boy.*<sup>114</sup> The Magi reached the boy with the star acting as a guide. Therefore all Gentiles seek Christ, the Son of God, in no other place than Judea. Then they went away from there (meaning from Jewish behaviour) and they came to the Son of God through believing. [460] The boy, as it says (...) as Isaiah also, in the character of the father: *My beloved boy* and so on.<sup>115</sup>

*Seeing the star, they rejoice.*<sup>116</sup> Having found that the truth was already on earth, they believed what had been foretold because they saw everything for themselves.

*Entering the house they find the boy with Mary his mother. Approaching and recognising him, [465] they worshipped him, and offer him gifts from their treasure chests: gold, incense and myrrh.*<sup>117</sup> *Entering the house:* the house is the Church, in which we obtain faith, being renewed through the baptismal font. *They find the boy with his mother,* meaning the Son of God, our Lord, in his Church. *Approaching and recognising him, they worshipped him,* knowing too that he had come in bodily form for the

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**110** Matthew 2:6.

**111** “Judah” and “Judea” are identical in Latin (*Iuda*). The Cologne manuscript includes a gloss at the beginning of this sentence, “Among the other words of the prophet.”

**112** Matthew 2:7.

**113** Matthew 2:8.

**114** Matthew 2:9.

**115** Isaiah 42:1 (cf. Matthew 12:18).

**116** Matthew 2:10.

**117** Matthew 2:11.

sake of humanity. *They open their treasure chests and offer gifts: gold, incense, myrrh.* It is evident that this literally happened. [470] For Isaiah had said that it would come to pass in this way at the birth of a boy: *And the Lord said to me: Call his name, swiftly take away the spoils, quickly plunder, because before the boy knows how to call father or mother he will receive the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria against the king of the Assyrians,* meaning Herod.<sup>118</sup> As for their offering of *gold, incense and myrrh,* they offer him *gold* as an indication of kingship, *incense* as to a god, *myrrh* to show that he must suffer [475] and be buried for the salvation of humanity. Therefore, because the Magi are the figure of believers from the nations, we can bend their gifts in figures.<sup>119</sup> Believers from the Gentiles therefore undergo martyrdoms, which, like gold, are tried through fire. We have understood that those who offer themselves as sacrifices to God and are made, like incense, into good fragrances for life, have the grace and dignity of burial in myrrh, for they hand themselves over gladly to death for the name of the Son of God.<sup>120</sup> [480] The Magi say, then: *Where is he who is born king of the Jews?* They worship the one they have found; they offer him gifts. This showed that all nations will acknowledge and seek out the King of the Jews, and they will worship Christ and undergo martyrdom for his name more readily than the Jews to whom he specifically came and from whom he took flesh, as the Apostle says: *From whom are the fathers and from whom is Christ, who is blessed, God for ever,* [485] *Amen.*<sup>121</sup> Pilate, also a figure of the nations, says: *You are King of the Jews* and Jesus: *You say it. To this point you too acknowledge that I am King of the Jews.*<sup>122</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar is also a figure of the nations when he alone saw the Son of God with the three boys in the furnace, and said: *Did we not send three men into the oven and Look, I see four men, and the figure of the fourth is like the son of God.*<sup>123</sup> This was long ago foreshown, that the nations would acknowledge the King of the Jews [490] and believe that Christ is the Son of God and see better than the Jews, who to their own destruction before Pilate replied against him: *We have no king except Caesar.*<sup>124</sup> What else could an earthly people with a stubborn neck therefore acknowledge but an earthly king, having scorned the eternal and heavenly king, the Son of God, of whose kindness they have always shown themselves ungrateful? To their own utmost distress, they even said: *His blood be upon us* [495] *and upon our children.*<sup>125</sup> They themselves passed this judg-

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<sup>118</sup> Isaiah 8:1, 4.

<sup>119</sup> The word translated as “bend” is corrupt.

<sup>120</sup> The Latin text of this passage is uncertain, although this is clearly a reference to Christian martyrdom.

<sup>121</sup> Romans 9:5.

<sup>122</sup> John 18:33, 37.

<sup>123</sup> Daniel 3:24–25.

<sup>124</sup> John 19:15.

<sup>125</sup> Matthew 27:25.

ment worthy of their merits, so that they should be considered guilty of spilling the blood of the Son of God for that time until they are converted. Blessed therefore are the nations, who believe everything about the Son of God and will also obtain the heavenly kingdom through his graciousness.

*Warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back on a different way to their own land.*<sup>126</sup> [500] This is plainly so that, after their coming to believe, they should not return to Herod's unbelief or heresy, or to Jewish tradition, as they were now progressing on the path of faith. *But along a different way:* it means that narrow and taxing way which directs believers who have escaped from the unrighteousness of the Jews to their own land. For the wide and broad way is earthly. The narrow way has the following significance: whoever truly believes in the Son of God [505] sets aside and no longer cares for their former way, which has various misfortunes, enslavements to idols and all other harmful things. Those who believe in the Son of God, then, once they have spurned the way of the world will return by another way which has the commandments of the Son of God. For he himself said: *I am the way and the truth.*<sup>127</sup> Whoever has firmly set their steps on this way, then, will easily reach their own land. It is evident, however, that the Magi came from the East with the star as their pointer and returned by [510] another way to their own land. For they had come in worldly behaviour, but later they were warned and they received commands as to which way they should travel. *Returning to their own land:* this shows that those who believe in the Son of God, having spurned depraved worldly behaviour, are able to return to their own land by another way. The land of those who believe in the Son of God is paradise, from which the first man was expelled because of disobedience. [515] The Lord himself spoke of the different types of ways, the nature of each and what it brings to the traveller: *Wide and broad is the way which leads to death, and there are many who travel on it.* Adam, progressing on this way, is found to have fallen from paradise. *How tight and narrow is the way which leads to life, and there are few who travel on it.*<sup>128</sup> For the elect, the martyrs and all the saints rely on this way. Scripture says that the total of the elect is innumerable, [520] but the Lord, *who wishes all to be saved,*<sup>129</sup> says that just a few travel on the way of the commandments of God.

*When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: Rise and take the boy and his mother and so on.*<sup>130</sup> As we said above that the Magi are the figure of all the nations, so Egypt too is the image of the world. In coming here, [525] the Son of God brought belief and removed everything from the kingdom of the Jews. *For it will come to pass that Herod will search for the boy in*

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**126** Matthew 2:12.

**127** John 14:6.

**128** Matthew 7:13–14.

**129** 1 Timothy 2:4.

**130** Matthew 2:13.

*order to kill him.* Indeed, the Jews carried out his wish, just as the prophets said before that they would do.

*Flee into Egypt.*<sup>131</sup> After the Passion of the Lord and his Ascension, the elders of the Jews sought with all their might to remove the way of the Lord by pursuing the apostles and saying [530] ‘Do not teach in that name’: this is their desire to kill.<sup>132</sup> When Paul saw such madness and discord, he said: *The message of this salvation had indeed been sent to you, but because you have proved yourselves unworthy, we will turn to the Gentiles.*<sup>133</sup> Not inappropriately is Joseph warned to flee to Egypt with the boy, meaning that all belief is to be removed from the Jews and granted to the nations.

[535] *But rising, Joseph took the boy and his mother and so on. So that the saying of the Lord through the prophet should be fulfilled: Out of Egypt have I called my son.*<sup>134</sup> When, therefore, the Magi returned to their own land after being warned, *the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream* warning him in what way and how cautiously he should hurry into Egypt because of the madness and rage of Herod, who wanted to put Jesus to death since he had heard from the Magi that the King of the Jews had been born.

[540] *When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the Magi, in his anger he sent out and killed all the boys who were in Bethlehem in Judea and in all the lands, starting from two years old and below, in accordance with the time which he had discovered from the Magi.*<sup>135</sup> Filled with diabolical rage on hearing that a king had been born and reckoning that he would be replaced by him, that man dispatched people to put every boy to death, but he was not able to fulfil his desires. For he could not accomplish the slaughter of the one for whose sake his savagery had blazed against the innocent, [545] and infants were the first to undergo martyrdom for the name of Christ. For it was thus fitting and worthy that it was none other than innocents and those worthy of the kingdom of the Lord who initiated martyrdom. The most holy David, overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit, said that this would come to pass: *Out of the mouths of infants and babes at the breast you have made perfect praise, in order that you should destroy the enemy and defender.*<sup>136</sup> Herod is the enemy, who ordered the innocents to be killed, and the defender of the kingdom in which he [550] feared he would be replaced. John mentions these innocents in the Apocalypse: *These are they who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.*<sup>137</sup>

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**131** Matthew 2:13.

**132** The Latin text of the final phrase (“this is their desire to kill”) may be corrupt.

**133** Acts 13:26, 46.

**134** Matthew 2:14–15.

**135** Matthew 2:16.

**136** Psalm 8:2.

**137** Revelation 14:4.

*Then the saying of Jeremiah the prophet is fulfilled: A voice was heard in Rama, weeping and much wailing, Rachel weeping for her children. And she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.*<sup>138</sup> Rama is a town or village near to Jerusalem. This is to be understood literally: when [555] the infants were being slaughtered, this could not be passed over without weeping and wailing. *And she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.* Rachel was the daughter of Laban the Syrian, the sister of Leah, the wife of Jacob. She bore two sons to Jacob: Joseph and Benjamin. When she was in labour with Benjamin, she was brought into danger by the act of giving birth and died.<sup>139</sup> Therefore Rachel, who wept and refused to be consoled, was now no more. But because she had been their mother, this is said in her character. Two sons were thus born to Joseph: [560] Ephraim and Manasseh. Their grandfather Jacob made them his own sons when he blessed them, and he is deemed to be in their names.<sup>140</sup> Therefore Joseph begins not to be a son, because his sons have replaced him through adoption in his stead. Joseph, then, is not a son. As for Benjamin, not he but his tribe committed a sexual crime in Gibeah against the wife or concubine of a Levite.<sup>141</sup> The Levite, making twelve pieces from her severed limbs, [565] sent them throughout the twelve tribes of the children of Israel and all twelve tribes gathered together and exterminated almost the whole tribe of Benjamin. For this reason, it says: *Rachel weeping for her children. And she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.* This is the correct literal interpretation. Spiritually, however, Rachel bears the type of the Church: through prophecy it was shown even then that martyrdoms would come to pass for the name of the Lord. Appropriately did *weeping and much wailing* take place at that time, [570] because so many thousands of infants are found to have been put to death by Herod. It can, however, also be understood with regard to those who have been overcome in the time of persecution and have turned to the worse and begin no more to be children of the Church. Appropriately, the Church weeps and is subject to much wailing when it sees those who were its children alienated from its affection and behaviour.

END OF CHAPTER THREE.

[575] HERE BEGIN THE INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS AS A SUMMARY, SO THAT YOU CAN FIND THE READING YOU WISH MORE QUICKLY.

- cap. M. I.** And from the exile in Babylon
- II.** But Joseph, rising up from sleep
- III.** When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea
- IIII.** Hearing this, Herod was worried and all Jerusalem with him
- V.** Then Herod privately called the Magi

<sup>138</sup> Matthew 2:17–18.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Genesis 29:16–35:18.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Genesis 48:1–21.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Judges 19–20. Fortunatianus spells Gibeah as *Gaba(a)*.

- VI. Warned in a dream not to return to Herod
- VII. A voice was heard in Rama
- VIII. That he will be called a Nazorean
- VIII. In those days John came
- X. Offspring of vipers
- XI. I indeed baptise you in water for repentance
- XII. Then Jesus came from Galilee into Jordan to John
- XIII. Then Jesus was led in the desert by the spirit
- XIII. Again, on the wing of the Temple
- XV. Again, he took him up onto a lofty mountain
- XVI. But when he was passing beside the Sea of Galilee
- XVII. And they brought to him all who were afflicted
- XVIII. Blessed are the poor in spirit
- XVIII. You are the salt of the land
- XX. You are the light of the earth
- XXI. Be in agreement with your opponent
- XXII. But if your right eye causes you to stumble
- XXIII. Beware of carrying out your acts of righteousness in front of others
- XXIII. The lamp of your body is your eye
- XXV. No-one can serve two masters
- XXVI. What if you see a splinter in the eye of your brother
- XXVII. Beware of false prophets
- XXVIII. Every bad tree
- XXVIII. Many will say to me on that day: Lord, Lord
- XXX. Everyone who hears my words and carries them out
- XXXI. Everyone who hears my words and does not carry them out
- XXXII. And as he came down from the mountain
- XXXIII. After this a certain centurion came up to him
- XXXIII. And when Jesus had come into the house of Peter
- XXXV. But once it was evening they brought to him many who had demons
- XXXVI. But a scribe came up and said: Master, I will follow you
- XXXVII. Another said: Lord, allow me to bury my father
- XXXVIII. And as he climbs in a boat, the disciples follow
- XXXVIII. When he had come across the strait, in the region of the Gerasenes
- XL. But those who had been tending them fled
- XLI. And behold, they brought to him a paralysed man
- XLII. So seeing this the crowds were afraid
- XLIII. And when Jesus had crossed over from there, he saw a man sitting in the toll booth, Matthew by name
- XLIII. And he said to the disciples of John: Can wedding guests fast
- XLV. But no-one sews a patch of new cloth onto an old garment
- XLVI. Behold, while he was speaking a leader asks on his daughter's behalf

**XLVII.** A woman with a flow of blood came up to touch his garment  
**XLVIII.** And when Jesus had come into the house of the leader  
**XLVIII.** When they had gone out, others bring out to him a man who was mute, deaf and blind  
**L.** And having summoned his disciples, he gave them authority to cast out unclean spirits  
**LI.** But the names of the twelve disciples are these  
**LII.** Do not own gold or silver  
**LIII.** In whatever town you enter, stay there  
**LIIII.** Behold, I send you like sheep in the middle of wolves  
**LV.** Nothing is covered which will not be revealed  
**LVI.** And concealed which will not be known  
**LVII.** What you hear in your ear, preach on the rooftops  
**LVIII.** I did not come to send peace but a sword  
**LVIII.** But John, when he heard in prison the works of Christ  
**LX.** But in response he said to them: Go and report to John  
**LXI.** Then he began to speak about John to the crowds: What did you go out to see in the desert? A reed being blown about by the wind?  
**LXII.** But what shall I reckon this generation is like  
**LXIII.** At that time, Jesus was walking through the crops  
**LXIIII.** And crossing over from there into their synagogue  
**LXV.** How can one enter into the house of a strong man  
**LXVI.** To those demanding a sign, he says: An evil and counterfeit generation seeks a sign, and none will be given except the sign of Jonah  
**LXVII.** What lack of belief and blindness: they saw so many signs and wonders, yet they demanded a sign  
**LXVIII.** The Lord brought in a similar example concerning the Queen of the South  
**LXVIII.** Behold, while he is speaking and instructing the disciples, it is announced to him: Behold, your mother and brothers are seeking you  
**LXX.** The kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard seed  
**LXXI.** The kingdom of the heavens is like yeast  
**LXXII.** The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure chest concealed in a field  
**LXXIII.** The kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant  
**LXXIIII.** The kingdom of the heavens is like a net cast in the sea  
**LXXV.** Therefore every scribe who is educated in the kingdom of the heavens  
**LXXVI.** But on Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced  
**LXXVII.** But once it was evening his disciples came up to him saying: The place is deserted  
**LXXVIII.** Jesus ordered his disciples to climb into the boat  
**LXXVIII.** And having gone out from there Jesus went away into the regions of Tyre and Sidon, and behold a Canaanite woman  
**LXXX.** And crossing over from there he again came beside to the Sea of Galilee

**LXXXI.** Jesus gathered his disciples and said: I pity the crowd, because it has now been three days and they are still without food

**LXXXII.** And the Pharisees and Sadducees came up to him testing him and asking for a sign from heaven

**LXXXIII.** On that day the disciples came up to Jesus and he called a boy

**LXXXIII.** But whoever causes to stumble

**LXXXV.** But if your hand or foot causes you to stumble

**LXXXVI.** See that you do not despise one of these tiny ones

**LXXXVII.** What do you think if someone owned one hundred sheep

**LXXXVIII.** And it happened, once Jesus spoke, that he took himself over from Galilee across the Jordan and many crowds followed him

**LXXXVIII.** The Pharisees came up to him testing him whether it was permitted to send away a wife

**LXXXX.** He said to them: Not everyone grasps the word

**LXLI.** Then infants were brought to him

**LXLII.** Behold, a man came up to him saying

**LXLIII.** The kingdom of the heavens is like the head of a household who hires workers

**LXLIII.** Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him

**LXLV.** Hearing this, the ten were aggrieved

**LXLVI.** When you go in as guests to supper

**LXLVII.** As they were going out from Jericho, many crowds followed him

**LXLVIII.** And when they had approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage

**LXLVIII.** Then Jesus sent out two of his disciples saying

**C.** Having left them, he went away from the town

**CI.** Jesus said: Neither do I say to you in what authority I do these things

**CII.** There was a man, the head of a household, who planted a vineyard

**CIII.** Again he sent to them more slaves

**CIII.** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees

**CV.** Snakes, offspring of vipers

**CVI.** Jerusalem, you who put the prophets to death<sup>142</sup>

**CVII.** Woe to those who are pregnant and breastfeeding in those days

**CVIII.** Then if anyone should say to you: Behold, here is Christ

**CVIII.** For just as lightning comes from the East

**CX.** But learn the parable from the fig tree

**CXI.** Then there will be two people in a field

**CXII.** Two women at the mill

**CXIII.** Two people in a bed

**CXIII.** Keep watch, then, because you do not know

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<sup>142</sup> Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Hierusalem* in this title but *Hierosolima* eight lines earlier.



**CXV.** Who is the faithful slave  
**CXVI.** Then the kingdom of the heavens will be reckoned like ten virgins  
**CXVII.** For just as a man having set out abroad  
**CXVIII.** But when the Son of Man shall come in his majesty  
**CXVIII.** Then one of the twelve went away  
**CXX.** Then Jesus says to them: All of you will stumble  
**CXXI.** Then he said to them: My soul is sorrowful to the point of death  
**CXXII.** And he came to his disciples  
**CXXIII.** Behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came  
**CXXIII.** Behold, one of those who were with Jesus  
**CXXV.** Then the leader of the priests  
**CXXVI.** One of the serving maids came up to him  
**CXXVII.** Peter denying the man  
**CXXVIII.** Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing  
**CXXVIII.** Behold, the curtain of the Temple was torn

End of the chapters according to Matthew. Here begin those according to Luke.<sup>143</sup>

**cap. L. I.** But it happened in those days  
**II.** And Simeon blessed them  
**III.** So he said to the crowds  
**III.** But already the axe is at the roots of the trees  
**V.** But as the people thought and everyone pondered  
**VI.** And once every temptation was finished  
**VII.** But arising from the synagogue he entered into the house of Simon  
**VIII.** But when the sun had set  
**VIII.** It came to pass that the crowds surged towards him  
**X.** And Simon in reply said to him: Teacher  
**XI.** And they filled both boats  
**XII.** Seeing this, Simon fell at Jesus' knees  
**XIII.** And it happened that he was in one town

End of the chapters according to Luke. There are thirteen chapters in total because the whole of the Gospel according to Matthew should also be understood in this part.<sup>144</sup> Here begins the Gospel according to John. There are eighteen chapters in total.

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<sup>143</sup> The word for “according to” here and in line 731 is *cata*, borrowed from the Greek (κατά). In addition, Fortunatianus uses the archaic form *Lucanus*.

<sup>144</sup> The words translated as “because the whole of the Gospel according to Matthew ... in this part” are corrupt.

- cap. J. I.** In the beginning was the Word  
**II.** Everything was made through him  
**III.** What was made in him is life  
**IIII.** There was a man sent from God by the name of John  
**V.** He was on this earth and the earth was made through him  
**VI.** He came to his very own and his own did not receive him  
**VII.** But to as many as received him he gave authority to become children of God  
**VIII.** And the Word was made flesh and lived in us  
**IIIII.** John bears witness about him  
**X.** No-one has ever seen God except the only-begotten Son  
**XI.** They questioned him again saying  
**XII.** And those who had been sent by the Pharisees  
**XIII.** These events took place in Bethany  
**XIIII.** But on the next day John saw Jesus  
**XV.** Again on another day  
**XVI.** On the next day he decided to journey into Galilee  
**XVII.** And on the third day a wedding took place  
**XVIII.** Jesus says to them: Draw some out and take it to the chief steward

End of the chapters according to John. There are eighteen chapters in total. We will, in addition, investigate a few matters which are not told in the other Gospels, but we understand the Gospel according to Mark in the same way as the rest because all four evangelists spoke about one God, our Lord.

**M. I.** [Matthew 1:17–18] *And from the exile in Babylon fourteen generations.* These are listed as thirteen: one is not taken away, but is in place since the evangelist also tells about the generation of Christ: *But the generation of Christ was as follows.* This fourteenth generation shown in the total above, then, is the Christian community generated in a spiritual generation. And because he says three lots of fourteen, [760] he makes the model of the Trinity known within this.

**M. II.** [Matthew 1:24–25] *But Joseph, rising up from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord instructed him and he accepted his wife and was not intimate with her until she gave birth to a son.* Because it said ‘until’, some think that this suggests he was intimate with her after the birth. But whoever is of sound mind should not thus suppose that Joseph, a righteous man who both saw visions of angels [765] and was also informed what he should do by angels, would have been able to defile Mary. He had also been ordered to give him the name Jesus.

**M. III.** [Matthew 2:1–2] *When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a town of Judea.* Bethlehem comes from Hebrew, in Latin *domus panis* (house of bread). Bethel<sup>145</sup> means ‘house of God’, so Bethlehem is ‘house of bread’. Jesus, who would be the true bread

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<sup>145</sup> *Bethel* is incorrectly written as *Bethlem* in the manuscripts.

for believers, is born here. He is born *in the days of King Herod*. [770] Herod was a Sadducee, as it says elsewhere: *The Pharisees with the Herodians*.<sup>146</sup> *Magi from the East came to Jerusalem*: Magi are the figure of all Gentiles. They came to him in the public place of the Law, seeking the Saviour. They say: *We have seen his star in the East and we have come to worship him*. The Magi say that he is the King of the Jews, yet in contrast the Jews replied: *We have no king except Caesar*.<sup>147</sup> Pilate says: *You are King of the Jews*. [775] Jesus says to him: *You have said that I am king*.<sup>148</sup> You see, then, that the nations, as with the Magi and Pilate, understand that he is a king more easily than the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar, too, spoke as follows: *I see the figure of a fourth like a son of God*.<sup>149</sup> No-one else from that multitude was able to see him, but only Nebuchadnezzar, since it was for the nations to see and worship and follow.

**M. III.** [Matthew 2:3–6] *But hearing this, King Herod was troubled and Jerusalem with him*. The public place [780] of the Law was plainly troubled, where the Jews used to read their scriptures, but so did the Sadducees too who are Jewish heretics. *Having gathered the leaders*, that is the elders, he enquires about the time and place where the Christ should be born. The answer is given to him according to the testimony of the prophet: *And you, Bethlehem of Judea, are not least among the leaders of Judea*. It said *Judea* because the Saviour took flesh from that same tribe.<sup>150</sup> *Judea* is translated as ‘acknowledgement’. *For out of you will come a chief to rule my people* [785] *Israel*. It was shown that Jesus would come, that is (<...>) but Jacob was called *Israel*, when he prevailed in the struggle and he was told: *Let me go, for the morning star is rising. He says: I shall not let you go unless you bless me. He says to him: What is your name? He replies: Jacob*, which means ‘supplanter’. *He says: Now your name will not be Jacob but your name will be Israel*.<sup>151</sup> He was called *Israel* by him because it means a man ‘seeing God’. And the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, [790] where he says: *His name is Emmanuel, which is translated as ‘God with us’*.<sup>152</sup> Appropriately, then, the people is called *Israel*, meaning seeing God, *Emmanuel*.

**M. V.** [Matthew 2:7–8] *Then Herod privately called the Magi*. Herod called the Magi privately and enquired about the time the star was seen, plainly fearing his successor. That depraved man was already planning to put Jesus to death: he thought he could do this when he had ordered the killing of all the infants [795] born after the time that they had replied to him. But it is not pointless that he said: *Bring me back news that I too may come and worship him*. Even though Herod said this in

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Mark 3:6.

<sup>147</sup> John 19:15.

<sup>148</sup> John 18:33, 37.

<sup>149</sup> Daniel 3:25.

<sup>150</sup> The same Latin word is used for the region of Judea and the tribe of Judah; see also note 111 on p. 17 above.

<sup>151</sup> Genesis 32:26–28.

<sup>152</sup> Matthew 1:23 (cf. Isaiah 7:14).

his depravity, because he said it in private, it still came to pass as follows: at the proclamation of the people of the Church, of whom David says *Children are born for you in place of your fathers*,<sup>153</sup> at their preaching, then, many of the Jews came to belief and worshipped Jesus. This is what is meant by *That I too may come [800] and worship him*.

**M. VI.** [Matthew 2:12] *Warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back along another way to their land*. For everyone who believes lets go of the behaviour of their earlier, worldly way, and follows the way of Christ, which is spiritual. This is the meaning of to return *along another way*.

**M. VII.** [Matthew 2:18] [805] *A voice was heard in Rama, weeping and much wailing, Rachel*. Rachel was the wife of Jacob. She is understood from the character of the Church, just as Leah is the figure of the synagogue. From the character of Rachel, it showed that the Church would have martyrs.

You read here these seven chapters briefly explained from the first to the seventh in their places. However, you have those seven chapters explained much more lucidly and fully further back.<sup>154</sup>

**M. VIII.** [Matthew 2:23] [810] *That he will be called a Nazorean*. Nazirites<sup>155</sup> are holy men and a blade has never reached their heads, for they are unshorn. So Samson the Nazirite, a man of great power, was a figure of the Saviour to come. Samson is shaved by his wife: he loses the seven hairs in which all his power was held.<sup>156</sup> *So Christ is the head of the man*:<sup>157</sup> without doubt, all power was held there. As for the seven hairs, this means the sevenfold spirit. For just as [815] Samson is shorn by his wife, so the Lord is fixed to the cross by those who are related to him through generation, plainly the Jews; and in that Passion like (...) the sevenfold spirit, although he does not let it go. For he is immediately hailed as the King of Glory when visiting the underworld with all the power of the Godhead.

**M. VIII.** [Matthew 3:1–4] *In those days John the Baptist came in the desert*. It says ‘the desert’ [820] because it had already come to pass in the land of Judea that, through not receiving the prophets, they were deserted by the Holy Spirit. John shouts in the desert, meaning among the Jews, that they should prepare *the way for the Lord*, plainly at the arrival of Christ. He says that they should make *the paths straight* in order to change their most dreadful and twisted behaviour and travel on the commandments of God, which is the way. *He had clothing from the hair of a camel and a belt made of skins around his waist*. [825] This shows his self-control and

<sup>153</sup> Psalm 45:16.

<sup>154</sup> This is a reference to chapters M. long. I–III (on pp. 6–21 above).

<sup>155</sup> The same Latin word (*Nazareus*) is “Nazorean” and “Nazirite”: the traditional rendering has been kept for the biblical quotation, but Fortunatianus expounds it as if it read Nazirite (cf. line 3202).

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Judges 16:17–19.

<sup>157</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:3.

righteousness; there is no doubt that the peoples are understood as the *tunic from the hair of a camel*. So it signified that the nations, who have the likeness of a camel because of their twistedness, would come to this righteousness rather than the Jews. Indeed, it also indicates that his food was locusts and wild honey, foods which are the model of the nations. Locusts are without a king, as Solomon says.<sup>158</sup> Wild honey is a figure of the nations: [830] those who believe from the nations have been made sweet to God and reached that greater sweetness, which is holiness, so that they even underwent martyrdom, in accordance with the saying of David: *The law of the Lord is without reproach, converting souls; the instruction of the Lord is clear, giving light to the eyes, and sweeter than honey and honey-comb.*<sup>159</sup>

**M. X.** [Matthew 3:7–10] *Offspring of vipers*. As the Jews boasted that they were the children of God and of Abraham, he said [835] to them, *Offspring of vipers*, meaning of Satan,<sup>160</sup> just as he says elsewhere: *You are from your father the devil, and you do his works.*<sup>161</sup> He showed rather that he could *raise children of Abraham from the stones*: these are the nations, not those who call themselves children because of their lineage. *The axe is at the roots of the trees*: this is understood as the word. *At the roots*, at the uttermost part of the kingdom of the Jewish people. It signifies that all of them who do not believe will also be exterminated by the strength of the word.

**M. XI.** [Matthew 3:11–12] [840] *I indeed baptise you in the water of repentance*. For John could not provide anything else except his conversion of the people and their coming to believe in the one who would baptise in the Holy Spirit: John acknowledged that he was not worthy *to carry his sandals*. Mention is made of this matter: *Undo the strap of your sandal, because the land where you are standing is holy.*<sup>162</sup> This, then, is why John recalls this: just as Moses then says that he is not worthy, so now too does John. [845] John therefore signifies the sort of person for whom he prepares the way: *He will baptise*, he says, *in the Holy Spirit and in fire, holding a winnowing-fork*. This is a spade with which the chaff is separated from the wheat as it is borne by the wind. So the winnowing-fork is the strength of God and the kingly greatness of his word. Just like the chaff, trifling humans will be separated in the same way from the righteous and all the others who provide the nourishment of teaching, like the lambs who provide clothing are separated from the useless goats. In what he says, [850] *Whose sandals I am not worthy to carry*, the reason for the sandals is as follows: if a man died without children, his relative or his brother would take his wife in order to raise up offspring in the name of the dead man. If there was a closer relative who did not perform his duty, then his sandals were

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Proverbs 30:27.

<sup>159</sup> Psalm 19:7–8, 10.

<sup>160</sup> Fortunatianus seems to have used the apparently unique form *Satanatae* for the genitive case of *Satanas*.

<sup>161</sup> John 8:44. Fortunatianus uses the form *zabulus* rather than *diabolus* throughout.

<sup>162</sup> Exodus 3:5 (Joshua 5:16).

removed in the sight of the people and that house was called ‘the house of the one without sandals’.<sup>163</sup> John therefore says: *I am not worthy to carry his sandals*. First, [855] he implies that he is not worthy to preach. For everyone who reckons themselves to be unworthy is a better choice, just like Peter: *I am not worthy*.<sup>164</sup> Moses himself, too, said: *Supply another man: I am not worthy*.<sup>165</sup> So the model of the saints is this: when they reckon that they are unworthy, they are actually found to be worthy, just as Solomon says: *In the beginning of their prayer, the righteous are their own accusers*.<sup>166</sup> So John says that he is not worthy; the Saviour himself says as testimony about him [860] that there is none greater among those born of women than John the Baptist, and in order to show (...) says: *Yet the one who is less than him in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than him*.<sup>167</sup> So he says *I am not worthy*. Similarly, now as well, no-one should obtain a place in the ranks of the Church through ambition but only the one who shall have been chosen. This is found to be the case concerning the two brothers James and John, who asked that one should sit on the right and one on the left in the kingdom, [865] and who are told that *It has been prepared for others*.<sup>168</sup> I will show this in the relevant chapter.

**M. XII.** [Matthew 3:13–17] *Then Jesus came from Galilee into Jordan to John in order to be baptised by him. John tried to prevent him, saying: I should be baptised by you, since he plainly knew who he was. For he says elsewhere: Behold the Lamb of God; behold the one who takes away the sin of the earth*.<sup>169</sup> It therefore says: *The Law and the Prophets up to John*.<sup>170</sup> The Law prepared and the Prophets announced in a figure: [870] John, on the other hand, shows that the one whom the Law and the Prophets had said would come is actually present: *Behold the Lamb of God; behold the one who takes away the sin of the earth*. He therefore says: *I should be baptised by you, yet you come to me?* To him speaks the Lord, who had said *I did not come to undo the Law but to fulfil it*<sup>171</sup> – since no fulfiller of the Law has been found except for the Lord alone – to him Jesus says: *Just allow it: for we should fulfil all righteousness in this way*. It was necessary that the slave [875] should obey his master for the reason that a sign should be shown to him. For after Jesus was baptised, John saw that the heavens were opened and that the Spirit like a dove came and rested on Jesus, but he also heard a voice: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I have decided well*. The voice which was heard came from the character of God the Father to his Son Christ,

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Deuteronomy 25:5, 7–10.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Luke 5:8?

<sup>165</sup> Exodus 4:13.

<sup>166</sup> Proverbs 18:17.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Matthew 11:11.

<sup>168</sup> Mark 10:40 (cf. Matthew 20:23 and chapter M. LXLVIII below).

<sup>169</sup> John 1:29.

<sup>170</sup> Luke 16:16.

<sup>171</sup> Matthew 5:17.

our Lord and God. After Jesus was baptised, the Spirit also came in the appearance of a dove, and the voice of affirmation [880] for the Son was heard.

**M. XIII.** [Matthew 4:1–4] *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be put to the test by the devil. And he fasted for forty days and forty nights.* He did this especially for those who say that he did not assume a body but was an apparition, and he also did it for those who insist that he was only a human. For if he had been an apparition, he would never have eaten. But because he used to eat, [885] for this reason he is said to have fasted. For if he had simply been a human, he would not have been able to fast for forty days and would have perished as a human, who, if they have not eaten for seven whole days, necessarily perishes from starvation, since they are human. But perhaps someone may say: Moses too, although he was human, fasted for forty days and forty nights.<sup>172</sup> For Moses in these forty nights and days had, so to speak, just a single day. [890] For he stood in the sight of the glory of God, where there is no night. It was impossible for a human to be hungry in the light, as he spoke with God and received the Law, and was shown on the mountain everything that he should make, be it the Tabernacle or the vessels of the Temple.<sup>173</sup> And Moses himself says: *A human does not live on bread alone, but on every word of God.*<sup>174</sup> A human, then, who was both in the light and spoke with God could not have been hungry. So, in order that Jesus, our Lord, [895] could show his strength, that he was not only human but also God, he fasted before his contest with the devil. When he had fasted, then, he was hungry, in order to show human frailty too. The tempter came to him enquiring whether he was the Son of God. Yet this was not to be told to the devil. So he said: *If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.* For Jesus could have made bread from the stones, but it was not permitted that he should [900] satisfy the ordering of Satan. But he replied: *A human does not live on bread alone, but on every word of God,* in order to show that Moses had also fasted that way long before, as well as Elijah under King Ahab.<sup>175</sup>

**M. XIII.** [Matthew 4:5–7] *Then he took him up onto the wing of the Temple, and he tells Jesus, as he stands there, to cast himself headlong; but he also introduces the words which David said: Because he has commanded his angels concerning you that they shall carry you in their hands.*<sup>176</sup> [905] For the devil regarded him as a human and thought that he would be able to ensnare him in some way, but he receives the response: *You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.*

**M. XV.** [Matthew 4:8–11] *Again, he took him up onto a lofty mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth and their splendour and said: I will give all this to you, if you fall down and worship me.* What satanic deception! Although he

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. Exodus 34:28.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Exodus 35:11–14.

<sup>174</sup> Deuteronomy 8:3 (cf. Matthew 4:4).

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Psalm 91:11.

has nothing, he says that everything is his and that he will give it to Jesus if he worships him. For Satan, [910] then, to give means always to lie by habit. For in this way, he deceived Adam through Eve, and by lies and deception he then took possession of the whole human race and wounded it. So since he had already twice been deservedly rejected, with regard to the stones and Jesus' casting himself down, he looked to greed and worldly splendour and says in a lie that everything is his. He employs that cunning which he has always employed, but here he is beaten back and his wish [915] remains unsatisfied. As Solomon recalls: *There are three things of which I am unaware and a fourth which I do not perceive: the way of an eagle in flight, the tracks of a snake on a rock, and the paths of a ship at sea.*<sup>177</sup> *The way of an eagle* shows a figure of the Holy Spirit, but it is *in flight* because the eagle is chief among all birds. *The tracks of a snake on top of a rock*: this prophecy of Solomon is fulfilled in this temptation. For just as a snake does not make or leave a track [920] on a rock which would enable it to be seen or recognised, so Satan, who had imprinted his wounding tracks on all humans in the past was not able to imprint them on the Saviour, since Christ is the rock.<sup>178</sup> Because he regarded Christ as a human, he seized on the chance to attack and, if it could come about, achieve something against him. But he was soon beaten back from the model of the Law, once he had said: *If you fall down and worship me, I will give to you.* What could he have given, who owns [925] nothing, who has nothing except only a lie? So he is beaten back, and he is told: *You shall worship the Lord your God and him alone shall you serve.* So since he could do nothing, *he left him and behold, angels began to serve him.* As for the prophecy of Solomon which we introduced about not seeing the paths of a ship, the Church is the ship and the world is the sea. While the Church of God is in this world it has no path, meaning that, with its heavenly behaviour, [930] the Church has no track or path in the world. For this reason, then, the *paths of a ship at sea* are not seen. *Go behind me, Satan*: this means what it says elsewhere in the Gospel according to Luke: *He left him until the time,*<sup>179</sup> meaning until the Passion, at which time he would insert himself in the heart of Judas.<sup>180</sup> For Jesus also says to Peter in the character of Satan: *Go back, because you do not discern what is of God but what is of humans.*<sup>181</sup> He noticed [935] that the cunning of Satan had replied (so to speak) through Peter, for he orders not Peter but Satan to go back, whose cunning he had recognised in the response. According to the Apostle, Christ is the rock: the snake (meaning Satan) does not make a track on this rock, meaning Christ who is both the rock and the cornerstone.<sup>182</sup> From this rock, in the Book of Joshua, twelve stone knives are made

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177 Proverbs 30:18–19.

178 Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

179 Luke 4:13.

180 Cf. John 13:2.

181 Matthew 16:23.

182 Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 2:20.



to circumcise the children of Israel for a second time.<sup>183</sup> These are the twelve apostles [940] who were sent to preach the circumcision of the heart, not the damaging of the flesh.

**M. XVI.** [Matthew 4:18–21] *But when he was passing beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers.* He calls over Peter and Andrew, so that those who were catchers of fish should become catchers of men. For just as fish are lifted from the deep by a net, so by the instruction of God and through their preaching humans [945] are raised out of the deep errors of the world, meaning that they are brought to the light. Similarly, *he saw two other brothers, James and John.* These two brothers, before they heard the words *Whoever values their father or mother above me is not worthy of me*<sup>184</sup> fulfilled them: indeed, they leave their father and the net and they follow Jesus.

**M. XVII.** [Matthew 4:24] *And they brought to him all who were afflicted.* Isaiah had said that this would come to pass: *And he will put [950] his hand into the holes of asps.*<sup>185</sup> *The holes of asps* are humans who are kept bound by demons. So he cures these and all the others who are in the grip of *various sicknesses*.

**M. XVIII.** [Matthew 5:3–5] *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* He says that the poor in spirit are blessed, meaning those in the one Spirit of God rather than in the manifold spirit of demons. *Blessed are they who mourn,* meaning that anyone who is like a mourner for the sake of persecution in this world will attain [955] happiness and consolation at the final recompense.

**M. XVIII.** [Matthew 5:13] *You are the salt of the land.* This saying is particularly for the apostles, and then flows down to teachers and to all the faithful. For salt is derived from wisdom, because it flavours tasteless flesh.<sup>186</sup> Christ is the wisdom of God, according to the Apostle Paul.<sup>187</sup> *So if salt has faded, what will flavour it?* Therefore, anyone who has gone away from true wisdom (meaning from Christ), or has deviated into heresy [960] or lived in the manner of the Gentiles, cannot become salt. What will they become? *It will be thrown away outside and ground down by humans.* What else does this mean except that such a teacher will be excommunicated and will be separated from the connection of the Church?

**M. XX.** [Matthew 5:14–16] *You are the light of the earth.* He calls the apostles the light of the earth because they enlighten humans with heavenly teaching. *A town set on top of a mountain cannot be concealed.* How else can ‘mountain’ [965] be understood except as our Lord Jesus Christ, on top of whom is built the Church, which he calls ‘a town’? But a town is named after the townspeople who dwell in it. (...) *Nor do*

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Joshua 5:2.

<sup>184</sup> Matthew 10:37.

<sup>185</sup> Isaiah 11:8.

<sup>186</sup> The Latin features two plays on words: *sal* and *salit* (“salt ... flavours”) and *sapientia* and *insipidus* (“wisdom ... tasteless”).

<sup>187</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:30.

*they light a lamp*: A lamp is an instruction. So it is lit and put *on a lampstand*, not *under a basket*. For just as a lamp is lit and towers on the lampstand above all other vessels in the house and enlightens those who are inside, so the Church, [970] which towers above through its behaviour, enlightens everyone by its command and instruction. *Under a basket* signifies that the Jews used to give tithes to the priests and Levites, yet they did not enlighten anyone. For the Law could not save anyone unless Christ came and suffered, who handed on the lamp (meaning command) to the Church. Thus he instructed them that they should give light through their behaviour, so that those who saw them act like this *should praise the Father who is in the* [975] *heavens*.

**M. XXI.** [Matthew 5:25–26] *Be in agreement with your opponent*. He warns that a human, while in the world, should agree with their opponent. It remains that you should understand this with regard to the Spirit of God and the flesh. For the spirit is the opponent of the flesh and the flesh of the spirit, according to the Apostle.<sup>188</sup> *Quickly, while you are with him on the way*, which is plainly this present life and behaviour. *So that your opponent does not hand you over to the judge*, that is to the one [980] whose role is to judge humans. *The judge hands you over to the servant*. To which servant but that angel who is in charge of torture? *You will not come out from there until you have paid the last penny*. The penny is the smallest sin. It says that you will not come out from there except when the account of all your sins, even of the smallest, has been paid off. For a penny has three dots on it: what are these three dots except the Trinity?<sup>189</sup> If anyone does not admit wholeheartedly that the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit [985] is made of one substance, it is necessary that they are called to account for this. For just as a penny consists of one, so the Trinity is of one substance.

**M. XXII.** [Matthew 5:29–30] *But if your right eye causes you to stumble*. It says that an eye causes others to stumble if a bishop teaches badly or is of bad behaviour.<sup>190</sup> To be torn out of the body is to be thrown out of the Church. The same comparison follows with regard to the right hand, which is easily [990] understood as a presbyter. *So that your whole body may not go into Gehenna*. The Church is taken as the body. So when such people are found who are an eye or right hand which causes others to stumble (meaning that they behave badly) they are to be torn out of the body (...) so that the body may be saved and *may not go into Gehenna*. But who really does cast out their eye or cut off their right hand, since it is not a case of the eye or the hand but of the heart, from which all evils proceed? For from there [995] *come*

<sup>188</sup> Cf. Galatians 5:17.

<sup>189</sup> The Roman coin known as the *quadrans* (here, “penny”) had three dots on it to show that it was equivalent to three *unciae*.

<sup>190</sup> Fortunatianus appears to be alluding to the etymological connection in Greek between the word for “bishop” (*episkopos*) and the verb “to watch” (*skopein*).

*sexual improprieties, thefts, false testimonies.*<sup>191</sup> So it remains that you should understand this with reference to those characters which were mentioned above: it is they who should be cut off from or torn out of the body.

**M. XXIII.** [Matthew 6:1–3] *Beware that you do not carry out your acts of righteousness in front of others.* He warns that no one should boast in their righteousness, as the Pharisees used to do, so that it is seen by others. If they do this, they will not receive a reward from the Lord. And whoever gives alms should not boast. [1000] *What the right hand does, the left hand should not know:* the right side is always taken as the Church, because of the number of one hundred at which age a son was born to Abraham. This is Isaac, who is the figure of the people of the Church; a ram is slaughtered in his place, which is Christ on behalf of the people. But the left side is the synagogue, for the reason that Abraham is circumcised at the age of ninety-nine; this total is held by the left hand, which is useless and does not [1005] work like the right hand.<sup>192</sup> A meal, indeed, and all other health-giving things are carried to the mouth by the right hand, not by the left.

**M. XXIII.** [Matthew 6:22–23] *The lamp of your body is your eye.* It says that the lamp of the body is none other than the bishop, who is in charge of the Church. Indeed, just as *the lamp of your body is your eye (...)* if, then, your eye is clear and without complication, meaning if the bishop is holy and [1010] devout, as the Apostle described, only then, so it demonstrates, will *all the body be clear:* this means that the whole Church will be happy, joyful and glorious when it has such a teacher. *If your eye is poor,* that is if through abominable behaviour the bishop teaches badly, or rushes into heresy or behaves badly with their own physical body, then indeed it shows that *all the body will be dark.* If, then, the eye which [1015] provides light is indistinct, all the more will the whole body become dark, meaning all the Church. It therefore says: *If the light which is in you (meaning the bishop) is dark, what great darkness that is;* this means that it is easy for the people to sin.

**M. XXV.** [Matthew 6:24] *No-one can serve two masters.* It says that those who are caught by the bonds of avarice cannot serve God. Therefore it said *two masters, God and Mammon,* which is [1020] worldly avarice.

**M. XXVI.** [Matthew 7:3–5] *What if you see a splinter in the eye of your brother, but there is a plank in your own?* It tells of those who easily pass judgment on others and show themselves to humans as righteous. In turn, they are criticised and told to take *the plank out of their own eye first,* and only then *the splinter from the eye of their brother.* For who could bear a plank or a splinter in their eye? [1025] So it remains that you should understand the plank spiritually, in accordance with the

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Matthew 15:19.

<sup>192</sup> Fortunatianus is referring to the Roman system of finger-reckoning: see note 67 on p. 9 above and the Introduction (p. XX).

saying of Jeremiah writing about idolatry: *Like a plank*, he says, *rests on the house*.<sup>193</sup> So, because we perceive with our eyes, in this way we also sin: for the eyes are the mirror of the heart. So if they perceive anything which is not allowed, immediately an evil plan arises to carry this out. It said that a plank lies in the eyes, meaning idolatry. A *splinter* is a thin stalk. In turn, sin ⟨...⟩ [1030] so the one who offers themselves as a judge should purge themselves from these, meaning the stains of idolatry. This is how they will be able to pull out the splinter from the eye of another. For people like this are called hypocrites, meaning pretenders who say that they are righteous. And because there is the mention of eyes, you easily understand that this is about a bishop teaching badly.<sup>194</sup>

**M. XXVII.** [Matthew 7:15] *Beware of false prophets*. Who are false prophets but heretics, who in order to [1035] introduce their evil ideas mix in good ones as well? It says they come *in sheep's clothing*, meaning with the claim of innocence and truth. But what follows? *In their inner plans they are ravenous wolves*. For wolves when they find a sheep first drink its blood. So these are people who in no way ⟨...⟩ to acknowledge the Lord and to be freed by his blood: they are therefore called *ravenous*.

**M. XXVIII.** [Matthew 7:17–19] [1040] *But a bad tree produces bad fruit*. The bad tree here, he says, is either the synagogue or little bands of heretics. As it does not produce fruit, it is demonstrated that it is to be cut out *and put into the fire*. Heretics will be known *by their fruits*, which is plainly their earthly teaching.

**M. XXVIII.** [Matthew 7:22–23] *Many will say to me on that day: Lord, Lord*. Here it denounces heretics, who [1045] say that they remain in the name of Christ and have taught in his name and prophesied and cast out demons. But because they were not able to keep to the right path of faith, since they are plainly heretics, for this reason they are told: *I do not know you. Depart from me, workers of evil*. For what can be more evil or more unrighteous than heretics, who in their mistaken opinions about the Lord himself either say that he was exclusively human, or that he was an apparition, or certainly was not the true [1050] God? Of all the other heretical doctrines, also, as of individuals ⟨...⟩ it is lengthy to enumerate, but it says that all heretics are entirely workers of unrighteousness, just as the reading also teaches about the goats separated from the lambs in turn.<sup>195</sup>

**M. XXX.** [Matthew 7:24–25] *Everyone who hears my words and carries them out*. It says that one who hears and carries out these words is like *a wise man building a house on rock*. Insofar as this refers to the character of the forefathers, [1055] the wise are understood as Abel, as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses himself; the Apostle

<sup>193</sup> Letter of Jeremiah 6:20 (Baruch 6:18 in the Vulgate).

<sup>194</sup> On the connection between bishops and eyes, see note 190 on p. 34 above.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. Matthew 25:32. The word translated as “in turn” is corrupt.

Paul too is said *to have laid the foundation like a wise builder*.<sup>196</sup> From the particular character of the apostles, this then flows down to the Christian people of the Church, who establish the foundations of their house, the Church, on the apostolic rock, meaning on Christ himself. Since the Church is found to be constructed on Christ [1060] with the strongest foundations (meaning those of faith) it cannot be uprooted from the truth of faith by any storms. *For as the rains came down*: this is the commandment of unrighteousness. And from the excessive rain, *the rivers rise up*, which are sometimes understood through the prophets as kings. So here the character in the rivers is understood as the kings of the persecutors and evildoers.<sup>197</sup> *The winds blew*, which is plainly the evil order running through the judges. It says that the winds are those who [1065] obey an evil order, meaning the judges. *They battered on the house*: to batter is to hit, meaning to attack. For whenever there is a time of persecution, everyone attacks the Church in order to destroy it. But when faith is present, the house (meaning a person themselves) which is founded *on the rock* (plainly on Christ) cannot be torn from its foundation by any force. For when someone is killed for the name of Christ, [1070] then they stick even tighter, fixed more firmly to the foundations of rock.

**M. XXXI.** [Matthew 7:26–27] *And everyone who hears my words and does not carry them out*. He likens everyone who hears the words and does not carry them out to a stupid man. Who is stupid but the Jewish people, who always remained in stupidity even when the Lord performed so many miracles? So, even now, if anyone is by chance unwise and bound up with worldly plans, they lay the foundations of their house on the sand. [1075] At the arrival of the rains and rivers and winds, which have been explained above, it is necessary that this house should collapse *and become a ruin*. Thus, indeed, humans who are concerned with riches, or desirous of honours, or are bound up by various desires, easily retreat to the worship of idols at a time of persecution and make a great ruin. Certainly, heretics too, who do not lay the foundations of their house rightly although they think that they have set their foundations on rock, [1080] are found at a time of persecution to be on the sand, as they refuse to suffer for his name, and they return to the earth like earthly people.

**M. XXXII.** [Matthew 8:1–4] *And as he came down from the mountain*, it says that crowds followed and a certain leper said: *If you wish, you can cleanse me*. The leper is the figure of the Jewish people, who says: *If you wish, you can cleanse me*. For he knows that it is written about leprosy in the Law and that it cannot be cured except by God. [1085] So this is the will of God for all who believe by faith, for Jesus says: *I wish it, be cleansed! Reaching out his hand he touched him and straightaway his leprosy was cleansed*. The *hand* here shows the strength of divine decree. The apostles

<sup>196</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:10.

<sup>197</sup> The words translated as “the character in the rivers ... as the kings of the persecutors and evildoers” are corrupt.

received this when they were sent to the synagogue and they preached and converted many Jews to belief. This is what the words mean, *He reached out his hand. I wish it, be cleansed!* And *Jesus said* to the one who was now cleansed: [1090] *Do not tell anyone, but show yourself to the priest.* This is so that you may specifically understand the figure of the Jewish people in the leper. He is also ordered to make the offering for his cleansing, in order to be *a witness for them* should they not believe, so that they might realise that the Lord Jesus, who heals the leprosy, is God.

**M. XXXIII.** [Matthew 8:5–12] *But after this, when he had entered Capernaum, a certain centurion came up to him.* [1095] It says that a centurion came up and asked the Lord on account of a boy who was lying paralysed in his house. *Jesus said to him: I will come and cure him. The centurion said in reply: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.* The centurion understood that he was a sinner and not worthy for the Lord to enter under his roof. So the centurion is the image of the Gentiles, who belong in a way to some worldly army. This is the reason [1100] he says: *For I too am a man set under authority.* Moreover, he shows by the heavenly army and by the regulation of things what God can do: ‘If it is true of me, since I am a man under authority and I have soldiers under me and I say to this one ‘Go’ and he goes, and to this one ‘Come’ and he comes, and to my slave ‘Do this’ and he does it, then it is true of you, since you are God and all the angels obey you, and even the whole creation is at your service; *speak only the word and he shall be healed.*’ [1105] He shows the divine strength by which this can come about. *Speak the word*, for it is the Word through which all things were made.<sup>198</sup> David said, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made firm and all their power by the breath of his mouth.*<sup>199</sup> So the centurion more easily recognised the regulation of things and the heavenly army (meaning the Gentile people in whose image the centurion stands) than the Jewish people did, for they did not believe even when miracles were performed. For in order that you may understand [1110] that the Gentiles received greater powers of recognition than the Jews, King Nebuchadnezzar alone saw the Son of God between the three boys, which no-one else could see except him, and Pilate said *You are the King of the Jews*, and during that interrogation, Jesus said *You say it*, meaning you say it because he was a Gentile.<sup>200</sup> This shows that the people from the Gentiles will believe and see, just as Nebuchadnezzar saw, and will acknowledge Christ, just as Pilate said *You are the King of the Jews*. [1115] So both of these two, Nebuchadnezzar and Pilate, are the figure of the Gentile people. For the words of the centurion, *I have soldiers under me*, and the fact that he says that he is a sinner and is unworthy show here that he is a sinner because he is a Gentile. Solomon too speaks as follows: *In*

**198** Cf. John 1:3.

**199** Psalm 33:6.

**200** Cf. Daniel 3:24; John 18:33, 37. The Latin text of certain parts of this sentence (“during that interrogation; you say it”) is corrupt.

*the beginning of their prayer the righteous are their own accusers.*<sup>201</sup> So humility must be preserved in all matters. Moreover, the centurion speaks about the regulation of soldiers: *I say to this one 'Go' and he goes*; this would come to pass concerning the Jews that [1120] they should go into annihilation. *And to this one 'Come' and he comes*; this is about the character of the Gentile people, who come when called by the apostolic teaching. The same is also found on the ladder of Jacob, when the Jews go down and the Christians go up.<sup>202</sup> *And I say to my slave 'Do this' and he does it. The slave: the one who wishes to be greater among you shall be your slave,*<sup>203</sup> that is the bishop, to whom the model and rule of preaching is given: *'Do this' and he does it* means that he preaches. So Jesus praises [1125] the faith of the centurion and ranks it higher than the faith of Israel and affirms that he has not found such faith in anyone. Obviously this shows that the peoples of the whole globe will come to belief: they will gather in the company of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens* and there will be children of the kingdom from all nations, while the children of the kingdom will go *into outer darkness*. And he says *'Go' and he goes*: this is the Jewish people going in the darkness. *'Come' and he comes*, as it said, *from the East and from the West* [1130] all peoples will come and recline with their forefathers *in the kingdom of the heavens*.

**M. XXXIII.** [Matthew 8:14–15] *And when Jesus had come into the house of Peter, he found Peter's mother-in-law in bed with a fever.* Peter's mother-in-law is understood as the synagogue: her daughter, to whom Peter is married, is without doubt taken as the Church. A fever, then, is unrighteousness inside and an unhealthy heat. It shows that, once she was healed from her fever, she got up and served. What else does it mean to get up and serve [1135] than to be a person coming to belief from the Jews, like the apostles themselves who, as if they had been resurrected from a fatal illness, began to serve the Church? She is a character of the elders who believed, but from the Jews. *He touched her hand*: a hand is understood as authority or a multitude.

**M. XXXV.** [Matthew 8:16–17] *But once it was evening they brought to him many who had demons.* At *evening* [1140] indicates the final end of the ages. That (...) at the coming of our Lord, who cured everyone who was held bound through various demonic pursuits, but also those who were held fast by various illnesses. So this is a figure as much of the people from the Gentiles as from the Jews too, and the prophetic testimony is appropriately applied that *He carried our weaknesses and took on our sorrows.*<sup>204</sup> For elsewhere too it says as follows: *And he puts his hands in the*

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**201** Proverbs 18:17.

**202** Cf. Genesis 28:12.

**203** Cf. Matthew 20:26–27.

**204** Matthew 8:17 (Isaiah 53:4).

[1145] *cave of asps*,<sup>205</sup> which plainly means on those people who are held full of evil spirits. *He puts his hand*: by the authority of his word he plainly heals everything.

**M. XXXVI.** [Matthew 8:19–20] *And a certain scribe came up and said: Master, I will follow you.* Jesus knew the plans of humans and saw through to the inner parts, so he saw a man who was a most depraved tempter claiming that he wanted to follow him. *Jesus said to him: Foxes have their holes.*<sup>206</sup> He calls heretical people *foxes*, [1150] just as he said of Herod, who was a Sadducee: *Go, tell that fox: Leave it alone, I cast out demons.*<sup>207</sup> *Foxes*, he says, *have their holes*: for foxes, in order to feed, hide themselves in the deep earth, buried away in their holes. False people, heretics, who have earthly works and make dark and shady little gatherings for themselves, are similar to foxes. For Samson, too, having captured some foxes, *tied firebrands*, meaning torches, [1155] *to their tails* (...) *and set fire to their entire harvests and vineyards*<sup>208</sup> (...) showed because the tail is the outermost part of the body. Having taken a torch, it sets fire to the crops and vineyards, plainly through wicked preaching. The heretics have set fire to the harvests, which provide the true bread, and are marked as having burnt the vineyards from which the grape juice is pressed which represents blood: thus they reject the Passion of the Lord. *Foxes have their holes*: we have said that foxes are [1160] heretics. *The birds of the sky their nests where they rest.* Birds are the type of holy people, who through their upright behaviour are called *the birds of the heaven* because they fly towards the heaven. *Nests*: these are of differing holiness; it was written that there were nests there in secret.<sup>209</sup> *But the Son of Man has nowhere where he may lay his head.* On what can the head of Christ, the Son of God, be laid? He found nothing in that people. To be laid means to rest: [1165] the Son of God rests in the one who fulfils the commandments. The Jewish people, through not doing this, did not have a resting-place for the head of the Son of God.

**M. XXXVII.** [Matthew 8:21–22]. *But another disciple said to him: Lord, allow me to bury my father.* He is told: *Let the dead bury their dead. But you, follow me.* Can the dead really bury the dead? It remains that he is talking about those who are dead to heavenly behaviour, [1170] and this is how it should be understood.

**M. XXXVIII.** [Matthew 8:23–27] *And as he climbed in a boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, a great commotion took place in the sea such that the boat was covered by waves.* The ship in which Jesus climbs is the Church. It is in the sea, meaning in the world. *But a great commotion in the sea*: as the winds arose, the sea began to be violently disturbed. What else [1175] does this commotion signify but a time of persecution in which the ship, meaning the Church, is subjected to the

<sup>205</sup> Isaiah 11:8.

<sup>206</sup> Fortunatianus' following observations on foxes resemble passages in Origen and the work known as the Physiologus.

<sup>207</sup> Luke 13:32.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. Judges 15:4–5.

<sup>209</sup> The words translated as "it was written that there were nests there in secret" are corrupt.



waves of the world which are plainly evil orders? *Jesus himself was asleep*: to sleep is to rest. *They approached and woke him*: for as many times as he is moved by the prayers of the holy ones in need, swiftly he arises to have mercy. *They say to him: Lord, rescue us, we are on the point of death*. Then he says: *Why are you frightened, you of little faith? He got up* [1180] *and ordered the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm*. *He got up*: the Lord, as if sleeping, is woken by the prayers of the holy ones and he restrains and breaks down the surging waves, meaning (<...>) he restrains the winds and the sea, plainly the evil order which is given throughout the world and makes it go to ruin.<sup>210</sup> Through his mercy he restrained the sea and he restored calm to his own people, meaning the Church, whose prayers he always answers in a time of need, so that it might be for a miracle [1185] of his power.<sup>211</sup> With regard to such sailing, David, too, says in Psalm 106: *Those who go down to the sea in ships*.<sup>212</sup>

**M. XXXVIII.** [Matthew 8:28–32] *And when he had come across the strait, in the region of the Gerasenes*. The region of the Gerasenes is where there were two men possessed by demons. When they had seen Jesus, *they shouted out: What do you have to do with us, Jesus, Son of God?* All of this has the aim of deriding the Jews, who [1190] read Moses every day and have in their hands the prophets who proclaimed the coming of the Son of God, and did not believe in him when he came and performed wonders. It was easier for demons to say to him *Son of God, what do you have to do with you?* than for Jews, who should anyway have noticed from their reading that it was him who would put *his hand in the cave of asps* and who would bear *our weaknesses*.<sup>213</sup> What else does it mean to put a hand in a cave than to cast out unclean spirits [1195] from humans? The hand is the strength of the word: plainly of the Word who was from the beginning with God, the one who was God and through whom all things were made.<sup>214</sup> So this, as we have said, is to deride those who did not recognise the coming of the Son of God even though their scriptures resounded with it. The demons beg that they may not be tortured *before the time*, that is before the Day of Judgment, and they ask that, if he casts them out of the men, he may allow them to go *into the herd* [1200] *of pigs*. Pigs are unclean creatures: they wallow in mud; when they are sated they roll around or sleep; they forget their herdsman, except when they are hungry. So the figure of the idolatry of the Gentile people is found in the pigs who will never come to believe, since when the demons came to them *the herd cast itself headlong into the sea and died*: this means that they rush headlong to the world and die there.

**M. XL.** [Matthew 8:33–34] [1205] *But those who had been tending them fled*. The fact that the herdsmen fled and told the town what had taken place shows that the

<sup>210</sup> The words translated as “and makes it go to ruin” are corrupt.

<sup>211</sup> The words translated as “it might be for a miracle” are corrupt.

<sup>212</sup> Psalm 107:23.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Isaiah 11:8; 53:4 (Matthew 8:17).

<sup>214</sup> Cf. John 1:1–3.

herdsmen are those who preside over the unclean practice of idolatry, which is that of the pigs. *And behold, the whole town*: a town is called from the townspeople: for it was not the town which went out, but the townspeople who lived in the town. *Towards Jesus*: meaning to meet him. *And once they had seen him, they asked that he would go away from their borders*: they asked Jesus not to judge them now, realising from the miracles [1210] which had been performed that he was God. But they tell him *to go away from their borders*, to go away so that he would not put an end to them right now by judging them.

**M. XLI.** [Matthew 9:1–6] *Behold, they brought to him a paralysed man lying on a couch*. The paralysed man, crippled in all his limbs, is the character of the Jewish people. And it said above: *Into his own town*, yet there was no one who could heal, because the Law is only a figure and does not have an effect. Because of this, [1215] the one whom the Law had prefigured came and completed everything which was foretold by the prophets, that he would cure *their weaknesses* and himself carry *their sorrows*.<sup>215</sup> Moreover, he saw the faith of those who prayed. So where there is a prayer of one accord (...) can be obtained, even if the one on whose behalf it is requested does not deserve it. Having seen their faith, *he said to the paralysed man: Your sins are forgiven*. We know that paralysis means endless sins, which make a person crippled [1220] and loose in all their limbs. But Jesus did this so that they would know by it that he was the Son of God, because no-one else forgives sins except God. Seeing a human, then, they rejected the divinity within him. *So when he saw their plans – for they began to say to themselves: He is blaspheming – he said to them: What wickedness do you plan in your hearts?* And he added even more because they did not believe: *What is easier, to say ‘Your sins are forgiven’ [1225] or to say ‘Get up and walk’?* Therefore he showed obviously who he was. He said: *But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins. Then he says to the paralysed man: Get up, take your pallet and go to your house*. So he demonstrates the strength of his divinity in different ways: first, by the faith of those who ask that their sins be forgiven; then, to those who are amazed at this, he adds: *Get up and walk*; third, he says: [1230] *Get up, take your pallet and go to your house*. As we have said, the paralysed man, crippled in every limb, is the figure of the Jewish people, who fell into ill health through not observing the Law: for it said *lying on a couch*. The couch is taken as weakness or rest. But because here it tells of a paralysed man, it shows the weakness of the Jewish people. This weakness is made up of sins, which are forgiven for the one who believes by faith. After the forgiveness of sins, [1235] the Holy Spirit is also given: this is the meaning of *Get up and walk*. Thirdly, it says *Take your pallet and go to your home*. Now, the one who has been baptised in the name of Christ has the Church as their home and the one who lay on the couch, meaning in weakness, was made so strong by the power of the Holy Spirit that, powerful and

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<sup>215</sup> Cf. Isaiah 53:4 (Matthew 8:17).

active, he carried that very bed: this means that he gave instruction about the weaknesses of others and in which way they are to be cured.

**M. XLII.** [Matthew 9:8] [1240] *But seeing this the crowds were afraid* ⟨...⟩ these things which had come to pass. *And they gave glory to God* (meaning that they believed) *who had given humans such authority*. Authority means that you are able to do something if you believe with complete faith. As it was said: *If you have faith like a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain ‘Go away’ and it will go away.*<sup>216</sup>

**M. XLIII.** [Matthew 9:9–13] *And when Jesus crossed over, he saw a man sitting in the toll booth, Matthew by name.* [1245] This man is chosen and told: *Follow me*. Without delay, *he followed him*. The toll booth is the office of the tax collectors. So Matthew is chosen from there for the reason that everyone who acknowledges that they are a sinner receives pardon more easily. Just as in the case of the two who pray in the Temple, the Pharisee and the tax collector, and the tax collector *went down into his house made righteous*,<sup>217</sup> so here too someone is chosen from the tax collectors. What follows next? *When* [1250] *he was reclining in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and reclined with Jesus*. So these people *are reclining in the house*, meaning in the Church. Those who acknowledge that they are sinners rest: through their acknowledgment they earn pardon for their earlier deeds and are appropriately found reclining with Jesus in the house. The Pharisees are annoyed at this, that pardon is given to sinners. For ‘Pharisees’ is translated as ‘separated ones’: plainly they are separated from the [1255] behaviour of the tax collectors and thus boast that they are righteous. They receive the response: You are righteous, and *A doctor is not needed for the healthy*.<sup>218</sup> It is not because they are healthy but because they claim that they are righteous that it is said to them in reply: *The healthy have no call for a doctor, but those who are unwell*. The Son of God shows himself to be a doctor who can cure the wounds of the soul, and by what sort of cure this happens. He says: *I want mercy and not sacrifice. For I have not come to call* [1260] *the righteous but sinners to repentance*. No-one is righteous in the sight of God, but it is because the Pharisees claimed that they were righteous. Therefore it is appropriate that whoever acknowledges that they are a sinner is called and their sins are forgiven, because in the sight of God no-one is without sin. The Pharisees, who fail to understand this while they boast of their righteousness, are left behind and forsaken.

**M. XLIII.** [Matthew 9:15] *And Jesus said to them: Can wedding guests fast?*<sup>219</sup> Here he shows [1265] that wedding guests cannot fast *as long as the bridegroom is with them*, and that he is the bridegroom, the apostles are the wedding guests, the

<sup>216</sup> Matthew 17:19.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Luke 18:10–14.

<sup>218</sup> This phrase may be corrupted from something like “A doctor is not needed for the righteous and the healthy.”

<sup>219</sup> The literal translation of both Latin and Greek forms of Matthew 9:15 is “the children of the bridegroom”, but the traditional “wedding guests” has been adopted.

Church herself is the bride. So he says that when the bridegroom is taken away, then they will fast. This took place at Pentecost as they were praying and fasting when the Holy Spirit came upon them.<sup>220</sup>

**M. XLV.** [Matthew 9:16–17] *But no-one sews a patch of new cloth onto an old garment.* [1270] The nature of old and new cloths is as follows: the new cloth is the Christian people, the old is the Jewish people. So the old cannot be sewn onto the new, unless someone comes to belief in the name of Christ and is baptised and made new. There is no other way of being joined to the body of the Church, *so that the tear does not become worse*. A tear is when there is argument and disagreement about faith between factions. There follows the similar comparison of the new wine and the old wineskins. [1275] The new wine is the Holy Spirit, the old wineskins are either the Jews or sinful people. So unless the wineskins have been renewed, they would not be able to carry the new wine because either of them might perish. So unless a person has been renewed and taught by the Holy Spirit, they are not able to bear the grace of God: the old wineskins are sinful people or the Jews, as I said, because of the old Law; the new wineskins are people renewed by the grace of God, [1280] to which new wine is appropriately entrusted. For we take new wine to be the Holy Spirit, as it was said of the apostles: *They are full of new wine*,<sup>221</sup> when in fact they were filled with the Holy Spirit. *Therefore new wine is put into new wineskins so that both of them will be kept safe*. So spiritual grace is given in this way to a renewed person, meaning to the one who believes in the name of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, and both persist [1285] undiminished.

**M. XLVI.** [Matthew 9:18–19] *While he was speaking these things to them, behold, a leader came up imploring him and saying: My daughter has just died.* He pleads and says: *But come, lay a hand on her and she will live*. The leader believes and asks on his daughter's behalf with complete faith. Indeed, knowing the strength of majesty, he says: *Lay a hand on her and she will live*. Recognising his faith, *Jesus got up and followed* [1290] *the man* who was strong in faith. Without any delay (...) it shows that he would provide. Indeed, he says nothing in response but immediately, to go with him (...) when he goes, the full sense of this story follows.

**M. XLVII.** [Matthew 9:20–22] *A certain woman, who had struggled with a flow of blood for twelve years already, came up behind him and touched his garment.* Weighing up the matter according to her faith,<sup>222</sup> *she said: [1295] If I touch his garments I will be saved*. In another gospel, this woman also says that she had spent much on doctors and had not been able to be healed.<sup>223</sup> The endurance of the flow of blood *for twelve years* shows her as the character of the Jewish people. The *twelve years* are

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Acts 2:1–4.

<sup>221</sup> Acts 2:13.

<sup>222</sup> The word translated as “weighing up the matter” is corrupt.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. Mark 5:26; Luke 8:43.

the twelve tribes of Israel. The flow of blood is the synagogue which can be imagined as a woman running out of blood, that is through killing all the righteous people and prophets; it finally raged against the Lord himself. [1300] So this is the flow of blood which the Gospel shows to have been in the woman: it means in the synagogue because it was stained with the blood of the holy ones. And because *she touched his garment from behind*, this indicates the following: *behind* means ‘at a later time’. What time does *behind* indicate but after the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the apostles were sent and preached to the synagogue and converted many to belief? So this was the meaning [1305] of touching the garment *from behind*. To touch is to reach with the inmost thoughts of the mind; to touch is to believe or to observe instructions.<sup>224</sup> For she touched him secretly, through faith, and he therefore said: *Someone has touched me*. Was he not also touched by others? But she truly touched him as she was touching with faith. When she was healed, he said to her: *Your faith has saved you*. We see, then, that the one who simply touches Jesus’ clothes can obtain their whole request through faith. And he, in order to show [1310] who he was, said: *Someone touched me*. He says this knowing that she is elsewhere, because she had touched his hem.<sup>225</sup> She said why she had done it. So there are some from the Jews who believe through the preaching of the apostles, as was shown above.

**M. XLVIII.** [Matthew 9:23–26] *And when Jesus had come into the house of the leader, he said: She is not dead but she is asleep*. It was easy for him to raise the dead. He said that the girl was asleep who was dead. [1315] *And having sent out the crowd he took hold of her hand*. We have often said that a hand is strength or a multitude of powers.<sup>226</sup> *And the girl got up*. For the girl is the figure of the Church, which the teaching of the apostles has raised through the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ. *And this report went out into that entire land*. Truly the report went out, for the Church is established throughout the globe. It also says this in Psalm 18: *Their sound went out into every [1320] land*.<sup>227</sup>

**M. XLVIII.** [Matthew 9:32–34] *When they had gone out, behold, others brought to him a mute and deaf man who had a demon*. It is evident that he could not be cured by anyone other than the Son of God, whom the prophets proclaimed would come. For example, Isaiah had said that a boy would put his hand in a cave of asps and would cast out the snakes and they would not hurt him.<sup>228</sup> This signified that the Son of God [1325] would expel demons with his divine authority from the bodies in which they were dwelling. For this reason he is also shown by David in a compari-

<sup>224</sup> The word translated as “to touch” is corrupt.

<sup>225</sup> The words translated as “that she is elsewhere” are corrupt.

<sup>226</sup> Compare lines 1137–1138, 1501–1504 and 2788.

<sup>227</sup> Psalm 19:4.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Isaiah 11:8–9.

son as a deer.<sup>229</sup> For a deer, when it finds a snake hiding itself in holes, is said to drag it out with its breath and kill it.<sup>230</sup> It is plain that the Son of God did the same, who dragged the true serpent, the devil, out from human bodies and killed it, meaning that he triumphed through his Passion. [1330] So this man with a demon is a figure of the Jewish people who, having deserted God and through serving idols, had delivered themselves to a demon by doing its will. He was mute, because he did not acknowledge the Son of God proclaimed to him through the prophets. He was also deaf, because he refused to hear the instructions of God or, hearing them, he spurned them. For everyone who does not acknowledge Christ as Lord is understood as mute, and the one who does not wish to hear the instructions of God [1335] is taken as deaf. *But once the demon was cast out the mute man spoke.* This showed that many from this same people, freed from the authority of the devil, would come to belief and would speak in the Church, meaning that they would give thanks to God and have their ears open to hearing the divine instructions.<sup>231</sup> *And the crowds were amazed,* it tells us, *saying that never had anything like this appeared in Israel.* The prophets, indeed, performed many signs among that people, but not of this sort. [1340] The Son of God, who had worked and spoken through these same prophets, held back all sorts of miracles and all wonders for his own coming, with which he might overcome the unbelief of the people and lay open the strength of his divinity to believers. *But the Pharisees began to say that he cast out demons in the power of the king of demons.* So what the Holy Spirit had long ago foretold through David would take place was fulfilled. For he said: *In the multitude of your power* [1345] *your enemies will lie about you,*<sup>232</sup> because they attributed divine authority to the king of demons instead.

**M. L.** [Matthew 10:1] *And having summoned his twelve disciples, he gave them authority that they should cast out unclean spirits and cure all sickness and all weakness.* The Gospels affirm that the disciples received authority from the Lord to free those who were in the grip of demons, and to cure [1350] various sicknesses. So the Lord gave authority to his disciples, plainly because he had long before given Moses authority to perform signs and wonders in Egypt through his rod and lead the people snatched from the hand of Pharaoh into the Promised Land.<sup>233</sup> He also gave authority to the apostles to perform signs and wonders in Egypt, meaning in the world, and to free all nations from the hand of Pharaoh, meaning from the authority [1355] of the devil, and to lead believers into the Promised Land, meaning to our Lord and Saviour himself. With regard to the body which he received from a virgin, he is un-

<sup>229</sup> Cf. Psalm 42:1.

<sup>230</sup> The connection between the story of the deer and the snake and Psalm 42 may first have been made by Origen; it is also found in the Physiologus.

<sup>231</sup> This may be a reference to baptismal initiation.

<sup>232</sup> Psalm 66:2.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Exodus 4:17.

derstood as the Promised Land because he himself had promised through all the prophets that he would come.

**M. LI.** [Matthew 10:2–8] *But the names of the twelve disciples are these.* We find that the twelve apostles have been shown as a figure in the Old Testament in many places. One example is the twelve [1360] springs by which the people quenched the thirst with which they struggled in the desert,<sup>234</sup> just as we, watered by the teaching of the apostles whose image had gone before in the springs, have extinguished through the water of baptism the thirst which we used to endure from the heat of sin. The same apostles are also prefigured in the twelve breads that are placed warm on the table of the Tabernacle on the Sabbath.<sup>235</sup> ‘Warm’ indicated that the apostles were glowing with the Spirit; placed in the Tabernacle, which means appointed in the Church, [1365] they daily satisfy us with heavenly food. In the same way, they are also in the twelve stone blades fashioned from rock, with which God ordered the people to be circumcised for a second time.<sup>236</sup> The Apostle said that the rock signifies Christ our Lord,<sup>237</sup> from which it was shown that the twelve blades (meaning the twelve apostles) would come in order to circumcise us from all evils with the keenness of faith, by taking away all defects and errors from our hearts by the grace of baptism. The twelve [1370] calves set up under the bronze sea in the Temple which Solomon had built are also a figure of the apostles.<sup>238</sup> These calves, divided into four groups, indicated the fourfold preaching of the Gospels; three set in each group, they showed the perfect total of the Trinity. They have their backs to the Temple and their faces to the four quarters of the earth: this made it openly evident that the apostles would turn their faces (meaning their preaching) away from the Jewish people [1375] towards all the nations, settling throughout the four corners of the earth to which they would proclaim the same Trinity which the unbelieving people refused to receive. David, too, had spoken of them, that *their sound* would go out *into every land and their words to the ends of the globe.*<sup>239</sup> So it was necessary for the apostles to be sent by the Lord according to the previous figures. They are instructed *not to go in the way of the Gentiles*, so that they would not live in a Gentile manner, [1380] *and not to enter into the towns of the Samaritans*, so that they would not deny the Resurrection like the Samaritans, *but they should rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, for whom he had especially come. For he had promised through the prophet that he would take away from them the bad shepherds, meaning the elders of the people who turned them aside from the right path by teaching badly, and give

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**234** Cf. Exodus 15:23–27.

**235** Cf. Exodus 25:30; 2 Chronicles 4:19.

**236** Cf. Joshua 5:2.

**237** Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

**238** Cf. 1 Kings 7:23–25.

**239** Psalm 19:4.

them other shepherds in their place.<sup>240</sup> These are the apostles, who would show to them the way of truth and preach [1385] that the *kingdom of the heavens* had come near, meaning that the Son of God had arrived: he is the kingdom of the heavens because we will reign through him and in him. They would cure *the weak*, raise *the dead* and all that follows. We read in their Acts that the apostles exercised all these powers. But this can also be understood spiritually, that we who were weak through the illness of sins have received healing through the kindness of the Son of God. Those who through their crimes [1390] were considered dead in the sight of God, as the Apostle says *And you, when you were dead in your crimes and sins*,<sup>241</sup> believed and came back to life once they had received the Holy Spirit.

**M. LII.** [Matthew 10:9–10] *Do not own gold or silver or money or a bag or sandals or a stick or two tunics.* Jesus warns that the disciples should be the model for all other believers. They must not be hindered by any worldly greed, but they should despise everything which is considered great on this [1395] earth, as it is natural that preachers of so great a mystery should travel in this world like foreigners. *Nor money in your belts.* Money is understood as the commandments of God, as he says we read:<sup>242</sup> *Why, he says, did you not give my money to the counter of the money-changers?*<sup>243</sup> But here we see that the disciples were forbidden from carrying money, from which we can easily notice that money also means human [1400] instructions. For example, in another place when the Lord was accusing the elders of the people and rebuking them because they passed on the commandments of humans rather than those of God, he introduced the testimony of the prophet: *Isaiah*, he says, *prophesied well about you: This people honours me with their lips but their heart is far from me. They pay homage to me without cause, as they teach the commandments and teachings of humans.*<sup>244</sup> And again: *You throw away the commandment of God in order to set up your own tradition.*<sup>245</sup> So this [1405] is the kind of money, meaning human instructions, which the apostles are prohibited to teach or receive. For the other money, meaning the divine commandments, which they had received from the Son of God to be handed on to God, was enough for them. *No bag on the way:* for a bag is carried on the way for the sake of bread. So they, like us, are forbidden to seek for any other bread, meaning the bread of the heretics about whom it is written: *Their sacrifices are the bread of sorrow. Everyone who eats them* [1410] *will be defiled.*<sup>246</sup> We are now fed with the true and heavenly bread, the body of Christ our

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<sup>240</sup> Cf. Jeremiah 23:2–4.

<sup>241</sup> Ephesians 2:1.

<sup>242</sup> The word translated as “he says” is corrupt.

<sup>243</sup> Luke 19:23.

<sup>244</sup> Matthew 15:7–9.

<sup>245</sup> Mark 7:9.

<sup>246</sup> Hosea 9:4.



God and Lord, who said: *I am the bread who came down from heaven.*<sup>247</sup> Next, *two tunics*. The heretics and schismatics who gather outside the Church appear to strive for two tunics, although there is only one tunic which is knit together by the faith of the unity of the one Church and *sewn from above* (meaning heavenly), which the soldiers examined and refused to tear.<sup>248</sup> This is because whoever [1415] is serving in the heavenly army does not make a division in the people, but is content with one tunic, meaning the love of the one Church. But the one who wishes to have another tunic, meaning that they think that gatherings should take place outside the Church, will be condemned to everlasting punishment as a deserter and one guilty of such a crime. *Nor sandals* means that they should not accept another faith. For they had already accepted the sandals of the gospel faith from the Son of God, about which [1420] the prophet had said: *How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the gospel of peace, who proclaim good things.*<sup>249</sup> *Nor a stick in your hands*: the practices of a different sect. For there are various customs and different practices belonging to different sects, but they should keep the true practice, meaning the sacred one, which they had received from him. *For the worker is worthy of his reward*: without doubt, because the one who has preserved the faith of God and kept the instructions of God [1425] will be considered worthy to attain the reward of eternal life.

**M. LIII.** [Matthew 10:11] *In whatever town you enter, stay there* and so on. It was made evident above that the town of which he speaks is the Church, when he says *A town set on a mountain cannot be concealed*:<sup>250</sup> plainly the Church, set on top of the Son of God. So he instructs that one should remain in this town, meaning persevere right up to the end. *Until you leave*, meaning [1430] up to when we depart from this body. For the departure of the holy ones is called a summons, on which we hasten from this world.

**M. LIIII.** [Matthew 10:16] *Behold, I send you like sheep in the middle of wolves* and so on. Because he is the shepherd of the sheep and the master, as he affirms elsewhere: *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays aside his soul for his sheep.*<sup>251</sup> He appropriately compared his disciples to sheep because of their innocence. [1435] But he signifies as wolves those who persecuted the apostles and all other believers after the Lord's Passion for the sake of the Son of God. He advises them in advance how to go their way in the middle of such people: *Be pure*, he says, *like doves*. Just as doves are without deceit and bile because they do not recall anger, so the Lord therefore wants us too to live in the present world without the deceit of malice and without bile, which is the bitterness of sin, forgetful of anger and

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**247** John 6:51.

**248** Cf. John 19:23–24.

**249** Isaiah 52:7 (Romans 10:15).

**250** Matthew 5:14; see lines 964–966.

**251** John 10:11.

[1440] wrongs so that we may lay hold of the divine promises.<sup>252</sup> *And be cunning*, he says, *like snakes*. The cunning of the snake which we should imitate is as follows:<sup>253</sup> for the snake, at a certain time, is said to edge itself through a very narrow opening and there, with great effort, having cast off its old skin, is made as new. Copying its cunning, we who have travelled on the narrow path of eternal life (of which it says, *how narrow is the way which leads to life*)<sup>254</sup> [1445] should cast off our old outward form, meaning our former behaviour, and appear as new people in the world, *walking in newness of life* as the Apostle advises.<sup>255</sup> There is another sort of snake's cunning as well: if it happens to end up in the hands of someone who wants to kill it, it surrenders its entire body to blows and beatings and desires nothing other than to keep its head intact. We too are encouraged to emulate this, so that if at a time of persecution we end up in the [1450] hands of enemies, we should subject our whole body to torture and punishment and indeed to death itself for the sake of our head, meaning the Son of God, because *Christ is the head of the man*.<sup>256</sup>

**M. LV.** [Matthew 10:26] *Nothing is covered which will not be revealed*. The preaching of the Law and the Prophets was covered among the Jews who could not understand the coming of the Lord, as the Apostle related: *The veil of Moses is over their heart. But when one of them has turned to [1455] the Lord, the veil is taken away*.<sup>257</sup> For this reason Moses, too, knowing long before that this people would not believe in the coming of the Lord, used to place a veil over his face and speak like this to the people.<sup>258</sup> This showed that what was covered and closed to them because of their unbelief was to be revealed and made evident to the entire globe by the preaching of the apostles.

**M. LVI.** [Matthew 10:26] *And concealed which will not be known*. To conceal (...).<sup>259</sup> The leaders of the Jewish people wanted to conceal [1460] the Resurrection of the Son of God: they gave a bribe to the soldiers, and wanted to prevent the apostles from speaking in the name of the Lord.<sup>260</sup> Even to this day it is incredible among the

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**252** In antiquity, it was thought that doves did not have bile: bile is used here both literally and metaphorically.

**253** The association of the behaviour of snakes with the biblical verses quoted below may first have been made by Origen, and is also found in the Physiologus.

**254** Matthew 7:14.

**255** Romans 6:4.

**256** 1 Corinthians 11:3.

**257** 2 Corinthians 3:15–16.

**258** Cf. Exodus 34:33–34.

**259** The Cologne manuscript breaks off at this point and resumes at the end of M. LXVI (as indicated below). The text of the intervening sections is supplied from the Zürich manuscript, occasionally supported by other witnesses, and is printed in smaller type in the critical edition. These sources tend to abbreviate and reformulate the text of the commentary, so the following chapters may be preserved in a shortened and slightly altered form.

**260** Cf. Matthew 28:12–15; Acts 4:18 or 5:40.

Jews that the Son of God should have risen from the dead, just as it has been made evident that it is known and believed by all the nations through the proclamation of the apostles.

**M. LVII.**<sup>261</sup> [Matthew 10:27] *What you hear in your ear, preach on the rooftops* ⟨...⟩ *What I say to you in the darkness, speak in* [1465] *the light*. It shows that darkness is the Jewish people. *The light*, it says, *shines in the darkness and the darkness has not grasped it*.<sup>262</sup> The light means the Christian people. As the Lord says: *You are the light of the world*.<sup>263</sup> And the Apostle says: *For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Therefore walk as children of light*.<sup>264</sup>

**M. LVIII.** [Matthew 10:34] *I did not come to send peace but a sword*. ⟨...⟩

**M. LVIII.** [Matthew 11:2] [1470] *But John, when he heard in prison the works of Christ*. ⟨...⟩

**M. LX.** [Matthew 11:4] *But in response he said to them: Go and report to John*. ⟨...⟩

**M. LXI.** [Matthew 11:7] *Then he began to speak about John to the crowds: What did you go out to see in the desert? A reed being blown about by the wind?* ⟨...⟩

**M. LXII.** [Matthew 11:16–17] *But what shall I reckon this generation is like? It is like boys sitting in* [1475] *a public place and shouting*. We find two sorts of boys in the Scriptures, some in their thinking and some in their evil-doing, as the Apostle says: *Do not be made boys in your thinking but be children in evil-doing that you may be perfect in thinking*.<sup>265</sup> The public place signifies Jerusalem, where the observance of the Law and righteousness was treated. It shows that boys sat in this public place, the prophets in time past and the apostles after the Passion of the Lord. All these who were without evil-doing are appropriately understood as boys. Indeed, the Lord says through the prophet: [1480] *Behold, I and the boys whom God gave to me*.<sup>266</sup> And elsewhere he says: *Boys, do you have any food?*<sup>267</sup> Abraham, when he was already in old age, was called the boy of the Lord.<sup>268</sup> So it says that these boys shouted to other boys, to the Jewish people, who are also taken as boys due to their silliness. *We sang to you and you did not dance*: that is, we preached the coming and the glory of the Lord and you refused to believe. For to dance is to rejoice and accord with the voice of the singer. This is what that [1485] people refused to do, since they did not trust the prophets who preached that the Son of God would come nor, later, did they wish to believe the apostles who bore witness that he had come. *We lamented for you and*

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**261** See also the doubtful extract 1 in the Appendix.

**262** John 1:5.

**263** Matthew 5:14.

**264** Ephesians 5:8. No witness is preserved for the following four chapters; their titles are supplied from the chapter list above.

**265** 1 Corinthians 14:20.

**266** Isaiah 8:18.

**267** John 21:5.

**268** Cf. Genesis 26:24.

*you did not cry.* This is because all the holy ones wept at the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersal of its people, which happened to them on their own merits, yet even then they did not wish to repent and come to believe.<sup>269</sup>

**M. LXIII.** [Matthew 12:1] *At that time, Jesus went away through the crops on the Sabbath.* This shows that the day of the Sabbath was the coming of the Lord. [1490] For the five books of Moses are counted as five days, and a single book of all the prophets is taken as the sixth day. The Sabbath is put in seventh place. The people are certainly understood as the harvest, as the Lord says: *The harvest indeed is great but the workers are few* and what follows.<sup>270</sup> The apostles are understood as the workers and harvesters: they began to pluck people from the world like ripe ears of grain and call them to belief. *To eat* is to fulfil the will of God, as the Lord says: *My food is this,* [1495] *that I should do the will of the one who sent me, the father.*<sup>271</sup> The apostles are shown to have fulfilled this will of God because they invited all people to the grace of God. *Rubbing the ears of grain in their hands, they began to eat* for the reason that they were separating the chaff, which are old sins, from the believers through the gift of the baptismal font.

**M. LXIII.** [Matthew 12:9–13] *And crossing over from there into their synagogue (...)* *there was a man with a withered hand.* This is [1500] the figure of the merciless and useless synagogue. Everyone who neglects the work of God and does not undertake acts of mercy is said to have withered hands. But the withered hand signifies, through a figure, the multitude of the sins of the people who in the coming of the Lord have obtained his mercy and are being transformed for good work and to their original condition. We have frequently said that a hand means a multitude of people.<sup>272</sup> In the Book of Kings it is written: *Are there not ten hands in Israel,* meaning ten tribes.<sup>273</sup> [1505] The withered hand was restored *like the other* in order to demonstrate that a multitude of sins, which required the kindness and mercy of the Lord, was thus made the same as the other original hand: that hand stands for the multitude of all the holy ones, patriarchs and righteous people, who have always kept the instructions of God and paid attention to the coming of the Lord (...). *the one having a withered hand* to Adam, who had unlawfully picked from the fruit of the forbidden tree, which had made his sin flow down to the whole human race. [1510] *Stretch out your hand:* to the cross of the Son of God, so that we may receive the condition of eternal life and the condition of immortality through the cross of the Lord.

<sup>269</sup> Fortunatianus here refers to the events of the year 70, which he also mentions at lines 2224–2225.

<sup>270</sup> Matthew 9:37; Luke 10:2.

<sup>271</sup> John 4:34.

<sup>272</sup> Lines 1137, 1315 and 2788.

<sup>273</sup> 2 Kings 19:43.

**M. LXV.** [Matthew 12:29] *How can one enter into the house of a strong man.*<sup>274</sup> ⟨...⟩

**M. LXVI.** [Matthew 12:39] *An evil and counterfeit generation seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.* By saying *an evil and counterfeit generation* it shows that they are not children of Abraham but [1515] children of the devil, as is made evident in another place: *You, he said, are from your father the devil and you want to carry out the desires of your father.*<sup>275</sup> For just as the one who does the will of God the Father is called a son of God, so the one who serves the will of Satan is called his son.<sup>276</sup> *It seeks a sign,* it says, *and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.* They were seeking a sign ⟨...⟩.

**M. LXVII.** [Matthew 12:40–41] What lack of belief and blindness, since they saw so many signs and wonders happen! [1520] However, it shows that what was manifested in Jonah was a sign of the truth to come. That Jonah was thrown in the sea and endured the storm, that he was taken up by the whale and coughed up onto the shore after three days demonstrated that the Son of God would come in the flesh, that he would endure the storm of the world and the trials from his people like some waves, that he would visit the underworld, and that on the third day he would rise again, having received back the body which had been laid in the tomb.<sup>277</sup> So [1525] he said that this sign would happen because, just as Jonah did not preach to the Ninevites until after he had been rescued from the depths of the sea and thus saved the people, brought back to repentance, so also Jesus showed that, after he had trampled down death and risen from the dead, he himself would preach everywhere through his apostles and would bring to salvation as many from that very people as from all nations. This is shown obviously in another place, [1530] when some Greeks came to Philip asking to see the Lord, but the Lord said that *unless a grain of wheat is cast into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it has died, it brings forth much fruit.*<sup>278</sup> He wanted himself to be understood as the *grain of wheat* who, after he had tasted death for our salvation, brought forth *much fruit*: we ourselves, in truth, believing in his Passion [1535] and Resurrection daily bear fruit in his work. Moreover, it shows that the people of Nineveh will be present for the condemnation of the Jewish people on the Day of Judgment, since they believed a single prophet who performed no sign and they repented: the people of the Jews, however, refused to believe so many prophets who spoke with one voice about the coming of the Lord and even the Son of God himself who performed such great wonders.

**M. LXVIII.** [Matthew 12:42] [1540] The Lord also introduced a similar example concerning the Queen of the South: *The Queen of the South will rise up in judgment*

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<sup>274</sup> No witness is preserved for this chapter; its title is supplied from the list above. See also the doubtful extract 2 in the Appendix.

<sup>275</sup> John 8:44.

<sup>276</sup> The Cologne manuscript resumes in the latter part of this sentence.

<sup>277</sup> Cf. Jonah 1:4–2:11.

<sup>278</sup> John 12:24–25.

with that generation and so on. We should take this literally and believe that it will come to pass, to the shame of this people. But the spiritual understanding is as follows: as *the Queen of Sheba, having heard the name of Solomon*,<sup>279</sup> leaves her homeland and comes to him with a shining retinue, so the Church, having heard the name of Christ the Son of God, comes to him [1545] in the belief of faith with a multitude of believers from all nations, that is from the world in which it abided, having left behind its idols. And just as the Queen of Sheba brought King Solomon *one hundred and twenty measures of gold and copious spices and a precious stone*,<sup>280</sup> so the Church has brought to the Son of God martyrs in one hundred and twenty thousand measures of gold who, pouring their blood for the name of the Lord, fill up the total of one hundred and twenty measures.<sup>281</sup> For in one hundred [1550] is shown complete and perfect faith: this was the total of years at which Abraham, the leader of our faith, received all the promises. Twenty, written in Greek as K, shows the name of the Lord (*Kyrios* in Greek).<sup>282</sup> By the spices, however, virgins are shown, since by their behaviour they provide the sweetest fragrance to God, like spices. In the precious stones it indicates righteous and self-controlled people, because just as fire cannot overcome precious stones, [1555] neither can Gehenna overcome the righteous. From this it is evident that the Queen of Sheba bore the figure of the Church, which is the true queen for ever because she will plainly reign with the Lord. Concerning her, David too says in a psalm: *The queen stands at your right hand covered with colour in a golden garment*.<sup>283</sup> This means the Church, which is recognised as having come from the furthest borders, meaning from all the Gentiles, just as David again mentions, when he speaks in her character: [1560] *I shouted to you from the borders of the land while my heart was uneasy*.<sup>284</sup> As for the words *Behold, here is someone greater than Jonah* and *Here is someone greater than Solomon*, the Lord made it openly evident that he was God the Son of God. For no-one could be greater than a king and holier than a prophet except for the Son of God alone, Christ and God.

**M. LXVIII.** [Matthew 12:46–49] While the Lord was instructing the disciples, *someone announced to him: Behold, your mother [1565] and your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with you*. The heretics, who refuse to believe that the Son of God had human flesh, are usually made to stumble by this passage because the Lord says ‘My mother’ and ‘My brothers’. The Lord did not deny that he had a mother, but in the character of his mother and brothers he opposed the Jewish people, who are called the mother and brothers of the Lord for the very reason that he took flesh

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279 2 Chronicles 9:1.

280 2 Chronicles 9:9.

281 The word translated as “measures” is the Latin *talenta*.

282 Greek numerals are written using letters of the alphabet.

283 Psalm 45:9.

284 Psalm 61:2.

from their stock, as the Lord said [1570] through the prophet: *Woe to them because my flesh is from them,*<sup>285</sup> and the Apostle said: *Theirs are the ancestors and from them was Christ born according to the flesh.*<sup>286</sup> So this is the mother whom it showed would be standing outside with her children (meaning the synagogue with its people) as it had been said in Genesis by Sarah concerning Hagar, who bore the figure of the synagogue: *Cast out the maidservant and her son. For the son of the maidservant will not be an heir with my son Isaac.*<sup>287</sup> The Lord appropriately scorned and opposed these people, [1575] saying *Who are my mother and my brothers,* because they refused to go into the church where he was preaching and still preaches every day.<sup>288</sup> Indeed, by saying *to the disciples with his hand outstretched: Behold my mother and my brothers* he obviously demonstrated that the Church was prefigured in the apostles and all the other believers; he describes them as a better mother and more dear brothers. For we read in the Gospel that the apostles were called the brothers of the Lord, when [1580] the Lord himself said: *Go, tell my brothers to go ahead into Galilee. There will they see me.*<sup>289</sup>

**M. LXX.** [Matthew 13:31–32] *The kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard seed, which someone took and cast into their field* and so on. The Lord himself explained that he was the mustard seed cast into the field, the Lord, sent onto this earth from the heavens by the Father, and that the field was the earth. [1585] *It is indeed the smallest of all seeds,* because having set aside his glory and heavenly splendour he was made more humble than all humans. As the prophet related: *Praise him who tricks his soul and is scorned by all races;*<sup>290</sup> and the Apostle Paul said: *Who although he was in the form of God did not consider it robbery that he was equal to God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave.*<sup>291</sup> Christ showed that he was made more humble than everyone because of the injuries and slander [1590] which he saw fit to suffer for our sake. *But after it has grown, it becomes greater than all vegetables:* evidently this demonstrated that, after the Resurrection, when he took back the glory which he had laid aside, he would be above and over all at the right hand of the Father. As John the evangelist also says: *The one who comes from above is over all,*<sup>292</sup> and the Apostle Paul: *Who is over everything, God, blessed for ever.*<sup>293</sup> Indeed, he is not only [1595] above humans but also above the angels, as the same Paul men-

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**285** Hosea 9:12.

**286** Romans 9:5.

**287** Genesis 21:10.

**288** Although the Greek word for “church” can also mean “assembly”, Fortunatianus’ use of *ecclesia* here is anachronistic.

**289** Matthew 28:10.

**290** Isaiah 49:7.

**291** Philippians 2:6–7.

**292** John 3:31.

**293** Romans 9:5.

tions: *For this reason, he says, God exalted him and gave him the name which is above every name, that at the name of the Lord Jesus every knee would bend, of those in heaven and on earth and the underworld, and every tongue would acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.*<sup>294</sup> That the seed becomes a tree, *big enough for the birds of the sky to dwell in its branches*, showed the Church, which was born after [1600] the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord; its branches are understood as none other than the apostles, reaching for the things which are above. *The birds of the sky, who dwell in the branches, signifies holy and spiritual people who rest in the teaching of the apostles, namely the Catholics. They are called birds for the reason that they make for the sky, with heavenly behaviour, and will fly to heaven among the clouds when [1605] the Lord comes in his majesty.*<sup>295</sup> As the Apostle related: *We too who are alive will be snatched together with them among the clouds to meet Christ, and thus we will always be with the Lord.*<sup>296</sup> For the Lord himself too promises in the Gospel that the holy ones will fly to heaven like eagles, by saying *Wherever the body is, there the eagles will gather.*<sup>297</sup> Isaiah likewise says that the holy ones will fly: *Who are these, he says, who fly like clouds and [1610] who come to me like doves with their young?*<sup>298</sup>

**M. LXXI.** [Matthew 13:33] *He spoke another parable to them: The kingdom of the heavens is like yeast* and so on. Yeast signifies heavenly teaching, while he shows that the woman is the Church, and the flour is understood as the people. The woman (meaning the Church) purifies the people, gathering them from all the nations like grains of corn and crushing them on the millstone, which means [1615] through the preaching of the two Testaments. Having thrown out the shell of the wheat (meaning their earlier behaviour), she makes them white through the water of baptism and brings them to unity of faith by making one body of the whole Church. So it was this kind of flour in which the woman is understood to have concealed the yeast, meaning that the Church has stored the heavenly teaching in the hearts of the people who believe. *Three measures* shows the Trinity of the Father and the Son and [1620] the Holy Spirit: in their equality, without doubt, the perfect Trinity is proclaimed in one substance of divinity, which the heretics refuse. This is the total and the faith in which the Catholic Church always teaches and baptises, as the apostles were instructed by the Lord: *Go, teach all races, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*<sup>299</sup> For long ago as well, Sarah, who bore the figure of the Church, was found to have made three flatbreads, [1625] to show the

<sup>294</sup> Philippians 2:9–11.

<sup>295</sup> The same Latin word, *caelum*, underlies “sky” and “heaven” in this passage.

<sup>296</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

<sup>297</sup> Matthew 24:28.

<sup>298</sup> Isaiah 60:8.

<sup>299</sup> Matthew 28:19.



same total of the Trinity.<sup>300</sup> But in the Law, too, three tithes of wheat flour with oil were ordered to be offered in return for the cleansing of a leper,<sup>301</sup> in which the same Trinity is understood in like manner. As for the words *Until the whole has swelled up* (...) to fill the earth.

**M. LXXII.** [Matthew 13:44] *The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure chest concealed in a field, which someone finds: they conceal it and, in their joy, go and sell everything they have and buy [1630] that field.* We understand that treasure chest of all heavenly riches as the Son of God, about whom the Apostle related: *In whom, he said, are all treasures of knowledge and wisdom concealed.*<sup>302</sup> But elsewhere he says: *Having that treasure in pottery vessels,*<sup>303</sup> meaning bearing Christ the God in our bodies. *Concealed in a field* plainly means set in the Church: for *a field* signifies the Church because of its various flowers and different [1635] fragrances. Isaac made this evident by a prophetic spirit in the Book of Genesis, when he blessed his son. For he said: *Behold, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a full field which the Lord has blessed.*<sup>304</sup> But in the Gospel too we understand the potter's field bought for the burial of foreigners as the same Church, which truly is the field of the potter.<sup>305</sup> Therefore, we can understand the Son of God, who [1640] at the beginning like a potter formed humankind from the clay of the land according to the will of the Father, as the treasure chest concealed in the field too: God took on a human body in which he concealed his divinity in order to be seen as humble in the world. But whether the field is understood as the Church or the body of the Lord (which is the Church, according to the Apostle), it is evident that the Church too is from the body of the Lord.<sup>306</sup> *When someone finds it, they hide it.* This is plainly the Christian people who, believing that the Son of God is the treasure chest of heavenly goods, found him and stored that faith [1645] in their minds, just as the Apostle related that Christ dwells *by faith in our hearts.*<sup>307</sup> *In their joy they go and sell everything they have and buy that field:* so, through the joy of the divine promises and of the glory that is to come, the same people are understood to have been inspired to divide their possessions and distribute them to the poor so that they should be worthy of the Son of God alone, in whom is every hope of riches. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that

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**300** Cf. Genesis 18:6.

**301** Cf. Leviticus 14:10.

**302** Colossians 2:3.

**303** 2 Corinthians 4:7.

**304** Genesis 27:27.

**305** Cf. Matthew 27:7.

**306** The words translated as “which is the Church, according to the Apostle; it is evident that the Church too is from the body of the Lord” are corrupt.

**307** Ephesians 3:17.

the believers did this,<sup>308</sup> [1650] and we read elsewhere: *Whoever gives to a pauper earns interest in the Lord.*<sup>309</sup>

**M. LXXIII.** [Matthew 13:45–46] *Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant seeking a fine pearl. But having found a precious pearl he went away and sold whatever he had and bought it. A merchant seeking a fine pearl* signifies the people of the Church, especially those who believed in the time of the apostles. They believed with full faith in the Son of God and, [1655] to give an example for the time to come, they ⟨...⟩ the precious pearl that was found, which is plainly the eternal life promised to us, because nothing is more precious. Having sold all their possessions, they presented the total sum to the apostles to be distributed to those in need so that they might acquire for themselves that same pearl, meaning that they obtained eternal life. We too should follow their example so that we can acquire that precious pearl for ourselves from God, just as [1660] he instructed in the Gospel: *Sell what you possess, he said, and give alms.*<sup>310</sup> And again, the Lord speaks in a similar way to the young man who said that he had kept all the commandments of the Law: *If you wish to be perfect, he said, go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have a treasure chest in heaven; and come, follow me.*<sup>311</sup> Therefore we are instructed and warned by these examples to give often and generously to those in need so that we may not be shut out from eternal life [1665] and the heavenly kingdom.

**M. LXXIII.** [Matthew 13:47–50] *The kingdom of the heavens is like a net cast in the sea, which collects fish of every kind. And once it was full, they drew it out onto the shore and chose the best in their vessels, but threw the bad ones out. At the culmination of the world the angels will go out and separate the bad from among the righteous and throw them in the furnace of fire: there will be* [1670] *wailing and gnashing of teeth.* The net is understood as the preaching of the Gospels. When this was *cast in the sea*, meaning in this world (for the world is called a sea), *it collected fish of every kind*: it plainly gathered into one believers from all nations. It caught these like fish from the depths of the sea, meaning from the depths of error, and set them on the shore, which is plainly the Church. For the shore is understood as the Church because just as those who are set in a storm [1675] do not reach safety and escape the danger of imminent death except by coming to the shore, so we too who had long before been placed in the storm of this world could not receive the safety of everlasting life except by coming to the Church. There we escape the danger of imminent death which used to threaten us while we were still set in the world and persisted in unbelief. *But once* [1680] *it was full, they drew it out onto the shore and, sitting down, chose the best in their vessels but threw the bad ones out.* This shows that after the preaching to the

**308** Acts 2:44–45.

**309** Proverbs 19:17.

**310** Luke 12:33.

**311** Matthew 19:21.

whole earth has been fulfilled the bad are to be separated from the good. The Lord makes it evident in the following saying that the angels will do this at his coming, when he arrives in his glory. *The best stored in the vessels* shows that righteous people are settled in the eternal dwellings by the angels, just as the Lord himself [1685] promises in the Gospel that there are many dwellings with the Father.<sup>312</sup> So these vessels are the dwellings prepared in advance in which he demonstrates that righteous and holy people will dwell. David also related about these in a psalm: *How lovely are your tents, Lord God of powers: my soul desires and is faint in the halls of the Lord.*<sup>313</sup> For by saying that he desires them, he evidently declares that he has spoken about the same dwellings [1690] that we all desire and long for. But it obviously shows that the unrighteous and evil will be handed over to the perpetual fire, just as we find the similar comparison of the wheat and the chaff elsewhere: he says that the wheat will be stored in the barn, but the chaff will be burnt up *with inextinguishable fire.*<sup>314</sup>

**M. LXXV.** [Matthew 13:52] *Therefore every scribe who is educated in the kingdom of the heavens is like the head of a household who [1695] brings out things new and old from their treasure chest.* The Lord made it evident that he himself is the head of the household: *If they have called the head of a household Beelzebub,* he says, *how much more is this true of its retinue.*<sup>315</sup> He is declared without doubt to have brought out things new and old from his treasure chest, which plainly means the two Testaments: the new are the instructions of the Gospel, the old are of the Law and the Prophets, just as John shows in the Apocalypse that a double-edged sword proceeds from the mouth of the Saviour, meaning the two [1700] Testaments.<sup>316</sup> For Solomon, too, in the Song of Songs speaks similarly in the character of the Church: *I have, he says, kept the new and the old for you, my brother.*<sup>317</sup> This shows that the Church always keeps the instructions of the two Testaments which it received from this same head of the household. The two Testaments are also signified in the two silver coins which the innkeeper is said to have received from the Samaritan (plainly the Son of God whom the Jews said was a Samaritan)<sup>318</sup> in order to care for the one who had fallen among robbers.<sup>319</sup> [1705] They are equally understood in the large coin, worth two silver coins, which was taken from the mouth of the fish.<sup>320</sup> We also find

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**312** Cf. John 14:2.

**313** Psalm 83:1–2.

**314** Cf. Luke 3:17.

**315** Matthew 10:25. Fortunatianus spells this name as *Belzebul*, although a corrector has altered the Cologne manuscript to read *Belzebub*.

**316** Cf. Revelation 1:16.

**317** Song of Songs 7:13.

**318** Cf. John 8:48.

**319** Cf. Luke 10:30–35; the silver coin is a *denarius*.

**320** Cf. Matthew 17:26; the large coin is a *stater*.

them shown in many more places: in the tongs in Isaiah, in which one of the Seraphim had taken a coal from the altar;<sup>321</sup> in the ladder in Genesis, which Jacob saw established from earth up to heaven, and God leaning on it;<sup>322</sup> in the two Cherubim set on the place of atonement in the Law, [1710] through which the Lord used to speak,<sup>323</sup> evidently demonstrating through the two Cherubim that there are two Testaments through which the Son of God (<...> to speak and to be known. Just as Habakkuk also related: *You will know him*, he says, *in the middle of two living creatures*,<sup>324</sup> that is in the preaching of the two Testaments. Finally, the Lord obviously shows through the prophet Jeremiah that he himself both gave the Old Testament long before and would also give the New after he had come into the flesh, [1715] by saying: *Behold, the days are coming and I will draw up a new testament for the house of Judah and the house of Jacob, not the same as the one I gave to their fathers*.<sup>325</sup> It is evident from this that the same Son of God handed over each Testament at different times: he had plainly spoken earlier through the prophets in the Old Testament, and he had also later preached in the New through the apostles. So his saying *Therefore every* [1720] *scribe who is educated in the kingdom of the heavens is like the head of a household* shows that an educated bishop, whom he calls a scribe, if they have examined all the secrets of the Scriptures and have instructed their people well and faithfully and have offered themselves as an example by living rightly will receive immortality in the kingdom of the heavens and be made into a similar glory through the heavenly brightness, just as the Apostle related: *Our behaviour*, he says, *is in the heavens. From there also we wait for the Saviour*, [1725] *our Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our humble body to become like the body of his glory*.<sup>326</sup> John, likewise, says: *Dearest friends, the Son of God has not yet come, which we know will happen. But when he has come, we shall be like him*.<sup>327</sup>

**M. LXXVI.** [Matthew 14:6–11] *But on Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced in the middle of the dining room and* [1730] *pleased Herod*. Dancing is understood as rejoicing. This, then, was Herod's rejoicing, since they were celebrating his birthday. When she had pleased Herod, he said that he would give her whatever she asked. She, not knowing what to ask, turned to her mother for advice and was told to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a dish. The dish signifies the last part of supper. So it would come to pass that, in the last times, the girl (meaning [1735] the Church) would receive the head of Christ. Therefore the Church is understood as the body and Christ as its head. When she had received this head, the girl *took it to her*

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**321** Cf. Isaiah 6:6.

**322** Cf. Genesis 28:12–13.

**323** Cf. Exodus 25:17–22.

**324** Habakkuk 3:2.

**325** Jeremiah 31:31–32.

**326** Philipians 3:20–21.

**327** 1 John 3:2.

*mother*: this shows that the Passion of Christ was to be preached through the apostles to the synagogue. For there were already churches which also preached to the synagogue. So this was the reason why the girl received the head and presented it to her mother. It involved a daughter because the Church and the apostles have always been named in the figure of children:<sup>328</sup> [1740] as David says, *Hear, daughter and In place of your ancestors are born to you children*,<sup>329</sup> meaning the apostles.

**M. LXXVII.** [Matthew 14:15–20] *But once it was evening his disciples came up to him saying: The place is deserted and the hour has now gone past. Send the crowd away, then, so that they may go around the villages and buy food for themselves. But Jesus said: They do not need to go. Give them something to eat. They replied: We have nothing except five loaves and two fishes.* This demonstrates that evening is the culmination [1745] of the earth, the time at which the Lord took on a human body and came into the world. A *deserted place* shows the Jewish people, who were deserted by the Holy Spirit because of their unbelief. The Lord himself made this evident elsewhere, when he criticised this very people: *Behold*, he said, *your house will be left deserted for you*.<sup>330</sup> We can understand *villages* as synagogues established in different places: [1750] the apostles thought that the people, as in the time of the Law, should still go to these to buy food for themselves, meaning that they should hear the instructions of the Law. It says *to buy* because they used to give tithes to the Levites and priests. We understand *villages* as synagogues because they have no defensive walls, no towers, no gates of entry, no charm or splendour in their buildings. The Church, however, is called a city as it is encircled by a wall because of [1755] its enemy: this means by our Lord and Saviour himself, who always defends his Church from the attacks of the foe. It also has towers: plainly virgins who by their behaviour tower above all others and are appropriately compared to towers. It also has gates, meaning the apostles whose teaching is the entrance into the Church. It also has various beautiful buildings, which are righteous people who behave rightly. Because, therefore, the Lord [1760] came to make a new Church out of two multitudes of people and to satisfy the hunger of all by his teaching, for this reason he said that *it is not necessary* for them *to go* to the villages (meaning to the synagogues) but to come to the Church which the Lord was already beginning to gather through his apostles. Next, he instructed his disciples that they themselves should give them something to eat, meaning that they should pass on heavenly food to all believers by preaching about the same Son of God: the Law and Prophets were now coming to an end because *the Law and* [1765] *the Prophets go up to John*.<sup>331</sup> *They replied: We have nothing more than five loaves and two fish.* The five loaves are the

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**328** The Latin text of this sentence is corrupt; the translation relies on the alternative suggested in the critical apparatus of the CSEL edition.

**329** Psalm 45:10; 45:16.

**330** Matthew 23:38.

**331** Luke 16:16.

five books of Moses and the two fish are taken as the two Testaments. As for his order that the people lie down *on the grass*, this shows that believers should rest from their former evils and cease for the future. For *grass* signifies our bodies, as [1770] Isaiah says: *All flesh is grass* and so on.<sup>332</sup> The fact that it related that the Lord took the five loaves and two fish and blessed them, broke them and gave them to his disciples, *and the disciples to the crowds*, shows evidently that the five loaves (meaning the five books of Moses) could not satisfy the people before the Lord himself had disclosed to the apostles all the mysteries of the Law and the prophecies which had been written about him. They, in turn, were taught by the perfect [1775] master and instructed about everything, about these five books of the Law of Moses, which are the five loaves, and the two fish, the preaching of the two Testaments. They passed on this spiritual food to everyone who came to belief and rested in the Church, showing that the Son of God had been preached in the same Law. Whether, however, it is in this place with five colonnades in which *a multitude of sick people was lying*,<sup>333</sup> or [1780] the five husbands of the Samaritan woman,<sup>334</sup> or even the five stones which David had and used to strike the foreigner,<sup>335</sup> the same five books of the Law of Moses are understood. Concerning the tradition of the Law, it is evident that *twelve full baskets* are left over:<sup>336</sup> these are plainly the twelve apostles full of the Holy Spirit, by whose teaching we are fed each day after the food of the Law.

**M. LXXVIII.** [Matthew 14:22–33] *Immediately, the Lord Jesus ordered his disciples to climb in and go before him in [1785] the boat, and to cross the strait while he sent the crowd away. And having sent the crowd away he went up a mountain to pray alone. But when evening fell he was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea being tossed by the waves, for the wind was against them. But at the fourth watch of the night, he came to them, walking on the water.* The boat which the apostles are ordered to climb in is understood as the Church; this is struck in the sea (meaning in this world) by the opposition of the enemy and, [1790] especially at a time of persecution, by the waves of various trials. Solomon also mentions this ship in his book when he speaks about the character of this same Church: *She was made*, he says, *like a ship which buys goods from afar*:<sup>337</sup> this means the Church, because she bought all people who were far from God *at a great cost*:<sup>338</sup> plainly the blood of the Son of God. *But at the fourth watch*: when he came; the coming of the same Lord is indicated, [1795] when he saw fit to take on flesh for our sake. For he himself came

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<sup>332</sup> Isaiah 40:6.

<sup>333</sup> Cf. John 5:2–3.

<sup>334</sup> Cf. John 4:17–18.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. 1 Kings 17:40–51.

<sup>336</sup> The Latin text of the beginning of this sentence is corrupt; the translation “the tradition” relies on the alternative suggested in the critical apparatus of the CSEL edition.

<sup>337</sup> Proverbs 31:14.

<sup>338</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:20.

in fourth place after the Law, the Righteous Ones and the Prophets: this is the meaning of *at the fourth watch*. To walk on the sea is evident: it means to trample on the world. But it is literally true that he walked on the sea to show that he was the Lord and the creator of the earth. For who has ever been able to walk on water except the Son of God alone, Christ, who long before [1800] had said through Solomon in the character of Wisdom that he would both walk *on the waves of the sea* and penetrate *the depths of the abyss*,<sup>339</sup> which means that he descended to the underworld? We see that all this has been fulfilled. Therefore when the disciples shouted out, terrified by such a sudden and strange miracle and thinking it was a ghost, the Lord *spoke to them* to strengthen their faith: *Stand firm; do not fear: I am*. This was so that they would understand that it was he who [1805] long before had said to Moses: *I am who I am*.<sup>340</sup> It had been said about him in Genesis that *the Spirit of God was borne above over the water*.<sup>341</sup> Peter, then, when he had recognised that it was the Son of God, asked to go to him, *getting out of the ship* in confidence because the Son of God was walking on the water: he was safe for as long as he kept himself fixed on the rudder of faith. When, however, as the wind grew stronger, he feared a little, like a human: he immediately began to be endangered in the firmness of his faith. [1810] But because he soon begged for help from the Son of God, he deserved to be rescued. At the end, he is asked: *You of little faith, why did you doubt?* So we are instructed by this example that we should always remain unchanging in faith. Human frailty was also shown in Peter: even though this has power and firmness of faith, at a time of trial, however, it needs the help of the Son of God. This shows that, without help from Jesus, someone may be endangered. [1815] That Jesus climbed in the boat and the wind ceased evidently indicates that the Son of God dwells in his Church and restores tranquillity to those who are within, having removed the storm of the world which threatened the people of the same Church, as in a shipwreck. *But those who were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying: He is truly the Son of God*. [1820] So, then, it comes to pass that, as often as we struggle with the trials of this world and receive peace from the Lord, so more and more we glorify the Son of God and display his strength, giving thanks through him to God the Father that he has rescued his Church from the storm of the world and restored safety to his people.

**M. LXXVIII.** [Matthew 15:21–28] [1825] *And having gone out from there Jesus went back into the regions of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from those areas began to shout, saying: Have mercy on me, son of David! My daughter is badly troubled by a demon. But Jesus did not reply a word to her. And the disciples came up and asked him: Send her away, because she is shouting after us.* The woman is from Cana: she is a Gentile and is the figure of the Church coming to belief from all the

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**339** Cf. Ecclesiasticus 24:5 (Sirach 24:8 in the Vulgate).

**340** Exodus 3:14.

**341** Genesis 1:2.

Gentiles. When she [1830] had recognised the son of David, plainly the Son of God whom the prophets had said would come from the offspring of David and rescue all Gentiles from the devil, she appropriately sought mercy. She asked on behalf of her daughter who was troubled by a demon, meaning on behalf of the multitude of the Gentiles who were bound up in the error of idolatry by an unclean spirit. *Yet Jesus did not reply a word to her*: the Lord was concealing, not because he was not going to provide what she sought, [1835] but so that the faith of the woman might be made evident to everyone. The apostles, however, who are the counsellors of the Church, seeing that the woman was pursuing the mystery of the same Church, assist her themselves with their prayers. As for what they say, *Because she is shouting after us*, they showed that after the Resurrection of the Lord the Church would shout to the Lord and come to belief. The Lord replied that he was not sent *except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, because [1840] he had come especially to save the Jewish people on account of the merits of their ancestors, had they only wished to believe. But because they were blinded in their mind and refused to accept the author of life who was sent to them first, just as John says *He came to his very own and his own did not receive him*,<sup>342</sup> salvation was transferred to all the nations. However, when the woman insisted and persisted in persisting to ask him to help her,<sup>343</sup> the Lord replied, in order to make evident [1845] the faith of the woman, that it was not permitted *to take the bread of the children and throw it to the dogs*. He shows his own body as bread, while the dogs are understood as Gentile people. So the Lord says that such great grace should not be handed over to Gentile people because they are unworthy. The woman agreed to this by saying *Indeed, Lord*: meaning, ‘You speak truly that they do not deserve this.’ But because she knew that salvation was also promised to the Gentiles, she added that even [1850] the puppies eat *from the scraps which fall from the table of their lords*. It showed in the puppies that all the Gentiles would come to belief and signified that they would eat from the scraps (meaning from the teachings of the prophets and the apostles) which fall from the table (meaning which are separated from the gathering of the Jewish people) for the refreshment of the human race. For the table is understood as the gathering of the people, according to David.<sup>344</sup> As for the words *of their lords*, she showed [1855] the two persons of the Father and the Son. So the woman recognised that the Son had proceeded indescribably from the Father before all worlds, plainly Lord from Lord, and she therefore said *of their lords*. The Jewish people, who listened to the Law and the Prophets, could not understand this. For this, the Lord appropriately praised the faith of the woman and granted what she sought. For he said: *O woman, great is your faith. May it be for you as you wish*. By saying *O* he indicates the culmination [1860] of

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342 John 1:11.

343 The word translated as “in persisting” is corrupt.

344 Cf. Psalm 69:22.



the world, because *O* is the last letter in the Greek alphabet:<sup>345</sup> this is the time at which the Church believed in the Son of God and recognised that the Lord had proceeded from the Lord.

**M. LXXX.** [Matthew 15:29–31] *And when Jesus had crossed over from there, he again came beside the Sea of Galilee and going up onto a mountain, he sat there. And crowds came up to him with people who were lame, blind, crippled, mute and many others, and they cast themselves at his feet and he cured* [1865] *all of them, so that the crowds were amazed.* The evangelist relates that the Lord went up a mountain and there cured many people who had various sicknesses. For the prophet relates that such signs would come to pass at the coming of the Lord, that the lame would be cured, the blind would receive sight, the crippled would regain soundness of body and the mute would speak.<sup>346</sup> Even though we can see that these were fulfilled on a literal level, they also have a spiritual meaning, however, for the mountain [1870] which the Lord went up and sat on can be understood as the Church in which the same Son of God takes his seat. David too bears witness about this mountain in a psalm: *Who goes up to the mountain of the Lord, or who will stand in his holy place,*<sup>347</sup> meaning in the Church. A mountain is presented in a comparison with the Church because just as a mountain is lofty and towers over everything, so the Church is lofty, knocking at heaven and excelling all with its heavenly behaviour. [1875] As for the many crowds which it said went up to the Lord, this shows the multitude of believers coming to the Son of God in the Church. *Having lame people with them:* plainly those who have limped off the way of truth; and *blind people* likewise: those who were blinded in their mind and unable to see *the light of life.*<sup>348</sup> *The crippled* signifies those who had been crippled by the enemy through serious sin. *The mute,* it also shows, are those who either did not know the Son of God or did not give thanks to God. [1880] There is no doubt, however, that all these are cured by the Lord as they come to the Church and are cured every day. Next it said that they cast them *at the feet of the Lord and thus they were cured:* this is to show that after the Ascension of the Lord, everyone who comes to the Church through the preaching of the apostles is healed by heavenly medicine and freed from their sins as from an illness. The feet of the Lord are understood as the apostles because through [1885] them the preaching has run throughout the whole earth: this is particularly because, coming after Moses and the prophets in the very last time, they are taken as the very last part of the body, the feet. David, too, in the psalm where he says in the character of the Lord *But my feet were almost dislodged,*<sup>349</sup> showed that these same apostles

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<sup>345</sup> The reference is to *omega* (Ω). Fortunatianus himself seems consistently to have used Latin characters for rendering Greek.

<sup>346</sup> Cf. Isaiah 35:4–6.

<sup>347</sup> Psalm 24:3.

<sup>348</sup> Cf. John 8:12.

<sup>349</sup> Psalm 73:2.

would hasten back at the Passion of the Son of God. Both in the Apocalypse and in many other places, the feet of the Lord signify the same apostles.<sup>350</sup> [1890] Therefore it evidently indicates that all of these people flock to the Church, cured in their inner conscience through the apostolic teaching. *So that the crowds were amazed seeing the mute speaking*: in truth, it is a marvellous thing that such great graciousness of God was shown in regard to sinful humans, so that those who were considered mute by the Lord because they prayed to idols and denied the Lord would later come to believe in the Church and speak and acknowledge the Father and the Son; [1895] those who were limping from the paths of righteousness were placed on the journey of the way of salvation and began to go forward with upright steps; those who had been blinded in their mind have been illuminated by the angel Raphael and have opened the eyes of their heart to the Lord, so that they might see and recognise *the true light* (plainly of God).<sup>351</sup> *And*, it says, *they glorified the Lord of Israel*: each day, the Lord is glorified in us, because having given the healing of eternal salvation he has freed us from such great [1900] evils and made us sinners righteous, if only we hold on with a firm stance to the righteousness which we have received from him.

**M. LXXXI.** [Matthew 15:32–37] *But Jesus summoned his disciples and said: I pity the crowd, because it is now three days that they have abided with me and they do not have food, and I do not want to send them away hungry in case they faint on the way. But his disciples say: Where, then, in a deserted place are there so many loaves that [1905] the crowds will be fed?* The Lord saw that the people were struggling with hunger for the divine word, just as he had said through the prophet that there would be *hunger on the earth, not hunger for bread or thirst for water, but hunger for hearing the word of God*.<sup>352</sup> So he called his disciples and said *I pity the crowd*, to show that he had come in order to aid those in need of heavenly nourishment and to give spiritual food to all believers, through the mercy of the Father. *Because it is three days*, he says, [1910] *that they have abided with me*: he openly indicates that all believers will abide in the faith of the birth, Passion and Resurrection of the Lord, which are *three days*. But to have abided *for three days* with the Lord can also be understood as those who have abided in the instructions of the Law, the Righteous Ones, and the Prophets, and afterwards have believed in the coming of the Lord and passed over to the law of the Gospels. *And*, he said, *they do not have food*, because the Son of God had not yet suffered, [1915] who would give true nourishment to all who believe in him. *And I do not want*, he said, *to send them away hungry in case they faint on the way*: this obviously shows that the whole human race could have fainted through the starvation of divine famine and the unfruitfulness of heavenly hunger, had not the Lord himself come as the bread from heaven to refresh the hearts of believers.

350 Cf. Revelation 1:15 as interpreted by Victorinus of Poetovio, Commentary on the Apocalypse 1.5.

351 Cf. 1 John 2:8.

352 Amos 8:11.

The Lord questioned them about the number of loaves they had. *They said: Seven and a few little fish. Seven loaves* indicates the sevenfold [1920] total of the Holy Spirit, as Isaiah says when he speaks about the Lord: *The spirit of wisdom*, he says, *rests on him and the understanding of the spirit of fear*,<sup>353</sup> in order to show that all the gifts of heavenly graces remain in the Son of God and are allotted by him to each individual according to the nature of their faith. This is just as the Apostle too bears witness: *To one is given a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge, to another faith in the same spirit*; and later he adds: [1925] *But one and the same Spirit performs all these things, apportioning them to each as it wishes*.<sup>354</sup> For the seven lamps on the golden candle-stand with seven branches placed in the Tabernacle also delineate the same total of the Holy Spirit.<sup>355</sup> But the seven eyes of the one stone in Zechariah as well,<sup>356</sup> and likewise the seven torches of fire burning in the Apocalypse and the seven stars set at the right hand of the Lord<sup>357</sup> signify nothing other than the sevenfold total of the Holy Spirit. [1930] These seven loaves, then, are understood as meaning the seven-formed Holy Spirit, from whose teaching through the apostolic preaching it is evident that all believers are filled. As for the account of the *seven hampers filled* from the seven loaves, that showed that there would be seven churches which were gathered through the apostles by the instruction and teaching of the same seven-formed Holy Spirit. And although it is right to understand one Catholic Church [1935] because of its one faith, because of the total of the seven-formed Holy Spirit, however, it is said that there are seven churches. For example, Noah, who waited on the Spirit of the Lord, was rescued from the flood together with seven souls in order to show the same total of churches.<sup>358</sup> Similarly in the writings of Solomon we read that there were seven pillars, meaning seven churches, on which *Wisdom built its house*.<sup>359</sup> But Isaiah too affirmed that seven [1940] women take hold of one man,<sup>360</sup> meaning seven churches and one man, plainly the Son of God whose name they beg to be pronounced over them, meaning the name of Christ. In the Apocalypse, John also interpreted the seven churches as the seven candlesticks between which he says he saw the Son of God walking.<sup>361</sup> Knowing this reason, the most holy Apostle Paul, although he could have written more, directed his letters to

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353 Cf. Isaiah 11:2–3.

354 1 Corinthians 12:8–9, 11.

355 Cf. Exodus 25:37.

356 Cf. Zechariah 4:10.

357 Cf. Revelation 4:5; 1:16.

358 Cf. Genesis 7:13.

359 Cf. Proverbs 9:1.

360 Isaiah 4:1.

361 Revelation 1:12–13.

none but [1945] seven churches. Likewise John, too, in the Apocalypse is ordered only to write to seven churches.<sup>362</sup>

**M. LXXXII.** [Matthew 16:1–3] *And the Pharisees and Sadducees came up to him testing him and asked him to show them a sign from heaven. The Lord replied: When it is late, you say 'It will be calm', for the heaven is red with clouds.*<sup>363</sup> *Late* showed the end of the world [1950] when the Lord himself saw fit to come to rescue the human race and give calmness to the world. *Calm* indicated that calmness would spread throughout the globe with the shining light of the Gospels, once all murkiness of error had been dispersed through his Passion. *Because*, he said, *the heaven is red with clouds*, making evident to them the redness of the blood of his Passion shown in the heaven *with clouds*. This is plainly the preaching [1955] of the prophets, who are understood as clouds for the reason that they water the hearts of humans like heavenly rain on the land. *The heaven*, on the other hand, is shown as the preaching of the same prophets, because they themselves had heavenly behaviour and announced that the Son of God would come and descend from heaven. So that you may know that the prophets are understood as clouds, the Lord makes it evident through Isaiah when he speaks about the vine in the character of the Jewish people: [1960] *And*, he says, *I will command the clouds not to drop rain over it*,<sup>364</sup> plainly meaning the prophets. So Isaiah also showed that redness of blood in his testimony about the Passion of our Lord: *Who is this*, he said, *who comes from Edom? The redness of his garments is from Bozrah.* And he added: *Why are your garments red?*<sup>365</sup> But also when in Genesis Jacob proclaimed the Passion of the Son of God in the character of Judah, he said the following: *He will wash his robe in wine, and [1965] his mantle in the blood of the grape.*<sup>366</sup> Likewise Solomon too speaks about the Lord from the character of the Church: *My brother*, he says, *is fair and red, pierced by the multitude.*<sup>367</sup> In order that the Lord should fulfil these prophecies, he sent forth blood with water from his side when he had been struck by the soldier's spear.<sup>368</sup> So this is the redness of blood that has been shown, as the preaching of the prophets demonstrates: it seemed to be hidden by the cloud of the Law and prophecy until the coming of the Lord. [1970] But after the Son of God had suffered, these were taken away and he gave calmness to the earth, making evident to all believers that his Passion had been proclaimed by the prophets. *And in the morning, 'Today there will be a storm'. For the heaven is red with gloom. In the morning* is understood as the Resur-

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**362** Revelation 1:4.

**363** Although the last phrase is normally taken as part of the interlocutors' direct speech, Fortunatianus' exegesis below shows that he attributes the words to Jesus.

**364** Isaiah 5:6.

**365** Isaiah 63:1–2. For Bozrah, Fortunatianus gives the Latin form *Bosor*.

**366** Genesis 49:11.

**367** Song of Songs 5:10.

**368** Cf. John 19:34.

rection of the Lord, through which the darkness of sin was put to flight and the light of truth was shown. As John says: *Since the darkness [1975] is passing and the true light now shines.*<sup>369</sup> *A storm*: this plainly means the storm of persecution which would come to the apostles from the Jewish people, because their task was to make evident to all people that same redness of blood, meaning the Passion of the Son of God proclaimed by the prophets, through the preaching of the newness of the Testament.<sup>370</sup> But his words about *the heaven with gloom* showed that the apostles, who proclaimed that the Son of God had suffered, [1980] would have cause for gloom as the same Jews remained in their unbelief.

**M. LXXXIII.** [Matthew 18:1–4] *On that day his disciples came up to Jesus* and so on. *He called a boy*: the Lord wants himself to be understood as the boy, the person which he took on from Mary. *He stood him in the middle of them*, meaning he came in the middle of the Jews. So he teaches in particular that the one who is more humble is therefore greater *in the kingdom of the heavens*, but more humble like a baby. For although [1985] our Lord Jesus Christ was God, he made himself humble in order to be human as well. So inasmuch as anyone is holy in this way they should make themselves humble by the same amount, and have the evil-doing of a boy, since boys do not keep evil-doing in mind. Therefore the Apostle says: *Be children in evil-doing*<sup>371</sup> (...) our ancestors were said to be boys, just as David and all the other holy ones were called boys.

**M. LXXXIII.** [Matthew 18:6] [1990] *But whoever causes to stumble* and so on. *A millstone for donkeys* to be hung *on their neck and to be drowned*: there are two millstones (which are the two Testaments) which grind wheat, meaning that they break up the grain. The Saviour said that he was the grain: *Unless a grain of wheat falls on the land* and so on.<sup>372</sup> So the two millstones also have a beam of wood, which is the Passion of the Lord. No-one makes their testament unless they are about to die. So the two Testaments are the two millstones; [1995] the wood is the Passion; the grain of wheat from which flour is made is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ: this is the Church which, when it receives unrefined people (meaning those who persist in their old behaviour), strips them down from that old behaviour and breaks anything which is opposed. For just as grains cannot stick together of their own accord, so an unbelieving people, once it has come to belief, passes through the mill: the outer coverings of the grains are removed [2000] and it becomes flour; it is sprinkled with water (which is baptism) and it becomes bread, meaning that the people are made one through their belief and through baptism they become the Church, which is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the millstone for donkeys to be hung on the neck

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369 1 John 2:8.

370 Fortunatianus may simply mean “of the New Testament”.

371 1 Corinthians 14:20.

372 John 12:24.

is the penalty for causing someone to stumble, as this person is judged by both Testaments. The donkey is the person who deserves to be judged for their foolishness: they do not receive what they deserve as a Christian, but as [2005] a Gentile. Mention is therefore made of a donkey because of their foolishness.

**M. LXXXV.** [Matthew 18:8] *But if your hand or foot causes you to stumble.* Here too it makes mention of the system of ecclesiastical rank. For who, if they have been made to stumble, can cut off their hand or foot or tear out their eye? For anyone who did this would become their own executioner. But it remains that if a hand should be said to make another stumble, you should understand it as a presbyter: [2010] if they are found to be blameworthy, they should be separated from the body of the Church. Likewise the foot too, which is a deacon, but also the eye, which is a bishop. Because the Church is the body of Christ Jesus, they are therefore members of this body, and a presbyter is called *a hand*, a deacon *a foot*, a bishop *an eye*. If any one of these, therefore, is found to be guilty, it says they are to be cut off and thrown out so that the body (which is the Church) [2015] can reach eternal life through their removal, plainly once evil people have been separated and rejected from it.

**M. LXXXVI.** [Matthew 18:10] *See that you do not despise one of these tiny ones.* This shows that every believer has angels to watch over them. For we find that there are also angels of places and regions, as when the angel came down from heaven to the shepherds and *there appeared with him a multitude* [2020] *of angels praising the Lord,*<sup>373</sup> which are plainly those I mentioned above. For Scripture also recalls that angels both came down and went up.<sup>374</sup>

**M. LXXXVII.** [Matthew 18:12–13] *What do you think if someone owned one hundred sheep and one of them went astray.* The sheep which went astray, the hundredth one, is a figure of all peoples who wander through the mountains, meaning that they err in various types of idolatry. So the shepherd looks for this one, *having left* [2025] *the ninety-nine behind*, which are the Jews. For Abraham, as a sign of this and a figure of the Jews, is circumcised when he is ninety-nine years old. So the shepherd comes and looks for the sheep: when he has found it, he calls it back and rejoices over it. The full total starts to be in his right hand, the one hundred which is the Church, and the ninety-nine in the left hand; the left part is plainly the synagogue.<sup>375</sup> So when he was one hundred years old, Abraham fathered a son, [2030] Isaac: this shows that when a person comes to belief, whether from the Jews or from the Gentiles, they are held on the right side and are the Church, which has been allotted the rank of the right side. Jesus says that he rejoices more over this one than over those who have not repented. So the Jews, who say that they are righteous, are

<sup>373</sup> Luke 2:13.

<sup>374</sup> E.g. Genesis 28:12; John 1:51.

<sup>375</sup> Fortunatianus is referring to the Roman system of finger-reckoning: see note 67 on p. 9 above and the Introduction (p. XX).

reproached and left behind by the Father; the single one, meaning the whole Gentile people, who come from their idolatries and have been in the grip of the diverse teaching of demons, [2035] is sought and carried back on the shoulders of the shepherd. It becomes the people of the Church, plainly the one hundredth on the right side, over which the shepherd rejoices more than over the ninety-nine.

**M. LXXXVIII.** [Matthew 19:2] *And many crowds followed him and he cured them.* The curing of the weak means, then, that whoever was burdened with any illness was healed. But the spiritual understanding indicates the curing of the inner person, that those who were weak in their eyes and ears, meaning [2040] in sight and hearing, received healing. The eye is understood as a teacher: the Jews were weak in their eye because they did not act rightly. So their sight, meaning their teaching, was obscured. The ear is the people, who are said to hear what is said. The people were ailing, plainly due to their bad masters. Those who were crooked, meaning looking down at the ground in the manner of animals, are made straight, plainly away from demonic superstition. For that Canaanite woman was crooked, [2045] plainly through the oppression of Satan.<sup>376</sup> Withered hands, too, are restored to wholeness: earlier they were unfruitful, now they begin to be productive. So sight, which is the eyes, is recreated in this way when it is restored to wholeness. It follows that hearing, too, is restored, meaning the ears which are the people who hear. The crooked are healed, they return intact, plainly from the oppression of Satan, and they look straight up at heaven; the hands become productive which [2050] were formerly considered withered.

**M. LXXXVIII.** [Matthew 19:3–5] *The Pharisees came up to him testing him and asking whether it was permitted for a man to send away his wife. He replies and says: Have you not read that the one who made them in the beginning made them male and female and said and so on.* So the Saviour shows that he had made humans and had spoken through Adam as follows: *For this reason, a man sends his father and mother away.*<sup>377</sup> These, then, are not the words of Adam, [2055] but of the Saviour through Adam, as he was Adam's creator. *And he will hold fast to his wife:* Eve, whom Paul interprets most openly as a figure *in Christ and in the Church.*<sup>378</sup>

**M. LXL.** [Matthew 19:11–12] *But he said to them: Not everyone grasps this word, but those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who are born this way from their mother's womb,* meaning those who remain as virgins from their cradles. He says that another type of eunuch is *forced by humans,* meaning [2060] that they have followed the teaching of holy people and abstained, at least since the time of their baptism. A third type of eunuch is made up of *those who have castrated themselves for the kingdom of the heavens.* What does it mean (...) that someone should castrate

<sup>376</sup> Cf. Luke 13:11–13.

<sup>377</sup> Cf. Genesis 2:24.

<sup>378</sup> Cf. Ephesians 5:32.

themselves, but that they should even abstain from their own wife for the sake of the heavenly promises. He said that these are the three types of eunuch: those who are born; those who are forced; those who have castrated themselves for the kingdom of the heavens. For Moses, too, is found to have abstained from his own [2065] wife, especially when it was incumbent on him to speak with God each day. Aaron also abstained out of necessity for the sake of the daily sacrifice. Noah, as well, abstained after he had heard the voice of God, and he was not permitted to participate in sexual intercourse. These and those similar to them are the ones who have castrated themselves for the kingdom of the heavens. Those who were born eunuchs, on the other hand, are those such as Mary [Miriam], sister of Moses and Aaron,<sup>379</sup> like Joshua son of Nun, Moses' successor, like the three boys,<sup>380</sup> like [2070] Jeremiah, Elijah and Elisha. *Therefore whoever can grasp it, let them grasp the word:* they will receive not the land but heaven. So Mary is found to go before women: this means that through her behaviour, self-control and chastity, as she was plainly a virgin, for this reason she went before them.<sup>381</sup> For the holy ones are also figured in the form of towers, because they tower above the walls, which are all the other people.

**M. LXXI.** [Matthew 19:13–14] *Then infants were brought to him for him to lay hands on them.* The reason that boys should not be prevented, [2075] since *the kingdom of heaven belongs to such people*, is evident: those who are innocent can obtain (...) *Do not prevent them:* for when the Lord comes all should be admitted to the promises. But our ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are also called boys, as are the prophets and all holy people and even the apostles themselves. There is yet another type of boy, as the Apostle says: *Do not be made boys in your thinking.* But what follows? *Be children in wrongdoing.*<sup>382</sup>

**M. LXXII.** [Matthew 19:16–26] [2080] *Behold, a man came up to him and said to him: Good master.* The man came up, as to a human being, and then he said *Master.* So, in order to show that he was not a human being but God, Jesus said: *No-one is good except God.* But he had already said: *I am the good shepherd.*<sup>383</sup> Who is the good shepherd but the one who is also the good God? Because he, the good one, came down and sought his lost sheep like a good shepherd (...) so God is good. He is also speech, as John says: [2085] *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God;*<sup>384</sup> he has also already been called 'word' by David, speaking in the character of the Father: *My heart has uttered a good word.*<sup>385</sup> So Jesus

<sup>379</sup> The Latin *Maria* is used for both "Mary" and "Miriam"; see also note 87 on p. 13 above.

<sup>380</sup> The tradition that the three boys in Daniel 1 were eunuchs is reported, for example, by Filastrius of Brescia, Catalogue of Heresies, 110.9, and Jerome, Commentary on Daniel, 1.3–4a.

<sup>381</sup> Cf. Exodus 15:20–21 and note 87 on p. 13 above.

<sup>382</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:20.

<sup>383</sup> John 10:11.

<sup>384</sup> John 1:1.

<sup>385</sup> Psalm 45:1.



did not wish to deny that he was good, but he simply wished to be called God. So when he says that the one is good whose word he is, he also shows through the same one that he is good. The young man, then, was trained in the Law; when he had told him the commandment through the Law, he said that he was a practitioner of them.<sup>386</sup> [2090] Next *he said: I have done all these. He said to him: Go, sell your goods and give to the poor.* Having heard this *he went away sorrowful. For he had many possessions.* This man was the figure of the Pharisees keeping the Law. When he heard the words *Sell and give to the poor*, he was saddened. To sell and give to the poor may be heard in a literal sense, yet it is a figure of the Gentiles, who are poor. So this man was not able to be their steward, just like that rich man [2095] who banqueted lavishly,<sup>387</sup> or the one who said *I will destroy my barns and storehouses.*<sup>388</sup> So the figure of the camel also follows: the Saviour says that *it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man in the kingdom of the heavens.* What a harsh thing! Next, as his apostles were saddened, he said that what is *impossible with humans* is possible *with God*. He speaks of a camel because of its twistedness: this is the figure of the Gentiles, plainly because of their various [2100] sins. The nations are therefore called twisted. A needle, however, is a small and very sharp object: it is the figure of the word because of its point. The eye of a needle is the narrow and very tight path. The person who does not attend to worldly matters passes along this path and the person who does not have the baggage of sin is admitted through that narrow entry. So in this way a camel enters through the eye of a needle more easily than a rich man enters into the realms of the heavens. But rich men can be understood not only [2105] from their wealth but also from their sins; alternatively, it is because the Pharisees boast that they are rich since they have been given the Law. *Everything is possible for the believer*<sup>389</sup> shows that (...) whoever believes from faith that there is one Spirit, all things can be possible for them. But it is impossible for that person who attends to the world and is devoted to earthly behaviour.

**M. LXLIII.** [Matthew 20:1–16] [2110] *The kingdom of the heavens is like* and so on. He presents the likeness of the head of a household, plainly of the one who hires workers for a vineyard (...) plainly the one, of whom it says *If they have called the head of the household Beelzebub.*<sup>390</sup> Jesus is clearly expressing his own character. *In the early morning:* Enoch, Noah and all the others (...) but he has put *the sixth* and *the ninth* hours without separating them because this relates to the Law and the Prophets. But coming himself *at the eleventh* hour, he sends his apostles. Hired for

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**386** The words translated as “he had told him the commandment through the Law” are corrupt; the last phrase could be applied to Jesus as “the maker” (rather than “a practitioner”) of the Law.

**387** Cf. Luke 16:19.

**388** Cf. Luke 12:18.

**389** Mark 9:22.

**390** Matthew 10:25.

one silver coin [2115] and receiving a silver coin themselves as well (meaning the commandment or instruction), they preached to all nations.<sup>391</sup> Just as a silver coin contains no image but that of the ruler, so too the apostles, having received the silver coin (meaning the commandment) proclaim Christ as the ruler to all nations. So those who were first are angry because they too received one silver coin, like those who came last, although they thought that they would receive more. This is the figure of those who [2120] are under the Law: they too have received the Lord as ruler, which is symbolised by the coin. *We*, they say, *have endured the heat of the day*. *The heat of the day* was the burden of the Law: these burdens are the heaviest. Once these burdens have been cut off, the apostles receive the simple preaching: this means the food of the right time,<sup>392</sup> plainly of the eleventh hour, which is most evidently understood as the last time. As for the fact that the last also receive the same as the first, this showed [2125] that there is the figure of the same ruler in the Old Testament who also was to be proclaimed through the New. *Therefore when it was late, the lord of the vineyard said*: the vineyard, according to Isaiah and David, is understood as the people.<sup>393</sup> So, to teach them, first the Law is given; it is closely followed by prophecy, as it took place.<sup>394</sup> The anger of the Jews is because they say that they bear the burdens of the Law and they see the Gentiles coming to belief without being circumcised [2130] or subjected to the burden of the Law. They take this badly and grumble about the reward of God's mercy, since they see instead the nations being saved through grace. *We have endured the heat of the day and you have made them the same as us*: they are the same, indeed, as far as pay is concerned, but they are not the same in what they deserve. For although they are the latest and only worked for one hour, they receive the reward of the first. For *In the morning* can be spiritually understood as the Resurrection of the Lord; *the third hour* as that when [2135] the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, came down on the apostles; *the sixth and the ninth* as when Jesus went down to the underworld. The ninth hour could also be the time of prayer, as the Acts of the Apostles mentions that Peter and John went up to pray at the ninth hour.<sup>395</sup> *The eleventh hour* is when all nations will be admitted to belief. As it is related in the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the latter went away having been made more righteous than the former who boasted *I fast twice on [2140] the Sabbath*,<sup>396</sup> and in the story of the two sons, when the younger prodigal was taken back and the elder was angry.<sup>397</sup> So this figure runs through all examples, just as in the ninety-nine sheep and the one which went

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<sup>391</sup> The coin in question is the *denarius*.

<sup>392</sup> Cf. Psalm 104:27?

<sup>393</sup> Cf. Isaiah 5:5; Psalm 80:8.

<sup>394</sup> The words translated as "as it took place" are corrupt.

<sup>395</sup> Cf. Acts 3:1.

<sup>396</sup> Cf. Luke 18:10–14.

<sup>397</sup> Cf. Luke 15:20–28.

astray. Therefore the whole figure of the Jews is in circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath, since they do not understand that it is the true Sabbath which is observed by those from the nations who have come to belief, and who do not have a circumcision made by hand, but the circumcision of their hearts which removes all [2145] faults of the flesh. The Jewish people was indeed earlier, but because of its unbelief it has been made last and the one who was last has been made first. As for what he says that many are called but few are chosen, this shows that even from those who are called there is a choice for the reason that heretics have also been made and, just as the Apostle mentions, there must *also be heresies so that the accepted ones may become evident among you*.<sup>398</sup> This means that those who are accepted are the few chosen.

**M. LXLIII.** [Matthew 20:20–23] [2150] *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him asking that her sons should sit one on the right and the other on the left.* Jesus said to them: *Are you able to drink my cup*, meaning to suffer. The cup is shown as suffering or tribulation. And they said: *We are able*. The Lord replied: *You shall indeed drink my cup*: later, James is killed by Herod and John suffered many tribulations, including when he was on the island of Patmos. This is the meaning of *You shall drink my cup*. [2155] *But to sit on the right or on the left is not mine to give you, but theirs for whom it was prepared by my father*: this could, indeed, be understood as hinting at the ancestors such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the other holy ones or prophets. But the spiritual understanding is this: to sit on the right and left is to receive the preaching which Peter and Paul received, one for those who were circumcised and the other for the Gentiles. This was [2160] what had been *prepared in advance* for others, *namely for those to whom it was given*. For so that you might know that these two would preach, it was shown beforehand about Paul in Genesis as follows: *Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he will consume the plunder and at evening he will give nourishment*,<sup>399</sup> this has a twofold understanding, that he would both preach and suffer. About Peter, on the other hand, the prophet Isaiah said as follows: *Go through the middle of Jerusalem and mark the men*.<sup>400</sup> Peter, therefore, having received the task of preaching to the circumcised [2165] is understood as if he went *through the middle of Jerusalem*. These men are therefore also the two olive branches mentioned by the prophet Zechariah,<sup>401</sup> which are plainly the two leaders of preaching.

**M. LXLV.** [Matthew 20:24–28] *And hearing this, the ten were aggrieved.* So since the others were aggrieved about the two brothers, Jesus set before them the following reason: *You know*, he said, *that the leaders domineer*, meaning those who are

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**398** 1 Corinthians 11:19.

**399** Genesis 49:27.

**400** Ezekiel 9:4 (!); Jerusalem is written as *Hierusalem* here and in the following sentence.

**401** Cf. Zechariah 4:12–14.

first, and the elders exercise their authority. Among you, the one who wants to be greater [2170] shall be your servant. So a servant and a slave are those who are put in charge of the Church, for they serve and minister to the people. Jesus also presents his own character which they should rather copy: *The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve*. Then he also washed the feet of the apostles and, last of all, suffered that he might save everyone through his Passion. This is what it meant that he came to serve, not to be served.

**M. LXLVI.** [Matthew 20:28] [2175] *But when you go in as guests to supper, you should not sit down in first place.*<sup>402</sup> He continues to set before them the reason about the two sons of Zebedee who asked if they could sit with him. So he mentions a supper: *when you have been invited to supper, do not sit down in first place*. It is called a supper because it is prepared once the day has been consumed:<sup>403</sup> it is an image of the New Testament because it is given in the last time, meaning at the end. The preachers and hosts of this [2180] (meaning of the New Testament which is the supper) are Peter and Paul. Indeed, during that very supper, the Lord, the renewer of the testament, showed the mystery of his sacrifice in the blessing of the bread and the cup. So the sons of Zebedee asked to be allowed to sit (...) the more noble, meaning Peter and Paul, who are also ordered to sit in the first places. That, then, is what is meant by *Do not sit down in first place, in case someone more noble than you comes instead*. So rank in the Church should not be solicited [2185] or easily come by, *in case someone more worthy is found* and you are told: *Give them your place, and with a blush you will begin to take the last place*. But it is better to sit down in that place, meaning to call yourself a sinner, just like the tax-collector, and because *the righteous at the beginning of their prayer are their own accusers.*<sup>404</sup> Only then, someone may be chosen for rank and told by the one who asked them to the supper: *Go up still further. And this will be more beneficial for them,* [2190] *because the one who exalts themselves will be humbled and the one who humbles themselves will be exalted.*<sup>405</sup> For Judas sat down in first place, and because of this went downwards: to go downwards is understood as to be degraded or for him to die in the same way that Judas died. But Matthias came up, who took on the apostleship in his place. Because Judas *hanged himself with a noose*, Judas is a figure of the Jewish people who would perish with a noose, meaning through sin. This noose is [2195] the Antichrist, whom the

**402** This addition to Matthew 20:28, similar to Luke 14:8–11, is not in the Vulgate version but found in a number of Old Latin manuscripts.

**403** Fortunatianus seems to be suggesting an etymological connection between *cena* (“supper”) and *consummatus* (“consumed”).

**404** Proverbs 18:17.

**405** Cf. Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14.

Jews wait for as Christ.<sup>406</sup> Judas was hanged from a noose and the Jews hang on for Antichrist.

**M. LXLVII.** [Matthew 20:29–34] *And as they were going out from Jericho, many crowds followed him. Two blind men were also sitting next to the way. When they heard that Jesus was passing, they began to shout: Son of David, have mercy on us.* The two blind men are the two kingdoms of the Jewish people, one in [2200] Jerusalem<sup>407</sup> and the other in Israel, meaning in Samaria. After the death of Solomon, these kingdoms were divided between Jeroboam, Solomon's slave, and Rehoboam, Solomon's son: Jeroboam ruled in Israel and Rehoboam in Judea.<sup>408</sup> So the two blind men are evidently understood as these two kingdoms; they were truly blind because of their unbelief. *They were told by the crowds to be silent; but they shouted all the more: Son of David, have mercy [2205] on us.* This means that through the preaching of the apostles (...) they could come to belief from those same two kingdoms. For anyone who wants to say of those two blind men that one is the Jewish people and the other the Gentiles is wrong about their character: from where would the Gentile people gain the knowledge to say *Son of David, have mercy on us*? It remains that you should understand this as being about those kingdoms. *Beside the way*: not on the way, like the man wounded by robbers.<sup>409</sup> *Beside the way* is put like 'next to the way': for the way [2210] and the truth is Christ.<sup>410</sup> So Jesus, who is on the way, came and healed them: plainly, he restored their eyes. But the spiritual understanding is this: he gave eyes in place of the elders of the Jews by setting the apostles (who are the eyes) on the way and not beside the way to teach them all things, so that they might see truly. Therefore everyone who acts badly is far from the way (meaning beside the way) on which Jesus, who is the Saviour and the true way, would come to his follower. *What [2215] do you want me to do for you? They said: Lord, that our eyes may be opened. And he pitied them and touched their eyes, and straight away they saw and followed him.* To follow is to believe.

**M. LXLVIII.** [Matthew 21:1] *And when they had approached Jerusalem and come to Bethphage. Beth* in Hebrew means 'house', *phage* 'to eat' in Greek. The house is easily understood as the Church, [2220] in which the body of Christ is consumed by the faithful.

**M. LXLVIII.** [Matthew 21:1–9] *Then Jesus sent out two of the disciples saying: Go into the village which is opposite you.* Jesus was showing that Jerusalem would be opposed to the apostles after the Passion of the Saviour, and for this reason he said

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**406** Christ could also be translated as Messiah. Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Antechristus* throughout.

**407** Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Hierusalem*.

**408** Cf. 1 Kings 12.

**409** Cf. Luke 10:30.

**410** Cf. John 14:6.

*the village which is opposite you.*<sup>411</sup> But he identified it as a village because Jerusalem was to be destroyed by the Romans and reconstructed as a village: [2225] this was done by Vespasian, who destroyed Jerusalem and conquered the Jews.<sup>412</sup> *You will find a donkey tied up*: he means the synagogue which is set under the bond of the Law. *And its foal with her. Untie them and bring them to me*: he calls the donkey tame because the people is found to be annihilated by many beatings already, while the foal to be untied and brought to him is the new people. For even if someone is already old, when they come to belief they are made new. [2230] But to untie the foal of the donkey means that through the apostolic preaching it has come to pass that all the former weights of the Law are removed. So to untie means to free from the bond of the Law. Jesus climbs onto the untied foal; garments are also laid on top of it so that Jesus can sit. The foal is therefore the people which believe from the Jews, whom no-one had tamed: the prophets who were often sent were not strong enough to tame the obstinacy of this people. The garments laid on top [2235] are the commandments which are passed down through the apostles. The significance of Jesus sitting on it is that the people who have been taught by the teaching and commandments of the apostles bear the Saviour above them. The one who has been dragged back from errors, plainly idolatry, starts to have the Son of God in the saddle. For the one in the saddle holds and keeps the reins with which they control the animal. So the Christian people, with God in the saddle, is controlled by reins: this means through instruction and holiness and [2240] the fear of God. For the fact that the animal is also spurred on by the rider's heels is a warning in case it stumbles or proceeds in an unfitting manner: it should not return to its waywardness, as if accustomed to its earlier error. So it is reined in with reins, meaning that it is controlled by instruction, so that anyone who happens to have been a blasphemer should now put *a guard on their mouth*;<sup>413</sup> anyone who used to run waywardly through the rough terrain should proceed on the straight way; anyone who happens to have been accustomed to sink through extravagance should now be firm and fixed and strong in order to [2245] be able to deserve the Lord whom they bear. Mention is also made of the prophecy: *Behold, your king comes to you gently, sitting on a donkey and the young foal accustomed to the yoke.*<sup>414</sup> It evidently says that the *donkey* is the synagogue; *the young foal accustomed to the yoke* means the new people of believers from the synagogue which will be Christian. It is accustomed to the yoke because of the instruction of the Law which has been handed down, plainly that of the New Testament. *But a huge crowd spread [2250] their garments on the way.* It pre-

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**411** Throughout this paragraph, Fortunatianus uses *Hierusalem* for Jerusalem, although in the previous chapter the biblical quotation has *Hierosolima*.

**412** An eyewitness account of the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, while Vespasian was emperor, is given in Josephus' Jewish War.

**413** Cf. Psalm 39:1 or 141:3.

**414** Zechariah 9:9 (cf. Matthew 21:5).

sents garments here in a spiritual sense, as bodies. *On the way* means in the commandments of God which the apostles handed down. Next it says: *And the disciples did as Jesus instructed them*. They cut down branches and set them out on the way: this means that they set their bodies in the commandments of God, yet they ought also to set out their children for the name of God. *But the crowds in front and those who were following shouted: Hosanna to the Son of David*. *In front* signifies the ancestors who [2255] had prophesied before him; *following* shows the apostles and all the others who with united voice have spoken praise to the Son of David, meaning Christ the Lord.

**M. C.** [Matthew 21:17–19] *And having left them, he went away outside the town*. Jesus was hungry and, *seeing a fig tree beside the way, he went to it and found nothing*. *The fig tree* is understood as the kingdom of the Jews; Jesus was hungry and went to it, for he was hungry for them. But for Jesus to be hungry meant that [2260] he might refresh with his own words the people who were suffering hunger. He went and did not find fruit: in that kingdom of the synagogue there was no fruit but only the appearance of it, as the tree was covered with leaves. So there was some appearance of the observance and righteousness of the Law but no fruit from which a hungry person might refresh themselves. The tree was *next to the way*: it does not say ‘on the way’, just like the two blind men above also *sitting next to the way*.<sup>415</sup> So, when he had not [2265] found anything on it except only the appearance of righteousness and of the Law, he said: *May no fruit be produced from you in perpetuity*. So he cursed the synagogue and said that it should not bear fruit in perpetuity. ‘Perpetuity’ or ‘eternity’ cannot be understood as anything other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Therefore for as long as people are in the synagogue, plainly in that appearance of righteousness, they will never give fruit to the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, [2270] unless they come to the Church and believe: then will they give fruit. The fact that the tree of figs withered is not pointless. After the Passion of the Saviour, therefore, Vespasian came and conquered the Jews and destroyed the city of Jerusalem: this was the withering of the tree of figs.

**M. CI.** [Matthew 21:27–32] *Jesus said to them: Neither do I tell you in what authority I do these things. What do you think?* [2275] *A certain man had two sons. Going up to the first he said that he should work in the vineyard. He refused to go. Afterwards, driven by remorse, he went. The man went up to the other, who said: I am going, my lord; yet he did not go*. Jesus asked them which of these had done *the will of his father*. When they had replied *The latter one*, he then said *that prostitutes and tax-collectors would go before in the kingdom of the heavens*. For the father here is from the character of the Son of God, who is the father to the two [2280] peoples, Jewish and Gentile (...) whom he calls tax-collectors. He lays the charge against the former that it was rather the latter who heard and believed John preaching.

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415 Matthew 20:30.

**M. CII.** [Matthew 21:33–35] *Hear another parable: there was a man, the head of a household, who planted a vineyard.* The head of the household is the character of God the Father. The *man, the head of a household, planted a vineyard*, meaning that he established a people which he brought out of Egypt into the Promised Land: this is the meaning of [2285] *he planted a vineyard. He surrounded it with a fence:* he provided protection, which it calls a spiritual fence, and a gospel defence. *He dug a wine-press in the vineyard:* for, if a vineyard is to produce wine, it must of necessity also possess a press in which the grapes are crushed. Then he leased this vineyard out to tenants. The tenants are none other than the teachers and elders of the Jews, to whom the people was entrusted for them to pass judgment on them and teach them the righteousness [2290] of the Law. He also *built a tower in it:* the Saviour shows himself, because he was produced by the virgin birth and, like a tower towering over the ramparts of walls, so is his holiness above the behaviour of all the others. *He leased it to tenants,* to the elders or the teachers of the Jews, as we said, *and journeyed abroad. But when the time of fruits had arrived, he sent slaves to the tenants to receive some of the fruits:* his slaves, then, are [2295] the prophets whom he sent; they seized them and put them to death in various ways. Wine-presses, however, represent martyrdoms: they serve with their blood, which they are forced to pour forth with great torture. So, for a wine-press as well (...) for a wine-press does not stand firm for the pressing of grapes without great planks. In the same way, too, when martyrdoms happen, they do not stand firm without great pains and tortures as they are wrenched around. For this is violent suffering. A plank, [2300] however, is understood as idolatry, just as Jeremiah said with regard to idols: *They are in the building like a plank.*<sup>416</sup> And: *Take out the plank from your eye,* meaning idolatry, *and then the splinter,*<sup>417</sup> which is some minute sin. So you see that persecutions arise because of idolatry.

**M. CIII.** [Matthew 21:36–41] *Again he sent to them more slaves.* And so when other slaves too had been sent, they slaughtered these as well. Not just on a single occasion, therefore, did the prophets who were sent to them prophesy. [2305] *Last of all he sent to them his only son, saying: They will respect my son.* On seeing him, they said: *This is the heir. Come, let us kill him,* which they did when they crucified him. Jesus says what would come to pass: *When the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to the tenants? He will bring an evil end to those evil ones and will lease the vineyard to other tenants.* The vineyard leased to other tenants provides fruit, for the Church preserves holiness and righteousness and produces martyrdoms.

**M. CIIII.** [2310] [Matthew 23:23–24] *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, who tithe* and so on. He criticises the Jews on the grounds that they claim both to observe the Sabbath and to keep the commandments of the Law. This is the meaning of *You tithe*

<sup>416</sup> Letter of Jeremiah 6:20 (Baruch 6:8 in the Vulgate).

<sup>417</sup> Matthew 7:5.



insignificant things: *mint, cumin and dill*; but they do not observe *the weightier aspects of the law: judgment, mercy and faith*. If only they had faith that the Son of God has come, then they would also be merciful and guard their judgment, no less, and be reverent! Therefore [2315] the comparison follows of the flea and the camel: the commandment is prefigured in the camel on account of its size. *Leaving the flea but swallowing a camel* means doing all the minute things but neglecting the more important ones, that is rejecting the burdens of the Law. Regarding the figure of the camel, the slave of Abraham too is found to have led ten laden camels:<sup>418</sup> these are the ten commandments of the Law from which everything is derived, which are the written burdens of the Law.

**M. CV.** [Matthew 23:33–34] [2320] *Snakes, offspring of vipers*. Whom does he mean except the Jews, against whom he lays the charge: *You are from your father the devil?*<sup>419</sup> This is not because the devil could produce children, but whoever does his deeds is deemed to be his child. *He was a liar and a murderer from the beginning.*<sup>420</sup> So because the Jews have always been liars and murderers, Jesus says: *Behold, I send to you prophets and wise people and scribes, and you will kill and crucify and hound them from* [2325] *town to town*. This was fulfilled after the Saviour's Passion: for first of all they killed Stephen and James, and they inflicted many serious tribulations on the apostles and all the other disciples by locking them in prisons, beating them and expelling them from towns.<sup>421</sup> So what the Lord had previously foretold that they would do was fulfilled.

**M. CVI.** [Matthew 23:37–38] *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets*. Jesus criticises the Jewish people [2330] who, clearly, live in that city where there is all the observance of the Law and the public place. *How often have I wished* means 'I often warned and accused you through the prophets.' In the end, he himself came but was not received. So he lays a charge against that city: *You kill, he says, the prophets whom I have sent and you stone them; how often have I wished to gather your children*. He lays a charge against the synagogue, saying: *Just as a hen rears her chicks and keeps them warm under her wings, so have I wished, says the Lord, to gather your children.* [2335] *But you refused*; and because you refused, *your house will be left deserted*: plainly, they are deserted by the Holy Spirit which he set as a fence in the vineyard (plainly as spiritual protection). *But a deserted house* takes in those people who are deserted and abandoned by the Holy Spirit. As for his words *underneath the wings*, Moses and Aaron are taken as wings, who led the people out of Egypt as it says in the canticle in Deuteronomy: *It stretched out its wings and took them up.*<sup>422</sup> [2340] But the wings in the Church now are the leaders and the apostles,

<sup>418</sup> Cf. Genesis 24:9–10.

<sup>419</sup> John 8:44.

<sup>420</sup> John 8:44.

<sup>421</sup> Cf. Acts 7:54–60.

<sup>422</sup> Deuteronomy 32:11.

who protect and preserve the Church with their teaching. In spiritual understanding, the hen is taken as the Church: so just as a hen keeps warm, nourishes and cherishes eggs, including those of any other bird which she did not lay herself, so the Church takes up those who come from every nation. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, it keeps them warm under its wings, meaning through the apostolic teaching: these are the wings of the Church. [2345] It fills their hearts and feeds them with spiritual nourishment and, through the Holy Spirit and the protection of its wings, it makes one people for God from the various nations. But so that you might recognise the Church in the figure of the hen, the figure of future hope ran in advance as follows: for example, in the Law we read that the blood of a dead chicken was mixed with water and the people were sprinkled and made holy.<sup>423</sup> So if the chicken by whose blood the people are made holy is understood as Christ, who pouring his blood for [2350] the Church makes her holy, without doubt the hen can be taken as the Church. In the same way, Solomon mentions *The lion cub, because it advances well*, and *The cockerel walking happily among the hens*,<sup>424</sup> meaning among the churches: John also calls the seven candlesticks the seven churches.<sup>425</sup>

**M. CVII.** [Matthew 24:19–21] *But woe to those who are pregnant<sup>426</sup> and breast-feeding in those days.* This means woe to them who, [2355] having neglected faith, *conceive pains and give birth to unrighteousness.*<sup>427</sup> *In winter or on the Sabbath:* this indicates that there are two types, of winter and of the Sabbath, meaning the people of the Gentiles and of the Jews. For just as *in winter* everything is considered to be dry, withered and dead, so this shows that the Gentiles are withered and useless. The Lord warns us, then, not to be found like the Gentiles in a time of persecution or on the Day of Judgment: withered, dry, dead, useless for good works. But he shows that the Sabbath is completely vacant, [2360] because the Jews are engaged in nothing but vacation on the Sabbath.<sup>428</sup> Therefore we must be zealous so that the time of persecution or the Day of Judgment does not find us vacant. For whoever is found like this, *such tribulation* will appropriately come upon them *as there has not been since the beginning of days.*

**M. CVIII.** [Matthew 24:23–26] *Then if anyone should say to you: Behold, here is Christ; behold he is there! Do not believe.*<sup>429</sup> *For false Christs will arise*, just as John

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<sup>423</sup> Cf. Leviticus 14:4–7.

<sup>424</sup> Proverbs 30:29–31.

<sup>425</sup> Revelation 1:20.

<sup>426</sup> The Cologne manuscript breaks off here and resumes early in the next chapter; as noted on p. XIII of the Introduction and note 259 on p. 50, the text of Fortunatianus in the other witnesses has normally been subject to some abbreviation and adaptation.

<sup>427</sup> Isaiah 59:4 (cf. Job 15:35; Psalm 7:14).

<sup>428</sup> The translation reproduces Fortunatianus' word play on *otiosum* and *otium*.

<sup>429</sup> The Cologne manuscript resumes at this point.

mentions that many have gone out from among us who were made Antichrists,<sup>430</sup> [2365] *who were not from us. For if they had been from us, they would indeed have remained with us.*<sup>431</sup> Paul, too, mentions this as follows: *In such a way that he sits in the Temple of God, insisting that he is the Christ.*<sup>432</sup> So they are warned that if anyone of this sort comes under a false name, he is not to be believed. Moreover, Jesus foretold how much effort this person would make regarding the faith of the elect, could he but corrupt any of them. But if someone has built *their house on the rock*,<sup>433</sup> [2370] they cannot be overturned by any whirlwinds or squalls. For Christ is the rock,<sup>434</sup> and the rulers are rivers; the whirlwinds are the orders of the leaders which will rise up to persecute the servants of God. *And evil false prophets:* since false Christs will come, then, how much more will false prophets, who are especially understood as heretics. Since they think that they disturb the faith of the elect, these people *will perform great signs*. So such people will say on the Day of Judgment: *In your name* [2375] *we cast out demons and we performed many acts of power.*<sup>435</sup> But they will be told: *Depart from me into the eternal fire, because I do not know you.*<sup>436</sup> The Saviour obviously shows that these things will take place in the last days, when he says that both false Christs and false prophets will come to shake the faith of the elect. He also gives clear instructions about the times which will come of the Antichrist himself: with his fake prophets, he will perform such great signs in order to deceive [2380] the faithful. So, through his great love for his own people, the Son of God did not want them to be unaware of these times and how they will be, but carefully informed them so that they might be safe through what has previously been foretold. *Behold, in the desert* (meaning in Judea) there is the Christ. The Jews are taken as the desert, because they are deserted and abandoned by the Holy Spirit. Or if they say *in the mountains*, they are not to be believed.<sup>437</sup> *In the mountains* shows the superstition of the Gentiles, who wander through mountains and groves and other out-of-the-way places [2385] through the different sorts of superstitious idolatry. Or *in the innermost core*, that is inside, meaning in secret. Daniel spoke of this, too, as *The abomination in the holy place*,<sup>438</sup> that is *in the innermost core*. And Paul: *In such a way that he sits in the Temple of God, parading himself as Lord.*<sup>439</sup> So when someone is seen to be doing such things in the innermost core, they are not to be believed.

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**430** As observed in note 406 on p. 77, Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Antechristus* throughout.

**431** 1 John 2:18–19.

**432** 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

**433** Cf. Matthew 7:24.

**434** Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

**435** Matthew 7:22–23.

**436** Matthew 25:41.

**437** “In the mountains” is not preserved in any other witness to Matthew 24:26, but the exegesis makes it clear that this was the text expounded by Fortunatianus.

**438** Daniel 9:27 (cf. Matthew 24:15).

**439** 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

For in the Acts of the Apostles, as well, Simon claimed that he was the power of God.<sup>440</sup> So, then, the Antichrist in the last [2390] days will say that he is God. *Whom, as Paul says, the Lord Jesus will put to death with the breath of his mouth.*<sup>441</sup>

**M. CVIII.** [Matthew 24:27–30] *For just as lightning comes from the East.* It therefore shows the sort of splendour with which the Lord will come for judgment: *Just as lightning, it says, which comes from the East and is visible all the way to the West, so will the coming be of the Son of Man.* And it shows from the character of the Church where this [2395] will be, as follows: *Wherever the body is, there the eagles will gather.* Body is said for the Church, as it is the body of Christ. The eagle indicates holy people, as the Apostle says: *They go to meet Christ in the clouds,*<sup>442</sup> when they have been snatched up by angels in the manner of eagles, flying from the four corners of the world. So the body shows the Church: together with this, Christ, the head of the body, will come to judge the future Church (meaning [2400] all holy people) as Peter said: *But what will happen to us? He said to him: At the rebirth, when the Son of Man has taken his seat, you who have followed me will also take your seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*<sup>443</sup> *The sign of the Son of Man will be seen,* which means that on the Day of Judgment, which he now discusses, the celestial bodies will be dimmed. This signifies that many of the holy ones will be degraded in the times of the Antichrist. John says of him in the Apocalypse: *And he dragged down [2405] one third of the stars.*<sup>444</sup>

**M. CX.** [Matthew 24:32–39] *But learn the parable from the fig tree.* It says that the fig tree is the kingdom of the Jews, just as Jeremiah shows two wicker baskets full of figs: one ripe and good to eat, the other bitter and unripe.<sup>445</sup> You see, then, that a choice is made from the same tree, meaning from the same kingdom. Those who are ripe and ready to be [2410] eaten, it says, return from that captivity; however, those who are unripe and have scattered the food,<sup>446</sup> it shows, cannot return because they are bound by various classes of demons. *The more tender branches:* we take these as the apostles from the same people. For everything which had been tender is firm in belief. So they are the tender branches, who also provide fruit for all the others through their teaching. For there is no fruit from the trunk but it grows from the tender branches. [2415] For this reason, then, they are called tender branches because of their fruitfulness. So that you may know that everything tender is good, Abraham takes a tender calf to eat,<sup>447</sup> while Susannah herself in her appearance is

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**440** Cf. Acts 8:10.

**441** 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

**442** 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

**443** Matthew 19:27–28.

**444** Revelation 12:4.

**445** Cf. Jeremiah 24:1–2.

**446** The word translated as “have scattered” is corrupt.

**447** Cf. Genesis 18:7.

shown as beautiful and tender.<sup>448</sup> Whoever has a tender soul more readily obeys the instructions of God. For the Apostle also speaks about the branches of the olive: *If the branches have been broken.*<sup>449</sup> This shows that it is the apostles who have made the Church firm with their richness, [2420] and we who before were from a wild olive have been grafted in there and made partners in the richness of the olive. It therefore shows the signs foretold of the Day of Judgment. Moreover, what Jesus said about the summer being close (meaning the Day of Judgment) and *No-one knows about the day, not even the Son, but the Father alone,*<sup>450</sup> is not to be taken literally. For how could it be that the Son does not know the day, since he says that *All things have been given to me by my Father?*<sup>451</sup> It remains that he says he is ignorant not because he is ignorant, but so that [2425] he might indicate it if he is reminded by repeated requests. The one who tells of the signs of the coming day, then, is not ignorant of the day but teaches perseverance in requesting and tireless prayer so that he might grant and impart what is requested. So he speaks of the sign of the day: *Just as in the days of Noah, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.* So he marks out people who are gluttons, of whom the Apostle says: *Their God is their stomach and their glory in destruction.*<sup>452</sup> They serve their stomach [2430] and do not fast: we find that many have been deceived by this lack of moderation. Adam himself, for the sake of his stomach, plucked the forbidden apple,<sup>453</sup> also, for the sake of his stomach, Esau was called Edom, that is ‘famished’: because of a few lentils he lost his blessing.<sup>454</sup> *The people* itself *sat down for to eat and drink* and be extravagant *and got up to play.*<sup>455</sup> So if anyone now adopts this as an example, the coming day will thus devour them, just like [2435] the flood took those who were *getting married* in the time of Noah: such people are now taken to be immoderate, and do not establish themselves in accordance with the Apostle that *those who have wives should be as if they did not have them.*<sup>456</sup>

**M. CXI.** [Matthew 24:40] *Then there will be two people in a field.* He calls the world a field. In this field, then, he shows that there are two peoples: one is taken up and the other is left. So the Christian people, by its behaviour, [2440] although it may seem to be in the field (meaning in the world) is in heaven, according to the Apostle: *But our behaviour is above in the heavens.*<sup>457</sup> This is also shown in the same way in

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448 Cf. Daniel 13:2.

449 Romans 11:17.

450 Mark 13:32 (cf. Matthew 24:36).

451 Matthew 11:27.

452 Philippians 3:19.

453 Cf. Genesis 3:1–6.

454 Cf. Genesis 25:29–34.

455 Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:7 (Exodus 32:6). The word translated as “for” is corrupt.

456 1 Corinthians 7:29.

457 Philippians 3:20.

the ladder of Jacob, through which some were ascending and others descending.<sup>458</sup> So the Jewish people is descending: it remains – or rather, in fact, is left behind – in the field; the Christian people is ascending, being taken up and *going to meet Christ*<sup>459</sup> (...).

**M. CXII.** [Matthew 24:41] [2445] *Two people milling at the mill.* This obviously shows the synagogue and the Church: he leaves the synagogue behind and takes up the Church. We have already said that a mill consists of two stones and in the middle of them is a wooden beam:<sup>460</sup> these are the two Testaments and the Passion of Christ. The millstone is a character of the elders, who teach people through the teaching of the two Testaments and cast off their old coat, meaning their behaviour. For just as the grains lose their outer covering [2450] and flour is then made from them, out of which bread is made through water and fire, so it shows that, through various tribulations, the people will become one through baptism and the Holy Spirit. For just as grains cannot contain (...) so the former people, too, before it is milled (...) so when it comes to this teaching (plainly of the two Testaments), once all the dirtiness of its old behaviour has been put aside, it becomes suitable to provide food: it is also able to teach [2455] others and feed them with heavenly nourishment.

**M. CXIII.** [Matthew 24:41b] *Two people in a bed.*<sup>461</sup> A bed has two meanings, for it is either tribulation or rest. In the case of the man who was weak for thirty-eight years, it is tribulation;<sup>462</sup> when the widow to whom Elisha came made up a bed for him, it is rest.<sup>463</sup> So, one is chosen: this is certainly the one who suffers tribulations and troubles in this world for the name of Christ. [2460] Those people to whom the Promised Land is given were in rest (...) is left. In a literal sense, however, the one who suffers tribulation here *is taken* into rest, and the one who was in rest *is left behind* in torments.

**M. CXIII.** [Matthew 24:42–44] *Keep watch, then, because you do not know at what day or hour your Lord will come.* He teaches us to keep watch for the signs foretold, so that our minds should always be concerned. When we will see [2465] what was said, then too (...) the times of Antichrist are approaching. One may also hope for the coming of the Son of God. Jesus also offered a comparison: *If the head of the household knew at what hour the thief came, they would keep watch and not allow their house to be broken into.* The house is understood as an actual human while the thief is none other than Satan, who strikes the house incessantly and tries to over-

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**458** Cf. Genesis 28:12.

**459** 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

**460** Cf. lines 1993–1995.

**461** This passage is not in the Vulgate version, but is added in Matthew 24:40 or 41 in several Old Latin manuscripts (cf. Luke 17:34).

**462** Cf. John 5:5.

**463** Cf. 2 Kings 4:9–11 (cf. 1 Kings 17:17–22).

throw it. Antichrist is a *thief and a robber*.<sup>464</sup> For both names easily match him, [2470] since the Apostle indeed says that he *whose coming is in accordance with the working of Satan* is the same as Satan.<sup>465</sup> So he is an obvious robber, for he will come to the Jews to break into them (...) signs on them, meaning his stamp on their foreheads.<sup>466</sup> These are the deeds of a robber, to break in through robbery and to lay waste. But the works of Satan are those by which he persuades humans to depart from true religion and the true God, the Son of God, and to cling to Antichrist, of [2475] whom it is said that *he sits in the Temple of God showing that he is Lord*.<sup>467</sup> It is also the work of Satan to send in different desires and to separate people from faith, like a hidden night-time thief. If the faithful mind recognises him, it keeps watch and prays and drives the shadowy thief away from itself. So Jesus says: *Keep watch, because you do not know at what hour the Son of Man will come*.

**M. CXV.** [Matthew 24:45–51] *Who is the faithful and sensible slave whom the master has set over [2480] his household?* This is understood as a bishop or presbyter giving nourishment to the multitude, for they pass on the commandments. *Nourishment at the right time*: at what time but this one, which is from the Passion of the Saviour? *Nourishment* is not only teaching, but is also the sharing of the sacrament. Therefore the one who has faithfully overseen this distribution will receive a reward and be set *above all good things* in the heavenly kingdom. Whoever *teaches* in this way [2485] *will be called great*.<sup>468</sup> *At the right time*: this is indicated as the time from the Passion of the Saviour up to the Day of Judgment. Paul says of this time: *Serving God, rejoicing in hope*,<sup>469</sup> referring to that reward which is presented in place of hope. *But if that bad slave should say in his heart 'The lord is delayed in coming' and begins to strike out*: this means when he starts to wound the consciences of individuals by living badly, or by teaching heresy, or by living extravagantly. [2490] *But he will eat or drink with the drunkards*: what is this but to commune with unworthy people? Drunkards are those who are full of unrighteousness. But in the Church, what is eating other than communion? *His lord will come on a day which he does not know*: plainly on the Day of Judgment, or on the day on which he makes him retreat from the world. *He will divide him*, meaning that he separates the soul from the body. But dividing means to take the soul away from the body, as [2495] Daniel said in the story of the two presbyters.<sup>470</sup> *He places his share with the hypocrites*, meaning that on the

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**464** John 10:1.

**465** 2 Thessalonians 2:9. In this sentence and the rest of the paragraph, the unusual spelling *Satanatas* is used for the oblique cases of *Satan*.

**466** Cf. Revelation 13:16. The word translated as “obvious” is corrupt.

**467** 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The Latin text is slightly different from the previous quotation of this verse at line 2387.

**468** Matthew 5:19.

**469** Romans 12:11–12.

**470** Cf. Susannah 1:51–63 (Daniel 13:45–61 in the Vulgate).

Day of Judgment he will be sent into Gehenna with his companions, where there is continual flame and everlasting punishment. In this torment, it says that there is the gnashing of teeth and weeping of eyes.<sup>471</sup>

**M. CXVI.** [Matthew 25:1–13] *Then the kingdom of the heavens will be reckoned like ten virgins.* *Ten virgins:* it is certain that the virgins represent the Ten Commandments which were handed down to Moses and handed down by him to the people.<sup>472</sup> [2500] For if you try to explain the total of virgins differently, you will not find it. But because he said that they are reckoned like the kingdom of the heavens, I think this should be understood as the Ten Commandments which were handed down, in which everything is contained. *Five were wise and five foolish, who did not take oil:* this shows that part of the Jewish people would not accept the coming of the Son of God because he has come in humility. But they are foolish [2505] because they did not understand the sayings of the prophets, by whom the coming of the Son of God in humility was announced: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb and she shall bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is translated as 'God with us',*<sup>473</sup> and all the other things which were said about his coming. The part of the people which does not understand is represented in the five foolish virgins. As for the fact that *they did not take oil* in their vessels, the vessels themselves are understood as humans; oil, on the other hand, [2510] is mercy, being the figure of the Holy Spirit which the stupid are not able to possess. So the virgins are understood as foolish, even if they have that commandment of the Law which is to do with insignificant things like fleas, mint and dill, for they leave behind the more important things, which Jesus called *swallowing a camel*. He presented it as a camel because of the greatness of the commandments. Neglecting the more important things but keeping the little ones, they have left behind *faith, mercy and judgment* and the rest of this sort.<sup>474</sup> [2515] So part of the people is deemed stupid because of this, and is deemed to be in the five foolish virgins. In the same way, whoever does not keep the commandments of God is appropriately deemed stupid and foolish. But torches are mentioned because of the greatness of holiness and self-control, just as the servants of God are also understood as lamps: *I have prepared a lamp for my Christ.*<sup>475</sup> Therefore the sensible virgins, *having taken their torches* also *took oil in their vessels*, meaning [2520] that they wait for the coming of the Son of God, girded with all spiritual holiness. For everyone who lives chastely and simply and piously and religiously, who is merciful, waits for the coming of the Son of God. Even if they depart from the body, nevertheless they are with him and will be rewarded for their mer-

<sup>471</sup> Cf. Matthew 24:51.

<sup>472</sup> The verb translated as “represent” seems to be corrupt. Fortunatianus here refers to the Ten Commandments as “the ten words of the Law”.

<sup>473</sup> Matthew 1:23 (cf. Isaiah 7:14).

<sup>474</sup> Cf. Matthew 23:23–24.

<sup>475</sup> Psalm 132:17.



its.<sup>476</sup> *But as the bridegroom was late, they all became drowsy and slept.* There are two understandings of sleep. Some sleep because they do not keep the instructions of God; others sleep [2525] who renounce all worldly matters. Therefore some are asleep to the world and others to God. As the Apostle says, *No-one in the service of God binds themselves to worldly need:*<sup>477</sup> the sort of people who have cut worldly evils out of their heart are asleep to the world, refraining from worldly malice. But the person who is rather careless in the work of God is asleep to God through not doing his will. Instead, this worldly companion, who has mingled with the immorality and the various lusts [2530] which belong to the world, is most evidently found to have fallen asleep to God.<sup>478</sup> So we can easily say that the five sensible ones who took oil and torches are the apostles, who come from that Law (plainly from heaven). They accept the coming of the Son of God, they hand on his commandments to the Church through careful observance and instruct them to be kept. Through this, the Church is taken to be wise because it has mercy, which is oil, [2535] but also the Holy Spirit. *But in the middle of the night:* this shows deep darkness. *A cry is raised* as the bridegroom comes: what cry but the one who is *the voice of one crying in the desert*, as John says: *The one who has the bride is the bridegroom.*<sup>479</sup> The five books of Moses can be taken in the character of the five sensible virgins: in reading these, the Church is called sensible as it recognises the Son of God: plainly, it has self-controlled virgins who await the bridegroom with torches and [2540] a great measure of self-control. They go in to the wedding, and thus the doors are closed. This is what we read took place in Sodom: those who were struck with blindness were not able to enter because they are not allowed and it had been closed.<sup>480</sup> As John says, too: *He closes and no-one opens; he opens and no-one closes.*<sup>481</sup> The entrance of the Church is open, which no-one has been able to close. For it has frequently suffered persecutions from rulers, yet it has never [2545] been possible for it to be closed. *And no-one opens:* it is closed to the Jews and no-one opens it. For the matter is already closed, since they neither have prophets to prophesy to them, nor are apostles sent to them. So everything is closed to them, and when they desire to enter into his glory, he opposes them and says: *Amen I say to you: I do not know you.* And, so that we should be recognised, he instructs us to keep watch with all power, since we have no knowledge of the day and hour of his coming. [2550] Alternatively, because we are unaware of the day of our departure from this body he warns us both to keep watch and also to serve God.

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**476** The words translated as “they are with him” are corrupt.

**477** 2 Timothy 2:4.

**478** The words translated as “this worldly companion” are corrupt.

**479** Matthew 3:3; John 3:29.

**480** Cf. Genesis 19:4–11.

**481** Revelation 3:7.

**M. CXVII.** [Matthew 25:14–30] *For just as a man, about to set out abroad, distributed his wealth to his slaves: to one he gives five talents, to another, two, and to a third, one, to each according to their own personal power, and he set out. And when he comes, the slaves bring him what they have earned. [2555] For he had given out eight talents, which we can understand as being the five books of Moses, one book of all the prophets (as if put in sixth place), while in seventh place comes rest (which is the Sabbath on which our Lord Jesus Christ came), and after his Passion, in eighth place, the Church is erected by the preaching of the apostles: they were sent to preach to all Gentiles, from whom they founded the Church. So the apostles [2560] multiplied the talents (meaning preaching) and, after them, their successors the bishops do exactly the same. But after much time, meaning on the Day of Judgment, when we depart from the body, we present an account of our deeds, just as in the story of that rich man who cried to Abraham when he was being punished and Lazarus who was resting in the lap of Abraham.<sup>482</sup> Therefore the slaves are praised who bring back increased [2565] wealth (meaning preaching). Because of this they are ordered to enter into the joy of the Lord, meaning into the kingdom of the heavens. To be faithful over a few things means during the life of the present generation. To be established in much: what else does this indicate but to rule in that which is perpetual? The slave who received one talent buried it in the earth: he could easily be called a bishop who lives according to the flesh, plainly doing earthly deeds. I know, he said, that you are a harsh man: you reap where you have not sown and [2570] you gather where you have not scattered. So he says to him: Wicked slave, you knew this. Why did you not give my money to the table of the money-changers? I would demand it back when I came. He also says: Wicked and lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I do not sow. These are the seeds of the devil, which our Lord reaps, meaning that he carries away the sins which the devil has sown. I gather where I have not scattered, but the one who is the author of crime. So the Lord says that he collects these seeds and returns to each person [2575] according to their deeds.<sup>483</sup> You should have given my money to the table of the money-changers means preaching the word of God in the Church. For the table is understood as the congregation: just as we gather at table to eat, so we also gather in Church to hear the Word of God. The Lord will come, plainly on the Day of Judgment, and will say: Take that talent from him. This happens even now in the Church: if someone should be found who, by their way of life, does not deserve to preside at the sacrifices [2580] and mysteries, that talent (meaning preaching) is taken away from them and given to another. He will say: Give it to the one who has ten talents. Ten talents are the completion of the Law. For the entire*

<sup>482</sup> Cf. Luke 16:19–25. Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Eleazarus*.

<sup>483</sup> Revelation 22:12.

Law sprang from these Ten Commandments.<sup>484</sup> So if anyone is perfect in these, meaning self-controlled and holy, it is not inappropriate to give them more of what they have. *For in this way everyone who has will be given more and they will abound. Those who do not have, even what they have will be taken away from them:* in the literal sense, he is speaking about [2585] the soul, and the spirit in particular. The person who condemns their soul by living according to the flesh exists in such a way as if they did not exist. So this is the meaning of *What they do not have will be taken away from them.* Alternatively, it could mean that even what the Jews now have in their sacrifices (through which they are plainly unable to attain salvation) will be taken away from them and given to those who have ten talents. Who are those who have ten talents but the leaders of the Church, who have received the model of the sacraments which [2590] are celebrated each day in the Church? This very reading also declares that the wicked slave is condemned to everlasting punishment, when there will be the separation of their soul and their body: *There will be the weeping of eyes and the gnashing of teeth.*

**M. CXVIII.** [Matthew 25:31–34] *But when the Son of Man shall come in his majesty.* This refers to a kingly character (meaning that of God) because it says: *And all the angels with him* and so on. *And all races will be gathered to him,* [2595] as to a judge, *and he will separate them as a shepherd separates the lambs from the goats.* Without any use of figures, the holy Lord our God describes himself as a king, a judge, the Son of Man and a shepherd. He obviously indicates what he will do, how he will set the sheep on the right but the goats on the left. But we have already often said that the right is related to one hundred, because the total of one hundred, after ninety-nine, is placed in the right [2600] hand.<sup>485</sup> Having lived for this many years, Abraham fathered Isaac; at ninety-nine he was circumcised, the total which is placed in the left hand, which are the Jews. Even now, because of their unfaithfulness, they are the figure of the goats. *The sheep from the right:* this is the Church, called a sheep from its innocence, for the reason that it clothes others and provides a covering. *The goats from the left:* these are the useless people of the synagogue and barren sinners. So he says [2605] to them: *So long as you did not do this to one of my little ones, neither did you do it to me. Then he says to those who are on his right: Come, blessed ones of my father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the establishment of the world.* This will be when *the Lord, coming on the Day of Judgment, will repay each person according to their deeds:* he establishes some in eternal life, meaning the people on the right-hand side; others he subjects to everlasting punishments, meaning the people on the left-hand side. So he says that it is

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**484** Literally “from the ten words”, which is how Fortunatianus identifies the Ten Commandments in the previous chapter.

**485** Fortunatianus is referring to the Roman system of finger-reckoning; see note 67 on p. 9 above and the Introduction (p. XX).

always necessary to do good, with no [2610] exception of character, because he says that whatever is done to one who suffers need is done to him.

**M. CXVIII.** [Matthew 26:14] *Then one of the twelve went away, who is called Judas Iscariot and so on.*<sup>486</sup> This was in order that the scripture of the prophets about Judas might be fulfilled, who would receive thirty silver coins<sup>487</sup> and betray the Lord, as Jeremiah the prophet had said.<sup>488</sup>

**M. CXX.** [Matthew 26:31–34] [2615] *Then Jesus says to them: All of you will be made to stumble in this night.* He said *In the night* because night had control of all people: no light was in anyone, since *they had all turned away*.<sup>489</sup> He showed that it was written that they would flee from him: *I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered*. Peter, in reply to this, said: *Even if everyone stumbles, I will not stumble*. Jesus said to him: *You will deny me three times before [2620] the cockerel crows*. But Peter, as a human, boldly said *Even if everyone*, not prefacing it with ‘if you wish, I will not stumble’. For this is ⟨...⟩ if any human says that they will do something in their personal power and does not say beforehand ‘If God wishes, I shall do it’, they speak out of line. Their words will be empty, as they are those of a human: they will have no effect. So when he says *I will not stumble*, he is told: *Before the cockerel crows you shall deny me three times*. Jesus shows [2625] that Peter too is still in the grip of a certain murkiness of night. Next: *Before the cockerel crows*. For when the cockerel begins to crow, there is already hope that light will come. So Peter was still *in the night*, and Jesus therefore said that Peter would deny him. But when the cockerel crowed: this means Christ, who is taken as a cockerel in accordance with that sacrament which we have already said is written in the Law: *The blood of a chicken is mixed with water and the people is sprinkled and made holy*.<sup>490</sup> Alternatively, it is because Solomon said: [2630] *The cockerel walks around confidently among the chickens*,<sup>491</sup> meaning among the churches, which John also mentions in the seven candlesticks.<sup>492</sup> But when the cockerel crowed, Peter *wept most bitterly*. There is another reason why he said that the disciples would be made to *stumble in the night*. This refers especially to the time when Cornelius the Gentile came to belief: this was a stumbling-block to the Jews and the disciples themselves, since Peter too was criticised for his action.<sup>493</sup> But *a stumbling-block in the night* [2635] means among the nations, who can truly be taken as the night. So it was a *stum-*

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**486** Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Scarioth* for Iscariot.

**487** The coin is specified as the Greek *stater*.

**488** Cf. Zechariah 11:12–13 (!).

**489** Psalm 14:3; cf. Romans 3:12.

**490** Leviticus 14:4–7; see also line 2346.

**491** Proverbs 30:31; there are slight differences between this quotation and the form given at line 2351–2352.

**492** Revelation 1:20.

**493** Cf. Acts 10:25–11:3.

*bling-block in the night*, meaning because of the Gentiles when they had been admitted to belief. The crowing cockerel foretells that there will be light, which everyone who (...) him, and spiritual understanding: the one who believes Christ is the true cockerel and the light will have everlasting day; he will no longer see the darkness of night, for he will experience Christ the Lord as the sun.

**M. CXXI.** [Matthew 26:38] [2640] *Then he said to them: My soul is sorrowful to the point of death.* This is not because Jesus was sorrowful, but because he was signifying especially the sorrow of the Jewish people, whom he always especially loved. But he says *My soul* for the reason that it was given by him: this means that, when he had made a man, he breathed a soul into him. How could it be that he should say *to the point of death* when death was frightened of him? How, then, could we believe that he was frightened of death, since he [2645] raised the dead himself? But the heretics, who do not understand, are usually made to stumble by this chapter. So he was saying not that his own soul was sorrowful, but rather the soul of the Jewish people. The fact that he says *My soul* is because it was from him, and given to Adam, from whom the entire human race was made.

**M. CXXII.** [Matthew 26:40–45] *And he came to his disciples and found them sleeping* and so on. (...) *Keep watch* [2650] *and pray.* But going away he began to pray that, if it were possible, the Passion might pass from him. He prayed three times because of the Trinity. *And he came to the disciples; he found them sleeping. For their eyes were heavy.* For there was no-one who was not filled with that sleep of unrighteousness. So he says: *It cannot happen unless I drink it.* For the prophets had said that Christ suffers. So, in order to complete everything which the Scriptures declare would take place, he says: [2655] *May your will be done.* After he has prayed, he says to his disciples: *Rest.* This means: ‘Sleep from the evils of the world.’ For there are two types of sleep: some are asleep to the evils of the world and keep watch for God, while others are asleep to the commandments of God.

**M. CXXIII.** [Matthew 26:47–50] *Behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came.* Judas, arriving with a crowd, gave the sign and is told: *For what have you come, friend?* So that everything which had been written *would be fulfilled.*

**M. CXXIII.** [Matthew 26:51–52] [2660] *Behold, one of those who were with Jesus* and so on. Peter, having taken out his sword, *cut off the ear of the slave of the leader of the priests.* The slave is plainly the figure of the sinful Jewish people: *For everyone who commits a sin is a slave to sin.*<sup>494</sup> As for the fact that *he cut off his ear*, Peter took away their hearing, just as the prophet said: *Give them, he said, eyes so that they do not see, and ears so that they do not hear.*<sup>495</sup> For the sword signifies the word of God. [2665] Therefore Peter, having received preaching and a commandment, turned to the Gentiles and took away hearing from the Jews. *Put away the sword:* this shows

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494 John 8:34.

495 Romans 11:8 (cf. Jeremiah 5:21; Psalm 115:6–7).

that many of them, too, will believe after the Passion of the Lord when Peter and the other apostles preach. But in a literal sense it is necessary that whatever one person does to another, they receive the same in return.

**M. CXXV.** [Matthew 26:65] *Then the leader of the priests, tearing his garments. Garments* are understood as people. [2670] Many of the Jews who would come to believe were to be torn, as it says *And the rocks were torn open*:<sup>496</sup> this means that the harsh people who had rock in their breast came to belief. *And the tombs were opened*:<sup>497</sup> we ourselves, who have been brought from death into belief, have been called as if from death and, coming out of the tomb, have believed.

**M. CXXVI.** [Matthew 26:69–71] *And one of the serving maids came up to him.* The fact that another serving maid came up to Peter a second time [2675] showed that there were two congregations, one of the Jews and the other of the Sadducees. This was fulfilled at the time when Stephen suffered, as is read in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>498</sup>

**M. CXXVII.** [Matthew 26:73] *And after a little while those who were standing there came up and said to Peter: Truly, you are one of them.* Peter, denying the man, acknowledged the Son of God, as indeed he had said before: [2680] *You are the Son of God, the Christ*.<sup>499</sup> *Those who were standing came up and said to Peter:* those standing are understood as the priests who serve at the Temple. They also persuaded the people that Jesus should be raised on a cross. But it says that they are standing because they had neither a field nor anything of their own, but they received tithes.

**M. CXXVIII.** [Matthew 27:3–9] *Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing.* This greedy man, who thought that he could have possessions [2685] in the world, and so took the thirty silver pieces, *led by remorse brought back the silver pieces and hanged himself with a noose.* Judas is the figure of the Jewish people: the noose is the Antichrist, on whom the Jewish people have to hang. So when Judas had brought back the silver pieces, from that money the priests *bought the field of the potter for the burial of foreigners.* The field is the Church, according to Isaac: *Behold, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a full field*.<sup>500</sup> A field full of fragrances: [2690] for in the Church, the various flowers and fragrances are virginity, self-control, holiness, modesty, mercy. *The field of the potter:* of Christ himself, who is the potter because he made humankind from the earth. *For the burial of foreigners* showed that everyone who is baptised will be foreigners to the world and, according to the Apostle, be buried with Christ in his baptism.<sup>501</sup> *The field of blood:* the Church, plainly redeemed

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<sup>496</sup> Matthew 27:51.

<sup>497</sup> Matthew 27:52.

<sup>498</sup> Cf. Acts 6:8–7:59. This chapter probably suffers from a lacuna or other form of textual corruption.

<sup>499</sup> Matthew 16:16.

<sup>500</sup> Genesis 27:27.

<sup>501</sup> Cf. Romans 6:4.

by the blood of Christ. Then already, it was made clear [2695] that the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled.<sup>502</sup>

**M. CXXVIII.** [Matthew 27:51] *Behold, the curtain of the Temple was torn into two parts.* This signified that part of the Jewish people would believe after the Passion of the Saviour. *The earth was shaken:* this shaking of the earth showed that all people would be shaken by the preaching of the apostles throughout the globe. *The rocks were split:* all this truly took place, but it also showed [2700] that it would come to pass that anyone who was hard of heart would be split, meaning that their heart would be opened so that they believed. *Many bodies of the holy ones rose again:* it showed that many would believe after the Passion of the Lord.

Here ends the discussion of the Gospel according to Matthew. 129 chapters.

Here begins the discussion of the Gospel according to Luke. The whole Gospel of Matthew, however, [2705] contains everything, because the other Gospels have also spoken of the one Lord (...) can be understood.

**L. praef.** Luke, observing the rule of the Law, begins his explanation from the priesthood of Zechariah. Because this Gospel contains the reason for the two kingdoms, Judea and Israel, which were created after the death of Solomon,<sup>503</sup> he makes mention of the two sons when the prodigal younger one returns and the father [2710] sacrifices a calf in his joy.<sup>504</sup> He also mentions the tax collector and Pharisee praying in the Temple,<sup>505</sup> and the request of one of the two crucified robbers, who is told: *Amen I say to you that you will be with me today in Paradise.*<sup>506</sup> It is appropriate, therefore, that the tax collector is made righteous; it is also appropriate that the prodigal younger son who has used up everything is received with rejoicing.<sup>507</sup> But Luke observes the rule of the Law with regard to the seventy-two who were sent out *before his face*,<sup>508</sup> and the twelve apostles [2715] (...) the seventy palm trees and the twelve springs in Elim.<sup>509</sup> But in addition, the circumcision in the flesh on the eighth day after the Lord was born and the sacrifice for the first-born is most evidently demonstrated.<sup>510</sup> He also goes back through the genealogy upwards, beginning with

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**502** Zechariah 11:13 (!); cf. Matthew 27:8–9.

**503** Cf. 1 Kings 12.

**504** Cf. Luke 15:22–23.

**505** Cf. Luke 18:10–14.

**506** Luke 23:42–43.

**507** The phrase “who has used up” is textually corrupt; it may originally have read “after doing penance”.

**508** Luke 10:1.

**509** Cf. Exodus 15:27.

**510** Due to the preceding lacuna, it is unclear how this sentence is connected with the preceding one and how it should be understood.

the Saviour,<sup>511</sup> making evident the Ascension. The Gospel according to Luke is therefore the face of a calf, because it is the instruction of the Law.

**L. I.** [Luke 2:1–12] [2720] *But it happened in those days that a decree went out from the Emperor Augustus that the whole globe should be registered. This first registration took place under Quirinius, the governor of Syria.*<sup>512</sup> Joseph too went up at this time in order to be registered. *When Quirinius was governor*, which means *dominator*. The registration could not therefore have taken place at any other time except when Christ was born in the flesh, by whom we will all be assessed. We should admit our sins to him, [2725] as John entreats and says: *Who showed you to flee from the coming wrath? So, produce fruit worthy of repentance.*<sup>513</sup> That Jesus is wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a cradle showed that people would come from all the Gentiles (meaning from the most dreadful behaviour), because the swaddling-clothes are ⟨...⟩ and surround the body of Christ, meaning that the Church would be made from them. The cradle signifies the character of the elders, because they satisfy with their teachings those who come: this [2730] is from the character of the Church. Next, in *an inn* ⟨...⟩ for the inn is the synagogue. So just as an inn and a stable have an entrance and an exit, it thus shows that the Saviour was indeed born in the synagogue but went out from there and is now in the Church, of whose body he is the head.

**L. II.** [Luke 2:34–35] *And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary [2735] his mother: Behold, he is set for the ruin*, meaning for the unbelievers: whoever has not come to belief will suffer ruin. Who are these but the Jews, to whom the prophets ⟨...⟩ about him, and had always written? For this reason, Simeon too soon recognised Christ and, as a believer, blessed the Lord. *And for the resurrection of many*: whoever believes, then, just as Simeon believed, will without doubt be in the resurrection. *And as a sign which speaks against*: this is what was said to the apostles by the Jews, [2740] who denied that he had risen again. *And a sword will pass through your own soul*: even though Mary perished by the sword, this still showed in her figure that the Church would be persecuted by the sword after the Passion of Christ. He therefore said: *And a sword will pass through your own soul*, meaning the Church, of which Mary is a type. Just as the Virgin Mary bore Christ, so too the Church (which is a fruitful virgin) each day produces a people for God through rebirth [2745] by water and the Holy Spirit.

**L. III.** [Luke 3:7] *So he began to say to the crowds which were going out to be baptised in his presence: Offspring of vipers, who showed you to flee from the coming wrath?* So John criticised the children of Israel and said: *Offspring of vipers, who showed you to flee from the coming wrath?* And the Lord himself had said to them as

<sup>511</sup> Cf. Luke 3:23–38.

<sup>512</sup> The etymology of *dominator* given below (based on the Greek κύριος) indicates that Fortunatianus used the spelling *Cyrinus* for Quirinius, although the Cologne manuscript has *Quirinus*.

<sup>513</sup> Luke 3:7–8.



follows: *You are from your father the devil.*<sup>514</sup> So the charge of being offspring of vipers [2750] is not made against the Jews without cause: it could not happen unless there were some reason for it. A female viper, therefore, when she conceives, drags the mouth of the male inside her with her own mouth: when she has climaxed and her lust has been sated, she kills the male and conceives. Once she has conceived, her children come out through her side, almost as if avenging their father, just as Peter was told: *Everyone who strikes with the sword will die by the sword.*<sup>515</sup> So everyone receives what they have done in return. The viper [2755] is the synagogue: it killed Christ, and later was deserted by its children, meaning that they put it to death. So the viper has this likeness. And because it has the most dreadful and incurable poison, so the children of the synagogue are said to have *the poison of asps on their lips.*<sup>516</sup>

**L. IIII.** [Luke 3:8–9] *But already the axe has been placed at the roots of the trees.* The *axe* signifies the authority of the word; a tree is sometimes put for a kingdom or for a person. So he says that those people are cut out [2760] who do not *produce worthy fruit of repentance.*

**L. V.** [Luke 3:15–16] *But as the people thought about John and everyone pondered in their hearts whether perhaps he was the Christ, he denied it and said: Someone stronger than me will come, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.* But concerning sandals it is written in the Law that, if a brother dies and does not leave offspring, his brother should take his wife and raise up [2765] offspring in the name of the dead man: if he refused to approach her, then his sandals were removed in the sight of everyone and it was called: The house of one without sandals.<sup>517</sup> However, even if someone takes the wife of a brother or a relative, no-one is found to have produced offspring in the name of the dead man and called them by his name, for this is reserved for the one in whose name offspring should be produced and be called by his name.<sup>518</sup> Therefore the apostles, Peter and the rest, as if they were one man, [2770] received the Church after the Passion of the Lord and raised up a child in the name of the one who had died. For it was in Antioch at first that the disciples were called Christians:<sup>519</sup> so it happened that the child in the name of the dead man was called Christian, after his very name.

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**514** John 8:44.

**515** Matthew 26:52. This account of the viper is found in many ancient Greek and Latin authors, but it may first have been connected with these biblical verses by Origen. It is also found in the *Physiologus*.

**516** Psalm 140:3.

**517** Cf. Deuteronomy 25:5–10.

**518** The Latin text of this sentence is unclear: “the one in whose name offspring should be produced” may be identified with Christ.

**519** Cf. Acts 11:26.

**L. VI.** [Luke 4:13] *And once every temptation was finished*, meaning overcome, *the devil*, beaten and overthrown, *went away from him until the right time*. This plainly means the time of the Passion, when [2775] the devil was able to send himself in the heart of Judas to hand the Lord over to the Jews.<sup>520</sup>

**L. VII.** [Luke 4:38–39] *But arising from the synagogue he entered into the house of Simon and Andrew. But Simon's mother-in-law was in the grip of great fevers*. He sets free Peter's mother-in-law, who was burning with fevers. This shows that the Lord, who can heal all illnesses, is there to be asked. Spiritually, the mother-in-law of Peter is the synagogue: therefore, those who believe from the synagogue become like Peter's women, meaning [2780] wives, since he himself is sent to spread the Gospel and cleanse from sins, which are easily understood as fevers. Believers, then, are holy and serve: this means those from the Jews, whose likeness is borne by Peter's mother-in-law. When she was freed from the fever, she *got up and began to serve them*.

**L. VIII.** [Luke 4:40–41] *But when the sun had set, everyone who had weak people with various sicknesses [2785] led them to him* and so on. Christ is called the sun. *When it had set*: this certainly shows his Passion. As many as were able to come to the Church in the grip of *various sicknesses* (meaning those bound by the diverse injuries of sin) were healed. *Putting his hand on each, he healed them*: a hand stands for a multitude or for authority. Here, however, it means authority: when the apostles received this, they cured and healed those who came to belief. [2790] *Demons cried out and left the people*. Isaiah had said that this would take place: *He will put his hand into the holes of asps*,<sup>521</sup> meaning on those people who are beset by evil spirits (plainly by demons). He drove them out *as they cried*, appropriately, because they were being tortured.<sup>522</sup> Finally, recognising his authority, they acknowledged *that he was the Christ*.

**L. VIII.** [Luke 5:1–4] *But it came to pass that the crowds surged towards him to hear the word of God. And [2795] he was standing beside the pool of Gennesaret<sup>523</sup> and he saw two boats standing* and so on. *Jesus climbed into one boat belonging to Simon and asked him to put out some distance from the land*. The *two boats* show two congregations of peoples, one from the Jews and the other from the Gentiles, which are the two callings. Then, he climbs *into the boat belonging to Simon*, whom he made the leader of preaching and sent to the circumcised. *Put out some distance from the land* means that, at the beginning, he began to speak not in a profound way [2800] but so that those who still remained in earthly behaviour could understand. Even if he told some parables, he explained them. But later, once he has already raised the

<sup>520</sup> Cf. John 13:2.

<sup>521</sup> Isaiah 11:8.

<sup>522</sup> The word translated as “he drove them out” is corrupt.

<sup>523</sup> Fortunatianus uses the spelling *Genesar*.

souls of his audience from earthly behaviour, he said *Put out into the deep*: this means that he began to make deeper and more profound mysteries evident. *Let down your nets for a catch*, plainly after they had received preaching. For *nets* means the preaching of the word; in the sea means in the world; *for a catch* [2805] of fish, plainly of people. Through preaching, he was to lead them to belief from the depths of the sea as if from the abyss, plainly from the furthest darkness, and to bring them to salvation.

**L. X.** [Luke 5:5–6] *And Simon said to him in reply: Teacher, struggling through the whole night we have caught nothing, yet at your word I will let down my nets. Through the whole night*, because it was truly night and [2810] darkness, and the minds of all were blinded. *Yet at your word I will let down the nets*, meaning ‘I will obey your command’. And he sent out the net and caught *a multitude of fish*, which is those who crowd together from all the races. Through the apostolic preaching, a multitude came to belief after the Passion of the Saviour. *The nets were breaking*: he showed that there would also be heretics, who would tear apart true preaching for their own wish and think up new teachings for themselves, [2815] as if they had fallen back in the world. For it is necessary that whoever is not inside the net must return into the sea. This also shows that people were inside the Church and, having broken the preaching, left: they had become heretics, clearly, and they were bound up in worldly activities, as if they had retreated to the world from the Church.

**L. XI.** [Luke 5:7] *And they filled both boats so full that they were sinking.* The fact that the two boats were filled [2820] with a multitude of fish, *so full that they were sinking*, shows the reason for the two callings. *So full that they were sinking*: for to sink is nothing other than to be baptised. Such, indeed, is the custom and the instruction of the Church that the children of God who come to it are spiritually renewed through the rebirth of water. This, then, is the meaning of *so full that they were sinking*, that they were baptised. Because Jesus was there on the boat, we should, of necessity, understand that Jesus, [2825] our Saviour, is always in the ship (meaning the Church). So, in his name all who come to the Church are baptised.

**L. XII.** [Luke 5:8–10] *When Simon saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees. He implores him and says: Go away from me, Lord. Go away from me, Lord* is not to be understood as it stands: instead, Peter judges himself unworthy to submit to Jesus’ wonders. Seeking pardon for his sins, he says that he is not [2830] worthy of such preaching that he should be sent. Moses, too, also did this, saying *I am not worthy of being sent to your people, the children of Israel.*<sup>524</sup> That is what Solomon also says: *The righteous at the beginning of their prayer are their own accusers.*<sup>525</sup> So, then, Peter too says that he is not worthy. Those are found all the more worthy who judge themselves unworthy. He says: *Because I am a sinful human. But he was seized by wonder at the catch*

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524 Exodus 4:13.

525 Proverbs 18:17.

*of fish*: so, while [2835] he was wondering, he is chosen for that preaching. *He says to him: Do not be afraid. From now you will be giving life to people.* The one who formerly caught fish in the sea is chosen as a fisherman. He is sent out into the world with preaching, and he begins to fish for humans: plainly, this is to pull them out from the world, so that he might give them life in God through the baptism of water and through the Holy Spirit. Jesus therefore said: *You will be giving life to people.*

**L. XIII.** [Luke 5:12–14] [2840] *And it happened that he was in one of the towns, and behold: a man full of leprosy fell face down before him and said: If you wish, you can cleanse me.* This shows that, through belief, if someone believes with all their mind that something can happen, what they seek can happen. For *everything is possible for one who believes* and has faith.<sup>526</sup> *I do wish: be cleansed!* ‘If you believe that I can do this, for this reason you have it.’ *I do wish: be cleansed!* So God has this wish, that we should implore him with all our mind. The man [2845] with leprosy, because it is written in the Law about the cleansing of leprosy, showed that there was a believing people from the Jews, who were all smitten with leprosy (plainly through their evil behaviour). So that you may know that this really is about the people from the Jews, Jesus said to the man who was now cleansed and healed: *Go, show yourself to the priest and make the offering for your cleansing, so that it may be a witness to them,* so that they might know that no-one purifies from leprosy except God; the works of God should themselves *be a witness to them* [2850] if they did not believe.

End of this section.

**J. praef.** John, the most holy evangelist, was the youngest among all the apostles. It is he whom the Lord held when the apostles were asking which of them was the greatest, and said: *Whoever does not become like this boy* and so on.<sup>527</sup> It is he who reclined on the Lord’s breast; [2855] it is he whom Jesus loved above the rest.<sup>528</sup> To him Jesus handed over his mother Mary, and handed him as a son to Mary.<sup>529</sup> Gospels had already been written by Matthew and Luke with regard to the human birth of Jesus (Luke was a disciple of Paul), and by Mark (who was a disciple of Peter). Despite these, many heresies arose about the godhead of the Son of God: some acknowledged that he only came from Mary; others said that he was not born [2860] through Mary but had come in the manner of angels; therefore they used to argue about his birth with various purposes and various debates, just as each of them pleased. John, therefore, was the last one to be driven to write a gospel. In this, he put down what the Son of God was beforehand and how he took on flesh, with careful guidance in both topics through the Holy Spirit. He adopted such a beginning that he might impose eternal silence on all heretics, [2865] as is natural for one who

526 Mark 9:22.

527 Matthew 18:3; Luke 18:17.

528 Cf. John 13:25; 21:20.

529 Cf. John 19:26–27.

knew all secrets. For to recline on the breast of Jesus is to know secret mysteries and all that is concealed. So he begins to explain and show the first, heavenly, birth of the Son of God, in which he was born God from God, since Matthew and Luke had already spoken about his birth with regard to the human condition. So John does not recount the birth of the Lord with regard to the flesh so much as what the Son of God was before all worlds. [2870] As the most holy prophet Isaiah says: *Who will recount his birth?*<sup>530</sup> John, then, shows what Jesus was, because the Lord himself also says to the Father: *Glorify me with that glory in which I was with you before the earth existed;*<sup>531</sup> plainly as God, through whom all things were made. Appropriately, John says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. Everything was made through him [2875] and without him nothing was made.*<sup>532</sup> God the Father is without a beginning, unbegotten, unborn, who is not to be contained in any place but rather contains all things himself; he can only be known to the extent that he is willing to allow; he is invisible, incalculable. From him is the Son of God, who was begotten indescribably before any beginning. We acknowledge that he was born in such a way that always the Father and always the Son can be said, with no account of time between them, as [2880] it said: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God, the Word, the Son of God, God with God the Father. And God was the Word.*<sup>533</sup> *This was in the beginning with God:* the beginning before all worlds, because always God the Father and always God the Son, the Word of God, are understood without any insertion of times. But the Father duly always is because the Son always is, and the Son duly always is because the Father always is. *In the beginning was the [2885] Word:* God, plainly the Son of God, born from God. Moses speaks of him as follows: *In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth* and so on.<sup>534</sup> Therefore we see that the most holy John had the same spirit as Moses also: their speech and meaning is, appropriately, found to agree in everything. Moses says as follows: *In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth* and indicates the working of God for the individual days. For when he came to the making of humans, [2890] he recounted it as follows by saying: *And God said: Let us make a human in our image and likeness. And God made a human in the image and likeness of God.*<sup>535</sup> This is therefore God, the Son of God, who made humankind; this is the one of whom John too says *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God, the Word was God with God, plainly the Son of*

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**530** Isaiah 53:8.

**531** John 17:5.

**532** John 1:1–3.

**533** This is the only occurrence of John 1:1 in which Fortunatianus reverses the standard Latin word order; it could also be translated as “the Word was God”.

**534** Genesis 1:1.

**535** Genesis 1:26–27.

God, God with God the Father through [2895] whom all things were made, as Moses related: *In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.* But John says: *All things were made through him and without him nothing was made.* From where, therefore, could Moses have been able to recount the crafting of the world four thousand years earlier unless, as I have said, he described the individual deeds at the instruction of the divine spirit? So the Holy Spirit is unfailing: it fills everyone, but itself remains whole. Just as a torch, when many others are lit from it, [2900] continues with its whole light, so is the Holy Spirit as it pours itself *into each person, as it wishes.*<sup>536</sup> For Moses, having brought the people out of Egypt from the slavery of idols, from the superstition of the world, where they had been devoted to the practice of idolatry with various desires, called them back to the knowledge of God from such superstition, because they reckoned that everything had been carried out by those which they had worshipped. The most holy Moses, demonstrating to the inexperienced and ignorant people [2905] which had been delivered from idols that God, the Son of God, had made everything, therefore said: *In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.* So just as Moses introduces the creator and maker of the earth, leading the people away from idols to the knowledge of God, so the most holy John calls all heretics back to true reason, who in one way or another are found to argue about the Son of God. John shows what he was beforehand, and how he came and put on human form [2910] for the sake of our salvation, in order to oppose the perversity of the heretics in everything. This is the beginning which he adopts: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. Everything was made through him and without him nothing was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father.*<sup>537</sup> Therefore, the Son of God was indescribably born before all worlds from God the Father. [2915] He took his beginning from God the Father, who is without beginning, and, when he was questioned by the Jews as to who he was, appropriately said: *The beginning, which I speak to you.*<sup>538</sup> *Everything was made through him and without him nothing was made.* Through the Word, meaning through the Son of God, the most holy John declares that everything was made; yet he says that the Word is God, the Son of God. David, too, when he introduces the creation of the heaven, the land and the sea, says: *By the Word of the Lord the heavens [2920] were made firm, and by the breath of his mouth all their power, gathering the waters of the sea as in a bottle.*<sup>539</sup> For countless designations correspond to the Son of God, which are taken according to the place, the time, the character or the powers wielded by him. He is called word, wisdom, power, light, hand,

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536 1 Corinthians 12:11.

537 John 1:1–3, 14.

538 John 8:25.

539 Psalm 33:6–7.

arm, lion, lamb, calf, rock and all the rest, as we have said, for the strength and powers which correspond to him. He is understood to be everything, meaning the Son [2925] of God, our Lord, true God from true God, true Son born of the true Father, light from light, born from the unbegotten Father, not made.<sup>540</sup> This is what the Arian heresy endeavours to maintain, which says that the Lord was made, not born, like the other substances which we perceive to be made. Therefore the most holy John made reply to such people at that time already, knowing that there would be people in the last times such as those the Apostle mentions when writing to Timothy: [2930] *In the last days, he says, troublesome times will draw nigh. People will be self-obsessed, puffed up, greedy, proud and so on.*<sup>541</sup> And again he says: *But there will be a time when they will not uphold sound teaching, but will heap up masters for themselves according to their desires. Scratching their ears and, indeed, turning away their hearing from the truth, they will be directed to fables.*<sup>542</sup>

**J. I.** [John 1:1–3] [2935] *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.* The manner, therefore, in which God the Father produced this Word, meaning the Son, was related more fully by David, when he spoke in the character of the Father: *My heart has uttered a good word and so on.*<sup>543</sup> We understand this word as none other than the Son of God, God born of God, through whom all things were made. He is the creator, not a creation; plainly the originator of all creation, by whom all things were made. [2940] As Solomon mentions with regard to the Son of God, speaking in the character of Wisdom: *The Lord created me for his works in the beginning of his ways.*<sup>544</sup> *He created me* must not therefore be taken as if he said that the Son was a creation, but in the way that we see that officers are created to govern the empire: so the Son is thus understood as created to do everything, plainly to complete every work, not as if he were born or made at that point. Indeed, those who are created officers [2945] are created as the people they are, who are able to control or organise the empire, not as people they are not. Therefore the Son of God, who is always God with God the Father, is created for the making of the earth, meaning that he is appointed in order to bring it to completion. Appropriately *everything was made through him and without him nothing was made.* David, too, says: *In the beginning you founded the land, Lord, and the heavens are the works of your hands.*<sup>545</sup> Since, then, he is the originator and maker of all creation, why do some misguided people wish [2950] to suppose him other than how he is?

**J. II.** [John 1:3] *Everything was made through him and without him nothing was made.* The reason he said *Without him nothing was made* must be understood more

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540 Cf. the Nicene Creed.

541 2 Timothy 3:1–2.

542 2 Timothy 4:3–4.

543 Psalm 45:1.

544 Proverbs 8:22.

545 Psalm 102:25.

deeply and profoundly with regard to the meaning of this *nothing* which is reported to have been *made without him*. The most holy Samuel, when he was discussing idols and reproaching the people, said: *Which are nothing*.<sup>546</sup> So we see that idols, which are made by human arbitrariness, [2955] are nothing. It says *Without him nothing was made*: this plainly signifies idols which are seen to be set up on earth not by God's activity but by human error; they are instituted through the most empty invention, and in worshipping them people are deemed to be nothing. But sin, too, because it was not made through him, is *nothing*: people, when they sin, become *nothing*. Next, appropriately, comes:

**J. III.** [John 1:3–5] *What was made in him is life, and life was the light of humans* and so on. Life is nowhere else [2960] except *in him* and in that which he himself made and established, as the Son of God, God, the maker and lover of all things, desired. For example, he says: *If you wish to attain life, do the commandment*.<sup>547</sup> Therefore, if the commandments or instructions of God are carried out, they enable the attainment of life. So the Son of God is life. If anyone does his instructions, they will attain life and will reign in everlasting life in which all the holy ones will be glorified. In order that we might understand more fully that the Son of God is called life, John says [2965] in the following speech: *And life was the light of humans; and light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not grasped it*. Therefore our Lord, when he came and enlightened the blind, brought the dead to life and wiped away everything hostile from our bodies, was indeed the light of humans. This light spiritually enlightened blind hearts so that the eyes of the heart could contemplate and see everything in a spiritual way in order to believe. Life, then, was the light of humans, and it still is today among [2970] those who believe in him with true faith. As for the words *And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not grasped it*, the light was shining, as we have said, in the darkness, meaning among the Jews: although the Lord performed such great miracles, they with their blinded and dull mind did not understand that a human could not have done such things. *And the darkness has not grasped it*: it says the darkness is the Jews themselves, who have remained in unbelief and have not been able to grasp this light. [2975] Hardened, plainly, in their senses and blinded in the eyes of their heart, they have not been able to look on the *true light*.<sup>548</sup> And this is the true meaning of *The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not grasped it*.

**J. IIII.** [John 1:6] *There was a man sent from God whose name was John* and so on. This is John, whom Isaiah prophesied when he said: *A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight* [2980] *the paths of our God*.<sup>549</sup> When

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546 1 Samuel 12:21.

547 Matthew 19:17.

548 Cf. John 1:9; 1 John 2:8.

549 Isaiah 40:3.



he was questioned by the priests and Levites about who he was, he said: *I am the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God.*<sup>550</sup> The Lord himself said of him: *None among those born of women is greater than John the Baptist. The Law and the Prophets have prophesied up to John.*<sup>551</sup> Luke the evangelist, in the fullest description of John's birth, shows that he is the son of Zechariah the priest. He was born from a promise [2985] to parents who were already old and worn out by age, just like the Book of Genesis affirms that Isaac too was born to show that all things are possible for God. Therefore women past childbearing, whose regular function of blood had already been denied (inasmuch as its source was emptied and dried up), who had reached old age barren, are made ready for the gift of childbirth. So Elizabeth bore a son, of whom Zechariah his father said, among other things: [2990] *And you, boy, will be called the prophet of the Most High* and so on.<sup>552</sup>

**J. V.** [John 1:10] *He was on this earth and the earth was made through him, and the earth did not know him.* Although it is related that the earth was made through him and everything which is in it, this specifically says that the earth is the land of the Jews to whom he had come and by whom he was not recognised. But all the other nations are reckoned as *locusts* or *dust* or, certainly, as *drops from a bucket*,<sup>553</sup> [2995] among whom there was still no recognition of God; worshipping idols they were deemed to be nothing. So it specifically calls those people the earth where there was the Law, where there was knowledge of God, where there was prophecy. And appropriately in the following passage it says:

**J. VI.** [John 1:11] *He came to his very own and his own did not receive him.* For the Jews are considered as *his own*, as the Apostle says: *From whom came Christ according to the flesh, who is God blessed [3000] for ever, Amen.*<sup>554</sup> *To his very own:* in fact, to those whom he had freed from slavery in Egypt by the performance of such great miracles, whom he had fed with manna in the desert, whom he had led into the Promised Land, to whom he had always spoken by the mouth of the prophets. He came to them himself, performing wonders among the people, in accordance with the utterances of the prophets, but he was not received by his own. *And his own did not receive him*, plainly that people which had been called by the name of children: [3005] as Isaiah said, *I bore children and raised them up, but they have rejected me.*<sup>555</sup> Appropriately, then, it says *He came to his very own*, just as to his children, *and his own did not receive him*, meaning the Jews. And this is the meaning of: *But they have rejected me.*

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**550** John 1:23.

**551** Matthew 11:13; Luke 16:16.

**552** Luke 1:76

**553** Cf. Proverbs 30:27; Isaiah 40:15.

**554** Romans 9:5.

**555** Isaiah 1:2.

**J. VII.** [John 1:12–13] *But to as many as received him he gave authority to become children of God, as they believed in his name.* We see here another race, meaning a race which had to be made up as one from all nations. [3010] This is a spiritual race which believes in him and displays spiritual behaviour. Appropriately, it says: *Who were born not from blood nor from the will of the flesh nor from the will of a man but from God.* These were already discussed above:<sup>556</sup> those who were born from a promise and those who are found to have been produced by women past childbearing, like Isaac, whose type was related to the future spiritual Christian people. It appropriately says *Who were born not from* [3015] *blood*, meaning from women, to whom that which is natural for them comes every month, *nor from the will of the flesh*, meaning conception in the womb, *nor from the will of a man*, meaning that insemination through which conception is performed at the appropriate time. The spiritual birth through which we are reborn to God through baptism therefore lacks these events and activities. For the Church, which long before was barren, has been made fertile: it bears children without blood, without male desire [3020], who are found to have been made children of God through the baptismal font. And it appropriately says: *Who were born not from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of a man but from God:* plainly we are reborn to God *through the baptismal font of rebirth.*<sup>557</sup> More about this birth is given in response to the questioning of Nicodemus: *Amen I say to you, unless someone is reborn anew they cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said: How can a human be reborn anew* and [3025] *so on. Jesus replied to him: Amen, amen I say to you, unless someone is reborn from water and spirit, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*<sup>558</sup> And it says *Those who are reborn from water and spirit*, meaning that they were born from God. This, then, is the spiritual generation by which the people of God is spiritually born to God every day, just as the same John says in his letter: *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born from God.*<sup>559</sup> For we are born to God through faith.

**J. VIII.** [John 1:14] [3030] *And the Word was made flesh and lived in us* and so on. This passage has already been discussed above in advance,<sup>560</sup> since God the Son of God, who was the Word in the beginning, saw fit to take on human form from the Virgin Mary for the sake of our salvation.

**J. VIII.** [John 1:15–17] *John bears witness about him and cries out, saying: This is the one whom I told you; he who comes after me* and so on. Not inappropriately was John foretold as *the prophet of the Most High* by his father Zechariah. [3035] And John himself duly said that the one who was the Word of God in the beginning had come, by the words *The one who comes after me was made before me, because the Word*

<sup>556</sup> See lines 2983–2989.

<sup>557</sup> Cf. Titus 3:5.

<sup>558</sup> John 3:3–5.

<sup>559</sup> 1 John 5:1.

<sup>560</sup> Lines 37–53 or 2911–2917.

*was before me, since we have all received from his fullness.* The prophets have plainly all received the spirit from his fullness in order to prophesy. John maintains that he himself is also a prophet, when he says *Because the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth* [3040] *were made through Jesus Christ.* This is grace and truth, which he yielded to his people, plainly once they had been reborn into him by a new birth, because *the Law was given through Moses.*<sup>561</sup> The Law had been given as an index of sins, and so that humans should recognise that they were sinners, because it said: *You shall not desire.*<sup>562</sup> The one who has desired has already been forced to sin by that very desire. However, the Law does not free from sin. For whoever had inflicted a wound or bruise on another, [3045] or killed them, was sentenced to an equal retribution so that they should receive whatever they had done to another. *But grace and truth were made through Jesus Christ,* because he has taken away all sins *through the baptismal font of rebirth.*<sup>563</sup> The righteousness of the Son of God makes believers righteous and, appropriately, *Grace and truth were made through Jesus Christ.*

**J. X.** [John 1:18–20] *No-one has ever seen God except the only-begotten Son, who is in the lap of the Father,* [3050] *he has recounted* and so on. We have already set this out in advance above:<sup>564</sup> God the Father, invisible, incalculable, unbegotten, immeasurable. He could not be seen by anyone indeed except by the Son, who proclaimed as much as humans were able to conceive about the Father. *And this is the witness of John the Baptist, when the Jews sent priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem to question him: Who are you? And he acknowledged and did not deny. He acknowledged, saying* [3055] *that I am not the Christ.* So, when the Jews were unsure about John and who he was, they sent priests and Levites and enquired if he was himself the Christ. But John, who was his forerunner, acknowledged that he was not the Christ.

**J. XI.** [John 1:21–23] *They questioned him again, saying: Are you Elijah? He said: I am not* and so on. He said to them: *I am the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, as Isaiah the prophet said* and [3060] so on. For the Jews know that the Christ and Elijah would come, but they are mistaken in that they do not believe that Christ has already come in humility. Sending representatives to John they therefore enquired who he was. When he had said that he was not the Christ, they said: *Are you Elijah?* When he had denied that he was Elijah, they said to him: *Are you a prophet?* And he said that he was not a prophet, because he had been proclaimed by the Lord as greater than all the prophets.<sup>565</sup> He rightly dismissed himself from being [3065] a prophet, for a prophet is one who foretells things to come.

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<sup>561</sup> The words translated as “he yielded” and “into him” are corrupt.

<sup>562</sup> Exodus 20:17.

<sup>563</sup> Cf. Titus 3:5.

<sup>564</sup> Lines 2875–2877.

<sup>565</sup> Cf. Luke 7:28.

Prophets are named after their prophesying, in that they are proclaimers of things to come. For all of the prophets said that Christ would come, but John, with his own voice, showed to everyone that he was present, saying *Behold the Lamb of God, behold the one who takes away the sin of the earth.*<sup>566</sup> For he outpassed the duty of a prophet, as he made evident the Son of God in his presence. For the others had said that he would come; John demonstrated that he had come. [3070] So since John had admitted that he was neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor a prophet, they said to him: *So who are you? Tell us, that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself? I am the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, as Isaiah the prophet said.* For the most holy Isaiah had prophesied about this John: *The voice of one crying in the desert.*<sup>567</sup> And John himself, when he was questioned, admitted that he was this voice of which [3075] Isaiah had spoken. Such is the reason, therefore, for that voice of one crying in the desert: Zechariah the priest, when he was performing the priestly office in his turn, entered the Holy of Holies, and an angel appeared to him, saying: *Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because, behold! your plea has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son to you and you will call his name John* and so on. *And Zechariah said: From what will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days.* [3080] *And the angel replied and said: I am Gabriel, who stands before God: I was sent both to speak to you and to bring this good news to you* and so on.<sup>568</sup> So since Zechariah was already quite old and his wife Elizabeth was barren, and her monthly periods had already failed, it was unbelievable to Zechariah that this could happen. He was therefore struck dumb and remained dumb until that time when the promise of God was fulfilled. For nothing is impossible for almighty God. Therefore, [3085] because he did not believe, he was struck dumb and remained mute. For he should have believed the angel, especially as it appeared to him in the Holy of Holies, just as Abraham had believed when – in a similar example – he too was quite old, and Sarah was quite old and considered barren.<sup>569</sup> Zechariah was struck dumb and a voice (meaning John) was produced from him: this showed that the former priesthood would become silent and that a voice would come from it which would proclaim in the desert and [3090] show the Lord. A voice in the desert, meaning John, plainly among the Jews: for they had already begun to be considered deserted from that moment when their priest had been struck dumb. Therefore the voice fathered by him and established for another office begins to show the Son of God: *Behold the Lamb of God, behold the one who takes away the sin of the earth.*<sup>570</sup>

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566 John 1:29.

567 Isaiah 40:3.

568 Luke 1:13, 18–19.

569 Cf. Genesis 17:17.

570 John 1:29.

**J. XII.** [John 1:24–27] *And those who had been sent from the Pharisees and Levites to question him said to him: [3095] Why, then, do you baptise if you are neither Christ nor Elijah nor a prophet? In reply to them, John said: I indeed baptise in the water of repentance. But in the middle of you stands one whom you do not know and so on.* So the voice of John baptised the people in repentance. For repentance is not born except from a crime: yet where there is no crime or sin, neither is there repentance. [3100] So because there were very many sins and crimes among the people, a place was allotted for repentance. John, as he was the forerunner of the Lord, was entrusted with the duty of preparing the people for the Lord through the baptism of repentance: this is the meaning of ‘to prepare the way of the Lord’, plainly through the service laid on him. He added: *But in the middle of you stands one whom you do not know*, that is Jesus, the Son of God, who *came to his very own and his own did not receive him*,<sup>571</sup> [3105] because ⟨...⟩ *after me comes a man* for the reason that, six months later than John, a man was born according to the flesh through Mary and was plainly made perfect in order to wield power. *The strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to undo*: plainly belonging to the man whom he says had come after him. He denies that he is worthy to undo the strap of that man’s sandal. It was written in the Law that anyone who would not approach should have their sandals removed.<sup>572</sup> So this is the true bridegroom, plainly a man [3110] who is perfect: God, the Son of God, Jesus. No-one is worthy even to undo his strap, because he is the true bridegroom in whom all the figures manifested before are found to be fulfilled. For Moses and his successor the prophet Joshua, son of Nun, are instructed to undo the strap of their sandals when they enjoyed a conversation with God.<sup>573</sup> This is because they were not bridegrooms, but they were *friends of the bridegroom*,<sup>574</sup> as this same John says. [3115] *To undo the strap*: this means to overlook even the least of the commandments. For something is undone if it is neglected or passed over; also, what had previously been gathered is undone. John affirms that he is not worthy to do this.

**J. XIII.** [John 1:28] *These events took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptising and so on.* Here, then, we find a mistake either of the Latin translator or the copyists. While [3120] Bethany is the place where Mary and Martha and Lazarus were, the place across the Jordan, on the other hand, is called Bethara, which is translated as ‘House of Preparation’.<sup>575</sup> Bethany, however, is ‘House of Listening’, and it is appropriately a house of listening where Mary sat at the feet of Jesus (which means listening) and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears.<sup>576</sup> For

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<sup>571</sup> John 1:11.

<sup>572</sup> Cf. Deuteronomy 25:8–10.

<sup>573</sup> Cf. Exodus 3:5.

<sup>574</sup> Cf. John 3:29.

<sup>575</sup> Fortunatianus consistently uses the spelling *Bethara* rather than *Bethabara*, which is also found in the principal manuscript of Origen’s Commentary on John.

<sup>576</sup> Cf. John 12:3; Luke 7:38; 10:39.

Bethara means house of preparation: there, John began to prepare a coming for the Lord, purifying the people with the baptism of repentance. [3125] But Bethany is the house of listening, so that those who had been prepared for the Lord would listen to him: plainly in the house of listening, which is the Church of God, where his instructions are applied and introduced to everyone who has been prepared for salvation.

**J. XIII.** [John 1:29–34] *But on the next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said: Behold the Lamb of God* and so on. It says *the Lamb* because of his innocence, or because in the sacrament of the Passover the lamb [3130] prefigured the Passion of Christ. Alternatively, it may be because it is evident that the whole human race is clothed and covered by the fleece of lambs (meaning sheep's wool), just as those who believe in the name of the Son of God are protected by his mercy. So this is the true Son of God, who was offered for the salvation of the people and, having suffered, brought healing to the earth and took away all sins from those who believe in him. In his birth in the flesh, indeed, he was produced after John, but he is said to have been before him [3135] in the heavenly glory.<sup>577</sup> John admitted that he did not know him except when the sign was given that the Spirit came in the likeness of a dove and remained on him. He therefore says: *And I did not know him. But the one who sent me to baptise in water, he said to me: The one on whom you see the spirit descending from heaven and remaining on him, he it is who baptises in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and borne witness that this is the chosen one of God.* And: *This* [3140] *is the Son of the Highest God, begotten of him.*<sup>578</sup> The difference between the reported utterances is not significant. Each author reports according to his own style, just so long as one and the same sense is reported by everyone. The most holy John, then, the forerunner and herald of the Lord, said that there would be (...) when Jesus had come to him: it was said to him that this would be the one on whom he had seen the spirit descend from the heavens. But a greater proof still takes place when the voice of the Father also [3145] is heard coming to the Son from the heavens. Not inappropriately does John boldly give evidence of the sights and sounds: for he saw the dove descending and heard the voice sent by the Father from the heavens to the Son.

**J. XV.** [John 1:35–42] *Again, on another day, John was standing with two from his disciples. John saw Jesus walking and said: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the earth* and so on. [3150] Therefore John, who had already spoken earlier about the Son of God, sought to impress this on them once more, so that the one who had come to prepare his way should not cease from the office laid on him: he was to make his way smooth and also show that the one whose way he prepared was present by saying: *Behold the Lamb of God; behold the one who takes away the sin of the earth.* Duly, two from the disciples of John, having heard what John had

<sup>577</sup> Cf. John 1:15.

<sup>578</sup> The source of this quotation is not obvious: compare Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22.

said, *followed Jesus*, asking where he was staying. When they had seen the place, [3155] *they stayed* there, because the sun had already set for the evening. *For it was the tenth hour of the day*. The disciples who came from the synagogue were already crossing over from there, and *they stayed with him*. *The tenth hour*: the final period of the world, the time at which our Lord saw fit to come for the sake of our salvation. The tenth hour is written by *iota* in Greek, which stands for ‘Jesus’.<sup>579</sup> So this is understood to be the time at which the Lord came. [3160] *They stayed with him*, meaning in the Church. In the morning, finding Simon, they brought him to Jesus. Seeing him, Jesus changed his name and established him as a disciple and leader of the others. Disciples are therefore now chosen from that advance party which John had prepared. Indeed, Simon’s name is changed: he is called *Cephas*, *which when translated means Peter*. It is appropriate that the one who plainly came from that advance party to this [3165] heavenly army should have his name changed, just as we find that our ancestors’ names were added or changed when they came to the knowledge and recognition of the Lord, such as Abraham from Abram, Israel from Jacob, Joshua from Hoshea.<sup>580</sup> They were leaders of the army of the Lord and of his instruction. So Peter, too, when he came to this army, appropriately received a name from the Son of God which seemed to be worthy of his service in the army. For example, in another place, it says: *You are [3170] Peter and on this rock I will build my Church and I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens: that which you loosen on earth will also be loosened in heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will also be bound in heaven*.<sup>581</sup> The evangelists Matthew and Mark related his selection as follows, saying: *And Jesus, passing along beside the sea of Galilee, saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea. For they were fishermen* and [3175] *so on. And Jesus says to them: Come after me and I shall make you fishers of men*.<sup>582</sup> But Luke related it as follows, by saying: *Jesus climbed into one ship, which belonged to Simon. He told them to put out a short distance from the land. And, sitting, he taught the crowds from the ship* and so on.<sup>583</sup> Nothing is different, therefore, in the varying expression of the Gospels, with regard to how they individually tell the beginning of the account. Three evangelists therefore said that they were fishermen; John alone brought forward the change of name. [3180] So those people are appropriately called fishermen; from whom Jesus took away the business of fishing and sent them to lead people to salvation and belief through their preaching. Thus had it been spoken of them through the prophet: *I shall send fishermen and they will fish for them, and hunters*

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**579** In Greek, the first letter of the noun Jesus is the letter *iota*, which is also the numeral 10.

**580** Cf. Genesis 17:5; Genesis 32:28; Numbers 13:16. Fortunatianus gives the spelling of *Hoshea* in Latin as *Ausen*.

**581** Matthew 16:18–19.

**582** Matthew 4:18–19; Mark 1:16–17.

**583** Luke 5:3.

who will hunt for them.<sup>584</sup> All this, then, is fulfilled in the apostles, who from being fishermen were made fishers of men. For just as fish are taken from the sea [3185] in nets, so people are lifted from the world by the apostolic preaching, and reach belief in the Son of God.

**J. XVI.** [John 1:43–51] *On the next day he decided to journey into Galilee, and he found Philip. Jesus said to him: Follow me* and so on. The Lord Jesus, therefore, who scrutinises the heart,<sup>585</sup> and knows everything, saw Philip and ordered him to follow him. He knew that this man was suitable to become a disciple and appropriate [3190] to be entrusted with preaching, who would introduce the others to the knowledge and recognition of the Son of God. Indeed, finding Nathaniel, he immediately said: *We have found the one of whom Moses wrote in the Law and the Prophets, Jesus, the son of Joseph, who is from Nazareth. And Nathaniel said to him: Something good can come from Nazareth.*<sup>586</sup> Philip says to him: *Come and see* and so on. Philip therefore is a figure of prophecy. For he says to the true Israelite that he has found [3195] Jesus. He immediately believed what had been written. For Moses had said: *The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from your brothers. You will hear him just as you hear me.* And: *But if there is any soul which does not listen to that prophet, it will be lost from its people.*<sup>587</sup> And the prophet Isaiah (...) him who had been produced from a virgin and named Emmanuel, which is ‘God with us’. Equally, Jeremiah had said: *This is our God and no [3200] other will be taken into consideration. He was seen on the earth and he conversed with humans.*<sup>588</sup> Appropriately, then, Nathaniel is the true Israelite and without guile, as he says without any delay: *Something good can come from Nazareth.* Nazirite was the name for anyone whose hair on their head or beard has not been cut with iron from their birth.<sup>589</sup> Such a man was Samson, in his time, who himself was a figure of Christ in many ways. So just as he, in his time, freed the people from [3205] foreigners who attacked and ruled over them (...) As for the words *Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you*, it says that the fig tree is the synagogue or the kingdom of the Jews. Elsewhere, it says of this: *And when he saw from afar a fig tree with leaves, he went to see if there was anything on it: he found nothing but leaves and he cursed it. Immediately it withered.*<sup>590</sup> For the Jews had only the appearance of the Law and no fruit. The fig tree is appropriately taken as the synagogue [3210] or the Jewish kingdom, as it has now withered and gives no

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**584** Jeremiah 16:16.

**585** Proverbs 24:12.

**586** Although this phrase could also be translated as the traditional question, the treatment below shows that Fortunatianus understands it as a statement of fact.

**587** Deuteronomy 18:15–19 (cf. Acts 3:22–23).

**588** Baruch 3:36, 38.

**589** Compare lines 810–811, where Fortunatianus also appears to confuse “Nazorean” and “Nazirite”.

**590** Matthew 21:19.



fruit for ever. Therefore, while the Jews were still regarded as covered by the shade or the veil of the Law, Nathaniel was seen by the one who *scrutinises the heart*,<sup>591</sup> so that this Israelite might believe more fully. Indeed, he says: *You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel*. Appropriately is he an Israelite, because he spoke with God, the Son of God, Jesus Christ: for Israel is translated as ‘seeing God’. And [3215] the Lord promises still greater things to the faithful: *You will see*, he says, *the angels of God descending and ascending to the Son of Man*. For all those who believed the Son of God frequently saw angels come to him and speak with him. What Jesus had said, *You will see*, was fulfilled. It is read in many places that this happened literally, but we can also adduce a significance regarding future matters which were to be fulfilled. [3220] For the believers to ascend is plainly for the people of God to be raised to the regions above; for the unbelievers to descend (...) to be degraded and be removed from hope. So Jacob too in his dream had seen a ladder set up in the heaven and the Son of God leaning on it, and angels ascending and descending.<sup>592</sup> A ladder consists of two shafts, which hold it together, and it has steps for climbing up. So the two Testaments hold together everything about the Son of God; the steps [3225] are those who are present in the Church, as Paul writes to Timothy: *They secure a good step for themselves*.<sup>593</sup> For the believers to ascend means the Christian people towards heaven; for the unbelievers to descend means the Jews towards the underworld: the dream of Jacob made this clear even then. David, too, says of them in a psalm: *May the ungodly descend to the underworld*.<sup>594</sup>

**J. XVII.** [John 2:1–7] *And on the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. And the mother of Jesus was there* and [3230] so on. As for the words, *On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee*, the most holy John from the beginning of the Gospel endeavoured to show the reason for the two persons of the Father and the Son. For it was especially his duty, since no-one was uncertain about the Father, to demonstrate that the Son of God was God, as has already been more fully shown. And because it was necessary for him also to make a mention of the Holy Spirit, he said *On the third day a wedding [3235] took place*. In the previous reading, therefore, he subtly put *On another day*.<sup>595</sup> He emphasised this three times by saying *On another day John saw Jesus*,<sup>596</sup> once more *On another day John was standing again*,<sup>597</sup> and *On the next day he wanted to set out*.<sup>598</sup> So he has kept back the reason for the two persons of the Father and the Son until this point: coming to the bond of marriage,

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<sup>591</sup> Proverbs 24:12.

<sup>592</sup> Cf. Genesis 28:12–13.

<sup>593</sup> 1 Timothy 3:13.

<sup>594</sup> Psalm 55:15.

<sup>595</sup> John 1:29.

<sup>596</sup> John 1:29.

<sup>597</sup> John 1:35.

<sup>598</sup> John 1:43.

therefore, he says *On the third day a wedding took place*. Who is this third to be taken as but the person of the Holy Spirit? He had already [3240] spoken about the Father and about the Son and now he added something about a third. The Trinity is certainly demonstrated in Cana of Galilee. The wedding took place as if outside Judea, a wedding which declared that a spiritual wedding would come to pass, meaning that the Church was to be betrothed to Christ through the Holy Spirit. This was to take place at the time when the apostles were sitting together with all the other disciples and the Holy Spirit came down at the third hour: it appeared as [3245] fire and *rested on each one of them, and they began to speak in different languages*,<sup>599</sup> just as the Acts of the Apostles bear witness in full. Therefore, *as the wine of the wedding was running out*, wine for the wedding was made from water with a better flavour of its taste than the one which had already been consumed earlier. It shows that the wine of the wedding is the Jews, as David says: *You brought across a vine from Egypt, you cast out the Gentiles and planted it, you made a way in its sight*, [3250] *you planted its roots and you filled the land*.<sup>600</sup> This is the vine which was called through Isaiah the *vine of the Lord of Hosts, the house of Israel*,<sup>601</sup> which instead of grapes produced thorns. This is that vine from which it said Moses planted wine which was the savagery of serpents and the grape-bunches of Gomorrah.<sup>602</sup> From this vine, therefore, the wine of the wedding ran out, meaning that the Jews had completely failed. For they were consumed with malice and unrighteousness and their unbelief. As for what *the mother of Jesus says to him*: [3255] *They do not have wine, my son; and Jesus says: What is this to me and you, woman? My hour has not yet come*: Jesus plainly knew that the Church and the nations would come to belief once the Jews, who were the wine of the wedding, had failed and collapsed. Because this would take place after the Passion of the Lord, *he said to her: What is this to me and you, woman? My hour has not yet come*: this means the time of suffering, because what the Son of God was going to do was not yet complete, nor had all those things which had to take place concerning [3260] him before the Passion yet taken place. Appropriately he says: *My hour has not yet come*. Indeed, when he had done everything which had been written about him and he had been given up to his Passion and had drunk the vinegar, he said: *It is complete*.<sup>603</sup> For the Jews had completed it by their crime and had accomplished everything which had been proclaimed beforehand by the prophets. *Then his mother said to the servants: Do whatever he tells you*. The servants are none other than the apostles and [3265] those who are now in charge of the Church. *Do whatever he tells*, means that what Jesus the Son of God commands is to be done with all power, to be observed and fulfilled with all attention so that the

599 Cf. Acts 2:1–4.

600 Psalm 80:8–9.

601 Isaiah 5:4–7; the phrase translated as “Lord of Hosts” is literally “Lord Sabaoth”.

602 Cf. Deuteronomy 32:32–33.

603 Cf. John 19:28–30.

Church may be accomplished. For the Son of God warns, encourages and instructs his apostles, as the evangelist Matthew related by saying: *And going up Jesus spoke to them: All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth and so on.*<sup>604</sup> This is what the mother of Jesus says [3270] to the servants: *Do whatever he tells you. There were six stone water jars there and so on.* As for the word *six*, these are the five books of Moses and one of all the prophets, in which that custom or practice of purification is contained. *Holding two or three measures* means people who already had belief in the Father and the Son: by saying *or three*, belief in the Holy Spirit is also introduced, and the result is [3275] the perfect Trinity. But the *six water jars* can be taken as the six thousandth year, the time at which our Lord saw fit to come and call all races to belief. This is what the water jars, this is what the two or three measures signified. As for the words to the servants *Fill them up, and they filled them right up to the top*, these are therefore for the apostles to whom he had said: *Go, teach all races, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*<sup>605</sup> By their preaching [3280] and teaching, the whole human race comes to belief and is washed in the baptism of the Son of God. Filled *right up to the top*: for the top is distinguished and perfect. It is perfect and topmost that the nations baptised *in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit* were filled *right up to the top*, plainly all having obtained heavenly grace.<sup>606</sup> The faithful are nourished daily with the body and blood of the Son of God in the Church, and [3285] this is the meaning of *They filled them right up to the top*.

**J. XVIII.** [John 2:8–11] *Jesus says to them: Draw some out and take it to the chief steward and the rest.* The chief steward is James, who sat as the first bishop in Jerusalem after the Passion of the Lord. So he said that the taste of this wine was good, *not knowing where it was from. But the servants, who had drawn out the water, knew:* this means Peter, when at his preaching the centurion Cornelius was the first of the Gentiles to come to belief and all the other nations were brought to belief through [3290] the Holy Spirit. This is what the chief steward did not know. And when some people wanted maliciously to accuse Peter, he explained himself, recognising what the will of God was with regard to the nations. Also, when those who came to belief from the Gentiles were being forced by some people to be circumcised, then James and the other apostles gave out a letter through the Holy Spirit instructing that anyone who came to belief from the Gentiles should remain as they were in the faith [3295] of the Son of God. Then it was fulfilled that the wine of the wedding ran out and wine was made by the strength of the Son of God from water<sup>607</sup> filled with a

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**604** Matthew 28:18.

**605** Matthew 28:19.

**606** The Cologne manuscript breaks off towards the end of this sentence and resumes in the middle of the next paragraph; as before, the witnesses used for the missing section normally abbreviate and adjust Fortunatianus' text.

**607** Following "water" there is a corrupt word (*ucosa*) which has not been translated.

better flavour of taste. As the Apostle said to the Jews: *The message of this salvation had been sent to you; but because you have proved yourselves unworthy, we will turn to the Gentiles*<sup>608</sup> (...) <sup>609</sup> the wise persevere through the Holy Spirit. For that earlier wine intoxicated people, as is natural for the one from the savagery of serpents;<sup>610</sup> but this wine (which we find was the better one kept for later) [3300] is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we have obtained through the preaching of the apostles. This is the new wine which is kept in new wineskins, which the old wineskins are not able to bear.<sup>611</sup> *Jesus made this first one the beginning of his signs, and he made evident his glory and his disciples believed in him.* Therefore the disciples, seeing the sign performed by him which a human could not perform, believed in the Son [3305] of God, plainly having perceived his glory and strength.

HERE ENDS THE DISCUSSION OF THE GOSPELS.<sup>612</sup>

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**608** Acts 13:26, 46.

**609** The Cologne manuscript resumes at this point.

**610** Cf. Deuteronomy 32:32–33.

**611** Cf. Matthew 9:17.

**612** As at line 134, the common term *feliciter* (“happily”) is included in the subscription. This is the end of the text in the Cologne manuscript.

## Appendix: Doubtful extracts

### 1 (Possibly from M. LVII)<sup>613</sup>

[Matthew 10:27] *What I speak to you in the darkness, speak in the light.* He says darkness for the Jews but light for the Christians, as the Apostle says: *Once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Therefore walk as children of light.*<sup>614</sup> *And what you hear in your ear, preach on the rooftops.* He says ear for the people because of their listening, just as leaders are understood as eyes because [5] they give light to all others by divine preaching. But he said that rooftops are divine promises, because believers had to be removed from earthly behaviour and set on the way of heavenly instruction. So this is the sense: everything which you hear from me, preach to the people in public and as if on a high place.

### 2 (Possibly from M. LXV)<sup>615</sup>

[Matthew 12:29] *How can someone enter in the house of a strong man and plunder his vessels unless they have previously tied up the strong man?* The strong man was Satan, in time past, who owned the whole human race on this earth as if they were his own vessels. But when the Son of God came, who was stronger than him, he drove Satan out through his Passion, he rescued us from Satan's authority and he made us his own vessels by giving us the [5] Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says: *We have this treasure in pottery vessels.*<sup>616</sup> So he called our bodies vessels.

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**613** This text is preserved in the Commentary on the Gospels by "Pseudo-Theophilus"; see GORMAN, Latin Commentary, 279, lines 238–247.

**614** Ephesians 5:8.

**615** This text is preserved in the Commentary on the Gospels by "Pseudo-Theophilus"; see GORMAN, Latin Commentary, 283, lines 352–358.

**616** 2 Corinthians 4:7.

