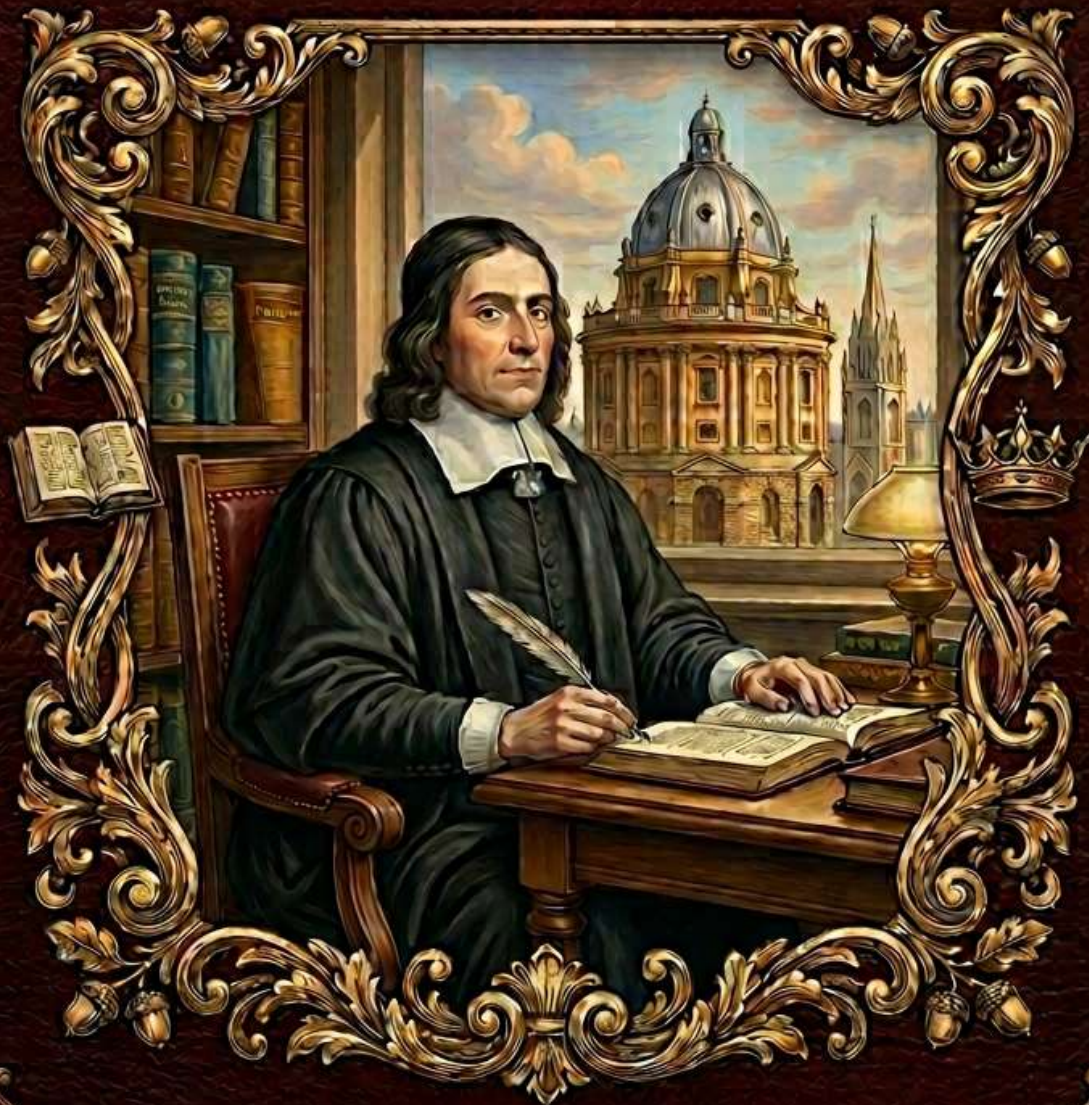


THE NATURE OF TRUE THEOLOGY

Volume 5: On Noahic Post-Diluvian Theology



JOHN OWEN



MONERGISM

THE NATURE OF TRUE THEOLOGY

VOLUME 5: ON NOAHIC POST-DILUVIAN THEOLOGY

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Monergism Books

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to volume 5 of our Claude-generated translation of *The Nature of True Theology* by John Owen. This volume is *c.* 61,000 words long and was very challenging to edit. Of the fourteen chapters that comprise Book 3 of Dr. Owen's original, twelve consider the progress of idolatry.

BOOK III. ON NOAHIC POST-DILUVIAN THEOLOGY

CHAPTER I

2 *Pet. 3:5-7, The new heaven and new earth — What the old world was — The new world, Isa. 51:15, 16; 65:17; 66:22 — The age to come — The future world — Noah a righteous man — He had faith as an antediluvian — Theology restored and augmented after the flood in his family — The first express mention of the divine covenant — Promise and counter-stipulation belong to the nature of a covenant — In what respect a promise is called a covenant — בְּרִית [covenant], its derivation — It often signifies a bare promise, 2 Sam. 23:5; Jer. 31:31, 32 — Διαθήκη [testament/covenant], συσθήκη [agreement] — The origin of “covenant” — How covenants were anciently ratified, Jer. 34:18 — On the sign of the covenant — The rainbow in the cloud — Why the sign of the covenant is called a covenant — The nature of the Noahic covenant — Precepts added to the theology — Gen. 9:5, 6, exposition of the first post-diluvian precept concerning the non-shedding of blood — The manner of vengeance to be taken through the magistrate established therein — The opinion of Onkelos — The origin of the law of retaliation — Exposition of the second precept,*

concerning not eating flesh with blood, Gen. 9:2, 3 — The seven precepts given to the sons of Noah — What the Hebrews understand by them — The fictitious speech of Noah to his sons in Inghirami — The restoration of the Noahic church — Its duration — The sin of Ham — The triflings of the Jews — The origin of the fable of the castration of Saturn — Why Canaan was cursed — New promises given to the reformed church — Its new defection — The occasion of the defection — A narrative of the catholic defection of the Noahic church.

I. The origin and progress of that mixed theology — which consisted partly of the law of nature or the dictate of right reason, or the relics of the ἐνδιάθετου [internal] theology, and partly of the revelation made to Adam after the entrance of sin — we set out in the preceding dissertation. We also showed briefly therein the various degrees of that apostasy which at last brought about the total defection of almost the whole world from God, and the dreadful πανωλεθρίαν [utter destruction] and punishment of apostate theologians. To the setting out of the restoration, growth, progress, and events of that theology from the flood to the calling of Abraham — this we now immediately take in hand. The blessed Peter sets out the whole of this divine οἰκονομίαν [dispensation] as follows: Οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκπαλαι, καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος συνεστῶσα, τῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγῳ, δι' ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπώλετο· οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτοῦ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶ, πυρὶ τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων [The heavens existed of old, and the earth formed out of water and through water, by the word of God, through which the world that then was, being flooded with water, perished; but the heavens and earth that now are have been stored up by his word, being kept

for fire until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men], 2 Pet. 3:5-7.

II. The apostle here makes mention of a twofold “world”: that former one which had perished through water, and that then-present one to be consumed by fire; after the destruction of which he foretells the entrance of a third, v. 13: Καινοὺς δὲ οὐρανοὺς καὶ γῆν καινὴν κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα αὐτοῦ προσδοκώμεν, ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ [But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells]. The apostle is treating in neither place of the visible heaven nor the earth with respect to their substance. For when the old world was destroyed by water, the framework of the heavens and earth nonetheless remained. That “world” therefore was the men living in the world. They being blotted out by the flood, another world had to be raised up for the duly performing of the worship of God. The foundations of this world God laid in the family of Noah; its whole fabric was completed by the erection and adorning of the Jewish church. And that was the world which the blessed Peter immediately foretold would be dissolved by fire — in the prophetic style, that is. So we read in Isaiah, ch. 51:15, 16: “I am the Lord your God, who parts the sea so that its waves roar — the Lord of hosts is his name — and I have put my words in your mouth and covered you in the shadow of my hand, to plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth, and to say to Zion, You are my people.”

III. At the time therefore when God, dividing the sea and leading his people out of Egypt, entrusted to them his word or law together with the solemn prescription of his worship — forming them into a church for himself — he instituted and completed this new world, that heaven and earth. At the time when Peter wrote, this world — that is, the now apostate

Jewish church — was hastening to the destruction of fire, just as that old world precipitated itself into the flood. By the burning of the temple and the city, the framework of that world was dissolved. But since τοῦ αἰῶνος συντέλεια [the consummation of the age] had not yet come, the apostle bids the faithful to expect another world — new heavens and a new earth — according to God's promise. That promise stands at Isa. 65:17 and in the same words at ch. 66:22: "Behold, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." The prophet in those passages portrays the state of the church after the advent of Christ — namely, the time when God was about to take from among the Gentiles priests and Levites, as the words run at v. 21 of the last chapter; that is, when he was about to institute the evangelical ministry. Hence that state of the church before the conflagration of this second world was designated "the age to come" and "the future world" — as Paul teaches us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. 2:5 and also ch. 6:5. The first or old world therefore perished through the diluvian water; the apostle foretells that the second — then present — was to perish through fire, and confirms that the future one will endure to the consummation of the age. But let us return from this digression to the road.

IV. That Noah himself, of whom we are speaking, was a righteous man, pleasing and acceptable to God, is established by the manifold testimony of the Holy Spirit. Gen. 6:8, 9: "Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations, and he walked with God continually"; also v. 1, ch. 7: "You I have seen to be righteous before me in this generation." There is moreover an honourable mention made of him in both Old and New Testaments conformable to this testimony — which is rare and almost singular — Ezek. 14:14; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5. That he obtained righteousness through faith

the apostle proves in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. All saving faith looks to the promised Seed. This faith, moreover, the antediluvian had — for he was then adorned with the testimony of righteousness by God. He was therefore righteous and pleasing to God, walking before him blameless, by virtue of that Adamic antediluvian theology which we delivered in the preceding dissertation. But for the sake of Noah himself, and of the church to be restored in his family, that theology was immediately augmented from the flood with various degrees of light, which I shall briefly run through.

V. We divided the antediluvian theology of sinners above into three parts: the promise of grace, the law of nature, and the prescription of the instituted worship. By the new revelation made to Noah, the first was further augmented, the second more fully set out, the third established. For now, for the first time, God makes express mention of a covenant, Gen. 9: וְאֲנִי הֵנֵנִי וְאַתָּה אֲתָּכֶם מִקֵּים אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם — “And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you.” We proved above that God ratified a gracious pact exhibiting spiritual benefits in the Mediator with Adam in that most celebrated promise of the Seed. For the solemnity of the divine covenant, there is required a promise of life and of all means necessary for obtaining it graciously, together with the exaction of obedience and an expressed counter-stipulation. But it is not necessary that all these should be expressed together at the same time wherever only a covenant is treated.

VI. A promise always includes the requirement of obedience. For obedience is nothing other than the due observance of the means instituted for obtaining the promised life. But where the obedience required in a covenant is only moral, and therefore has its general foundation elsewhere than in the covenant itself — namely, in the law of nature — and is rendered acceptable and pleasing to God through the covenant alone, since

the promise is of pure revelation, the name of covenant is peculiarly ascribed to the promise. And so it is in this place: the promise is called a covenant. But also for other reasons promise and covenant signify the same thing — it is not the place here to set them out. A few things may be added concerning the word itself. בְּרִית [berit] some take to be derived from בָּרַח or בָּרַת [barah/barat], “to cut” or “to hew asunder.” So Grotius, *Annotations at the beginning of the Gospel according to Matthew*, because in covenants victims were slain. Others refer it to what also signifies “to choose” and “to arrange” — and that derivation of the name pleases the learned and pious Cocceius, *On the Covenant of God*, ch. 1: from בָּרַר [barar], “to choose,” “to purify,” Mercer on the root בָּרַת. Wherever it takes its origin, it frequently signifies a bare “promise”: 2 Sam. 23:5; Jer. 31:31, 32; also a gratuitous and irrevocable “gift,” Num. 18:9; and a “statute” or decree of God, Jer. 33:21. And very frequently it is employed where there is no place for a solemn agreement or compact of parties. In the New Testament it is rendered by διαθήκη [testament/covenant]; which word has equally broad scope as בְּרִית. Grotius testifies that it is used for laws, engagements, and testaments. The word συνθήκη [agreement], which properly signifies a “covenant,” is not used in the New Testament to explain בְּרִית. The Septuagint translators perpetually render that word by διαθήκη; differently, Aquila and Symmachus, who also use συνθήκη. Our [John] Ball, in his treatise *On the Divine Covenant*,¹ ch. 1, affirms that the Septuagint renders בְּרִית by συνθήκη at Isa. 28:15. But the learned man is mistaken; for the word they there translate by συνθήκη is חֹזֶה [hozeh], which properly signifies “vision”; but at the beginning of the verse, after their usual manner, they place διαθήκη instead of בְּרִית. The best reason for this is given by the same Grotius: “Συνθηκαι [agreements],” he says, “receive the force of a bond

from the consenting testimony of two wills; but what Moses and others call בְּרִית is for the most part of such a kind as to require no consent on the other party's side, since its binding force rests on the command and authority of God alone." So it is — the covenant of God does not hang upon our will or upon any conditions to be performed by us; its whole force and effect comes from the authority, grace, and faithfulness of God himself. For the promise of grace is absolute, and there is no condition of the covenant that is not contained in the promise itself. Those therefore act absurdly and preposterously who attempt to set out the nature of the divine בְּרִית from the nature of a covenant commonly ratified between men. Nor does "covenant" even in Latin always denote a solemn "agreement of parties," but sometimes a law or constitution — so in Virgil, *Aeneid* I, 66:

"And he gave him a king who knew, by a fixed law, Both to press and, when bidden, to loose the reins."

We confess, however, that this promise had the true nature of a covenant; and therefore Chrysostom, *Homily XXVIII on Genesis*, interprets τὴν διαθήκην [the covenant] of the Septuagint in this place by συνθήκας [agreements].

VII. Furthermore: "covenant" — *fædus* — is derived from "striking" — *ferire*; the origin of the name comes from a vile superstition. The custom of entering into covenants, from which the name derived, is narrated among others by Polybius, Bk. III, ch. 25: "The fetial," he says, "holding a stone in his hands, after agreement on the covenant had been reached between the parties, spoke these words: if I make this covenant and this oath rightly and without evil intent, may the gods grant all good things to me; but if otherwise — whether I act or think otherwise — all others remaining safe in their own laws, their own household gods, their own temples, their own

graves, may I alone perish, as this stone falls from my hands.” Others record that covenants were entered into differently, and that the fetial used these words: “So may the great Jupiter strike me foully, as I foully slaughter this pig, if I do not keep the compact of the covenant.” And so striking the pig he killed it with a blow of the stone. So almost Livy, Bk. I, ch. 24: “Hear, Jupiter; hear, father of the fetials: as those things have been publicly read out, first and last from those tablets or wax, without evil intent, and as they have been most correctly understood here today, let not the Roman people be the first to depart from those laws. If it should first depart by public counsel and evil intent, then do you, Jupiter, strike the Roman people as I today strike this pig — and strike them the more, the more you are able and mighty.’ Having said this, he struck the pig with a flint stone.” In the same sense the poet:

*“Armed men, holding phials before the altars of Jove,
Stood, and joined the covenant over a slaughtered sow.” — Aeneid, Bk.
VIII, 640.*

And:

*“A priest in pure vestments
Brought the young of a bristly sow.” — Bk. XII, 169.*

VIII. It is probable that this custom of ratifying covenants flowed — not without the intervention of corrupt superstition — from that ancient practice of entering into fixed and solemn compacts through sacrifices, and through the division of the victim into two parts between which those entering the covenant had to pass. Homer pursues this custom at length in *Iliad* III, 252, in the covenant that preceded the μονομαχίαν [single combat/battle] of Paris and Menelaus: “Ἰν’ ὄρκια πιστὰ τάμναι [that you may cut faithful oaths]. On which words Eustathius: Τὸ τάμνειν δὲ ὄρκια παρ’ Ὀμήρῳ καὶ Ἡροδότῳ τὸ

θῦσαι τὰ ἐπὶ ὄρκῳ σφάγια δηλοῖ [Cutting oaths in Homer and Herodotus signifies sacrificing the victims offered at an oath]. For τάμνειν [to cut] is said Ionically for τέμνειν [to cut]. In this manner was established the covenant between the princes of Judah and the king of Babylon, which God calls his own on account of the invocation of his name, Jer. 34:18: “I will deliver the men who transgressed my covenant, who did not perform the words of the covenant which they made before me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts.” And again, v. 19: “Who passed between the parts of the calf.” Those entering the covenant and passing between the parts of the victim loaded themselves with a curse, devoting themselves to such a cutting apart if they did not stand by the appointed pact. So Agamemnon prays to the gods, *Iliad* III, 279:

Ὅς τις κ' ἐπίορκον ὁμόσση·

Ὑμεῖς μάρτυρές ἐστε, φυλάσσετε δ' ὄρκια πιστά·

[Whoever shall swear a false oath:

be you witnesses, and guard the faithful covenants.]

After which he adds at v. 292:

Ἦ, καὶ ἀπὸ στομάχους ἀρνῶν τάμε νηλεῖ χαλκῷ·

[He spoke, and cut the throats of the lambs with pitiless iron.]

Devoting the perjurers to a like death: Neh. 10:29, “We made a covenant and took an oath to walk in the law of God.” Hence perhaps that threatening against the unfaithful servant: Διχοτομήσει αὐτόν [he shall cut him asunder] — that is, the Master, Matt. 24:51 — for neglect of the covenant, shall divide him into parts. And from this cutting of the victim, “to cut” in Hebrew means “to strike a covenant”: 2 Chron. 7:18, “And I will establish the throne of your kingdom as יָהֵבָה [I covenanted] with David your father” — Ὡς διεθέμην [As I disposed], the Septuagint renders; “As I have

promised,” the Vulgate translator; “As I have covenanted,” our vernacular translation. Literally “I cut,” “I severed” — the same verb is used in the same manner in Hag. 2 at v. 5. But these things do not pertain to the simple בְּרִית [covenant].

IX. And this was the first degree of progress in post-lapsarian theology. For by this revelation made to Noah, that communion which obtains between God and sinners in the Mediator is for the first time expressly called a covenant. That name — most full of consolation, clearly declaring the divine love and faithfulness — is laid as a foundation for the new church to be erected in the family of Noah.

X. Furthermore: God now for the first time establishes a visible sign of the covenant — namely, “the rainbow in the cloud,” Gen. 9:11-13. Not indeed that he now for the first time sets a rainbow in the cloud; but he now for the first time sets a rainbow in the cloud as a sign of the covenant. In this manner the sacraments of the New Testament appear capable of being called אֲתוֹת בְּרִית [signs of the covenant]. Also for the sake of this sign, the promise is called a covenant. For a promise together with a visible sign has the proper nature of a covenant. Hence the sign itself is sometimes called a covenant: Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη [This cup is the new covenant], Luke 22:20. It is true that only temporal things — τῶν βιωτικῶν [earthly matters] — are expressly mentioned here, and the sign of the covenant directly regards a temporal benefit. Nevertheless, spiritual grace — or the gratuitous love of God especially toward the faithful — is chiefly intended. For such was the οἰκονομία [dispensation] of religious institutions before Christ was exhibited in the flesh. But all these things were σκὰ τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν [a shadow of good things to come], Heb. 10:1, of which Christ is ἀρχιερεὺς [the high priest], ch. 9:11. And this בְּרִית עוֹלָם

[everlasting covenant] existed only in Christ. Temporal benefit indeed flowed from it to all; but the spiritual grace of the covenant ratified in Christ pertains to the elect alone.

XI. And in this manner the Adamic antediluvian theology was augmented — by new revelation, by the appellation of covenant, and by the visible sign. From this the faith and hope of the theologians were confirmed. Moreover, the designation of the rainbow in the cloud as a sign of the covenant pertains to the instituted worship. To the promise therefore was added the name of covenant; to the instituted worship, a new sacrament — by which two things the two former parts of that theology were amplified.

XII. Furthermore, to amplify this theology, precepts were also added to it, so that after the notable fall it might rise more illustrious on every side. The first concerned manslaughter, or the non-shedding of human blood. For the first and last care is for life; the rest are subordinate to it. The precept stands at Gen. 9:5, 6: “But your blood — the blood of your lives — I will require; from every beast I will require it, and also from the hand of man; from the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.”

XIII. A solemn institution of vengeance for the violent shedding of human blood is here established. The shedding itself was prohibited by the law of nature — this both the crime and the punishment of Cain demonstrate. Indeed, all violence against others rises so much against the dictate of right reason that that unbridled rage by which sinners before the flood overwhelmed one another as if by assault was itself the most serious cause of the flood. But the solemn manner of punishing violence through the magistrate — extending beyond the boundaries of private families, and established by mutual consent of the many — had not yet been constituted.

God, therefore, granting the habitable world to the sons of Noah, laid this obligation upon all universally — that for the preservation of political society and public peace among all, they should constitute a magistrate among themselves. Hence the magistrate is ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσις [a human creation], yet erected on no unstable foundation — namely, on the command of God.

XIV. These words are therefore rightly expounded by the paraphraser Onkelos: “Whoever sheds the blood of a man — by witnesses, from the sentence of judges, shall his blood be shed.” By מִן־אָדָם [in man], “in man,” he understands fit witnesses among men. Nor does Jonathan differ: “He who sheds the blood of a man — by witnesses, judges shall condemn him to death; but he who sheds without witnesses — the Lord of the world will exact vengeance from him on the day of the great judgment.” Grotius thinks that the natural right of retaliation is here hinted at, “because public courts had not yet been established.” But the natural right of retaliation did not originate only now. And although public courts had not yet been established — yet precisely so that they should be constituted, now that the human race had grown large, lest the severe antediluvian age filled with unbridled violence should return — it is provided here that they should be. The magistrate is therefore instituted by God, and the sword is placed in his hands — as Münster rightly says on the passage.

XV. To this precept was also added that concerning not eating flesh together with blood, which is the life of the flesh. Since the investigation of this matter has more labour than utility, having applied a few words to its explanation, let us dismiss it.

XVI. Very many affirm that it was not permitted to men before the flood to eat flesh. For whatever privilege there is in the eating of flesh appears to

be finally granted at Gen. 9:3: כָּל־רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאָכְלָהּ כִּי־רָק עֵשָׂב [Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything]. These words, compared with those by which God grants dominion over all animals to man at v. 2, plainly show that they had not eaten flesh. Hence the report of abstinence from animals reached the nations — Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Bk. I, Fable 3, v. 103:

*“Content with foods that no compulsion grew,
They gathered the fruits of the arbutus, Strawberries from the hills,
Cornelian cherries, and blackberries clinging to the hard bramble,
And acorns that had fallen from the broad tree of Jupiter.”*

And again, Bk. XV, Fable 2, v. 96:

*“But that ancient age which we have called the Golden Age
Was blessed with the fruits of trees and the herbs the ground puts forth,
And did not defile the mouth with blood.
Then birds safely moved their wings through the air,
And the hare wandered fearless through the midst of the fields,
Nor had its own trustfulness hung the fish upon a hook.”*

Virgil also, *Georgics* II, v. 536:

*“Before the sceptre of the Dictaeon king,
And before the impious race feasted on slaughtered bullocks,
Golden Saturn lived this life upon the earth.”*

And among our own writers, Tertullian, *On Jewish Foods* — if he is the author of that book — ch. 2: “The first food for men,” he says, “was solely the produce and fruit of trees.” Hence the philosophers dispute at length as to how it came about that men were ever induced to eat flesh. Plutarch, after neatly attacking the practice, ascribes it to necessity, *On the Eating of Flesh*.

Porphyry at length contends that the custom flowed from participation in sacrifices, *On Abstinence from Animals*, Bk. II. Casaubon shows from this that all animals that were slaughtered were called ἱερεῖα [sacred victims] by the ancient Greeks, *Observations on Athenaeus*, Bk. I, ch. 11 — because, that is, they ate the flesh of no animals except those slaughtered for use in sacrifices. So, before the flood, whole burnt offerings alone were in use. With the permission of eating flesh, feasts from sacred rites accompanied — which is also probable before the law, though Selden defends the contrary, *On Natural Law among the Hebrews*, Bk. III, ch. 8. For the beginnings of the eating of flesh, consult *Bereshit Rabbah*, Parasha 34; Joseph Albo, *Book of Principles*, Pt. 3, ch. 14.

XVII. Flesh being permitted, the eating of it with blood is forbidden at v. 4: אַךְ בֶּשָׂר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ [But flesh with its life — its blood — you shall not eat]. It is not the eating of blood itself, but of flesh with blood, that is forbidden. It has been shown that the long-lived men of the early age were prone to cruelty — hence the earth was filled with violence before the flood. That men are rendered savage by eating raw flesh and blood still almost palpitating with motion, experience among the American Indians teaches. To counteract that vice — at the boundary of which, above all others, the human race destitute of the Word of God appears to be placed — this prohibition of eating flesh with blood was given. Some understand this of a limb torn from a living animal. That barbarous Americans still delight in this food is reported. So Aben Ezra on the passage: “For the reason that I permitted you the eating of the flesh of animals, you ought not to be cruel toward the beasts themselves, so as to eat a limb from a living animal.” That the more recent Jews have been led over to this opinion by hatred of Christians — that is, of the Greek Christians, who, as Tertullian says, still

abstain from sausages distended with blood — Grotius judges. To me it scarcely appears that the eating of blood that has already grown cold is here prohibited. Nor can this be proved from the text by any adequate argument. Indeed, it is not even blood primarily, directly, or at all that is forbidden; much less the eating of it separated from flesh. The object of the prohibition is flesh, affected in a particular manner — בְּנִפְשׁוֹ [in its life], that is, while it is still animated with living blood. And Stephen Curcellaeus appears to me to have wasted his effort in a posthumous dissertation on the eating of blood, in which he contends that this question is of some moment in Christian practice. See Ludovicus De Dieu on the passage. Whether אֶבֶר מִן הַחַי [eber min ha-hai] — “a limb from a living thing,” that is, with blood still dripping — or דָּם מִן הַחַי [dam min ha-hai] — “blood of a still-living animal,” or “blood still pulsating in the flesh” — is forbidden, is uncertain.

XVIII. To this head also belong those seven πολυστίλλῃτα [much-celebrated/famous] precepts which it is reported that God gave to the sons of Noah. They are customarily reviewed as follows:

1. עַל עֲבֹדַת זָרָה — Concerning alien worship.
2. עַל בְּרַכַּת הַשֵּׁם — Concerning the cursing of the Name or the divine power.
3. עַל שְׁפִיכוֹת דָּמִים — Concerning the shedding of blood.
4. עַל גִּילּוֹי עֲרֵיוֹת — Concerning the uncovering of shameful things.
5. עַל הֶגְזָל — Concerning robbery.
6. עַל הַדִּינִים — Concerning judgments.
7. עַל אֶבֶר מִן הַחַי — Concerning a limb of a living animal.

XIX. By the first, idolatry of every kind is prohibited. Concerning the sense and interpretation of the second, the learned are not so agreed — the dispute arises from the ambiguous use of the word בָּרַךְ [barak], which signifies both to bless and also to curse. Some state the words affirmatively and wish it to be understood as requiring the blessing of the divine name — that is, true worship — as opposed to the foreign worship of the first. The greater number take it negatively, concerning not cursing the name of God. The third is concerning murder. The fourth concerns adultery and all unlawful intercourse. The fifth expresses the eighth commandment of the Decalogue. Political governance is instituted by the sixth; and the last teaches mortals to abhor all cruelty.

XX. That these precepts were given to Noah and his sons in the first year after the flood is asserted by Genebrard, *Chronicle* at Year of the World 1656: “Seven precepts are given,” he says, “which the Hebrews call partly the precepts of the sons of Noah, partly the precepts of nature, and they consider them to be binding upon the nations also.” This persuasion flowed from Jewish traditions. Mention of them is most frequent in both Talmuds and in the writings of very many rabbis. But it is false that the Jews affirm these precepts were given to Noah and his sons — that is, to those four men — immediately after the flood. By Noachides or sons of Noah they understand all the nations distinct from themselves; but themselves they call Abrahamites and sons of Israel, in contrast to the sons of Noah — absurdly, as if Abraham and Israel were not sons of Noah. But they love to speak so. By Noachides they understand all those who proceeding from Noah enjoyed no special spiritual privilege. When they affirm that these precepts were given to those, they mean nothing other than that these are the general dictates of right reason, or the heads of natural law carrying binding force

for all those destitute of supernatural revelation; but that they themselves are bound moreover by the written law. Hence *Seder Olam*, ch. 5; and *Sefer Melakhim*, ch. 9 affirm that the first six precepts were transmitted to Adam — thereby showing them to be common dictates of nature, or universal heads of natural law. They assert that the last was added to Noah — interpreting by it that commandment concerning not eating flesh with blood: Manasseh, *Conciliator*, Question II on Deuteronomy. For the rest, it is well known that John Selden illuminated these precepts with most learned commentaries, to which we refer the studious reader in these matters.

XXI. I am unwilling to append here the speech of Noah to the posterity he brought with him to Italy, which Curtius Inghiramus published among the fragments of Etruscan antiquities, as though it were to occupy some place in this expansion of antediluvian theology. For the whole drama concerning the invented globes which were supposed to contain little histories of the antiquities of Etruria from the arrival of Noah in Italy down to the Catilinian War appears to me — and not to me alone — to be the most laborious of fictions, by a learned man indeed, but one who abused his leisure and his genius far too much — indeed impiously. Since, however, the author of the drama observed τὸ πρέπον [propriety] in the speech attributed to Noah, I have judged it should be permitted here for the reader's judgment. The title of the globe in which the speech was deposited is this: "NOA VANDIMON." Then: "These are the words of the great Vandimon, which I, Ancus Caecinna, have transcribed." The speech is as follows: "Hear, my sons and grandsons, my words, and with your ears receive what your father speaks to you. Blessed is God, before whose sight I found grace, who having rescued me from the waters, preserved me to repair the human

race, which was blotted out by the angry God with rains and floods, lest what God had made should entirely perish. Therefore be not ungrateful to the greatest Aesar; fear him alone, serve him from your minds, because he is worthy, and because he has done many good things for you, and because he is God. If the greatest Aesar shall always be God to you, nothing will be lacking to you. Let his altar not be polluted; let no man seek the life of his brother, as Cain did. Let there be a bond of peace among you, and let it never be broken. You have this city, which I have built upon this mountain; when this shall not be sufficient for you — for you must multiply — you will be able to build others upon the same mountain; and if the mountain shall not be sufficient, choose healthful places in which you may be able to build others. And if there are no dissensions among you, all things will prosper for you. He who does not fear God and who dissents from his brothers, let him be cast out from you, because the discord of a brother corrupts everything. My sons, do not provoke God again in fornication, in iniquity, and in wickedness; but remember God who made you, delivered you from the waters, and created all things for you, and subjected all things to you. God exalts the good, destroys the impious; love him alone, and do all things in fear of him; for doing these things you shall be filled with abundance of grain, wine, and oil, and the sons of your brothers shall serve you. Your kingdom shall remain for ever. Guard always the sacred rites, and ceremonies, and all the things I leave to you; and teach your sons these things. May God bless you, and fill you with every blessing: and may he swiftly send a king to rescue you from the power of another.” So he — whose triflings I wonder ever pleased any learned person, since every page of the whole book sufficiently indicates fraud and imposition.

XXII. And such was the post-diluvian theology: namely, that natural Adamic theology destined to a new end and assigned to new uses through the promise of the Messiah, conformable to that state into which Satan through sin had by evil design enticed all men — augmented and restored by new revelation, the renewal of the solemn covenant, a visible sign, and various precepts — which the church of eight persons had as the rule of their faith, obedience, and whole divine worship. We have no cause to doubt that many furnished with it spent their lives in the highest reverence toward God, in piety, faith, love, and obedience; in gentleness, charity, mercy, justice, and fidelity toward their own kind; in simplicity and candour of all manners, and the remaining virtues by whose benefit men are renewed into the image of God — even at the smallest outward degree of revelations, provided the Holy Spirit was present to irradiate the minds of men with his saving light.

XXIII. By the benefit of this theology, the reformed church — as to external profession and ὁμολογίαν [confession] — walked on the earth pure and acceptable to God for forty years or thereabouts. For nothing that contaminated it in any way has been committed to memory, except after the birth — and perhaps a few years of growth — of Canaan, the fourth and youngest son of Ham. The long-concealed impiety of Ham at last broke out. What it was, the Holy Spirit shows at Gen. 9:22. The sin was against the dictates of right reason, which, as Aristotle testifies, teach all men γονεῖς τιμᾶν [to honour parents]. So also Plutarch, *On Brotherly Love*: Πάντες λέγουσι καὶ ᾄδουσιν ὡς γονεῦσι τιμὴν μετὰ θεοῦς πρώτην καὶ μεγίστην ἥ τε φύσις, ὃ τε τὴν φύσιν σώζων νόμος ἀπέδωκε. Καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτι μᾶλλον ἄνθρωποι κεχαρισμένον θεοῖς δρῶσιν, ἢ τοκεῦσιν αὐτῶν καὶ τροφεῦσι παλαιᾶς ἐπὶ νέαις δανεισθείσας χάριτας προθύμως ἐκτίνοντες. Οὐδ' αὖ

πάλιν μείζων ἐπίδειξις ἀθέου γέγονε τῆς περὶ γονεῖς ὀλιγωρίας καὶ πλημμελείας· διὸ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους κακῶς ποιεῖν ἀπείρηται, μητρὶ δ' αὐτοῦ καὶ πατρὶ τὸ μὴ παρέχειν ἑαυτοὺς δρῶντας ἀεὶ καὶ λέγοντας ἀφ' ὧν εὐφρανοῦνται, κἂν μὴ προσῇ τὸ λυποῦν, ἀνόσιον ἡγοῦνται καὶ ἄθεσμον — “All say and sing that nature, and the law that preserves nature, have assigned to parents the first and greatest honour after the gods; and there is nothing that men do more pleasing to the gods than when they eagerly discharge to their own parents and fosterers old debts of gratitude added to new. And again, there is no greater demonstration of impiety than contempt of and offence against parents. Hence, we are forbidden to do harm to others; but not to give themselves to their mother and father — always doing and saying those things from which they will rejoice, even if no harm is added — is held impious and unlawful.” This he says admirably. Hierocles and virtually the entire chorus of the wise have similar sentiments. It is therefore remarkable that some, on account of those words of Gen. 9:24 — וַיֵּדַע אֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לוֹ בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן [And he knew what his youngest son had done to him] — contend that not Ham but Canaan is to be understood. “For what,” they say, “did Ham do to his father? He was merely a messenger to his brothers of his father’s shame.” These are the words of the great Scaliger in his *Refutation of the Speech of David Paraeus*. That, I say, is what he did — he openly and publicly transgressed the law of nature, which is clearly established from the contrary act of his brothers setting against his impiety. He showed his father’s nakedness τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐπιγελῶν δείκνυσιν [laughing to his brothers, he shows], as Josephus rightly says, *Antiquities*, Bk. I, ch. 1. He therefore sinned against the greatest principles of that theology which was the foundation and norm of the church, of worship, and of obedience.

XXIV. The sin of Ham, therefore, holy Scripture, as we have shown, sets out clearly enough. What certain persons add to that narrative are conjectures — indeed the ravings of dreamers. The rabbis trifle that he not only saw or observed with a certain joy and mockery the nakedness of his father, but that he castrated him, or bewitched him by magical arts so that he could no longer beget children — Rashi on Gen. ch. 9. Boissard in his *Life of Apollonius* clings to their fables, and Athanasius Kircher in his work *On the Origin of Letters and Obelisks*, ch. 2, appears to give them credence. Hence almost all suspect that from this arose the fable of Saturn cutting off the genitals of his father Heaven — as Lactantius, Bk. I, ch. 12 — or Jupiter cutting Saturn himself with a sickle. And that is indeed very plausible — although, to confess the truth, Porphyry in his book *On the Cave of the Nymphs in Ithaca* accommodates the whole fable to cryptic natural theology so cleverly that I could almost believe that the first fabulists had something of this kind in mind. For the rest, the curse is expressly pronounced upon Canaan — either because he was at that time most especially his father's delight, being his youngest son; or because he stood by his father in the sin and the nefarious spectacle; or because this family among the posterity of Ham was to be the first to depart from the true church and the worship of God; or for the consolation of the Israelites about to enter the promised land, so that they might understand that the nation with which they were about to engage in war was accursed and once for all devoted to servitude and destruction. However that may be, it is most certain that Ham himself was cursed in the person of his son — that is, was ejected from the family of God. But remarkable — or rather laughable — are the things certain of the ancients trifle about the passion of Christ prefigured in the drunkenness of Noah, concerning the cross, the sacraments, the nations, the Jews, and

the ministers of the word — all of which they supposed themselves to have seen in the wine, Ham, Japheth, and the garment.

XXV. On account of this sin therefore — by which his long-concealed hypocrisy burst forth to the gravest scandal of the church and openly revealed itself — Ham was cursed by his father, who still presided over the whole church under God with paternal authority. And in his ejection from the fellowship of the pious we have another — and illustrious — example of ecclesiastical reformation. For reformation of the church must first be attempted through the removal of sinners from the assembly and communion of those who rightly worship God through faith. We gave the example of this in the post-lapsarian Adamic church above. But when the company of the contumacious grows stronger, the separation of the faithful from their assemblies takes its place.

XXVI. In this manner therefore the reformation of the new church was instituted. For such is the infirmity of all and the wickedness of many, that no church from the beginning of the world has ever been able to endure long without some notable reformation. To this recently reformed church new promises were given — partly for the consolation of their most wretched fortune, partly as spurs to more exact obedience and to living before God with the utmost care and diligence. Gen. 9:26, 27: “Blessed be Jehovah the God of Shem; and God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.”

XXVII. That Ham, driven from solemn worship of God by the paternal curse, also fled all the assemblies of the pious — this is beyond doubt. But the time had not yet come for the human race to be scattered into the various parts of the earth. With his brothers and their posterity therefore, Ham and his people continued to dwell under the same region of the sky.

Hence arose a new source of evil; hence again sprouted the seat of defection in the church so recently emerged from the flood and newly reformed. That Noah, Shem, Japheth, and their pious sons and grandsons endeavoured to preserve the purity of the worship of God according to the canons of that theology with which they were furnished, safe and sound in the church — no one doubts. Both their own piety and the consideration of their duty toward others required it. But that from their posterity very many, carried away by the wicked seductions and examples of the Hamites — having themselves also a nature headlong toward every wickedness — foully and almost universally defected from the governance and worship of God within a few years, we shall understand from what followed. For in the one hundred and first year after the flood, covered with crimes, with reckless and contumacious pride, the crowd of apostates openly set aside the authority, discipline, and warnings of Noah and rushed headlong toward every wickedness. And since the humble, peaceable, and pious manner of Noah's life was most displeasing to them, they went in every contrary direction. Casting off therefore all reverence for the divine power and puffed up with I know not what pride, they set themselves to building a tower by which they might gain a name and glory for themselves. But committing great things — hateful to God — the dreadful judgment of the confusion of languages seized them and scattered them over the whole face of the earth. From that day until the advent of the promised Messiah, God permitted the greatest part of the human race to walk in their own ways.

1. The English title of John Ball's book is *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace* (1645). It is available from <https://www.monergism.com/treatise-covenant-grace-gospel-grace-adam-christ-ebook> .

CHAPTER II

Noah אִישׁ הָאֶדְמָה [a man of the ground] — The fable of Saturn and Rhea born from this — Janus a herald of justice — The Sibylline oracles are fictitious — The authors of the Sibylline poems — Why the Sibyls were so named — Traditions mixed with their oracles — A specimen — The builders of the tower of Babel; the rationale and cause of its construction — What the primeval language was — The opinion of Grotius examined — Why the holy language is called Hebrew, Gen. 10:21; Josh. 24:2, 3 — The most portentous fables of the Targumist Uzziel — Abraham called Hebrew from Eber — The time of the division of languages.

I. That Noah was אִישׁ הָאֶדְמָה [a man of the ground] — that is, “a man of the earth” — occupied with a humble manner of living, Scripture notes at Gen. 9:20. This befitted the wretched condition of sinners on earth, and his own in particular, since he had seen the dreadful judgments of God upon the antediluvian world. Hence the fabulists called Saturn the husband or consort of Rhea — that is, of Earth. This is the conjecture of Bochart, *Sacred Geography*, Bk. I, ch. 1. Whatever later generations thought of this, it is

plain that that manner of life displeased the impious of his age. Planting a vineyard also, he יַיִן־מִן־יַיִן [drank of the yayin] — that is, of wine — hence he was called Janus. That he was a herald of righteousness among the antediluvians, the apostle affirms, 2 Pet. 2:5. Duly discharging that office, the world which he could not heal he condemned by faith and deeds, Heb. 11:7. His preaching is commemorated in the poems called Sibylline oracles, in these and other verses:

Ἄνδρες ἀπιστόκοροι μεγάλῳ βεβλημένοι οἴστρω, Οὐ λήσει θεὸν ἔργ' ὅς'
ἐπράξατε.

Πάντα γὰρ οἶδεν Ἀθάνατος σωτὴρ πανεπίσκοπος,
ὅς μ' ἐκέλευσεν Ἀγγέλλειν ὑμῖν,
ἵνα μὴ φρεσὶν ἐξαπολῆσθε.

Νήψατε, τὰς κακίας ἀποκόψετε, μηδὲ βιαίως
Ἀλλήλοις μάρνασθε, μαιφόνον ἦτορ ἔχοντες
Αἵμασιν ἀνδρομέοις πολλὴν γαῖαν ἀραδεύοντες.

[O faithless men, smitten by a great sting of madness,
the works you have committed shall not escape God.

For the immortal Saviour who oversees all knows all things —
he who commanded me to announce to you that you should not perish in
your minds.

Be sober, cut off your wickednesses,
and do not fight violently against one another with murderous hearts,
drenching the broad earth with the blood of men.]

This is the author who a little later feigns herself to be Noah's daughter-in-law, and to have been with him in the ark along with her husband. But everything that circulates under the name of the Sibyls is fictitious. I wonder that any mortal was ever of so debased a credulity as to think

otherwise. Their authors not only drew very many things from the sacred Scriptures, but were Christians — and heretics. That Prisca and Maximilla, the prophetesses of Montanus, composed these centos — if women were the authors of the work — is not improbable. Only after their prophecies were made public were the mysteries of the Christian religion claimed to be derived from the Sibylline oracles. I would not deny that certain prophesying women, whom they called Sibyls — as Diodorus says, Bk. IV, 61: τὸ γὰρ ἐνθεάζειν, Σιβυλλαίνειν [for to speak by divine inspiration is Sibyllising] — lived among the nations as consultants of the gods in their more secret counsels. But that their lots and oracles were diabolical, all historical testimony teaches. Let the things which Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch, Cicero, Varro, Livy, Tacitus, Zosimus, and others have committed to memory — drawn from their books at various times by order of the Roman senate — be consulted: all of it savours of diabolical superstition and Hellenism. The sum of all is given by Cornelius Tacitus, *Annals* XV, ch. 44: “It was the custom,” he says, “to seek expiations from the gods, and the Sibylline books were consulted, from which supplication was made to Vulcan and to Ceres and Proserpine, and Juno was propitiated through matrons — first on the Capitol, then at the nearest point of the sea.” But perhaps the ancient serpent also mixed certain true things with false ones, after his manner — in order to render true things suspect and to win credence for false ones through them. Also things which by a thin report, from the tradition of the first promise and of other divine revelations, had invaded the earlier centuries of the world concerning the future kingdom of the Messiah — drawn out into pagan swamps and mingled with those prophecies — appear to have been of this kind. Such appears to be that which Marcus Tullius mentions in *On Divination*, Bk. II, ch. 54: “We

observe,” he says, “the verses of the Sibyls, which she is said to have poured forth in a frenzy; whose interpreter was lately thought, on certain false popular report, about to say in the senate that he whom we had in truth as king ought also to be called king, if we wished to be safe. If this is in the books — for what man and what time is it? For the one who composed those things cleverly contrived that whatever happened should appear to have been foretold, by removing the definition of person and time.” He is noting Lucius Cotta, a member of the college of fifteen, who at the instigation of Antony attempted to gratify the ambition of Julius Caesar — who desired to add even the name of royal power — by using the common report of those times about a greatest king to come. The same oracle is expounded in almost the same words by two of the most noted of the Roman historians: Suetonius in the *Life of Vespasian*, and Tacitus in the fifth book of the *Histories*. Suetonius calls it “an old and constant opinion.” Tacitus calls it “a persuasion from the ancient books of the priests.” Namely: Ἐξ σοῦ ἐξελεύσεται ὁ ἡγούμενος [Out of you shall come forth the ruler] — that is, the east would prevail, and the one set over Judaea would gain dominion of affairs. But these things have nothing to do with our subject.

II. Now we showed above that Noah admonished his antediluvian contemporaries of their crimes. That he did not also strive more earnestly to restrain his sons and grandsons after the flood from impiety and defection from God, it would be wicked to suspect — and both efforts were in vain. For although he was the father of the whole new people, he could not restrain his degenerate sons from the foolish attempt to celebrate their own name by building a great tower, Gen. 11:3, 4.

III. That Noah himself and all the pious abstained from that mad enterprise of the apostates, holy Scripture clearly hints. Those who undertook that deed were בְּנֵי הָאָדָם [bene ha-adam] — Gen. 11:5 — that is, “sons of men.” These are set against the “sons of God” — that is, the pious and God-fearing. For “sons of God” from the days of Enosh, both before and after the flood, were the pious men adhering to the Adamic theology and to the divine worship; “sons of men” were the deserters and apostates. So the Holy Spirit here hints at the impious apostates and deserters of the church. That from this was born the gigantic fable, boys know. The tower moreover they built not to ascend into heaven. Nor is it credible that they were seized by that madness — since God prevented them from completing what they had begun, v. 6. Nor did they take in hand that deed in order to render themselves immune from another flood — for they could not be ignorant that no universal flood would occur again. Nor would they for that end have descended from the highest mountains of the whole earth into a most deep valley. But Moses expressly testifies that puffed up with pride and κενοδοξία [vainglory] they had determined among themselves to obtain a NAME and glory for themselves by that work, v. 4.

IV. Many things are disputed here and there concerning the confusion of languages, which do not belong to this place. Let us add a few words concerning the primaeval language and the rationale of the name it subsequently acquired. We said that the “sons of God” in no way joined themselves as participants in the wickedness of tower-building. With them, therefore, and their posterity, the use of the primaeval language remained. That this language was the Hebrew — which was afterwards so called — the learned almost universally agree. The distinguished Bochart rightly says, *Sacred Geography*, Bk. I, ch. 10: “The languages of others being

confused, these” — that is, the pious participants in the covenant — “retained their own — that is, that most ancient one which was called Hebrew from Eber, because it remained safe and sound among the posterity of Eber.” So far as I know, among more recent writers Grotius alone is of a different opinion, *Annotations on Gen. 11:1*, “The earth was of one language.” “The Hebrews,” he says, “call that language their own; the Syrians call it theirs.” This is right — the Hebrews say so, and consistently. So the Targum of Jonathan: בְּלִישׁוֹן קוֹדֶשׁא הָוּוּ מִמֶּלֶךְ לִין דְּאֵתְבְּרִי בֵּיה עֲלָמָא מִן שׁוּרְיָא [They spoke in the holy language in which the world was created from the beginning]. The Jerusalem Targum has the same words. Rabbi Solomon Jarchi on the passage: “One language is the holy tongue.” So also Aben Ezra, and all the ancient Christians except Theodoret. “But the Syrians think it was their language,” says Grotius. This is also true. The Maronites are of this opinion, after Theodoret. That they think so absurdly is too plainly established. That the Syriac language derives its origin from the Hebrew — not the Hebrew from the Syriac — is acknowledged by all who have any understanding of their analogy. The purity and simplicity of the Hebrew language proclaim it. “The Maronite Syrians,” says Joseph Scaliger, *Letter to Richard Thomson*, “contend with every pledge that Syriac is more ancient than Hebrew — which is the height of ignorance; for it is the same as if one said the Italian idiom was more ancient than Latin. For certainly מֶלֶךְ [melek] is prior to מַלְכָּא [malka], and many other things we can adduce to refute this obstinacy.” “But the Hebrew language,” says Grotius, “is the language of עִבְרִים [iverim] — of sojourners from Chaldaea. For this is the origin of the name ‘Hebrews,’ not from Eber. See Josh. 24:2, 3. The Hebrew language of Abraham and his posterity therefore, through

their dwelling in Canaan, ever more and more drew close to the Canaanite language.” This he said, οὐδὲν ἡγνίς [having concealed nothing].

V. I confess that that account of the ὀνομαστοθεσίας [notable institution] — namely, of ‘Hebrew’ and ‘Hebrews’ — has pleased, and still pleases, certain learned men. The arguments in favour of that opinion have been collected by Erpenius, *Oration on the Hebrew Language*. Fuller refutes them, *Sacred Miscellanies*, Bk. IV, ch. 4; and Rivet, *On Genesis*, Exercise 66; and we showed above that Bochart rejects that derivation of those words. It was doubtless once a great thing to have gone out from Mesopotamia — for the nations whom συγκλεισάντες οἱ ποταμοὶ ἔχουσιν [the rivers enclosing them] hold: Νησιώτας ἑαυτοὺς νομίζοντες ὥς ἐπὶ θάλατταν καταβαίνειν φάσκειν, ὅτ’ ἐπὶ τοὺς ποταμοὺς βαδίζοιεν, ὅρον τε ποιῆσθαι τῆς γῆς τὸν τῶν ποτάμων κύκλον — “They consider themselves islanders, so that they say they are going down to the sea when they go to the rivers, and make the circuit of the rivers the limit of the earth,” as Philostratus says in the *Life of Apollonius*, Bk. I, ch. 14. But that Abraham was hence called Hebrew, and the holy language Hebrew — that is, he was called “a crosser” and it “the language of those who cross” — is far too incredible. Moses says that “Shem was the father of all the sons of Eber,” Gen. 10:21. What this can mean other than “the father of all the Hebrews” can scarcely be understood.

VI. The sons of Eber are therefore the Hebrews, and the Hebrews are the sons of Eber. And this is the rationale of the ὀνοματολογία [nomenclature]. Some say these words can signify “that Shem was the father of all those beyond the river.” But this is said without any precedent and is destitute of all probability. Indeed, if the Holy Spirit had said חַוָּא אָבִי כָּל הָעִבְרִים [He is the father of all the Hebrews], that conjecture would not have been quite so

futile. But as the words stand — כָּל־בְּנֵי־עֶבֶר [all the sons of Eber] — that the posterity of Eber and none others are denoted is clear from the common usage of the holy tongue. Nor can any probable reason be assigned why Shem should be called emphatically the father of all those beyond the river, since the greatest part of his own posterity always dwelt on this side of the river, while very many families of Hamite origin crossed it. But what we said of Eber is expressly affirmed by Balaam in his last prophecy, Num. 24:24: “Ships from Kittim shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber” — where the interpreters agree that the prophet uses national and patronymic names in place of the individuals, so that the Vulgate renders “Assyrians and Hebrews.”

VII. But Grotius refers us to Josh. 24:3. There Joshua does indeed say that God took Abraham מֵעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר [from beyond the river] — from the place that was across the river. Grotius thinks therefore that Abraham was thence called עִבְרִי [ivri] — as one might say “a crosser” — and that for this same reason, namely that Abraham crossed the river, this name was so given by the Holy Spirit to serve as the surname of all his posterity, and that they would be called “crossers” or “a people of crossers” throughout all ages. But such a rationale of ὀνομαστοθεσίας [the notable institution] — similar or like to this — exists nowhere in the records of things anywhere in the world. No trace therefore of the reason for this conjecture appears here. Nor was Abraham the only one in that age who had crossed the Euphrates to migrate to the land of Canaan. For that reason — and not because he had dwelt in Mesopotamia — he was not to be called “a crosser” or “one beyond the river” any more than very many others. Indeed it is most certain that very many of the Canaanites, of Hamite origin, crossed the Euphrates not long after the Babylonian dispersion. These therefore — from this

derivation of the word — ought no less to be called Hebrews than Abraham himself and his posterity, and could have gloried no less in being Hebrews of the Hebrews than the apostle Paul.

VIII. Some gratuitously state in this cause — indeed falsely presuppose — that Abraham was first called Hebrew by the Canaanites, as if they wished to denote by that name his crossing, which they had almost, as they say, seen with their eyes. For it was by the Holy Spirit himself that he was first distinguished with that surname, Gen. 14:13: “There came he who had escaped, and reported to Abraham the Hebrew.” These are the words of the Holy Spirit, not of the Canaanites. It is true that he was first so named among the Canaanites; but by the Canaanites by no means. But the Septuagint renders those words Ἀβραμ τῷ περάτῃ [to Abram the crosser]. From this also Chrysostom, far too incautiously, thought him to have been called Abram, and that name to have that signification, *Homily XXXV on Genesis*: Ἐξ ἀρχῆς, he says, οἱ γονεῖς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῷ ἐπετίθεσαν προμηνύοντες αὐτῷ τὴν ἐκεῖθεν μεταστασιν. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ περῶν ἔμελλε τὸν Εὐφράτην, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Παλαιστίνην ἔρχεσθαι, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ Ἀβραμ ἐκαλεῖτο — “From the beginning his parents gave him this name, signifying beforehand his migration from that place. For since he was going to cross the Euphrates and come to Palestine, he was therefore called Abram.” Would that the most learned man had blundered on this point alone from ignorance of the Hebrew language. But boys know that the signification of that name is entirely different. That the Septuagint called Abraham περάτην [the crosser] from תַּרְבִּי [the Euphrates], some think. But the force of the word plainly deceives them — they rendered the interpretation of the word, not the word itself. That this was customary with them, Jerome observes on Isa. 27:12, where conversely they render לַחֲבִי

מִצְרַיִם [the brook of Egypt] by “Rhinocorura”: “For ‘the brook of Egypt,’” he says, “the Septuagint translated ‘Rhinocorura,’ which is a town on the border of Egypt and Palestine — expressing not so much the words of the Scripture as the meaning of the words.” So also deceived by similarity of letters, not once did they translate עִבְרִי [ivri] as “slave” in place of “Hebrew” — reading Daleth in place of Resh: 1 Sam. 13:3, יִשְׁמְעוּ הָעִבְרִים [Let the Hebrews hear]; the Septuagint has Ἡθετήκασιν οἱ δοῦλοι [The slaves have revolted]. What Ἡθετήκασιν means, I do not know; δοῦλοι is עִבְרִים [Hebrews]. And Jonah 1:9, עִבְרִי אֲנִי [I am a Hebrew]; the Septuagint has Δοῦλος Κυρίου εἰμὶ ἐγώ [I am a servant of the Lord] — adding Κυρίου [of the Lord] of their own accord to give colour to the blunder. There is therefore no reason why their interpretation of this name should move us in any way. If moreover Moses wished to call him a crosser and not a Hebrew, he would not have called him עִבְרִי [ivri], which is most plainly a patronymic — as אֲמֹרִי [Amorite] and עַמְלֵקִי [Amalekite] — but עֹבֵר [over] or עֵבְרִי [everite], as Augustine, Steuchus, Drusius, and Buxtorf show. But the rationale of the nomenclature is at hand. The whole people of the Canaanites, destined to be extirpated, was at that time formed from many families which, driven from their eastern seats by various chances or impelled by some force of God, had flowed together under various leaders into that land. And all of them were distinguished from one another by the well-known surnames of their ancestors — as Moses narrates, Gen. 10:15-18. This one was an Amorite, that one a Jebusite, another a Hivite, another a Hittite. Each was named from his stock or the author of his stock. Abraham, dwelling among them, was called Hebrew from the most famous author of the family from which he sprang — Eber — and was thereby separated from every branch of Ham, even by a familiar appellation. For in the very

same passage where Abraham is first called עִבְרִי [Hebrew], his companion Mamre is called אַמְרִי [Amorite] — so that we can easily see that the rationale of both surnames was the same; for both are equally patronymics. Therefore, just as all the inhabitants of that land were distinguished from one another by some patronymic name, so Abraham was called Hebrew from the most celebrated author of his stock, Eber. Nor do the Targumists take that word in any other sense. Whoever consults Uzziel on the passage will encounter the fable which I have judged should be set out here, so that the reader may understand what coals he is likely to find for treasure who happens to come upon this Talmudic fabulist — for scarcely anywhere does he surpass himself more than here. Thus he writes on Gen. 14:13: “And there came Og, who had escaped from the men who had died in the flood; and he had ridden upon the ark, and there was a covering on its top; and he was fed from the foods of Noah; and it was not for his righteousness that he was rescued, but so that the inhabitants of the world might see the power of God and say: Did not the giants who were from the beginning rebel against the Lord of the world, and were they not destroyed from the earth? And he came to Abraham, at the going down of the Passover day, and found him making unleavened cakes.” To these you may add the same Og’s antediluvian death — for he was antediluvian, I presume — which the same Uzziel narrates at Num. 22 thus: “And it came to pass that after the wicked Og... saw the camp of the Israelites, which was spread over six miles, he said to himself, I will draw up a battle line against this people, so that they will not do to me as they did to Sihon. He went and uprooted a mountain six miles wide, and placed it upon his head to throw at them. Immediately the Word of the Lord prepared a worm which gnawed through the mountain and perforated it, and his head sank into the middle of it; he wished to pull

his head out of it” — not as in the London translation “he wished to pull it out of his head” — “but could not, because his teeth and molars had been pulled hither and thither; then Moses went and took an axe of ten cubits, and leapt ten cubits, and struck him on the heel of his foot, and he fell and died.” This is worthy to be numbered among the fables of Aesop — yet not even worthy of that, since it is tasteless and entirely useless — indeed harmful. The Alcoran of Mohammed is no more crammed with the most impudent lies than this Pentateuch of Ben Uzziel. And he is the more to be detested for this, that this trifler proposed to defile the holy oracles of God. The Targum of Onkelos has עִבְרָאָה [the Hebrew]; and at Exod. 2:6, הָעִבְרָיִים [of the Hebrews] it renders by הַיְּהוּדָיִם [of the Jews]; and at Deut. 15:12, אָחִיךָ הָעִבְרִי [your Hebrew brother] by בֶּרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל [your brother the son of Israel]. For him Hebrew and Jew and son of Israel are the same — that is, the name is patronymic.

IX. Some object that no probable reason can be assigned why the whole family was named from Eber rather than from others — namely, from Shem himself or from Arphaxad — or why Abraham rather than other grandsons of Eber was called Hebrew from Eber. But probable cause and rationale for both are not lacking. That Eber was greatly eminent in the new people is probable from the fact that Shem is pointedly said to be “the father of all the sons of Eber” — Gen. 10:21 — to the exclusion of others. And no reason can be assigned why he obtained that degree of honour except through holiness and virtue toward God. Furthermore, he was μακροβιώτατος [longest-lived] of all the patriarchs born after the flood, and survived his son Peleg. After the death of Peleg, no one can doubt that he took particular care of his grandsons and was to them in the place of an immediate parent. So although Aram was the youngest son of Shem, yet because he outlived

all his brothers, the Syriac language used by very many others besides his own progeny is called Aramaic — as Elias Levita teaches us in his preface to the *Methurgamim*. Eber also lived, distinguished for piety, at the time when the languages were confused, and the earth was divided — in view of which specimen of adorable divine providence he gave his son the name Peleg. And also from the preservation of the primaeval language in his family, he appears to have been the leader of those who did not consent to the building of the mad tower. Not without most weighty reasons therefore was his name transmitted to his posterity. That they constituted a separate family or tribe from the rest of the posterity of Shem appears most plainly from those words of Moses which we cited above.

X. Furthermore: that not only all the sons of Joktan — who was the younger son of Eber — received themselves into the apostate crowd, but that very many also from the line of Peleg himself mingled with them and bid farewell to the paternal family in which pure worship of God flourished — this is evident from the outcome. Abraham, however, above all others followed in the footsteps of his pious forefathers and of Eber himself, though he was not himself immune from the stain of the common defection. At last, however, led by God and by the benefit of new revelations, he restored the ancestral piety and the worship of God that had gone into exile from the earth. Should it then seem wonderful — especially since he became celebrated above all other mortals of his age, and was constituted the head and founder of a most glorious nation — if he claimed for himself and his posterity the celebrated patronymic name which apostasy had discarded, or at least esteemed at nothing, of what remained of that kinship? Nor was the crossing of a river of such importance that from it a name lasting for all ages should be imposed upon him and the whole holy nation.

The migration of Abraham from his country and the land of his kindred, to follow God to a place he did not know, was indeed an illustrious testimony of his faith. But he who thinks that this Abrahamic obedience is to be assessed from the crossing of a river — which he had in common with innumerable others — judges wrongly. That in obedience to God's word, yielding to his will and commands, leaving his ancestral household gods, his own home, and the superstitious worship in which he had been nurtured, allured by no hope of a better condition, he followed him where he knew not — this, among innumerable other things, commends his faith. Compared with those things, the crossing of a river is nothing. Moreover, that that migration so pleased God that for this reason he received promises — that his posterity should possess the land into which he was going to journey as an inheritance, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed — as some affirm, is false and ἀθεόλογον [contrary to theology]. False, because he had received those promises before he had crossed the Tigris, let alone the Euphrates — as is seen at Gen. 12:1-4. And ἀθεόλογον [contrary to theology], because it teaches that what is most certain to have come from pure grace in every way is in any manner to be imputed to Abraham's obedience. For that God gave those promises to Abraham without any respect to any preceding obedience is more agreed upon than to need proof. Concerning this derivation of the name of the Hebrews, the same opinion as ours is held among the Jews by Josephus, *Antiquities*, Bk. I, ch. 6; the Triple Targum; Aben Ezra on Exod. 1; Kimchi, root עֶבֶר; Elias Levita, *Methurgaman*. Among the Fathers and ancient Christians: Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, Bk. VII, ch. 2; Jerome, *Questions on Genesis*; Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. XVI, ch. 3; Eucherius on Genesis, Bk. II, ch. 7; Zonaras, *Annals*, Bk. I. Among the more recent: Calvin on Gen. 10:20;

Pererius on Gen. 20; Mercer on Gen. 14:13 and in the Pagnine *Lexicon*, root עֶבֶר; Münster on Gen. 11:16; Drusius on Gen. 14:13; Paraeus on Gen. 14:15; Junius, *Oration on the Hebrew Language*; Cornelius à Lapide on Gen. 14; Buxtorf, *Dissertation on the Preservation of the Hebrew Language*; Sigonius, *On the Hebrew Republic*; Schindler, *Lexicon*, root עֶבֶר; Bochart, Bk. I, ch. 10; and innumerable others.

XI. Let us return to the distinguished Grotius treating of the primaeval language. He grants that the Hebrew was the language of Abraham; but what that language was — since it was not that ancient one coeval with the world — he does not show. “Chaldaic,” says Cappel, *Sacred Chronology, Notes on the Second Table*. “That language of Abraham and his posterity,” says Grotius, “through their dwelling in Canaan drew closer and closer to the Canaanite language.” Cappel asserts that Abraham learned the Canaanite language from the Canaanites — which Canaanite was the primaeval language that is now called Hebrew. We grant that the language of the Canaanites — whence the Punic — drew near to the Hebrew language. This has been most plainly shown after others by the distinguished Bochart in his wholly admirable work — the argument being from the proper names of cities and men. But that those who were without doubt among the chief builders of the tower of Babel retained the primaeval holy language pure, while those who religiously abstained from that wickedness — among whom, above all others, were the progenitors of Abraham — forgot it, surpasses all credibility. Cappel was preceded in this opinion by Joseph Scaliger, *Letter to Thomson*, and *Observations on Eusebius*, at number 804. But we are about to show that the Hebrew language was the primaeval one. The loss of that language was penal. Whether moreover anyone can bring himself to believe seriously that those

were punished with ignorance or corruption of that language who had never consented to the wickedness which merited that punishment — I greatly doubt. That some of them in the course of time deviated somewhat from the purity of the dialect is probable. Elias affirms in his preface to the *Methurgamim* that this kind of deflection was the origin of the Chaldaic language. But that the accursed Canaanites — devoted to eternal destruction — retained the *primaeval* language pure; that Abraham also learned their language, whatever it was, and communicated that alone to his posterity, who were most gravely forbidden to have anything in common with those Canaanites whom they were about to exterminate from the face of the earth — these appear παράδοξα [paradoxes].

XII. Furthermore, it is most certain that the Philistines — contrary to what the learned man thought — did not use the Hebrew language. For those born of Jewish fathers but Ashdodite mothers “spoke partly in Ashdodite, and did not know how to speak Judaically” — for which Nehemiah was most angry with them, ch. 13:24, 25. And Jerome, on Isa., Bk. VII, ch. 19, affirms that “the language of Canaan is intermediate between Egyptian and Hebrew.” “Wherefore,” says Grotius, “it is more true that the *primaeval* language exists nowhere in purity, but that its remains are in all languages; and that the names of Adam, Eve, and the rest, expressed in Hebrew speech by Moses, were expressed for the sake of the Hebrews with the same signification which they had in the *primaeval* language. So Curtius says that certain soldiers were called by the Persians ‘immortals’; that the pass into Cilicia was called ‘the Gates’ by its inhabitants; and that those who commanded individual thousands of soldiers were called ‘chiliarchs’ by the Persians.” He so dismisses both those who contend for Hebrew and those who contend for Syriac, awarding the palm of antiquity

to neither. And in this opinion, he is almost alone. Goropius Becanus indeed attempted to claim the honour of primaeval antiquity for his own vernacular language — but in vain, since all are settled here. But that God wished to commit his oracles to that language which was mixed from others and those themselves corrupt, does not seem credible. But the most learned Mercer long ago responded to these things, and we need no other words to convict the vanity of these objections: “I hold it as certain, persuaded, and indubitable that that primaeval language was Hebrew,” he says, “although certain persons hostile to it say that proper names were changed by Moses and translated into his own language which he favoured — as if historians were not generally accustomed to retain proper names even barbarous ones unchanged, though sometimes they change them when in the course of time the names of regions or places have been changed. But they generally keep the names of men unchanged, only accommodated to the inflection and usage of their own language, somewhat twisted and corrupted; yet so that the origin is easily recognised. Add to this: the etymology of all proper names before the flood, and after it until the division of languages, cannot be attributed to any other language; nor can that of others after that time, of which Moses makes use, other than Hebrew: as אָדָם [Adam] from אֲדָמָה [adamah]; חַוְוָה [Eve], because she was the mother of the living. Cain, Abel, Seth, Mahalaleel, Kenan, Noah, etc. — of all of which and the rest, the source can only be Hebrew.” This he says learnedly and piously.

XIII. Whether moreover it is probable that all these proper names of men were translated into another language by Moses — when for very many of them no adequate reason for such a translation can be given — let the learned judge. קַיִן [Cain] is said from קָנִיתִי [I have acquired], “because God has set another seed” — what will those on the other side also say of the

allusions drawn from the Hebrew language? Such as that יִפְתָּ אֱלֹהִים לְיָפֶת [God shall enlarge Japheth]. But some say that these words were also in use in the Chaldaic or Syriac language; but their pretension is plainly met by those words of Adam: “She shall be called woman, because she was taken from man” — אִשָּׁה [ishah] from אִישׁ [ish]. But among the Chaldeans אִתָּא is “woman” and נָבַר is “man” — words between which there is no such community as ὁ πρωτοπλάστης [the first-formed man] hints at.

XIV. But this whole argument not long ago was so treated in a special dissertation on the origin and antiquity of the Hebrew language by the most learned Buxtorf the son that no place for doubting in the future seemed to be left for anyone. The primaeval language therefore — the use of which God implanted in man at his very creation — is Hebrew. After it had been common to the whole earth for 1757 years, at the division of languages it remained among those posterity of Shem who had not been present at the construction of the mad tower. So Genebrard, *Chronicle*, Bk. I: “The Hebrew, which before was common, remained uncorrupted with Eber — from whom both the language and the people take their name — because he had not participated in the counsels of those, nor in the work, whose pleasure it was to erect a tower to heaven.” But just as many of them gradually defected from the true worship of God, so they also seem to have gradually deviated from the pure dialect of the language — from which the Chaldaic dialect was born, as the distinguished Selden thinks, *Prolegomena* II, *On the Syrian Gods*. And so Elias Levita teaches us in his preface to the *Methurgaman*: לִישׁוֹן אֲרָמִית הוּא לִישׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ מְשֻׁתָּפֵשׁ [The Aramaic language is the holy language corrupted]. Elsewhere he proves from R. Aben Ezra that it is closer to the holy language than all other languages; and he further adds: “It appears that in the time of the patriarchs that language was

corrupted. The evidence of this is **יְגֵר שְׂהֵדוּתָא** [a mound of witnesses]. It therefore seems to me that it must be said it was corrupted as soon as Abraham went out from Chaldaea. For without doubt he and his fathers spoke the holy language, as they received it from Adam down to Noah — **אִישׁ מִפִּי אִישׁ** [one man from the mouth of another man].”

XV. Where the church remained — and especially that family from which it was fated to be renewed — there also the purity of the ancient language remained. That was the family of Eber, from whom this Hebrew language was called, which had previously been distinguished by no title. Nor did it need a title by which to be distinguished from others, when it was the only one — as Augustine rightly says, *City of God*, Bk. XVI, ch. 11: “Because,” he says, “this language remained in the family of Eber while the remaining nations were divided into other languages — which language is deservedly believed to have been formerly common to the whole human race — it was therefore henceforth called Hebrew. For then it was necessary to distinguish it from other languages by a proper name, just as the others also were called by proper names. But when it was the only one, it was called nothing other than the human language, or human speech, in which alone all the human race spoke.” From Eber also, Abraham — who almost alone sincerely embraced his ancestral religion — was called Hebrew, as we proved; and he brought that language with him into Canaan, the land promised to himself and his seed. But the remaining brothers and kinsmen of Abraham himself, and others of his contemporaries from the family of Eber, as they degenerated from true religion, so also appeared gradually to have deviated from the pure use of the holy tongue — from which was born the Chaldaic dialect, as the distinguished Selden thinks.

XVI. But the sacred page affirms that this division of languages occurred either a little before the birth of Peleg, or about that time — Gen. 10:25; 1 Chron. 1:19. The Jews in the *Seder Olam* — or *Series of the World* — count 340 years from the flood, says Münster; for thus he makes the computation in the margin of his translation. The text has: from the flood to the division, two hundred and seventy-two years; for they narrate that the division occurred when Abraham was forty-eight years old. From the flood to the forty-eighth year of Abraham, however, there are 340 years; hence Münster added fifty-two years to their number so that his computation might be consistent with itself. But this is false; and that division falls in the two hundred and forty-first year before the birth of Abraham, around the birth of Peleg, as was shown above. But this controversy is also most learnedly decided by Buxtorf, in his *Dissertation on the Confusion of Languages*; David Paraeus treats of it at length in his *Commentary on Genesis*, ch. 12; and most recently Ussher in his *Sacred Chronology*, ch. 5, where he vindicates the faithfulness and truth of the computation of the Hebrew text from the objections of Morin.

XVII. But when the whole of the human race had been brought to this state and condition, and left to the counsel of their own minds — since, that is, weariness of the true God and his worship had seized them — they gradually poured themselves into every form of idolatry. The earlier ages indeed could not wholly cast aside whatever knowledge of God they had received either from the instruction of their parents or from wandering tradition. From these therefore we find that very many — as is the way of men convicted by the sparks of divine light — feared God indeed, but served idols. But with the passing of time, all revealed theology having gradually been rejected, the memory of the solemn promise and the divine

covenant being utterly abolished, the whole world of nations polluted itself universally with nefarious and most foul idolatries. Their origin and progress therefore — which we promised above — it is our pleasure to investigate here more diligently.

CHAPTER III. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY, OR ἐθελοθησκεΐας [WILL-WORSHIP] — CHAPTER I

The beginnings of idolatry most uncertain — The diversity of opinions concerning them — The causes of a new investigation — Adamic idolatry in paradise — The apostasy and superstition of Cain — The Enoshite reformation of the church — Before the flood, no idolatry properly so called — The “golden age” after the flood — In it no traces of idolatry — Why men were called μέροπες [men of divided speech] — The time of the division of languages and the dispersion of the human race — The builders of the tower of Babel: what manner of men they were — What purpose they had in building it — Among them the beginnings of idolatry are to be sought.

I. That no clear traces of the origins and occasions of idolatry exist — we saw this before, and the fruitless endeavours of investigators have placed it beyond controversy. That it had an origin is evident from the outcome. The times, rationales, causes, authors, and all the beginnings of its origin must be investigated by conjecture. Here indeed:

Μάντις ἄριστος, ὅστις εἰκάζει καλῶς

[The best prophet is he who guesses well] — Euripides, *Frag. inc.*

CXXVIII.

So Cicero renders that saying from Euripides. Some think that idolatry occupied the world before the flood. In this opinion are most of the Jews, especially Maimonides, at the beginning of his work *On the Worship of the Stars*, whom Selden follows in the *Prolegomena* to his *Syntagma on the Syrian Gods*. Others think that Satan sprinkled this poison on those who came out of the ark. The Targumists heap this wickedness specifically upon Ham. To others it seems that no certain traces or express monuments of arbitrary and profane worship can be found before the construction of the tower of Babel — which the contumacious and proud Noachides attempted to build as a memorial for eternity. Here therefore the foot must be planted for a moment; and the sources of this Nile — most productive of monsters, from which “the monsters of gods of every kind, and barking Anubis” came forth — must be investigated. This is a field most rich in the monuments of ancient times; and though great intellects have cultivated it, yet, as is wont to happen in investigating the most obscure beginnings of things — of which “scarcely the thin breath of report glides across to us” — there remains in it much room for others to exercise themselves long and much. The reader will easily perceive from what we are about to contribute to this place that, after the most abundant vintage-gatherings of others, there was no lack of reasons for offering these gleanings of ours. For if we cannot bring new light to the things themselves — that is, to the most darkness-covered beginnings of foreign worship — we are at least brought to some hope that we shall set out for the reader things not unwelcome and lending some light to a most obscure truth: at least what relation those beginnings bore to the worship of God, by what tricks the most ancient deceiver

practised illusion upon the human race and led it into fraud; and other things tacitly passed over by the learned men who have cultivated this place with very great erudition. It is our intention, however, to touch only upon the chief heads of matters, so that I may freely satisfy the proposed work and keep to the road laid out.

II. We showed above that God implanted in man — created for his glory — an ἔμφυτον [innate] law of obedience, embracing all those things that necessarily follow upon his nature, condition, and ultimate end. He never, however, permitted that law to be the full rule and revelation of all divine worship. To it, in the state of creation before the entrance of sin, he added the institution concerning not eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In that institution, with respect to the external act, the rational creature made the beginning of defection from God. But it laid the foundation of defection in moral worship. For in giving credence to the serpent against the threatening of God, it held him to that extent in the place of God. And this was a certain species of idolatry — indeed the worst — which still flourishes among all those who, setting aside the authority of the divine promises and threatenings, render themselves obedient to Satan. But this is not the idolatry properly so called whose beginnings we are investigating.

III. After the entrance of sin, God restored the natural theology — amplified by new revelations and the institution of sacrifices and consecrated to new ends. In the instituted worship, sin was immediately committed again with unbelief going before. We set out the nature and outcome of that sin above. We also showed that Cain, cursed by God, defected entirely from his solemn worship. It is probable indeed that he and the Henochite citizens over whom he presided, Gen. 4, repudiated that

worship — namely, of sacrifices — from which he had drawn the first stain of evil, and usurped new rites by his own discretion, practising ἐθελοθρησκοῦντα [will-worship] and procuring אֱלֹהִים הַדְּשִׁים [new gods] for himself — as Scripture speaks, Judg. 5:8. There are many things, however, which prevent us from believing this. For it was not possible for Cain to put off his humanity to the extent of devising other gods for himself — after that express and open communion which had passed between him and Jehovah, the creator of all.

IV. As time advanced and some of the Sethites also lapsed into the ways of the Cainites, the pious Enoshites — together with a reformation of divine worship, in order to preserve it pure the better and longer for rightly calling upon the name of God — established separate assemblies, and were thence called “sons of God,” Gen. 4 (last verse): “Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord.” That some wrongly think the origin of foreign worship is noted by those words, we also showed above. For it is not the profanation of the divine name but the reformation of the church that the Holy Spirit hints at.

V. God himself laments that before the flood all flesh corrupted its way. Nor is there any doubt that the apostates openly declared war on God and religion. But that they were bound by this crime — namely, idolatry — no testimony exists, no probable foundation for conjecture. Since, however, we demonstrated this above with clear arguments, I am unwilling to do here what is already done. The antediluvian ages, therefore, we are necessarily obliged to pass over in this investigation. For the opinion of Justin Martyr does not please me — who interprets the sons of God who, seized with love for the daughters of men, associated them with themselves, as angels; and

who says that daemons were born from them, who immediately devoted their efforts to the advancing of idolatry: *Apology to the Roman Senate*.

VI. What the Targumists and other Jews foolishly rave about concerning the idolatry of Ham, his magic incantations, and the nature of that wickedness, does not belong to this place. That age, which came between the Deluge and the διασποράν [dispersion] of the nations— rendered διαβόητον [famous] at Babylon—left very few, or indeed no traces at all of itself in the surviving monuments of history. Whatever that space of time was, Noah, as a great patriarch, held the whole human race descended from him under a pious and paternal rule. That was the golden age of which the ancient mythmakers say so much. ¹

Virgil, *Georgics* I, 125:

*“Before Jupiter, no farmers subdued the fields:
Nor was it lawful even to mark or divide the field by boundary:
They sought all things in common; and the earth itself
More freely, with no one asking, bore all things.”*

And Martial, *Epigrams*, Bk. XII:

*“Great king of the ancient Pole, and of the former world,
Under whom was sluggish rest, and no labour,
Nor too regal a thunderbolt, nor earth worthy of the thunderbolt,
Nor cleft open to the shades, but rich of itself.”*

Both refer to Saturn from Hesiod; for he says, *Works and Days*, 111:

Οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ Κρόνου ἦσαν,
ὅτ’ οὐρανῷ ἐμβασίλευεν·
Ὡς τε θεοὶ δ’ ἔζων, ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες,
Νόσφιν ἄτερ τε πόνων καὶ ὀϊζύος.
[Those who lived in the time of Kronos,

when he held sway in heaven, lived as gods,
with hearts free from care, apart from toil and grief.]

“When Saturn held sway and ruled in heaven, men lived like gods,” etc.

And Tibullus, Bk. I, 3:

*“How well they lived when Saturn was king of old,
Before the earth was opened up to long journeys.
No house had a door; no stone fixed in the fields
To mark the boundaries and govern the land.
The oaks themselves gave honey,”* etc.

Lucian has similar things in *Letters to Saturn*, ch. 7, where he introduces Saturn speaking: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀπανταχοῦ κρίτος, καὶ ὥδῃ, καὶ παιδιὰ, καὶ ἰσοτιμία πᾶσι, καὶ δούλοις, καὶ ἐλευθέροις, οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἐπ’ ἐμοῦ δοῦλος ἦν [And therefore everywhere is merriment, singing, play, and equality for all — both slaves and free; for in my time no one was a slave] — all referring to the paternal governance of Noah and the undivided earth. From this flowed the licence of slaves at the Roman Saturnalia, as Plutarch narrates in the *Life of Numa*.

VII. For Noah was Saturn. He was the greatest δικαιοσύνης κήρυξ [herald of righteousness] among the antediluvians, 2 Pet. 2:5, whose warnings were met with contempt by the dreadful πανωλεθρία [utter destruction] of the human race. As long therefore as his sons and grandsons either respected his authority or showed themselves obedient to his sayings and sermons, it is not fair for us to suppose that they admitted this wickedness into themselves.

VIII. Most think that the confusion of languages occurred in the one hundred and first or second year after the flood. Then men became μέροπες [men of divided speech] and were so called: Γενεαὶ μερόπων ἀνθρώπων

[generations of men of divided speech], Homer, *Iliad* I, 250 — “generations of various-tongued men.” Μερόπων — that is, μεμερισμένην τὴν φωνὴν ἔχόντων· ὃ ἔστι μεριζομένην εἰς συλλαβὰς καὶ ἔναρθρον ἔχόντων τὴν ὅπα, says Didymus — that is, “those men have their tongue divided and fitted for pronouncing syllables and use articulate speech”; since the voices of the other animals are ἄναρθροι [inarticulate]. Hesychius agrees with the scholiast: Μέροπες ἄνθρωποι διὰ τὸ μεμερισμένην ἔχειν τὴν ὅπα, ἡγουν τὴν φωνήν [Men are called meropes because they have a divided voice, that is, speech]. Eustathius cites the same opinion in first place; to which he adds δι’ ἐπανορθώσιν [by way of correction]: οἱ μέντοι τῆς ἡμετέρας θείας αὐλῆς, μέροπας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐπικληθῆναι φασιν, ἀπὸ τοῦ μερισμοῦ ἦτοι διαμερισμοῦ τῆς ἐπὸς, ὃν ἔπαθον μετὰ τὸν τῆς Χαλάνης πύργον διαμερισθέντες ἀπανταχοῦ τῆς γῆς [Those of our holy court say that men were called meropes from the division — that is, the distribution — of speech which they suffered after the tower of Chalane, being dispersed everywhere throughout the earth] — “it was the common opinion of the ancient Christians that men were called μέροπες [those of divided speech] from that division of languages which they suffered in the building of the tower of Babel.”² John of Antioch Malalas has similar things: Γλῶσσαι διεμερίσθησαν, διὸ καὶ μέροπες κέκληνται οἱ ἄνθρωποι διὰ τὸ μερισθῆναι αὐτῶν τὰς λαλιάς εἰς πολλὰς γλώσσας καὶ φωνάς [The languages were divided, hence also men are called meropes because their speeches were divided into many languages and voices]. Now as men were called μέροπες [those of divided speech] on account of the division of languages, so the place where that punishment was inflicted upon the rebels was called בְּבֶל [Babel] — as if one said בְּבֶלָה [confusion came]; or בְּבֶל stands for בְּבֶלָה [confusion], the middle Lamed being dropped to avoid cacophony. In the

one hundred and first year after the flood, Peleg was born. That name was given to him כִּי בְיָמָיו נִפְלְגָה הָאָרֶץ [because in his days the earth was divided], Gen. 10:25. And the verb פָּלַג is used in that sense elsewhere: Ps. 5:10, פָּלַג לְשׁוֹנָם [divide their tongue]. Very many of the Jews affirm that this name was given to this son of Eber by prophetic inspiration. Cornelius à Lapide and Augustine Torniellus are of the same opinion — the former in his *Commentary on Genesis*, the latter in his *Annals* at the year of the world 1931. So in the giving of the name of Noah, the pious parents appear to have had regard to things not to be fulfilled until six hundred years later. The Jews therefore wish the tower of Babel to have been built in the two hundredth year of Peleg's life, led by arguments not altogether absurd. Whatever pertains to understanding or rightly affirming that chronological dispute, the most distinguished Buxtorf the son has set out in a special dissertation on the origin of the several languages. Seth Calvisius in his *Chronology*; Pererius, Paraeus, Rivet in their *Commentaries and Disputations on Genesis*; Torniellus in his *Annals of the World*; Masius in his *Commentary on Joshua*; Ussher in his *Sacred Chronology*; and very many others, both theologians and chronologists, have woven the same web.

IX. Those who assert that the division of languages occurred at the birth of Peleg and that his name was imposed from the event appear, in the opinion of some, to place the interval from the flood shorter than one in which men could have multiplied to that multitude which set about building the tower — for as we said, the birth of Peleg falls in the one hundred and first year after the flood. Those however who think the name was given to Peleg by prophetic inspiration and push the dispersion of the human race to the end of his life, and therefore to the year of the world 1996, are

compelled to place the arrival of Abraham in the land of Canaan at eighty-eight years after that dispersion — which space seems too short for the erection of those kingdoms which sacred history narrates were founded in those times. Buxtorf therefore denies that Peleg was the firstborn of Eber or born in his father's seventy-fourth year, and pushes his birth — and therefore the division of languages — to another and far later time. But Johannes Temporarius demonstrates in his *Second Chronological Demonstration* that from the stock of Noah within the space of 102 years 1,554,420 males and females could have been born. Half of that number Ussher accepts, *Sacred Chronology*, ch. 5, where he most learnedly refutes the madness and notable audacity of Johannes Morin in rejecting the Hebrew chronology. Let us therefore grant that the building of the tower of Babel and the division of languages occurred in the year of the world 1757, or 101 or 102 years after the flood. That any traces, any monuments, any testimonies of idolatry existed or ever existed up to that time, there is nothing remaining to testify — at least no traces of it survive.

X. The Jerusalem Targum teaches that the builders of the tower of Babel had it in mind to set an image at the summit of that impious mass to receive religious worship: "They said," it declares, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower, the top of which shall reach to the heights of the heavens, and let us make something to worship at its top, and let us put a sword in its hand." Jonathan Ben Uzziel appends the same fable in almost the same words. That that tower endured for a long time after the confusion of languages is the common opinion of learned men. Nor indeed does it appear to be different from what Herodotus describes at length under the name of the temple of Bel, Bk. I, ch. 181. It consisted of eight towers, one placed upon another — of which the first at least, if not each one, was a stade in

height. Concerning the topmost he speaks thus: Ἐν δὲ τῷ τελευταίῳ πύργῳ νηὸς ἔπεστι μέγας· ἐν δὲ τῷ νηῷ κλίνη μεγάλη κέεται, etc. — “In the topmost tower there stands a great shrine, in which a splendidly furnished bed is laid,” etc. Not much later therefore after the confusion of languages, that mad building was converted into the temple of an idol — that is, of the sun. But the Jews summon the origin of their opinion from another source — they think that those words of Moses by which the builders exhorted one another to undertake the work hint at that purpose: וְנַעֲשֶׂה-לָּנוּ שֵׁם [and let us make ourselves a name] — that is, they say, “an idol of a great name.” For they suppose that שֵׁם [shem — name] is used absolutely to mean “some god” in that way. הַשֵּׁם [ha-shem — the Name] indeed is used emphatically to mean “God” in certain places — Lev. 24:11 — but absolutely nowhere, and never to mean an idol. If this were true, no one could find a more illustrious testimony of the origin of idolatry anywhere in the world. Nor would it have to be thought that this wickedness settled upon the world gradually and through various degrees and by various occasions seized upon — a deliberate defection of the human race from God would provide its origin. But this is a rabbinical delusion; and the words which the builders used look plainly in another direction. They had it in mind that, although mortals, subject to various chances — especially to dispersion into remote regions of the earth — they should become eternally famous for their reputation and glory. That purpose of mind they expressed in those words, “Let us make ourselves a name” — that is, let us leave to our posterity a hereditary title of praise and glory. Nor is it credible that almost all the families of the whole world conspired as it were in a moment, as in a whirlwind, against the living God, and simultaneously resolved — having cast aside all reverence and worship of the Creator — to worship idols.

XI. That they built the tower therefore with the mind and purpose of worshipping new gods, no reason persuades; Holy Scripture narrates them to have had a very different resolution. It is probable indeed that these builders were a race of men stained with many crimes, who thought that the power they had obtained could not be exercised without wrong and oppression if it were light and without means. We showed above that they had rejected the warnings and governance of Noah. Hence, they were most ready for the commands of Satan and for performing all those things which the innate vanity of the mind had suggested.

XII. The speech of all having been confused and divided, the commerce of new languages cast them into various herds. God scattered them in that condition, by tribes and families, over the whole surface of the earth. There were indeed among the ancient Christians those to whom it was heresy to deny that Noah had distributed the world among his sons and grandsons and assigned their seats to each family. For after the designation of heresies had become arbitrary, there was scarcely anything said or written by anyone — however most true — which was not by certain persons placed in that category. For the rest, Scripture shows that it was by divine arrangement — not by Noahic assignment — that the sons of men occupied their new seats or were carried to the various shores of the world, Gen. 11:8. That any of the builders of the tower retained the primaeval language without any notable change cannot be proved by testimonies or arguments. We acknowledge that words from it remained in some use among almost all the nations; but they were very few — as Boxhorn rightly affirms, *Origins of the Gauls*, ch. 7. That along with the loss of the primaeval language, forgetfulness of very many instructions concerning divine things seized them, is not improbable. Among these therefore — that is, among the

builders of the tower of Babel, left to themselves, destitute of new revelations, forgetful of former ones, scattered and wandering here and there — the beginnings of idolatry are to be sought.

1. We relied on Gemini to translate this paragraph, as Claude struggled with the Greek words, which led to it misinterpreting the Latin.
2. We retained separate translations of the Greek and Latin here owing to the significant differences between them.

CHAPTER IV. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY — CHAPTER II

*C*ol. 3:11 — The distinction of various religions by Epiphanius — The two kinds of idolatry: Sabaism and Hellenism — The peculiar superstition of the Druids — The beginning of idolatry in the worship of the heavenly bodies, Job 31:26-28 — The exposition of the ancients noted — The time when Job lived — The beginning of error in the seduction of the heart, Deut. 11:16 — The manner of the most ancient worship — What adoratio [adoration] is — Religious salutation — The ἔκστασις [ecstasy] of Socrates — Catulus — Pompey — The kiss — Religious adoration, Ps. 2:12 — The Septuagint version noted — Jerome on Hos. 13:2 — ἐνστάσις [objections] against adoration by kisses: from Pliny, Apuleius, Lucian, Minucius Felix — The rationale of the bowing of the body in adoration — The first sacrifices to idols without blood — The opinion of Porphyry — A reconciliation of opinions concerning the origin of sacrifices, Gen. 4:4; 8:20 — The offering of fruits added to adoration, Hos. 2:8 — The origin of other ceremonies — The nature and desert of idolatry — The Egyptians the first worshippers of the stars — The Chaldaeans join them; and the

Persians — Whether the sun was the only God of the Persians — The opinion of Herodotus — The number of gods continually increased with the passing of time — Writers of the history of the Magi — The custom of the Greeks and Romans in recording the gods of other nations — The gods of the Germans and Gauls — Tacitus noted — The sun the most ancient god of the Carthaginians — Also of the Greeks, as Plato testifies — The rationale of the positioning of sacred places — The first beginnings of idolatry — The foolishness and blasphemies of Cardanus — Nimrod among the builders of the tower of Babel — The triflings of the Jews — The catholicism of solar worship and its πολωνυμία [multiplicity of names].

I. The apostle Paul teaches in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians that in Jesus Christ there is neither Greek, nor Jew, nor Barbarian, nor Scythian. From this, Epiphanius elicits various species of religions, *Against Heresies*, Bk. I: Βαρβαρισμόν [Barbarism], Σκυθισμόν [Scythism], Ἑλληνισμόν [Hellenism], and Ἰουδαϊσμόν [Judaism]. He writes that Βαρβαρισμός prevailed from Adam to Noah; Σκυθισμός from Noah to the age of Serug, at which time Ἑλληνισμός was introduced; and he traces the beginning of Judaism from the circumcision of Abraham. Since moreover he places the entrance of idolatry into the world after the flood, it is plain that by Βαρβαρισμός he understands that ferocity of manners and violence which brought the antediluvian world to ruin. He places the distinction between Σκυθισμός and Ἑλληνισμός in this: that ἀγαλματοποιΐα [image-making] was introduced by the latter, of which the former was destitute. Whether he distinguished these rightly or not, let others judge; Petavius denies it in his *Annotations* on the passage. We establish that there were two kinds of all that idolatrous worship which occupied almost the whole world — one of which may be called Sabaism, the other Hellenism.

But since there were many peculiarities in the superstition of the Druids, we shall narrate that separately in a few words. Sabaism consisted in the worship and religion of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars; Hellenism added to it the veneration of deceased men and daemons. The adoration of images, statues, and stars was common to both. But the crowd of idolaters first venerated the heavens before the fictitious heavenly inhabitants. In Sabaism therefore — that is, in the worship of celestial things — idolatry had its beginning. We shall first prove this. Then we shall briefly show what handles of corrupt superstition the human race seized upon; by what vain reasonings Satan allured men into fraud and error; and, so far as we can attain by conjecture, we shall designate the time of the origin of this most pernicious error.

II. All the monuments of past things prove that idolatry planted its beginning in the world in the worship of heaven and the sun. For there exist in the Old Testament, beyond all credibility of profane history and the most ancient memory of things among the nations, illustrious testimonies of this wickedness. To this end, the most ancient writer — whether this was Moses, which is most probable, or another divine man of the same age, through whom the Holy Spirit entrusted the history of Job to the faith of the church — reports the apologetic words of that most holy man: ch. 31:26-28, “If I beheld the sun when it shone, and the moon walking in brightness; and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand — this also would be an iniquity to be judged, for I should have denied God above.” With their leave, let me say that what Chrysostom, Nilus, Olympiodorus, and other ancients comment on this passage is most absurd. They deny that idolatry is here treated, and maintain that Job, when he denies that his mouth kissed his hand, wished to signify that he never felt so

arrogantly about his virtues and works — which he denotes by the sun — or about the fame of his name — which he assigns to the moon — as to have his mouth kiss his hand, as if he had accomplished by himself whatever power or ability he possessed. Absurd, I say, these things are, repugnant both to the scope of the passage and to the words themselves. The holy man is most plainly treating of the worship of the heavenly bodies. And while he carefully repels this crime from himself, he makes it plain that very many others at that time were engaged in it. Job lived, after the Babylonian dispersion, in the year 350 — that is, about the year of the world 2100. The words show that in that century the superstition had made progress and spread itself far and wide. But Job ascribes the beginning of the error to the seduction of the heart.

Elsewhere also the Holy Spirit uncovers this fountain of idolatry, Deut. 11:16: “Take heed to yourself lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods.” All other things are naturally fitted to point to the true God; the whole danger lies in the human heart alone. Therefore, deceived by the appearance of empty reasonings — which would have had no force unless they had first been wholly turned away from the love of God and of spiritual things — the most ancient idolaters first secretly, then openly, religiously venerated the sun and moon. The shadows of those reasonings we shall set out in the next chapter. The manner of worship which he mentions is simple adoration. Now adoration is a religious salutation performed by raising the hand to the mouth. In this the error of the heart first expressed itself; other religious ceremonies being gradually introduced. So Plato narrates that Socrates used to salute the sun, and sometimes fell into ἔκστασιν [ecstasy] in that worship. The superstition having grown to an immense size, yet that simple adoration endured

through all the centuries of ancient ignorance. Catulus, in Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, Bk. I, ch. 28:

*“I had stopped by chance to salute the rising dawn,
When Roscius suddenly rises on my left.”*

For they venerated the rising sun especially. Hence the scornful jibe of Pompey directed at the declining dominion of Sulla: Τὸν ἥλιον ἀνατέλλοντα πλείονες, ἢ δυόμενον, προσκυνοῦσιν — “More men adore the rising than the setting sun,” Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*. And from this, temples were built looking toward the rising of the sun. Nor does the custom — ancient enough among superstitious Christians — of bowing toward the east and worshipping come from any other source; although other reasons are put forward for that superstitious worship, which are all plainly futile.

III. Furthermore: Job denies that his hand was put to his mouth to kiss it, or that he pressed kisses upon it. For the kiss was also the pledge and sign of religious worship. So the Psalmist, Ps. 2:12: נִשְׁקִי-בֶרֶךְ — “Kiss the Son” — that is, worship with religious homage. The Septuagint corrupts the sense of the passage, rendering the words Δράξασθε παιδείας [Lay hold of discipline], which the Vulgate translator follows. Jerome acknowledges that religious worship is intended, and therefore renders the words “Worship purely.” To venerate idols also with kisses was once and still is customary: Hos. 13:2, עֲגִלִּים יִשָּׁקוּן — “Let them kiss calves” — that is, adore them; as the same Jerome says in *Against Rufinus*, Bk. I. “The images of Hercules,” Cicero says in *Against Verres*, IV, “they were accustomed not only to venerate but also to kiss.” “In adoring we bring the right hand to the kiss, and turn the whole body round,” as Pliny, Bk. XXVIII, ch. 2. Plutarch, in his *Life of Numa*, gives the reason for this turning or bowing of the body.

He says it was Numa's institution τὸ προσκυνεῖν περιστρεφομένους [to adore while turning around]. He adds: Ἡ δὲ περιστροφή τῶν προσκυνούντων, λέγεται μὲν ἀπομίμησις εἶναι τῆς τοῦ κόσμου περιφορᾶς — “The turning of those who adore is said to be an image of the revolution of the world” — or of the circuit of the heavens which the sun performs. But this bowing of the body appears to have been introduced after temples looking toward the east were built. For since those who adored the idols in them were compelled to bow toward the west, they turned the body around in order to show that they principally intended the sun. Lucian, *On Dancing*, affirms that the Indians added leaping dances to kisses in adoration. Apuleius also, Bk. IV, *The Golden Ass*, speaking of a beautiful maiden whom they admired as a goddess: “Many of the citizens,” he says, “applying their right hand to their lips with the forefinger resting upon the upright thumb, were worshipping her with religious adorations as if she were the very goddess Venus herself.” After images were set up, they kissed the images themselves; but in the worship of the heavenly bodies — namely the sun and moon — being absent, they were accustomed only to raise the hand to the mouth; and also other images, when in passing it was not permitted to devote leisure to religion. So Minucius Felix, noting that Caecilius had bowed to an image of Serapis, “had raised his hand to his mouth and pressed a kiss upon his lips.”

IV. As yet — that is, in the age of Job — sacrifice had not been made to the sun with horses, bats, mice, and other creeping things of which Maimonides treats, *More Nevukhim*, Pt. III, ch. 29, or with grain — much less with human blood, which came later. Simple adoration — that is, the worship of the heart expressing itself only in the actions and bowings of the body — was followed by offerings of the fruits of the earth. For to this

extent we agree with the opinion of Porphyry in his second book *On Abstinence from Animals*. The first sacrifices offered to idols did not consist of animals and blood, but of the fruits of the earth. It is most certain that the first sacrifice pleasing to God was bloody, Gen. 4:4; also after the flood, Gen. 8:20. Nor is there any doubt that so long as men worshipped the true God alone with religious worship, they venerated him with bloody sacrifices. Turned to idols, they did not immediately dare — nor until long afterwards — to offer them animal sacrifices. Their first sacrifices after adoration were from the fruits of the earth. Thus the prophet laments that the Israelites offered grain, wine, and oil to Baal — that is, to the sun — Hos. 2:8. And in the poet:

*“Turned toward the rising sun they give
Salted grain from their hands.” — Aeneid XII, 172.*

The Pythagoreans, abstaining from the blood of animals, added hymns to their adoration. These also were a most well-known part of true or superstitious religious worship. Such were those of Homer and Callimachus that survive. Very many other ceremonies were afterwards admitted among the nations, which arose partly from the most obscure report of the Mosaic νομοθεσίας [law-giving], partly from the κακοζηλία [evil emulation] of Satan.

V. Then the most holy man adds the nature and desert of this wickedness. He teaches that its nature consists in the denial of the omnipotent God who is above, governing all things, disposing all things, and who created the sun itself. “I should have denied,” he says, “God לַמַּעַל [from above].” Against perhaps what has seemed to many who are entangled in that error. The majority of mortals scarcely think that all religious worship of creatures is a denial of God the Creator. But he pointedly adds לַמַּעַל [from above]. For

since the chief reason for solar worship has always consisted in the fact that men see it carried above all things, he indicates that God alone is exalted above all things. Maimonides rightly says, *On Idolatry*, Bk. II: המְשִׁימָד לַעֲבֹדָה זָרָה הוּא פֶּמְשִׁימָד לְתוֹרָה כְּלָה — “He who is converted to idolatry defects from the whole law.” And a little before: “Behold, you learn from this that whoever takes up idolatry denies the whole law, all the prophets, and whatever was commanded to the prophets, from the first man to the end of the world.”

VI. He adds that worship of this kind of sun and moon has been judged iniquity — that is, most worthy of the severe judgment and retribution of God, or rightly to be abominated by all the pious. For “sun,” the text has אֹר [or] — that is, light κατ’ ἀντονομασίαν [by naming-substitution]. Hence the Sun was called Horus.

VII. To this testimony certain passages of Deuteronomy are in agreement. Now this worship of the celestial stars — especially of the sun — which beyond doubt invaded the world immediately from the Babylonian dispersion, attained catholicism before the idols which Hellenism worshipped were either known or created.

VIII. The first who publicly gave themselves over to this corrupt superstition were the Egyptians. We shall soon show this from Diodorus, Lactantius, and others. The Babylonians and all the Chaldaeans followed them. Bel was none other than the Sun. God was therefore angry with Hezekiah because, when the king of Babylon had sent ambassadors to inquire about the miracle of the sun’s recession, 2 Chron. 32:31, he did not seize the occasion to declare the true God and to say that the sun was his obedient creature.

IX. Herodotus testifies the same of the ancient Persians [and Massagetae] in his *Clio*, ch. 216: Θεῶν ... μόνον ἥλιον σέβονται, τῷ θύουσιν ἵππους — “Of the gods they worship the sun alone, and to him they sacrifice horses.” Mithras also was the greatest — if not the only — God of the ancient Persians: Μίθραν νομίζουσιν οἱ Πέρσαι εἶναι τὸν ἥλιον — “The Persians hold Mithras to be the sun,” Gregory Nazianzus, *Oration I Against Julian*. Similarly, Strabo: Θεὸν δὲ ἥλιον μόνον ἡγοῦνται· τούτῳ ἱποθυτοῦσι — “They hold the sun alone to be God, and sacrificed to him.”

X. All appear to affirm that the sun was the only God of the ancient Persians. The distinguished Vossius denies this, *On Idolatry*, Bk. II, and against Herodotus, adducing testimonies from Plutarch and Hesychius, teaches that they admitted other gods. But it is by no means established that they enrolled others in the number of gods — after the customary manner of idolaters — before the times of Plutarch, whom in the days of Herodotus they had not yet worshipped. For after the human race had donated to itself the right of ἀποθεώσεως [deification] and of manufacturing divine powers, the number of gods grew daily. Varro counted thirty thousand. But concerning earlier centuries, the Satirist speaks well, *Juvenal*, *Satire XIII*, 46:

*“Nor was the crowd of gods
Such as it is today; and the stars, content with few
Divine powers, were pressing upon miserable Atlas
With less burden.”*

But Herodotus does not say absolutely that the sun was held as the only divine power among the Persians — but rather that the sun alone of all those gods whom Greece venerated was held in divine honour among the Persians. For he himself elsewhere mentions other stars and elements, of

which the rationale is the same as the sun, among the Persian σεβάσματα [objects of worship]: *Clio*, ch. 131. Θύουσιν ... ἡλίῳ τε καὶ σελήνῃ, καὶ γῇ, καὶ πυρὶ, καὶ ὕδατι, καὶ ἀνέμοισι — “They sacrifice to the sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and winds.” For the worship of these almost everywhere accompanied solar worship. Τούτοις ... μὲν δὲ μούνοισι θύουσιν ἀρχῆθεν — “To these only have they from the beginning performed sacred rites.” In these idolatry had its origin. Ἐπιμεμαθήκασι δὲ καὶ τῇ Οὐρανίῃ θύειν — “From others they have learned to worship the host of heaven with sacrifices.”

XI. Hence at Diogenes Laërtius in the preface to his work, the writers of the history of the Magi charge Herodotus — forgetful of himself — with falsehood, for writing that Xerxes hurled javelins at the sun, since the sun was held as God by the Magi who were present with Xerxes in his expedition, as the guardians of Persian superstition.

XII. Herodotus further adds: “They have the custom of ascending certain very high mountains, and there sacrificing to Jupiter, calling the whole circuit of the sky Jupiter.” But by what name they designated the circuit of the sky in their own language is entirely unknown. For it was most customary among Greeks and Romans to designate the gods of other nations by the names of those gods whose worship had prevailed among themselves. So far, however, Herodotus is right in showing that — although he pretends the Persians worshipped Jupiter — he did not intend that [Ἑλληνισμὸν] Hellenism of the Greeks which he introduced. Others are different. So they write that the Gauls and Germans worshipped Jupiter and Mercury. That no Celt ever so much as heard by report the names Jupiter and Mercury before the arrival of the Greeks and Romans in Gaul, all the surviving memory of the early history of those nations teaches. But since

the Greeks and Romans were most ignorant of all in knowledge of the origins of nations, peoples, and religions, they did not believe that the mortal race anywhere had been wise beyond their own fictions.

XIII. More correctly in the main, and closer to truth, Caesar on the Germans, *Gallic War*, Bk. VI, ch. 21: “They count only those as gods whom they can see — the Sun, Vulcan, and the Moon; the rest they have not even received by report.” Tacitus is different — he says they worshipped Hercules, Mars, Mercury, and Isis. “More things therefore, and more certain, about the religion of the Germans were known to Tacitus than to Caesar,” says Lipsius. “And Caesar, whether he inquired about this in Gaul or in Germany, either had it reported to him incorrectly, or did not himself inquire with sufficient diligence,” as Montanus says on that passage of Caesar. But in truth Tacitus was either himself deceived or willingly deceives others. He assigns at his pleasure Roman names to the gods of the Germans. For Woden was not Mercury, nor Taranis Jupiter, nor Hesus Mars. Those Roman names were equally unknown to the Germans as the fables which are the foundation of their Hellenistic worship. Eostre, however — or Eastar — was perhaps the same goddess as the Astarte of the Syrians. Bede says of her: “Eostermonath, which now means Pascha, this month formerly took its name from their goddess called Eostre, to whom they celebrated festivals in that month.” And indeed the word Eostar comes close to the Syriac name עֲשְׁתָּרֹתָה [Ashtaroth], which is proper to the Syrian goddess — for that it is also called עֲשְׁתָּרֹת [Ashtaroth] in the plural number denotes the multitude of images or the worship of her instituted in many places. Christians also, who instituted a festival according to the observation of the lunar course, were thought by the pagans to be worshipping the moon, or Astarte or Eostre — whence that name is retained to this day.

XIV. Caesar affirms that the Gauls worshipped Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva, assigning them the same attributes as the Greeks and Romans. But they drew that superstition from the Greek Massilians; for it does not belong to Druidic institutions. Also in the treaty entered into between the Carthaginians and Philip, king of Macedonia and others against the Romans, in Polybius, *History*, Bk. XVII, the Carthaginians call the Sun and Moon the gods of their armies — thereby showing, among other false divine powers, that these were their most ancient gods, since almost all nations placed their beginnings in arms and wars.

XV. That the Greeks themselves also did not from the beginning worship any other gods than the sun, moon, and stars, Plato is the witness in the *Cratylus*: Φαίνονται μοι, he says, οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν περὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα τούτους μόνους τοὺς θεοὺς ἡγεῖσθαι, οὔσπερ νῦν πολλοὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ γῆν καὶ ἄστρα καὶ οὐρανόν· ἅτε οὖν αὐτὰ ὁρῶντες πάντα ἀεὶ ἰόντα δρόμῳ καὶ θέοντα, ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς φύσεως τῆς τοῦ θεῖν θεοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐπονομάσαι — “It seems to me that those men who first inhabited Greece held only those to be gods which very many barbarians now worship — namely, the sun, moon, earth, stars, and sky; and since they saw all of these ever carried along in continual course and running, from that nature of running they named them gods.” Nor is that etymology of the name θεός [God] which he offers inept, as we shall see.

XVI. And from this it came about that in antiquity all temples — as erected to the sun — looked toward the east, and yet also had sacred doors on the south. So Homer makes his sacred cave of Ithaca two-gated; but the southern gate sacred to the gods, *Odyssey* XIII, v. 109-112:

Δύω δέ τε αἱ θύραι εἰσίν·

Αἱ μὲν πρὸς Βορέαο,

καταιβαται ἀνθρώποισιν,
Αἱ δ' αὖ πρὸς Νότου εἰσὶ θεώτεραι·
οὐδέ τι κείνη ἄνδρες εἰσέρχονται, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων ὁδὸς ἐστίν.

“But the gate is double:

*This facing north admits mankind; but that
Looking to the south, more divine, is wholly closed
To man, and provides passage only to immortals.”*

The rationale of this positioning of sacred places was none other than that at midday the sun hangs over the southern entrance — as Porphyry testifies. Ἰσταῖσιν, he says, οὖν καὶ σύμβολον τῆς μεσημβρίας, καὶ τοῦ νότου, ἐπὶ τῇ θύρᾳ μεσημβριάζοντος τοῦ θεοῦ [They therefore set up also a symbol of midday and of the south at the door, the god being at midday]. The same custom in arranging what they call sacred places is still retained everywhere.

XVII. Let it suffice to have said these things concerning various nations σποράδην [scattered] here and there. Concerning the eastern nations we shall later show the same thing in particular. This, I say, was the beginning which idolatry made in the world. As yet images and statues had not been invented; nor had pillars or columns been erected for religious purposes; nor had deceased men been enrolled in the order of divine powers. The error was first in heaven, and in the sun. It has seemed good to God to press down in dark night the chief authors of this wickedness, the precise time, and the places from which it took its rise.

XVIII. Plainly vain and trifling are the things which Hieronymus Cardanus discourses concerning the origin of idol worship in his commentary on *Ptolemy on Astrological Judgment*, Bk. II, text 17. “Mercury,” he says, “joined with Venus, produced a weak law of idols,

devoted to luxury, in which all things are permitted; and a manifold one on account of the power of Mercury; and therefore since Venus is weak in comparison with the superior planets, it was made light, of many gods, full of superstitions and divination and fables, which are also full of adulteries and other villainies and love of boys; for Mercury signifies all such things.” And again: “The law of idols, since it had its origin from Venus, began in the south — namely, Assyria, Babylonia, and the Chaldaeans; for Belus the first king of the Assyrians commanded himself to be adored.” This, I say, is to rave. But although these things are fatuous and insipid and altogether unworthy of one in whose left breast something beats, yet it were to be wished that the learned man had placed a limit to his madness here, and had not blurted out what he also vomited up in the same place impiously, foolishly, and blasphemously concerning the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ and his law.

XIX. All the ancients are of the opinion that Nimrod, after he had laboured in vain in building the tower, not only lapsed into the worst morals but also fell into idolatry. The distinguished Bochart thinks he was not present at that work, Bk. I, ch. 10, “since he was either not yet born, or still a child.” But the foundation for this conjecture is lacking; for although I believe Nimrod seized his tyranny only after the dispersion of the peoples, yet since he was the son of Cush, the eldest son of Ham, he could have been sixty years old when the tower was being built. “But he placed the beginning of his empire where he would have been dispersed,” says the most learned man, “if he had been among the builders.” But it is not necessary to say that all men without exception were driven from that place; and if they were, it is most certain that they immediately occupied it again. The opinion of the ancients is therefore not altogether improbable — there

is nothing to add. Among the dispersed builders of the tower — who had cast off all reverence for the true divine power — first gradually and in moderation, then broadly and headlong, this wickedness grew and invaded the world.

XX. But within the space of not many centuries, it is established that almost all nations took on the divine sovereignty of the sun. So the Phoenicians, as Sanchuniathon testifies: Τοῦτον, he says — that is, the sun — θεὸν ἐνόμιζον μόνον οὐρανοῦ κύριον, Βελσάμην καλοῦντες, ὃ ἐστὶ παρὰ Φοίνιξι κύριος οὐρανοῦ — “They held this one to be the only God, lord of heaven, and therefore called him Belsamen — that is, in the Phoenician tongue, lord of heaven.”

XXI. His worship therefore attained catholicism; and he acquired πολωνυμίαν [a multiplicity of names]. He was the same as הָאֵל עֶלְיוֹן [the Most High God], בַּעַל [Baal], בֵּל [Bel], אֲדֹנַי [Adonai], כְּמוֹשׁ [Chemosh], בַּעַל זְבוּב [Baal-zebub], בַּעַל פְּעוֹר [Baal-peor], מֹלֶךְ [Moloch], כִּיּוּן [Kiyyun], אֲדַרְמֶלֶךְ [Adrammelech]; Saturn, Jupiter, Hammon, Mithras, Ὡρος [Horus], Διόνυσος [Dionysus], Mars, Apollo, Osiris, Pan, Bacchus, Liber, Jupiter Sabazius, Hercules, Janus, Belenus, Abellio, and what not. Hence Plutarch calls the Sun and Moon μυριωνύμους [of ten thousand names]. For by heaping up epithets and piling up titles, they thought they could capture the divine power and that it was thereby most greatly honoured — so that at last what had been only various names of superstition, with error advancing, came to be regarded as various divine powers — as the most learned Rivet rightly says, on Hos. 2:8. In πολωνυμία [multiplicity of names] also there was a certain species of worship. Hence Ovid, *Fasti*, Bk. VI, 213:

*“I was asking whether I should assign the Nones to Sancus, Fidius,
Or to you, Father Semo; when Sancus said to me: ‘*

*Whichever of them you give the offering to,
I shall receive the gift;
I carry three names: so the Cures willed it. ’’*

And Horace, *Carmen Saeculare*, v. 14:

*“Gentle Ilythia, protect the mothers,
Whether you prefer to be called Lucina,
Or Genitalis.”*

And *Satires* VI, Bk. II, v. 20:

*“Father of the morning, or Janus,
if you more gladly hear that name.”*

Catullus also, *Carmen* XXXIV, 5, 13, 21:

*“O daughter of Latona, great offspring of greatest Jove;
You Lucina, invoked by women in the pains of childbirth;
You powerful Trivia, and by the borrowed light Named Luna.
Be by whatever name it pleases you, Holy one.”*

Callimachus likewise, *Hymn to Apollo*:

*Ὡς Ἀπολλων, πολλοὶ σε Βοηδρόμιον καλέουσι,
Πολλοὶ δὲ Κλάριον, πάντα δέ τοι οὔνομα πολὺ·
Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Κάρνειον.*

[O Apollo, many call you Boedromius,
and many Clarius, and everywhere your name is many;
but I call you Carneius.]

From the diverse manner of solar worship, from the ceremonies by which he was worshipped, from the goods sought from him, from his benefits, from the places where he was solemnly adored, the sun obtained new names and new titles in the course of time and thrust forth new and diverse divine powers. Hence, perverting Scripture from the outcome, the Jews assert that

God granted the sun and moon to the nations to be adored. This they gather from the words of Moses, Deut. 4:19: “Lest perhaps you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and moon and stars — all the host of heaven — and being drawn away you bow down and serve them, אֲשֶׁר חָלַק יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֹתָם, לְכָל הָעַמִּים תַּחַת כָּל הַשָּׁמַיִם [which Jehovah your God has distributed to all the peoples under all the heaven].” This is a most powerful reason for restraining the minds of the peoples from the worship of the heavenly bodies. That dominion which they assign to the sun and moon is servitude, destined for the use of all the nations that are under heaven. But the Jews drag these things in another direction, after the Jewish manner. God, they say, calling Israel to his own worship, set forth the sun and moon to the other nations as objects of adoration. So Trypho in Justin’s *Dialogue*: “Tell us of another God,” he says, φυλαζάμενος λέγειν τὸν ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην ἃ γέγραπται τοῖς ἔθνεσι συγκεχωρηκέναι τὸν θεὸν ὡς θεοὺς προσκυνεῖν — “careful not to mention the sun and moon, which it is written that God has permitted the nations to worship as gods.” The Vulgate translator renders the sense of the passage best: “Which the Lord your God created for the service of all the nations,” Matt. 5:45.

CHAPTER V. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY — CHAPTER III

The occasions of the origin of idolatry — The report of the dominion of the sun and moon — In what sense the sun and moon are the two great luminaries — The portentous fiction of the Targumist Jonathan — The rationale of dominion, wrongly transferred into worship — The vain reasonings of the idolaters, Rom. 1:21 — The influence and operations of the sun and moon upon earthly things, Jer. 44:17, 18; Acts 14:17 — God alone the author even of earthly good — The beauty, course, and glory of the stars as allurements — The God who is above — Some confine God to heaven; others assign παντοτοπίαν [omnipresence everywhere] to the human nature of Christ, Deut. 4:19 — The opinion of Lactantius and Diodorus Siculus on the occasions and beginnings of idolatry — The opinion of the philosopher Plotinus on the worship of the stars, Ps. 19:4 — The Septuagint noted, and the Vulgate translator — The blunder of Marsilio Ficino — The ancient Syriac translation — The sum of the vain διαλογισμῶν [reasoning].

I. We set out the beginnings of idolatry in the worship of the sun and moon in the preceding chapter. Before we proceed to set out the advances which this error plainly made from the outcome, it is our pleasure to set out briefly in advance certain handles and occasions of the worship of the celestial stars which the first idolaters appear to have seized upon, and those vain reasonings by which they seduced themselves.

II. And first, it seems to me that a tradition of the dominion of day and night committed to the sun and moon had settled in men's minds. For it was necessary that they should believe those things to be constituted ἐν ὑπεροχῇ [in preeminence] which they worshipped. The report of those things spread abroad which in the first chapter of Genesis are now consecrated to eternal memory: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֵת שְׁנֵי הַמָּאֲרוֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֵת הַמָּאֹר הַגָּדֹל וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֵת שְׁנֵי הַמָּאֲרוֹת הַקְּטָנִים אֵת הַמָּאֹר הַקָּטָן [And God made the two great lights, the greater light for the governance of the day and the lesser light for the governance of the night]. Dominion here is attributed to the sun and moon — that is, from the very origin of things. But all who hold dominion are to be honoured. Moreover, it was believed that the sun and moon are called two great luminaries not properly but by a certain συγκατάβασιν [condescension] to the capacity and sense of the common people. Why so? Because, that is, certain stars are larger than the moon. But is the moon therefore not to be called a great luminary, or not to preside in a peculiar manner over the governance of the night? Certainly the luminary is called great not with respect to its substance but to its light; which, however borrowed, is greater than that of all the stars combined. And to this knot — which is in reality no knot — the Jews apply the wedge of a most portentous fiction. “God made,” says the Targum of Jonathan, “two great luminaries, and they were equal in glory for twenty-one years, lacking six

hundred and seventy-two parts of an hour” — so that we may know that he attained the truth here with the utmost precision! — “and afterwards the moon brought an accusation against the sun and was diminished; and he set the sun, the greater luminary, to rule the day, and the moon, which was the lesser luminary, to preside over the night.” In such manner does this paraphraser almost everywhere defile the sacred page — as we have warned not once before; nor does he appear to have been born for any other end — so foul is everything that is peculiar to him. No one will come away from reading him either more learned or more virtuous. But it is probable that the report of this dominion became known to the nations. Satan made use of it as a lure to idolatry, even before all knowledge of the true God had been abolished. For what after God would they honour, except those things to which by God authority was committed over days and nights, and thus over the whole life of men? Hence the poet imagined even Juno herself a suppliant to Aeolus, who is said to have presided over the winds:

“Juno, suppliant, made use of these words:

Aeolus, for to you the father of gods and king of men

Has given both to smooth the waves and to raise them with wind,

A race hostile to me” — etc. — Aeneid I, 64.

To serve absolute power with sacred worship is natural; to serve delegated power in this way is corrupt. But this very many who are called Christians do not yet understand.

III. This therefore was the first occasion of idolatry in the worship of the sun and the whole host of heaven for those men who had voluntarily cast away the true knowledge of God. The report of the dominion of day and night delegated to the sun and moon — corrupted by perverse traditions — lured into the fraud of error those who had cast off almost all religion of the

true God. Hence the Sun: king, ἄναξ [lord], מֶלֶךְ [melek], and בַּעַל [baal] — whatever in short denotes governance and dominion. Add to this that they were αὐτόπται [eyewitnesses] of the things they had heard by report; they saw that at the motion and course of the sun and moon the governance of days and nights — and therefore of all things measured by time — was regulated; so that all room for doubt seemed to have been removed.

IV. By other vain reasonings also they were led into this impious opinion. For the apostle traces the beginning of idolatry to this: that vain men had become foolish ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν [in their reasonings], Rom. 1:21. For since the minds of men were altogether empty of spiritual and heavenly things, and turned away from God, they burned with excessive desire for earthly things. They would never have worshipped unless they had first loved κτίσιν παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα [the creature rather than the Creator]. But how great a moment they thought resided in the operations and influence of the sun and moon for earthly things to succeed prosperously and happily, they supposed themselves to perceive clearly. They thought no conjectures were needed here — they were αὐτόπται [eyewitnesses]. And they easily persuaded themselves that whatever was above them and could aid those things of whose care they were most occupied, was God. By no other διαλογισμῷ [reasoning] did the idolatrous Israelites fall into the worship of the host of heaven and the queen — that is, the moon and the stars — than because from their religion they experienced all earthly things going well for them: Jer. 44:17, 18, “When,” they say, “we burned offerings to the queen of heaven, we were satisfied with food and were cheerful, and we saw no evil. But since we stopped burning offerings to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything.” God therefore, about to bring that people

back to better fruitfulness and to his worship, recalls to their minds that the vanities of the nations could not give rains, Jer. 14:22. And the apostle Paul, sharply reproving the Gentiles themselves for their nefarious idolatries and charging them with folly, asserts that the one true God, creator of all, gave to men from heaven ὕετους καὶ καιροὺς καρποφόρους [rains and fruitful seasons], Acts 14:17 — indicating clearly enough that the nations had been lured into the worship of idols by hope and expectation of βιωτικῶν [earthly things]. And this was the second fountain of the most pernicious error.

V. Furthermore, the Psalmist affirms that the beauty of the heavens, the course of the stars, and the order of the celestial bodies declare the glory of God, Ps. 19:1, and the apostle at Rom. 1:20. All that glory, snatched from the Creator, the apostates assigned to the creatures themselves. They thought the beauty which was from God to be God. There is also an innate persuasion in the human mind that the divine power which is to be worshipped is in the heavens and above itself. Hence, for those placed in danger — where the presence of God is needed — it was always the custom to stretch their hands doubled toward the stars. God therefore in Hesiod is ὃς ὑπέρτατα δώματα ναίει [who inhabits the highest dwellings]. Our Lord Jesus Christ also taught us to invoke our Father in heaven — where, that is, he makes his glory manifest in a manner plainly special. But absurdly for that reason the Socinian Biddle circumscribes and confines God to the heavens in his Catechism — which utterly overthrows the divine nature. While others, assigning to the human nature of Christ — which heaven contains — πολυτοπίαν [presence in many places] unto the restoration of all things, and others παντοτοπίαν [omnipresence], do away with it no less effectively — that is, among the very many compulsive disputings of those

called Christians. For those therefore who were not pleased to be wise above what the senses reach, the sun above all appeared to occupy the place of God in the heavens. The Holy Spirit himself indicates this origin and lure of the worship of the stars, Deut. 4:19: “Lest perhaps,” he says, “you lift up your eyes to heaven, and see the sun and moon and stars, with the whole host of heaven, and being drawn away you adore them.” The impulse of the heart toward idolatry follows the sight of the eyes. Allured by the beauty, glory, order, and motion of the stars, and carried away by excessive admiration — since they did not know how to learn from them the glory of the true God which they declare, having already cast aside the knowledge of him — they were gradually impelled into the worship of them. Lest the same should happen to the Israelites, this and other cautions were given.

VI. Lactantius long ago uncovered this fountain of error, *On the Origin of Error*, Bk. II, ch. 24: “Since,” he says, “in Egypt on account of the delightful constitution of the land they rarely kept themselves within their houses and huts, they spent the whole night sleeping under a serene sky subject to no harmful impressions; and from frequent sight of the celestial bodies and the constant law of the stars in their courses, they gradually came to the opinion that the stars were gods and the preservers of the universe, whom they venerated with various rites and ceremonies.” Diodorus Siculus narrates similarly, *Library*, Bk. I, ch. 11, near the beginning: Τοὺς δ’ οὖν κατ’ Αἴγυπτον ἀνθρώπους τὸ παλαιὸν γενομένους, ἀναβλέψαντας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ τὴν τῶν ὅλων φύσιν καταπλαγέντας, καὶ θαυμάσαντας, ὑπολαβεῖν εἶναι θεοὺς αἰδίου τε καὶ πρώτους, τὸν τε ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην, ὧν τὸν μὲν Ὅσιριν, τὴν δ’ Ἴσιν ὀνομάσαι — “Namely, the most ancient inhabitants of Egypt, contemplating the world above them and the nature of the universe, not without astonishment and

wonder, supposed that there were eternal and primary gods — the sun and moon — calling the former Osiris and the latter Isis.” From which he himself pronounces the first and eternal gods to have been two: the sun and moon.

VII. From these things the reason of the divine caution mentioned above appears most plainly. For since very many nations had been impelled into the worship of the stars by the very sight, contemplation, and admiration of them, he severely warns the Israelites lest the same happen to his people. And indeed, not without cause — Maimonides affirms that he learned to himself the rationale of many laws from the idolatrous worship of the Sabians, *More Nevukhim*, Pt. III, ch. 29; and he is above all others to be consulted by the reader devoted to these matters. But how great were the reasonings drawn from contemplation of the order and motion of the stars among men ignorant of the true God, for assigning a divine nature to them, Plotinus shows many centuries later, *Enneads* II, lib. 9: “Ἄστρον ... τὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑποκάτω σφαίραις, τὰ τε ἐν τῷ ἀνωτάτῳ, διὰ τί οὐ θεοί, ἐν τάξει φερόμενα καὶ κόσμῳ περιίοντα — “But the stars that are in the lower spheres, and those that shine in the highest — why should they not be gods, seeing that they are carried in order and revolve in beauty?” Hence, after the Christian religion had scattered its rays far and wide, the followers of Platonic philosophy — who by a most absurd rivalry were attempting to oppose the authority of their own wisdom to it — having rejected the countless other fictitious gods of the ancient Gentiles, nevertheless contended that the Sun and other stars were to be adored, and accordingly attributed sight and hearing to them. The same Plotinus teaches us this, *Enneads* IV, lib. 4: Νῦν δέ, he says, ἐπειδὴ μνήμας μὲν ἐν τοῖς ἄστροις περιπτάς εἶναι ἐθέμεθα, αἰσθήσεις δὲ ἔδομεν, καὶ ἀκούσεις πρὸς ὀράσει,

καὶ εὐχῶν δὴ κλύοντας ἄς πρὸς ἥλιον ποιούμεθα, καὶ δὴ καὶ πρὸς ἄστρα ἄλλοι τινὲς ἄνθρωποι, καὶ πεπίστευνται ὡς δι' αὐτῶν αὐτοῖς πολλὰ καὶ τελεῖται — “But now, since we have said that memory in the stars is superfluous, and have given them senses — sight and also hearing — and have granted them moreover to hear the prayers which we direct to the sun, and indeed which certain other men direct to other stars; for they believe that they obtain many things by prayer from them.” To that idol-madness, that I may add this in passing, the most famous interpreter of Plotinus appears to lend his patronage by adducing that passage of the Psalmist to that end: “In the sun he has placed his tabernacle,” Ps. 19:4. For in this manner the Vulgate translator reports the words of the Psalmist from the Greek translation so called of the Septuagint. But the Hebrew truth has a far different sense: מִן־בָּרָאֲלֵי שָׁמַיִם [For the sun he has set a tabernacle in them] — that is, as our translators render the words: “In them” — that is, in those heavens — “hath he placed a tabernacle for the sun.” But that translation greatly vexed many of the ancients. Question 63 *To the Orthodox* is as follows: Ἐπειδὴ διαφόρως τινὲς ἐρμήνευσαν καὶ ἀσαφῶς τό, Ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ ἔθετο τὸ σκηνῶμα αὐτοῦ, τὴν σαφήνειαν αὐτοῦ δίδαξον — “Since certain persons have interpreted variously and obscurely the words ‘In the sun he placed his tabernacle,’ teach us their plain meaning.” The most learned author of the solutions answers: Τό, ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ ἔθετο τὸ σκηνῶμα αὐτοῦ, ἵνα εἴπῃ τοὺς οὐρανούς ἔθετο σκηνῶμα τοῦ ἡλίου· ἡ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς τῶν Σύρων γλώσσης μεταγωγὴ τῆς λέξεως οὕτω γεγένηται, ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔθετο τοῦ ἡλίου τὸ σκηνῶμα — that is, “In the sun he placed his tabernacle” means to say “the heavens he placed as the tabernacle of the sun; for the translation from the Syriac language has come about in this manner: ‘In them he placed the tabernacle of the sun.’” Which reading,

however, is not found in the Syriac version now extant, and which for other reasons also does not appear to be that ancient Syriac translation known to very many of the ancients.

VIII. And these were the chief heads of the most vain διαλογισμῶν [reasonings] by which the impious apostates seduced themselves into the worship of the stars. First, a perverse and corrupt tradition of the dominion of the sun and moon over days and nights took hold of their minds. Then they supposed themselves to perceive clearly that the proceeds of all earthly good things — τῶν βιωτικῶν [temporal things] — of whose care and pursuit alone they were occupied, depended chiefly on their influence. Entangled and impeded by these vain opinions, when they contemplated the wonderful beauty of the heaven most full of august majesty, the course of all the stars, the splendour and efficacy of the sun, and the positioning of all in the heavens — they fell headlong into this idol-madness.

CHAPTER VI. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY — CHAPTER IV

*A*nother corruption of natural theology — the worship of natural things under the mask of dead men, a pretext for some — whether the exposition of φυσικῆς [natural] theology is μυθική [mythical] and allegorical — a new method of philosophizing — the theology of the Stoics, of Zeno, of Chrysippus, refuted by Philo of Byblos, and by Eusebius — idolatrous confusion — whether the Sun and Apollo are the same — the tradition of Jacob's history in the servitude of Apollo — the follies of the philosophers in excusing the ancient idolaters — a comparison of the ancient idolaters with the more recent — the frauds of the Pharisees, and of the Jesuits, in excusing the sins of men — the art of exorcising demons common to gentiles, Jews, and Papists.

I. We have shown that the sun, and the rest of the host of heaven, were, through the depraved superstition of men, the first to occupy the place and dominion of the Godhead in the world. From this, in process of time, another new and most pernicious superstition sprang up, which they call

φυσικὴ [natural] theology. Its beginnings too we shall relate — but briefly, and as it were ἐν παρόδῳ [in passing].

II. By the precepts of natural theology, the works of nature were appointed to promote the true worship of the Creator of all things. This we established in the first book, in expounding that theology. That religious worship was owed to these very works — this too we showed the first idolaters to have taught. Their worship they called natural theology, because it was the things of nature that were worshipped, whereas true natural theology in fact teaches us to draw lessons from natural things for the promotion of the worship of nature's author. That, in the process of time, another kind of idolatry was introduced, we shall see below. It took its rise from fabulous traditions, and from the impious and imaginary ἀποθέωσις [deification] of wicked men. But after philosophising began to be practised somewhat more strictly among certain men, and more refined opinions concerning the divine nature had gained ground among many, the wise began to be ashamed of the ignorance and utter darkness of those iron ages which had produced those gods. They contended, accordingly, that everything commonly celebrated by the ancient μυθολόγους [mythologists] concerning the fictitious gods — Jupiter, that is, and the whole sacred apparatus of Hellenism — was but a shadowing-forth of natural things. This theology they call μυθικὴ [mythical], which, they say, was nothing other than an allegorical exposition of τῆς φυσικῆς [natural philosophy].

Diodorus Siculus, book I, and Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris*, weave this web; and, in Eusebius's most excellent *Treasury*, very many others do the same. For them, Jupiter was nothing but the Sun, or the Air; Juno, the Moon, or the Earth; and the rest of the idols of former ages — whose beginnings we shall show hereafter — were either the elements, or the

natural causes of things. This the more recent poets also everywhere suggest. So Juvenal, *Satire* V, line 78: “When Jupiter roared with the fierce spring hail.”

And before him, Virgil, *Georgics* II, lines 324–327: “In spring the earth swells, and demands the seeds of generation; then the almighty father Aether descends in fruitful showers into the lap of his joyful spouse, and, mingling his great body with hers, nourishes all her offspring.”

And Lucretius the Epicurean, who preceded him, book II, lines 654–658:

*“If anyone should decide to call the sea Neptune, and the crops Ceres,
and prefer to misuse the name of Bacchus
rather than to give to liquid its own proper name,
let us allow that he may call the round earth the Mother of the Gods,
provided that in reality he does not actually believe it so.”*

And the more ancient Greeks — Orpheus:

Γῆ μήτηρ πάντων Δημήτηρ πλουτοδότειρα.
— *“Earth, mother of all things, Demeter, giver of wealth.”*

For Δημήτηρ [Demeter] was Γῆ μήτηρ [Earth the mother], as Diodorus attests. Empedocles too, in verses which Athenagoras cites in his *Legation*:

Ζεὺς ἀργῆς, Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος, ἥδ’ Αἰδωνεὺς
Νῆστις θ’ ἧ δακρύοις τέγγει κρούνισμα βρότειον.

— that is:

*“Zeus, shining with fire; Hera, the life-sustaining; and Aïdoneus,
lowest of the gods; and Nestis, who moistens with her tears the mortal
spring.”*

And another — Ennius, in Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, book II, chapter 25: “Behold this shining vault above, whom all men call Jupiter.”

III. Of this same sort, too, were the doctrines of the Stoics. So, of Zeno, Velleius the Epicurean says, in Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, book I, chapter 14: “When he interprets the *Theogony* of Hesiod, he does away entirely with the customary and accepted notions of the gods; for he counts neither Jupiter, nor Juno, nor Vesta, nor anyone so called, among the number of the gods; but teaches that these names have been assigned, by a kind of signification, to things inanimate and mute.” And presently, of Chrysippus: “The same man argues that the Aether is he whom men call Jupiter; and that the air, flowing through the seas, is Neptune; and that the earth is what is called Ceres.” Hence, Seneca observes, *Natural Questions*, book IV, chapters 6 and 7, that sacrifices were offered to the clouds, that they might not send hail and storms.

IV. The more recent Platonists and Pythagoreans followed the same path — Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Amelius, Eumenius, and others. Let the fable of Porphyry serve as an example: his interpretation of Saturn’s castration of his father Coelus, applied to the causes of the heavenly bodies.

Ὁ Κρόνος ... δεθείς ἐκτέμνεται, ὡς ὁ Οὐρανός· τοῦ θεολόγου (hoc est Musæo) δι’ ἡδονῆς δεσμεῖσθαι καὶ κατάγεσθαι τὰ θεῖα εἰς γένεσιν αἰνισσομένου, ἀποσπερματίζειν τε δυνάμεις εἰς ἡδονὴν ἐκλυθέντα· ὅθεν ἐπιθυμία μὲν συνουσίας τὸν Οὐρανὸν κατίοντα εἰς Γῆν ἐκτέμνει Κρόνος· πρῶτος τῶν ἀντιφερομένων τῷ Οὐρανῷ ὁ Κρόνος ἐστὶ, καὶ ἡ τούτου σφαῖρα· κατίασι δὲ δυνάμεις ἐξ Οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν πλανωμένων· ἀλλὰ τὰς μὲν ἐξ Οὐρανοῦ δέχεται Κρόνος, τὰς δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Κρόνου Ζεὺς. — that is: “Saturn, bound, is castrated, as Coelus was: by which the theologian (that is, Musaeus) hints darkly that the divine essences, enticed by sweetness, are bound and drawn down into generation, and, dissolved by pleasure, sow abroad certain powers: whence, as Coelus descends toward

Earth in desire of union, Saturn castrates him. For Saturn, and his sphere, is the first of those that moves in a direction contrary to Coelus; and certain powers descend both from Coelus and from the wandering stars. But Saturn receives the powers of Coelus; and Jupiter, in turn, receives those of Saturn.”

So he, in his book *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, in Homer. That is: he contends that the fable signifies that Saturn — who, in the reverse order of his motion, stands nearest to Coelus — so receives the prolific power of Coelus that it cannot descend immediately to the earth; and that Jupiter’s power, in turn, intercepts the influence of Saturn. By this device, I say, they laboured to gloss over the stupidity of the first idolaters, and the madness of Hellenism.

V. Philo of Byblos, in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, book I, chapter 9, shows at length, and most aptly, that the philosophers most foolishly invented these things, when the matter was plainly otherwise: Ἀλλὰ ... οἱ μὲν νεώτατοι τῶν ἱερολόγων, τὰ μὲν γεγονότα πράγματα ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀπεπέμψαντο, ἀλληγορίας καὶ μύθους ἐπινοήσαντες καὶ τοῖς κοσμικοῖς παθήμασι συγγένειαν πλασάμενοι μυστήρια κατέστησαν — that is: “But the more recent theologians, having rejected the things that actually happened from the beginning, and having devised allegories and invented fables, and contrived some kinship with the phenomena of the universe, established mysteries.”

VI. Eusebius attacks this vanity at greater length, *Preparation for the Gospel*, book III, chapter 1 — for this was, at that time, a matter of concern to the Christians. For after the light of the gospel had struck the world with its rays to such a degree that the shameful madness of the old superstition had come, even among the common people, into contempt, the sharper

sophists — as I have said — clung most stubbornly to this fiction, which all the credit of history contradicts, in order to make that folly appear lovely, dyed in a new colour. Indeed, to mention this in passing, in the earliest times of the church the whole method of philosophising was renewed even among the gentiles themselves. For after Ammonius of Alexandria, the coryphaeus of the philosophers of his age — whose hearers were Origen, Herennius, and Plotinus (the latter the teacher of Porphyry, as Porphyry was of Iamblichus) — had sown certain seeds of heavenly wisdom in the minds of his hearers through his philosophical discourses, those who, on account of inveterate prejudices and the hatred of the world, refused to embrace the Christian religion, nevertheless did not cease to cultivate those seeds to the best of their ability, drawing rivulets of truth into the cisterns of Plato. Add that others, from reading our own books, had drawn a great deal from the most hidden mysteries of the gospel. Among these were Numenius, Amelius, Plotinus, Herennius, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, Hierocles, Marinus, Damascius, and others, who, though they abandoned neither the curious speculations of the Platonists nor the magical incantations of the Pythagoreans, nevertheless mingled with them many little sparks of heavenly truth.

VII. Among the ancients, however, everything on this subject was confused and uncertain. Plutarch discusses at length whether Apollo was distinct from the sun, in his book *Why the Pythia No Longer Prophesies in Verse*. But the most ancient of the poets teach, in their very hymns, that he was the sun, and set forth where he was born and of what parents — so that the Arcadians could claim to be older not only than the Moon but even than the Sun. They add, too, fables patched together from ancient traditions. Such is what they write of Apollo's pastoral exile — which Callimachus

celebrates in such a manner that I could almost believe that fable to represent the manner of life of Jacob, spent among the flocks of Laban the Syrian. He teaches that the cause of his journey and of the task he undertook was love: Ἡλίου δ' ἔρωτι κεκαυμένος Ἀδμήτου — “Burning with love for the youth Admetus” — just as, for Jacob, love was the cause of his pastoral servitude. And in assigning the cause of Apollo's servitude, since Callimachus departs here from the rest of the poets, there is no doubt that the report of some obscure tradition gave him occasion for doing so. Then he depicts, most excellently, the increase of the young flocks under his care:

Ῥεῖα κε βουβόσιον τελέθει πλέον, οὐδέ κεν αἴγες
Δεύοιντο βρεφέων ἐπιμηλάδες, ἧσιν Ἀπόλλων
Βοσκομένης ὀφθαλμὸν ἐπήγαγεν, οὐδ' ἀγάλακτοι
Οἶες, οὐδ' ἄκυθοι, παῖσαι δέ κεν εἶεν ὕπαρνοι,
Ἥ δέ κε μουντοτόκος διδυμοτόκος αἶψα γένοιτο.¹

— that is:

*“Easily, indeed, would the herd of cattle grow yet more numerous,
nor would the she-goats, mingled among the ewes, lack for young,
upon which Apollo, as they grazed, cast his eye;
nor would the sheep be without milk, nor barren,
but all would have lambs beneath them,
and she that bore but one would at once bear twins.”*

If it were fitting to examine the poet's words one by one, very many things would be found that wonderfully agree with the history of Jacob; but since an attentive reader will perceive this at first glance, and since we are engaged in other matters, it does not please us to dwell upon them here.

VIII. This new mystical natural theology, however, was a most putrid fiction of men blinded by ignorance and malice. The greater part of mortals

worshipped the sun, the moon, and the rest of the heavenly bodies with divine honours long before the fables of Hellenism had their rise or occasion. Greece was, as it were, the birthplace of the ἀνθρωποφυέων [man-born; of human origin] gods, and the workshop of idols. But that the Greeks themselves, in ancient times, worshipped no other gods than the sun, the moon, and the stars, we have shown above, from Plato. But it pleased these new masters to undertake the defence of the ignorance and darkness of former ages — being themselves no wiser than those of whom they were most ashamed. Not otherwise, even today, do the Jewish rabbis twist all the monstrosities of the Talmud into I know not what allegories; it is a wonder the Jesuits have not done the same in reading their own writings. They would perhaps have acted more prudently and more modestly had they, imitating the philosophers and the rabbis, devised ingenious lies by which to win credit for those writings, rather than doing what they have in fact done — after leading so many years, and so many thousands of men in every nation, through the byways of the most hideous errors, utterly and openly rejecting them. But this, you will say, is an injury — nay, a violence — to wish to compare and liken the most holy fathers of the Society of Jesus with the philosophers and the rabbis? Come, then, let us examine, by one example (or perhaps another), but one of the greatest weight, whether they follow in their footsteps or not. No one can inflict a more atrocious injury upon the immortal souls of mortals, upon human society, and upon the obedience owed to the Supreme Being, than he who so labours to palliate and excuse the crimes of sinners that men take from it fresh courage to commit them further, and more freely. What the masked hierophants among the gentiles did to this end, the divine philosopher relates at length in the second book of the *Republic*:

Ἀγύρται ... δὲ καὶ μάντεις ἐπὶ πλουσίων θύρας ἰόντες, πείθουσιν ὥς ἔστι παρὰ σφίσι δύναμις ἐκ Θεῶν ποριζομένη, θυσίαις τε καὶ ἐπωδαῖς, εἴ τέ τι ἀδίκημά του γέγονεν αὐτοῦ, ἢ προγόνων, ἀκεῖσθαι μεθ' ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἑορτῶν, ἐάν τέ τιν' ἐχθρὸν πημῆναι ἐθέλῃ, μετὰ σμικρῶν δαπανῶν ὁμοίως δίκαιον ἀδίκῳ βλάψειν, ἐπαγωγαῖς τισὶ καὶ καταδέσμοις τοὺς Θεούς, ὥς φασι, πείθοντές σφισιν ὑπηρετεῖν· τούτοις δὲ πᾶσι τοῖς λόγοις μάρτυρας ποιητὰς ἐπάγονται, οἱ μὲν κακίας περὶ εὐπετείας διδόντες, —

Ὡς τὴν μὲν κακότητα καὶ ἰλαδὸν ἔστιν ἐλέσθαι· Ρηϊδίως· λείη μὲν ὁδός, μάλα δ' ἐγγύθι ναίει· Τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν· καὶ τινα ὁδὸν μακράν τε καὶ ἀνάντη· οἱ δὲ τῆς τῶν θεῶν ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων παραγωγῆς τὸν Ὅμηρον μαρτύρονται, ὅτι καὶ ἐκεῖνος εἶπε,

Στρεπτοὶ δέ τι καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοί· Καὶ τοὺς μὲν θυσίαισι καὶ εὐχολαῖς ἀγαναῖσιν· Λοιβῇ τε κνίσῃ τε παρατρωπῶσ' ἄνθρωποι· Λισσόμενοι, ὅτι κέν τις ὑπερβῇ καὶ ἀμάρτη·

Βίβλων δὲ ὅμαδον παρέχονται Μουσαίου καὶ Ὀρφέως, Σελήνης τε καὶ Μουσῶν ἐγγόνων, ὥς φασι, καθ' ἃς θυηπολοῦσι, πείθοντες οὐ μόνον ἰδιώτας ἀλλὰ καὶ πόλεις, ὥς ἄρα λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοὶ ἀδικημάτων διὰ θυσιῶν καὶ παιδιᾶς ἡδονῶν εἰσὶ μὲν ἔτι ζῶσιν, εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ τελευτήσασιν· ἃς δὴ τελετὰς καλοῦσιν, αἱ τῶν ἐκεῖ κακῶν ἀπολύουσιν ἡμᾶς· μὴ θύσαντας δὲ δεινὰ περιμένει· — “Begging priests and diviners go to the doors of the rich, and persuade them that they possess a power, procured from the gods by sacrifices and incantations, to heal, with pleasures and festivities, any wrong done either by the man himself or by his ancestors; and if he wishes to injure some enemy, at small expense he will be able to harm alike the just and the unjust man, by binding the gods, as they say, with certain spells and enchantments to serve them. For all these claims

they bring forward the poets as witnesses — some, concerning the ease of vice:

*‘Wickedness, in droves, one may easily choose;
smooth is the road, and it lies very near;
but before virtue the gods have set toil’ —
and a road both long and steep.*

*Others cite Homer as a witness that the gods may be led astray by men,
since he too said:*

*‘The gods themselves may be turned aside;
men turn them, with sacrifices and gentle vows,
with libation and burnt offering,
entreating them, when one has transgressed and sinned.’*

They stir up, moreover, a great mass of books from Musaeus and Orpheus, who are sprung, as they say, from the Moon and the Muses; by whose precepts they perform their rites; and they persuade not only private individuals but even whole cities that expiations and liberations from crimes are effected, through sacrifices and the festive delights of games, for the benefit of both the living and the dead; which purgations of the departed they call τελεταί [initiations], which, indeed, free men from the punishment of their evil deeds after death; while for those who have not sacrificed, grave penalties await.” This superstition, then, as one which brings about the confusion of all duties, and indeed the plague and ruin of the whole of life, the philosopher censures at great length.

IX. Let the reader learn from this that there is scarcely anything new in the contrivances of those who, putting on the mask of religion, either serve the various ἐπιθυμίας [lusts] of the flesh, or gape after wealth, or after dominion over the consciences of blinded men. That the Pharisees among

the Jews — most like these charlatans in wickedness, boldness, and superstition — devised lies twin to theirs, from which to extract an excuse for sin, our most holy Saviour, who is the Way, the Life, and the Truth, has shown, Matthew 5–7. But that the same avarice, the same dishonesty, the same shamelessness, the same twin boldness, are found among the Jesuits, in extenuating, excusing, and expiating the sins and crimes of the most wicked scoundrels, in sharpening and inflaming the minds of men toward vice, and in blunting every prick of conscience, has not long ago been made openly known by one who, in a particular book, has laid bare their mysteries.² Let the reader compare what we have adduced from Plato with what that learned man has excerpted from the books of the Jesuits: he will scarcely find one egg more like another than the doctrines of these to the maxims of those charlatans.

X. I shall add yet another instance, which likewise concerns gain and κενοδοξία [vainglory]. Let us take it from the exorcism of demons. Philostratus, in his *Life of Apollonius*, book IV, chapter 6, relating a demon cast out of a young man by Apollonius, having set forth the fury and licentiousness of the possessed man, adds: Καὶ οἱ μὲν πολλοὶ τὴν νεότητα σκιρτῶσαν ὥοντο ἐκφέρειν αὐτὸ ἐς ταῦτα· ὁδ' ὑπεκρίνετο ἄρα τῷ δαίμονι καὶ ἐδόκει παροινεῖν ἃ ἐπαρώνει, τό τε ὀρῶντός τε ἐς αὐτὸν Ἀπολλωνίου, δεδοικότος τε καὶ ὀργίλου φωνὰς ἠφίει τὸ εἶδωλον ὀπόσαι κλαιομένων τε καὶ στρεβλουμένων εἰσὶν ἀφέξεσθαι τε τοῦ μεираκίου ὥμνυτο, καὶ μηδενὶ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐμπεσεῖσθαι· τοῦ δὲ οἶον δεσπότου πρὸς ἀνδράποδον ποικίλον πανοῦργόν τε καὶ ἀναιδὲς καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα σὺν ὀργῇ λέγοντος, καὶ κελεύοντος αὐτῷ σὺν τεκμηρίῳ ἀπαλλάττεσθαι· τὸν δεῖνα ἔφη καταβαλὼν ἀνδριάντα, δείξας τινὰ τῶν περὶ τὴν βασιλείον στοὰν πρὸς ἧ ταῦτα ἐπράττετο· ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ ἀνδριάς ἐπεκινήθη πρῶτον, εἶτα ἔπεσε· —

that is: “And most supposed that the luxurious and effeminate character of his youth was the cause of all this. But the young man, under the demon’s impulse, was gesticulating, and seemed then to rave, whenever Apollonius fixed his raging gaze upon him. For now uttering the cries of one afraid, now of one enraged, the phantom, with such sounds as those who weep and are tormented make, swore that it would release the young man and enter into no other; but Apollonius used toward it such words as masters use toward slaves, calling it shifty, wicked, and shameless, and commanded it, threateningly and angrily, to depart the young man, giving some sign of its going — namely, to overturn a certain statue, indicating one of those set up in the royal portico, near which these things were being done. When these words were spoken, that statue, at first swaying a little, then fell.” Whether these things really happened so, I do not know. Eusebius, against Hierocles, has often caught Philostratus lying flat on his back. But I know that things twin to these are daily done, or feigned, among the fathers of the Society. It is a wonder, too, how greatly they agree with him. You would think you were hearing Menghi, or Thyraeus, or Sprenger speak. But just as this Apollonius was, above other mortals, so sharp-sighted that he could discern a demon in a drunken youth, when everyone else could see nothing in him but what was to be ascribed to licentiousness and impudence, so it very often happens that the fathers of the Society discern unclean spirits in men — especially in young men and young women — in whom the rest of mortals, blinder, indeed, than moles, can discern absolutely nothing, except what they judge to be attributable, in some cases to the ravings of the mad, and in others to the tricks of the deceitful. Then, the phantom of Philostratus raged no more at the presence and gaze of the magician Apollonius than is customary for the demons of the Jesuits to rage at the presence, gaze, or

touch of a popish priest. This is taught us, among others, by Edmund the sacrificing priest himself, in his miraculous history of things done in England, about the year 1585 and after: “Scarcely,” he says, “had he begun the exorcisms, and laid his hands upon the head, when he” (the Jesuit’s young man) “at once began to rage, to be thrown into the air, to struggle with hands and feet, to beat off the priest’s hand, to fill everything with cries, oaths, and blasphemous curses” — so that this young man of Philostratus’s was plainly no match for him. And in the matter of the reproaches to be hurled at the demon, it will appear quite plainly, if compared to our own men here, that Apollonius was a mere infant.

He called that spirit ποικίλον, πανοῦργον, et ἀναιδὴ [shifty, cunning, and shameless]. But if one should consult Menghi, *Fustis Daemonum*, Exorcism IV, he will easily perceive how paltry these terms are, in comparison with those which he teaches the fathers to use in exorcisms: “Hear,” says the priest, “insensate, false, reprobate, master of demons, most wretched creature, tempter of men, deceiver of the wicked angels, deluder of souls, leader of heretics, father of lies, foolish, bestial, witless, drunken one, infernal brigand, most iniquitous serpent, most rapacious wolf, lean, starving, most filthy swine, mangy beast, most savage beast, cruel beast, bloody beast, beast most bestial of all beasts, Acherontine spirit, fuliginous spirit, tartarean spirit.” Away with the trifles of Apollonius! Let the demon himself learn to rail from this. It must indeed be an untamed and most stubborn spirit, that is not terrified by such reproaches as these. Without doubt Saint Michael himself did not dare to use such a κρίσει βλασφημίας [judgement of blasphemy] of this kind, Jude 9. These new masters also imitate the overturning of a statue at the demon’s departure — but here they fall shamefully short of Apollonius. For they very rarely proceed further

than the extinguishing of a candle, or the breaking of a window. To overthrow statues is not for every priest. But this art of exorcising demons the Jews received from the Gentiles; and the Papists, from both.” Ἡδὴ μὲν τοι οἱ ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐξορκιστὰι τῇ τέχνῃ ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη χρώμενοι ἐξορκίζουσι, καὶ θυμιάμασι, καὶ καταδέσμοις χρῶνται [Already, indeed, your exorcists, using the art just as the gentiles do, exorcise, and employ incense and bindings] — Justin Martyr, in the *Dialogue with Trypho*: “Exorcistæ certe vestri jam arte quadam veluti gentes in adjurationibus utuntur, et thymiamata et vincula adhibent” [Your exorcists, indeed, now use a certain art, just as the gentiles do, in their adjurations, and employ incense and bindings].

XI. But we must return to the road from this digression. Through a long succession of years the worship of heaven and of the sun flourished, before it had yet occurred to men to raise up their own kind to the throne of God; nor did it pass unpunished, even among the Greeks themselves, that anyone should blaspheme the Sun as merely πυρὸς ἄθροισμα μέγα [a great mass of fire].

1. The Greek is highly corrupted in the source, making it very hard to decipher.
2. The *Provincial Letters*, by B. Pascal, 1658, etc.

CHAPTER VII. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY — CHAPTER V

The beginnings of idolatry assigned by the ancients to the age of Serug, without reason or authority — Eusebius's Chronicle; Suidas interpolated — Serug of the family of Shem — whether Terah, the father of Abraham, was a statuary — the opinion of Epiphanius on the origin of idolatry; and of Tertullian — the arts of painting and statuary, in the service of idolatry — the rude beginnings of the art of painting — according to Pliny and Athenagoras, who its authors were — the distinction between σκιά [shadow] and εἰκών [image], Hebrews 10:1 — the sun and moon the first idols — the first worship of idols simple adoration — its progress — to worship God, natural — all superstition full of fluctuations — the absence of the new gods — Elijah's mockery of the idolaters on account of the absence of their idols — the Ithyphallic song sung by the Athenians to Demetrius Poliorcetes — the occasion of making Aaron's calf — the general influences of the heavenly bodies — the madness and hardness of heart of the idolaters — the occasions of this new kind of superstition — the origin of pillars, stelae, and images — the testimony of Maimonides; and of

Plotinus — the manner of making images; the idolatry of astrologers — the folly of the old and the more recent image-making.

I. Almost all the ancients assign the beginnings of idolatry to the age of Serug. Serug was born in the sixty-third year after the dispersion of Babel. That span of time they hold to have been free from this crime. We ourselves have no doubt that, immediately upon the dispersion, the greatest part of the apostate multitude bade farewell to the worship of the one true God. Nor is any reason given why the age of Serug should be believed to have given a special beginning to this crime. Most follow Eusebius in his *Chronicle*. He asserts that Serug was of the tribe or family of Japheth, to whom Shem was a great-great-grandfather. Eusebius's words are twice cited in Suidas, and in both places Serug is said to have been of the family of Japheth; for a great many things in that work are inserted two or three times over, which are the additions of later hands. But what they ascribe to Serug pertains to Hellenism; for they imagine that he was the first to enter upon the way of religiously worshipping the dead — a practice which, they say, Terah, the father of Abraham, promoted by the fabrication of statues. Epiphanius says this of Serug: Οὐπω δὲ ἐν ξοάνοις καὶ ἐν τορείαις λίθων ἢ ξύλων ἢ ἀργυροτεύκτων ἢ χρυσοῦ ἢ ἐξ ἄλλης τινὸς ὕλης πεποιημένων, μόνον δὲ διὰ χρωμάτων καὶ εἰκόνων ἢ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου διάνοια ἐφ' ἑαυτῇ ηὔρισκε τὴν κακίαν — that is: “Not yet had that superstitious worship attached itself to images, or to carved stones or wood or silver statues or those of any other material; nor was there anything besides colours and likenesses, in which the mind of men had of itself devised this new kind of wickedness.” In pictures and colours, then, consisted, at that time, the whole preparation for idolatry, as Tertullian says.

II. It would be easy to prove that the arts of painting and statuary had their beginnings in the service of idolatry; but that the latter preceded the former in that service is not so easily shown. The art of γραφική [drawing/painting] remained, for several centuries, altogether rude, and unfit for representing the gods, unless these were first fashioned out of some solid material. Pliny teaches that it had its beginning in σκιαγραφία [shadow-drawing], a rude likeness traced from the observation of a man's shadow. So Athenagoras, in his *Legation for the Christians*: Καὶ σκιαγραφίας μὲν εὐρεθείσης ὑπὸ Σαυρίου, ἵππον ἐν ἡλίῳ περιγράψαντος — that is, “Saurias invented the picture of shadow, having traced round the shadow of a horse in the sun.” But to paint the Sun itself in shadow — which they held, almost alone above all else, to be a god — was a matter of very great difficulty. He adds: Γραφικῆς δὲ Κράσωνος ἐν πίνακι λελευκωμένῳ σκιάς ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς ἐναλείψαντος — that is: “Craton was the first to show graphice” (that is, the art which added colours to outlines), “who traced, on a whitened tablet, the shadows of a man and a woman.” Others added still other things. Hence that distinction of the apostle, Hebrews 10:1: Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων — “For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.” Terah was, through his son Nahor, the grandson of Serug; that he practised the potter's and statuary's art, and fashioned images, the Jews have feigned, and most of the ancient Christians have believed.

III. The image-making of Terah, therefore, followed the idolatry of Serug by about eighty or a hundred years. And this is commonly assigned as the first stage in the progress of idolatry. We, however, have entered upon other lines of inquiry in investigating the beginnings of superstitious worship;

and, where we have begun our path, we shall proceed further. אֱלֹהִים הַדָּשִׁים [Elohim ḥadashim], as the Holy Spirit speaks, Judges 5:8, or “new gods,” which the apostates, scattered from Babel, first procured for themselves, were the Sun and Moon, as we have shown, and the other heavenly bodies. They used these as guides for their wanderings. Their first worship consisted in simple adoration. By what stages the human race gradually slipped into other seeds of error, and into the most hideous rites of superstition, we shall, as the matter and the occasion allow, briefly set forth.

IV. That some God should be acknowledged and worshipped, that very nature demands, by which we are men. Hence, forgetting the true God, until they adopt false ones, the goads of conscience harass men. It was thus that the first apostates went to the sun, moon, and stars of heaven. The novelty of the thing, and the name of “gods,” pleased them for a time. But, driven by the loss of their dearest into these new and rugged straits, the goads and terrors of conscience afflicted them with fresh anxiety and distress. For no one can enjoy true peace of mind, whereby depraved superstition war is declared against the true God. At first, then, those deities did not seem sufficiently present; for unless God be present, he cannot be held a deity. By the same instinct of nature by which we are persuaded that God exists, we are persuaded also that he is present. Nor, for the warding off of dangers — which is, among men, the greatest use of a deity, at least to those wise only in earthly things — can the use of a deity suffice, if he be not more present than every danger, and therefore not God at all. Hence Elijah reproaches the Baalite Israelites with the absence of their idol, 1 Kings 18:27: “Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth.” With severe εἰρωνεία [irony] he strips the idol

of all divine nature, of every attribute proper to God, and thereby takes from it all power, and removes it from the divine government.

V. And this consideration kept all idolaters ever thus suspended and anxious, so that, although they attempted to remedy their fear and wavering by means of sacred pillars and images — as we shall presently see — it could not but be that this uncertainty of mind, by which they were troubled, should sometimes break out and betray itself. Hence, it was that the Athenian people, receiving Demetrius Poliorcetes, the liberator of their city, with divine honours, inserted among other things, in the Ithyphallic song, or sacred hymn, sung to him as he entered the walls, these words:

Ὡ τοῦ κρατίστου παῖ Ποσειδῶνος θεοῦ, Καὶ θεᾶς Ἀφροδίτης· Ἄλλοι μὲν ἢ μακρὰν γὰρ ἀπέχουσιν θεοί, ἢ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ὦτα· ἢ οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἢ οὐ προσέχουσιν ἡμῖν οὐδὲ ἔν· Σὲ δὲ παρόνθ' ὀρῶμεν, Οὐ ξύλινον, οὐδὲ λίθινον, ἀλλ' ἀληθινόν· — that is: “Hail, O son of Neptune, most mighty god, and of Venus: for the other gods are either far away, or have no ears, or do not exist at all, or pay not the least heed to our affairs; but thee we see present before us — no god of wood or stone, but a true one.” Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, book VI, relates this from Duris of Samos.

VI. For this cause the Israelites in the wilderness compelled Aaron to cast the golden calf, Exodus 32:1: “Up,” they say, “for as for this Moses, we wot not what is become of him. Up, make us gods, which shall go before us.” They do not say, “other gods,” nor “gods” absolutely, but “gods which shall go before us,” and aid us with their help. For they did not demand another God besides Jehovah, but some visible sign of the divine presence, to which they might have recourse in matters doubtful and difficult. And such signs were afterwards, indeed, granted by God to that carnal people — but instituted by himself alone. And this was the beginning of that fatal

transgression for that people. Whence the proverb arose: *אין לך ישראל פורענות*: — — that is, “There befalls thee, O Israel, no retribution in which there is not an ounce of the iniquity of the calf.” It is frivolous, and *᾿λουδαῖκώτατον* [most Jewish], that certain of the rabbis attempt, from those words of Aaron — “I cast the gold into the fire, and there came out this calf” — as though it had leapt forth unforeseen and without his intending any such thing, to transfer the sin of the calf’s formation onto a rabble of Egyptians (among whom, they say, were certain magicians), by whose art it was contrived that, beyond everyone’s expectation, the calf should come forth.

VII. This, then, was the occasion of a new superstition for the first idolaters, after they had judged the heavenly bodies worthy to be held as deities. For as every lie is full and fruitful of others, so is the greatest lie the most fruitful of all. Nor is there any error that does not either offer allurements to those who err, or bring upon them some necessity, in the greater number of cases. These deities were absent. But in dangers, in matters set in doubt and difficulty, a present God was needed. Cast into these straits, they ought, by the dictate of right reason, to have returned to the God who is everywhere present. “But it did not seem good to them to retain that true God in their knowledge,” as the apostle says, Romans 1:28; and so God gave them over to a mind void of all judgement. Being possessed of such a mind, something had now to be done, by which they might make present to themselves the gods they had chosen.

VIII. Moreover, since the effects of the operations of the heavenly bodies were common, and equal to all, it was exceedingly difficult to understand how each individual might make himself, in some peculiar manner, a partaker of those benefits which they believed flowed from them. For he

who is a God of all in such a way that he takes no care even of individuals, and does good to no one otherwise than when he bestows something on the whole together, is in truth a God to no one. He who is not my God is no God to me. And hence they might very easily have perceived that they had cast themselves into incredible difficulties. But the die was cast, and they had to go further along the road they had begun. Force had to be done, then, to their own κοινὰς ἐννοίας [common notions], and to nature itself. The defection of mankind from the rule and government of the one God cost them no less than this. New sensible gods having been set up, what remained of right reason cried out against it, that they were not present, that they took no care of individuals, and therefore were neither to be worshipped nor feared as gods. A bad wedge was applied to a bad knot, and lies were covered over with lies, lest the roof should leak through. To meet this twofold defect, arising from the first and greatest sin of idolatry, the idolaters, by Satan's aid, entered upon new ways, by which they might exhibit the absent deities as present, and draw down their beneficent influences, and enclose them within some present object exposed to each individual. And this was the origin of the sacred pillars, stelae, statues, and images, which we shall next set forth.

IX. There were, as we have said, two inconveniences which the idolaters felt pressing upon them in the choice of their new gods: first, that they were absent and far distant; second, that they took no care of individuals. These they sought to remedy by the erection of pillars and stelae. For they supposed that, by the relation of these to the sun, moon, and stars — whether induced by diabolical incantations, or imposed by the force of dedication — the stars themselves could be made present, and their beneficial influences drawn from them, through a certain Ethereal Spirit, by

anyone's vows and prayers. So, Maimonides teaches us, from the ancient monuments of the Sabaeans, in the *Guide for the Perplexed*, part III, chapter 29: "According to the opinions of the Sabaeans, they set up images to the stars; to the sun, indeed, images of gold, but to the moon, of silver; and thus they divided the metals and the climates of the earth among the stars. For they said of such-and-such a climate, 'the god and star of it is such-and-such.' Then they built shrines, and placed images in them, supposing that the powers of the stars flowed into those images, and that these had the faculty of understanding, could bestow on men the gift of prophecy, and, finally, could indicate what was useful and salutary for them; so too they speak of trees, which are under the compact of those stars — when a certain tree is dedicated to some star, it is planted in its name, and is cultivated in this or that manner, so that the spiritual powers of the star may be infused into that tree."

Plotinus unveils the whole mystery, *Enneads* IV, book III, chapter 11: Καί μοι δοκοῦσιν ... οἱ πάλαι σοφοὶ ὅσοι ἐβουλήθησαν θεοὺς αὐτοῖς παρεῖναι, ἱερὰ καὶ ἀγάλματα ποιησάμενοι εἰς τὴν τοῦ παντὸς φύσιν ἀπίδοντες, ἐν νῶ λαβεῖν, ὡς πανταχοῦ μὲν εὐάγωγον ψυχῆς φύσις· δέξασθαι γε μὲν ῥᾶστον ἂν εἴη ἀπάντων, εἴ τις πρὸς πάθεσί τι τεκτῆναιτο δυνάμενον μοῖραν τινὰ αὐτῆς — that is: "Now it seems to me that the ancient wise men, whoever desired the gods to be present with them" (that is, whom they saw with their own eyes to be far removed from them), "in fashioning shrines and statues, directed the gaze of their minds toward the very nature of the universe; and thence perceived that the nature of soul is everywhere most easily led and inclined, and can most readily of all things be caught, if one should fashion something capable of easily receiving an impression from it, and, by receiving that impression, of obtaining some portion from it."

This is what we have taught: namely, that the idolaters — these Plotinian sages — hoped to capture the power or virtue of the soul of heaven and of the stars, and to enclose it within stelae or statues, so that it might always be present to them. To show, indeed, how this could be brought about, he adds: Προσπαθὲς δὲ τὸ ὁπωσοῦν μιμηθέν, ὥσπερ κάτοπτρον ἄρπάσαι εἰδὸς τι δυνάμενον — “That which is in any way fitted for imitation is easily susceptible of impression, just as a mirror is able to seize hold of some likeness.”

That is: wherever an ἄγαλμα [image] or statue is set up to a heavenly power, that power is inclined to descend into it, so as to correspond to the imagination of its maker; and the ἄγαλμα at once catches that power, no otherwise than a mirror catches the likeness of a body set before it: Καὶ γὰρ ... ἡ τοῦ παντὸς φύσις πάντα εὐμηχάνως ποιησαμένη εἰς μίμησιν ὧν εἴλε τοὺς λόγους — “For the nature of the universe fashions all things by a certain admirable craftsmanship, in imitation of those things whose rational principles it possesses within itself.” That is: there is nothing among these lower things which is not fashioned after the likeness of some power which first existed in the mind of the universe — which is the doctrine of the Platonists concerning the Ideas. The philosopher continues: Ἐπειδὴ ἕκαστον οὕτως ἐγένετο ἐν ὕλῃ λόγος, ὃς κατὰ τὸν πρὸ ὕλης ἐμεμόρφωτο, συνήψατο τῷ Θεῷ ἐκείνῳ καθ’ ὃν ἐγίνετο, καὶ εἰς ὃν εἶδε ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ εἶχε, ποιοῦσα — “Since, then, each thing comes into being in this way, surely the rational principle in matter, having been formed according to that principle which is prior to matter, is joined to that God according to whom it was made, and upon whom the soul looked, and whom it possessed, while it was making it.”

These words unfold the whole mystery. There is given, in the matter cast into an image, a certain rational principle, which corresponds exactly to that heavenly principle which existed before that matter; and hence arises, between the image and that very being to whom it is consecrated, a relation. But why this image, or this particular portion of matter, should have this god, or this portion of heavenly power, attached to it, rather than any other, is not yet clear. This, he shows, comes about for a twofold reason. First, because it was fashioned according to that God: Συνήψατο τῷ Θεῷ ἐκείνῳ καθ' ὃν ἐγίνετο [“it was joined to that God according to whom it came into being”]. But how could the maker of the image know according to the power of which god that matter, thus fashioned by him, had proceeded? This he could perceive from his own soul; for that god upon whom the soul looked when it made the ἄγαλμα [image], is he according to whom it is fashioned. But whether the image-worshippers of today can give better reasons why this or that image should represent this or that saint, rather than any other, I greatly doubt.

X. For the rest, to add this in passing: this idolatrous delirium still clings openly to very many who hawk about that unspeakable art under the name of judicial astrology. For they fashion figures and images, which they pretend correspond to the forms of the heavenly bodies; and thence they persuade fools that these acquire virtue and wondrous effects from the heavenly figure. They have, too, statues and images, in which they say the spirits of the stars are enclosed. These spirits, however, they do not know whether they are the powers of the heavenly bodies, or demons that attend upon the stars. But all this smacks of gross idolatry — although Albertus Magnus, in his *Speculum*, Marsilio Ficino, in his *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, Girolamo Cardano, and others, have not been ashamed to

thrust these most absurd portents of the heathen upon the Christian world, without either truth or modesty. In these, indeed, consists the whole rationale of magic — from which crime I can by no means acquit the consecration, among the Papists, of little images, which they call Agnus Dei, of candles, of holy water, and of other such things.

CHAPTER VIII. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY — CHAPTER VI

The progress of idolatry — the visible objects of the first superstitious worship — κίονες πυραμοειδεῖς [pyramid-shaped pillars], λίθοι ἄργοι [rough stones], βαιτύλια [baetyls], מטסטבא [matstsebah], στήλαι [stelae], ἄγαλμα [image], what these are — the testimony of Clement, of the author of the Phoronis, of Eumelus — the origin of the stelae, from Clement — a truer opinion — the pillar-stone in the field of Colchester — λίθοι ἄργοι — the testimonies of Pausanias, Maximus of Tyre, Suidas — Theusares — Stonehenge — Elagabalus; the Idaean Mother — the Persians destroy the ἄγάλματα, and mock them — the image of Diana of Ephesus — the idols of the Germans; groves empty of images: oaks — the most ancient temples without images — no ἄγάλματα in antiquity — rough and quadrangular stones — βαιτύλια — sacred stones — the testimony of Sanchuniathon — he feigns that Uranus devised living stones — most of what Eusebius draws from him ridiculous — the ancients feigned stones to be ἔμψυχοι [ensouled] — βαίτυλος in Hesychius, whence the proverb βαίτυλον ἂν κατατίνοις arose — βαίτυλα in Damascius, in Photius — what θεραπεύω [to serve, to tend]

means — anointed stones, in Clement and Arnobius — whence βαιτύλια are named — Scaliger's conjecture — the erection of the stone at Bethel by Jacob — what אֲבִנֵּי אֵלִים signifies — the nature of Jacob's act — and to what end — why the common translator renders אֲבִנֵּי אֵלִים as "title" — the ἐπιφάνειαι [manifestations] of the gods, in Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Cicero — the Christian festival — the stone of Bethel worshipped among the Phoenicians — the progress of idolatry — statues fashioned to the likeness of the human face dedicated to the sun, and other matters.

I. What we have said concerning the progress of idolatry in the invention of the worship of present objects is confirmed by what remains, from the monuments of history, in memory of the first visible σεβάσματα [objects of worship]. These, in ancient times, were of two kinds: κίονες πυραμοειδεῖς, pillars tapering to a point; and λίθοι ἄργοι, rough and shapeless stones — to which may be added the βαιτύλια. Not until long afterwards, in process of time, were images fashioned to human form — namely, when the worship of the dead had been introduced through Hellenism.

II. The Greeks call sacred pillars στήλαι. So the Septuagint renders אֲבִנֵּי אֵלִים, forbidden Leviticus 26:1, Deuteronomy 16:22. "אֲבִנֵּי אֵלִים," says Kimchi, "is a stone which is set up for worship. From נָצַב, 'he set up.'" So Apollo Agyieus was a pyramid, as Hesychius attests — that is, κίων εἰς ὅξυ λήγων [a pillar tapering to a point]. Of these, Clement of Alexandria says, book I: Πρὶν γὰρ οὖν ἀκριβοῦσθαι τὰς τῶν ἀγαλμάτων σχέσεις, κίονας ἱστάντες οἱ παλαιοὶ ἐσίδον τούτους ὡς ἀφιδρύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ. That is: "For before the fashioning of statues was perfected, the ancients, setting up pillars, worshipped these as seats of the god." An ἀφίδρυμα [image] of this kind is an image which is, as it were, the seat of a deity. This is what we have said: since ἀγάλματα [images] were not yet accurately fashioned, they set up

pillars, which might receive the power of the absent deities, and thus become, as it were, seats of the gods. But ἄγαλμα is an image artfully made — Πᾶν ἐφ’ ᾧ τις ἀγάλλεται, says Suidas — that is, “anything in which one delights”; that is, whatever so feeds the eyes as to affect the mind with a certain joy.

III. To this belongs what the same Clement relates, from the author of the *Phoronis*, concerning Callithoe, the first priestess of Juno:

Καλλιθόη κλειδοῦχος Ὀλυμπιάδος βασιλείης Ἡρῆς Ἀργείης, ἣν στέμμασι καὶ θυσάνοισι Πρώτη ἐκόσμησεν περὶ κίονα μακρὸν ἀνάσσης.

That is: “Callithoe, key-bearer of the Olympian queen, Argive Hera, who first adorned her, with garlands and tassels, about the long pillar of the queen.” The poet calls it “long” (μακράν) because the στήλη [stele/upright stone] was erected lengthwise, unlike the λίθοι ἄργοι [idle stones]. So a κίων [pillar] in Homer is sometimes called μακρός [long], sometimes ὑψηλός [high]. He produces similar things from Eumelus, namely:

Ὅφρα θεῷ δεκάτην ἀκροθινιά τε κρεμάσαιμεν Σταθμῶν ἐκ ζαθέων, καὶ κίονος ὑψηλοῖο.

That is: “That we might hang up for the god a tithe and the choicest spoils from the sacred doorposts, and from the lofty pillar” — although Eumelus perhaps meant nothing more than that the ἀκροθινία and spoils were customarily hung from doorposts and pillars, which is very well known.

IV. Clement writes that demons invented these things in imitation of that pillar which went before the Israelites in the wilderness. Others may judge as they will; I have no doubt that, at that very time when the tabernacle was set up, pillars and στήλαι [upright stones] of this kind were already in common use among many nations. Hence, perhaps, arose the Anthelian Gods, the guardians of doorways — little pillars at the doors of temples and

of other houses. Hesychius: Ἀντήλιοι θεοὶ οἱ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἰδρύμενοι — “Anthelian gods, those set up before doors.” Athenaeus, book X: ἐπὶ τῆς αὐλῆς — “in the courtyard”; that is, at the first entrance of the house, in the open air. Men had not yet conceived of ἀγαλματοποιΐα [the craft of making images], or εἰκονοποιΐα [image making], when first they set up pillars and στήλας [upright stones] for the sake of religion. For since they held the heavenly bodies alone to be in the place of deities, there was no reason for them to erect to these images fashioned and fabricated in human form. That, indeed, came to pass as superstition grew stronger — when, that is, the same being was the sun, and, I know not, some Apollo, substituted for him; but since the idolaters had nothing else in mind than to make the absent deities present by some visible sign, they had no need of the representation, in that sign, of any living creature. I recall having seen a pillar of this kind in the field of Colchester, among the Trinobantes, upon which later ages set the image of a cross, and consecrated it anew to the use of a new superstition.

V. Then, besides these tapering pillars, they used, for the same purpose, rough stones. So Pausanias, in the *Achaica*: Ἐστήκασι δέ ... ἑγγύτατα τοῦ ἀγάλματος τετράγωνοι λίθοι τριάκοντα μάλιστα ἀριθμόν· τούτους σέβουσιν οἱ Φαρεῖς ἑκάστου θεοῦ τινος ὄνομα ἐπιλέγοντες· τὰ δὲ ἔτι παλαιότατα καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν Ἑλλήσι τιμὰς θεῶν ἀντὶ ἀγαλμάτων εἶχον ἄργοι λίθοι. That is: “Near the image stand about thirty square stones; these the men of Pharae worship, naming each one after some god; and, indeed, in the most ancient times, rough stones held, among all the Greeks, the honours of the gods in place of images.” A notable testimony. He mentions stones of this kind also in the *Boeotica*. This, I say, was the custom of those most ancient Greeks, of whom we showed, from Plato, that they worshipped the sun, the

moon, and the other stars of heaven, and these alone. And Maximus of Tyre, of the Arabians, *Oration* 38: Ἀράβιοι μὲν σέβουσι ὄντινα οὐκ οἶδα· τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμα ὃ εἶδον, λίθος ἦν τετράγωνος. That is: “The Arabians worship I know not whom; but the image which I saw was a square stone.” The sign of the unknown god was a quadrangular stone. But that god was called θευσάρης — “τοῦτ’ ἔστι,” says Suidas, “θεὸς Ἄρης” — “that is, the god Ares” — in which explanation of the name he is without doubt mistaken; he adds, however, whoever that god was: Τὸ ἄγαλμα, λίθος ἐστὶ μέλας τετράγωνος, ἀτύπωτος, ὕψος ποδῶν δ’ εὔρος δύο, ἀνάκειται δὲ ἐπὶ βάσεως χρυσηλάτου· τούτῳ θύουσι, καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῶν ἱερείων προχέουσι· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἡ σπονδή. That is: “The image is a black, square stone, without any carved shape — that is, rough — four feet in height, two in breadth, resting upon a base of beaten gold; to this they sacrifice, and pour out the blood of the victims; and this is their libation.”

VI. Of this kind, perhaps, were the stones which are here in England, in the field of Salisbury — huge and rough boulders, λίθοι ἄργοί, as Pausanias speaks. Jones, a most skilled architect, proves, in a particular treatise, that these were sacred. That the ancient Britons worshipped the Moon under the name of Andraste, Dio Cassius attests, *History*, book LXII. To the Sun and the Moon, stones of this kind were erected.

VII. That the worshippers of the heavenly bodies erected these stones and pillars, in order to have at hand the power and ἐνέργεια of the deities they worshipped, for protection and blessing, we have shown before. This, they believed, could be brought about by the descent of the Ethereal Spirit. At length the stones themselves were called gods, or divine. Lampridius, in the *Life of Heliogabalus*: “He wished to carry off, from its own shrine, the image of Diana of Laodicea — the ‘stones which are called divine’ — from

its inner sanctuary, where Orestes had placed it.” The historian means nothing other than such λίθοι ἄργούς as were consecrated to the sun and moon, which, in process of time, came to be reckoned by the name of gods. Hence the custom of swearing “by Jupiter the Stone.” And of the idol Elagabalus, from whom that monster of a man, the pseudo-Antoninus, borrowed his name, Herodian says: Λίθος τίς ἐστι μέγιστος, κάτωθεν περιφερής, λήγων εἰς ὀξύτητα. That is: “It is a very great stone, round below, tapering to a point.” Also, ܠܥܠ ܒܥܠ [Egle Ba'al] is “the round lord,” by which name they denoted the sun itself — unless the sun should rather be called, in Syriac, ܠܒܠ ܗܠܐ, that is, “the God of the Gabalites,” a name taken from the place of worship, as “Baal Peor.” The Idaean Mother, which, with such great religious observance, was brought from Pessinus to Rome, and set up by the whole city in the Temple of Victory, was a stone of this kind, as Livy attests, book XXIX, chapter 11.

VIII. In early times, then, among many nations, ἀγάλματα had no use, and were unknown — held, indeed, by some, in abhorrence. Herodotus, in his *Clio*, of the Persians: Ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ ποιευμένους ἰδρύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖσι ποιεῦσι μωρίην ἐπιφέρουσι· ὥς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς, κατάπερ οἱ Ἕλληνες, εἶναι — chapter 131. That is: “It is not their custom to set up images, or temples, or altars; rather, they charge those who do so with folly — because, as it seems to me, they do not believe the gods to be of human form, as the Greeks do.” A notable testimony. We have shown above that the Persians pursued the sun and moon with religious worship. Clinging to that superstition received from the first idolaters, they never admitted the deities which Hellenism introduced, and for that reason had no ἀγάλματα at all. Hence those who wrote the history of the Magi, in Diogenes Laertius’s

proem, relate that Xerxes, on his expedition into Europe, ἀγάλματα εἰκότως καθαίρειν — “removed images, according to the ordinance of his discipline.” Nay, they not only removed such images, but mocked them pleasantly. For when Cambyses had entered the temple of Vulcan at Memphis, πολλὰ τῷ ἀγάλματι κατεγέλασεν, Herodotus, book III — “he greeted the image with much laughter”; and in the shrine of the Cabiri, τὰ ἀγάλματα ἐνέπρησε, πολλὰ κατασκώψας — “he burnt the images, jesting much over them.” He burnt them, according to the custom of his country, because they were images of men; he laughed, because they were ridiculously fashioned. For this cause he gave to the flames all the temples of Asia, according to Solinus — save that of Diana of Ephesus alone, whose image was a sharpened trunk of elm, or of beech. So Callimachus teaches us, *Hymn to Artemis*:

Σοὶ καὶ ἀμαζόνιδες πολέμου ἐπιθυμήτῃραι

Ἐν κοτε παραλίῃ Ἐφέσου βρέτας ἰδρύσαντο, Φηγῶ ὑπὸ πρέμνῳ.

That is: “For thee too the Amazons, eager for war, once set up an image on the shore of Ephesus, beneath the trunk of an oak.” For the rest, the father of history does not say that the Persians had no statues at all. They had no ἀγάλματα [images], because they did not believe the gods to be ἀνθρωποφυεῖς [of human origin]. But that they repudiated all pillars and stelae, he does not say, nor is it true. Tacitus relates the same of the Germans, *On the Customs of the Germans*, chapter 9: “For the rest, they think it improper, judging by the greatness of heavenly beings, to enclose the gods within walls, or to liken them to any form of the human face: they consecrate groves and forests, and call by the names of the gods that hidden presence which they behold only with reverence.” But a little before, he had said: “They believe a god to be present with them in battle, and carry into

the fight certain images and standards, taken from their groves,” chapter 7. Not every effigy or standard, then, but only those fashioned in any likeness of the human face, were absent from the groves.

IX. Perhaps, too, in place of the stones and pillars which the peoples of the East erected, living oaks, or the ancient trunks of oaks, were in use among the Germans. For we have shown, from Maimonides, that the heavenly bodies were worshipped in trees as well. Hence Claudian, *In Praise of Stilicho*: “That it might be permitted to hunt in safety, far off, through the vast silences of the Hercynian forest, and the groves grim with ancient religion, and the oaks that stand as images of barbarian divinity.” Also, “oaks held by the Greeks for oracles” — Virgil, *Georgics*, II, line 16. And the Gauls, in Lucan, book III, line 412: “And the mournful images of the gods lack all art, and stand shapeless on hewn trunks. Their very rudeness, and the squalor of the already rotting wood, strike men with awe.” Maximus of Tyre also teaches that the Celts — that is, the Gauls — worshipped Jupiter, whose sign was the tallest oak. Procopius of Caesarea, too, in his *History of the Gothic War*, book IV, affirms that the people of the Abasgi, dwelling from the Pontic Sea to the roots of the Caucasus, “even to his own time” — that is, the time of the Emperor Justinian — “venerated groves and forests with superstition, and believed trees to be gods, with barbarous simplicity.” Similarly, too, the Huns — the first who drove the Goths from their ancient Scythian dwellings — whom Jordanes, *On the Origin and Deeds of the Getae*, chapter 24, carried away by a wondrous credulity, relates to have been born of unclean spirits, begotten upon certain sorceress-women whom they called Aliorumnae; and historians relate that the remnants of these people, in Lithuania, worshipped trees down to a late age, until King Jagiello cut them down with his own hand. Philostratus

relates that at Cadiz there was a most ancient temple dedicated to Hercules, in which he says there were no ἀγάλματα, but only unmarked altars; he shows, however, that the inhabitants of that place had στήλαι inscribed with unknown letters, which were four-sided, like anvils — see his *Apollonius*, book V, chapter 1. Of the same temple, Silius Italicus says: “But there is no known effigy or image of the gods.” Curtius, book IV, chapter 1, relates that in this Hercules the Tyrians — from whom the people of Cadiz derived — worshipped Apollo, or the sun. So true is what Themistius says, *Oration 15*: Καὶ πρὸ μὲν Δαιδάλου τετράγωνος ἦν, οὐ μόνον ἡ τῶν Ἑρμῶν ἐργασία, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνδριάντων· Δαίδαλος δέ, ἐπειδὴ πρῶτος διήγαγε τὸ πόδε τῶν ἀγαλμάτων, ἔμπνοα δημιουργεῖν ἐνομίσθη. That is: “Before Daedalus, not only the workmanship of the Herms, but that of the rest of the statues too, was square; but Daedalus, since he was the first to separate the two feet of the images, was reputed to fashion them living and breathing.” Of which more hereafter.

X. To these λίθους ἀεργούς [idle stones] belong the βαιτύλια [sacred stones]. The first to mention them, in Eusebius, is Sanchuniathon, in his *Theology of the Phoenicians*: “Ἐτι δέ ... Θεὸς Οὐρανὸς βαιτύλια, λίθους ἐμψύχους μηχανησάμενος. That is: “Moreover, the god Uranus devised baetyls, living stones, by his craft.” A most learned man supposes that Sanchuniathon did not write אבנים נפשים, “living stones,” but אבנים נשפים (with the פ and ש transposed) — that is, as he says, “anointed stones.” For it is ridiculous, he says, to imagine that Uranus made “animated stones.” And it is indeed ridiculous; yet it does not therefore follow that Sanchuniathon did not so write it, since, out of a horrible confusion, partly, and partly out of a mixture of the most monstrous trifles, everything which Eusebius draws from Sanchuniathon in that passage is altogether absurd and

ridiculous — nor is it recorded by him for any other purpose than to show how absurd these things are, and how repugnant to all theology, indeed to reason itself. Moreover, Uranus devised these stones that they might be at hand, to aid him in the war which he was waging against Saturn to recover his kingdom — for which he had need of living stones, rather than anointed ones. It is, moreover, very well known that the ancients no less feigned stones of this kind to be ἔμψυχοι [ensouled] than they feigned the statues of Daedalus to be αὐτοκίνητα [self-moving]. Hesychius derives the word from another source: Βαίτυλος· οὕτως ἑκαλεῖτο ὁ δοθεὶς λίθος τῷ Κρόνῳ ἀντὶ Διός — that is, “Baetylus: so was called the stone which was given to Saturn in place of Jupiter.” A most familiar fable. Whence the proverb, Καὶ βαίτυλον ἄν καταπίνοις — “You would even swallow a baetyl” — which Erasmus, in his *Adages*, explains from this passage of Hesychius: “Baetylus is the name given to that stone, wrapped in swaddling-bands, which Saturn swallowed in place of Jupiter.”

XI. It is certain, however, that there were other stones, destined for sacred uses, called βαιτύλια, besides that one which was given to Saturn in place of Jupiter. The author of the *Life of Isidore the Philosopher*, in Photius — whom Suidas writes to have been Damascius — mentions them, *Bibliotheca*, codex 242. He says that he himself saw: Τὸν βαίτυλον διὰ τοῦ ἀέρος κινούμενον, ποτὲ δ’ ἐν τοῖς ἱματίοις κρυπτόμενον, ἤδη δὲ ποτὲ καὶ ἐν χερσὶ βασταζόμενον τοῦ θεραπεύοντος· ὄνομα δ’ ἦν τῷ θεραπεύοντι τὸν βαίτυλον Εὐσέβιος. That is: “The baetyl, moved through the air, at one time hidden within garments, and at another time even carried in the hands of him who tended it; and the name of him who tended the baetyl was Eusebius.” Thus does Andreas Schott — otherwise a learned man — interpret those words most absurdly. For what has a physician to do with a

baetyl? Children know what θεραπεύειν τοὺς θεοὺς [to tend the gods] and ἡ περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς θεραπεία [the service paid to the gods] mean. This Eusebius was an impostor, who served the baetyl in its rites — whom he sometimes carried in his hands, and sometimes pretended had moved itself through the air. Ὄνομα δ' ἦν τῷ θεραπεύοντι τὸν βαίτυλον Εὐσέβιος — “the name of him who tended the baetyl was Eusebius.” Julius Pollux, *Onomasticon*, book I, *On Occupations*: Ὄνόματα τῶν θεοὺς θεραπευόντων, τῶν θεῶν θεραπευταί, ἱερεῖς, νεωκόροι — “Names for those who tend the gods: attendants of the gods, priests, temple-wardens.” Damascius further teaches how this Eusebius religiously worshipped the baetyl, and drew oracles from it. And this was one of those ἔμψυχοι [ensouled] stones, which Isidore asserted was moved and, as it were, animated by a demon not of the worst kind: Εἶναι γάρ τινα δαίμονα, τὸν κινοῦντα αὐτόν, οὔτε τῶν βλαβερῶν, οὔτε τῶν ἄγαν προσύλων — “for there was, he said, a certain demon that moved it, neither one of the harmful kind, nor one excessively bound to matter.” For, in the process of time, wherever such an idol was set up, demons at once took possession of it, as we shall show hereafter. Damascius mentions, a little after, other stones dedicated to the Sun, which he calls συνοδιάται [travelling companions].

XII. It must be confessed, moreover, that the ancient idolaters were accustomed to anoint these stones, so that they might no less be called “anointed” than “living.” Clement, *Stromata* VII: Πάντα λίθον, τὸν δὲ λεγόμενον λιπαρὸν προσκυνοῦντες — “worshipping every stone, especially the one called ‘oily’ [i.e., anointed].” And Arnobius, speaking of himself, when he was still a gentile: “If ever I had seen a stone made slippery and anointed with oil-ointment, I would flatter it, as though some present power dwelt within it.”

XIII. The first, so far as I know, to conjecture — most acutely — that these stones came to be called βαιτύλια from the stone which Jacob set up at Bethel, or from Bethel itself (the name by which the place where he set it up was called from that time on), was that admirable man Joseph Scaliger. Others suppose that the whole practice of erecting rough stones for superstitious uses proceeded, ἐκ κακοζηλίας [from a wicked imitation] devised by Satan, from this very act. Jacob's deed is recorded in Genesis 28:18, 19. He took the stone which he had put for his pillow, and set it up מַצֵּבָה, “in titulum,” so the Vulgate translator; στήλην, the Greeks. From נָצַב, “he set up,” comes מַצֵּבָה, “a statue,” as we said above — the same word used in the prohibition of idolatry, Leviticus 26:1; Deuteronomy 7:5, 12:3. He found a rough stone, by chance, in the field; and, having set it up in this fashion, he anointed it with oil, and, first among mortals, solemnly vowed to God a vow conceived in definite words. Among other things, he promises that this stone shall be to him, thereafter, the house of God, Genesis 28:22 — that is, that he would there solemnly perform the worship of God, once he should have at hand something to offer to God, of all which he was then in want. Afterwards, admonished by God, he fulfilled his vow, chapter 35:6, 7.

XIV. But whether Jacob did rightly or otherwise in erecting this pillar, the commentators inquire. Abulensis gives two answers. First, that this was lawful before the giving of the Law, though afterwards forbidden. Second, that Jacob erected this monument in memory of the event, not that he might worship it. In his opinion, very many others acquiesce. It was, without doubt, lawful for pious men, before the Law was given, to erect altars in any place, and to offer sacrifices upon them. But that Jacob erected this stone in memory of the angelic vision granted to him there, and did not

employ it in religious worship, is clear from the fact that, long afterwards, admonished by God concerning his vow, he built an altar in that very place, chapter 35:7. The Latin translator renders תַּיִתּוּל as “titulum” [“a title” or “inscription”], from the customary practice of inscribing titles upon such sacred stones, indicating to which god they were dedicated. So Damascius: Καὶ γράμματα ἀνέδειξεν ἡμῖν τῷ λίθῳ γεγραμμένα χρώματι τῷ καλουμένῳ τιγγαβαρίνῳ κατακεχρωμένα — that is, “He also showed us letters written upon the stone, coloured with the pigment called cinnabar.”

XV. From this act of Jacob’s — likewise commemorating a vision of the true God — there arose afterwards the superstitious custom of erecting pillars, in memory of feigned ἐπιφάνειαι [manifestations] of the gods. Very many writers mention these ἐπιφανίων of the gods. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, book II, chapter 68: Πάνυ δ’ ἄξιον καὶ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν ἱστορεῖν τῆς θεᾶς, ἣν ἐπεδείξατο ταῖς ἀδίκως ἐγκληθείσαις παρθένοις. That is: “It is well worth relating the manifestation of the goddess, which she showed to the maidens unjustly accused.” To which he adds a ἐλέγχειν [refutation] of the Epicureans: Ὅσοι μὲν οὖν τὰς ἀθέους ἀσκοῦσι φιλοσοφίας, εἰ δὲ καὶ φιλοσοφίας αὐτὰς δεῖ καλεῖν, ἀπάσας διασύροντες τὰς ἐπιφανείας τῶν θεῶν. That is: “As many as practise those atheistic philosophies — if indeed they ought to be called philosophies at all — ridiculing all the manifestations of the gods” — mocking the presences of the gods, as Cicero explains that word. Athenaeus too, book XII, from Carystius of Pergamon, relates that Demetrius of Phalerum observed, with religious worship, τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν [the manifestation] of his brother Himeraeus, who had been slain by Antipater, which raised great envy against him among the Athenians. For after he had feigned, it seems, that his dead brother had appeared to him, he paid him religious worship, and

thus introduced a ξένος δαίμων [foreign deity], which was forbidden at Athens, Acts 17:18. Concerning these epiphanies, Cicero, in the second book *On the Nature of the Gods*, chapter 2: “And so, both among our own people and among others, the worship of the gods, and the sanctity of religious observances, grows daily greater and better. And this happens not by chance, nor without cause, but because the gods often declare their presence.” And let us know from what workshop that festival among the Christians proceeded, which they call Epiphany — concerning which a certain priest doubted whether it was masculine or feminine, and fearlessly declared it to be a great saint.

XVI. The Jews affirm that this Bethel-stone was afterwards worshipped by the Phoenicians; and it is exceedingly probable that these rough stones, which they set up to their gods, were called Βαιτύλια from Bethel.

XVII. In this manner, then, the worship of the sun grew: to simple adoration were added pillars and Baetylic stones, to which were joined, first, anointing, then the offering of fruits and flowers, and, finally, sacrifices of animals.

XVIII. It came to pass, indeed, in process of time, that the sun himself came to be worshipped in statues fashioned to the likeness of the human face. Of this kind was the Colossus of Rhodes, seventy cubits in height. Macrobius, too, relates that the Egyptians and Assyrians were accustomed to carry in procession an image of the sun holding a thunderbolt and ears of corn in the left hand, and raising the right, with a whip, after the manner of a charioteer, *Saturnalia*, book I, chapter 23. And Pliny, book XXXIV, chapter 7: “Zenodorus,” he says, “made a Colossus, intended as an image of the emperor Nero, a hundred and ten feet in height; which, the crimes of that prince having been condemned, was dedicated to the worship of the

sun.” This was done by Vespasian, as Suetonius attests, *Vespasian*, chapter 18: “He rewarded the restorer of the Colossus with a notable largess, and a great fee.” The head of the restored statue, having seven rays, was set in Nero’s place; this was afterwards removed by Commodus, who set his own head upon it, as Herodian attests, chapter 48: Τοῦ μεγίστου ἀγάλματος κολοσσιαίου ὃπερ σέβουσι Ῥωμαῖοι, εἰκόνα φέρον Ἡλίου, τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτεμὼν, ἰδρύσατο ἑαυτοῦ. That is: “Having cut off the head of that greatest colossal image, which the Romans worship, bearing the likeness of the Sun, he set up his own in its place.” Scaliger supplies the defective passage with καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀντιτιθεῖς [“and setting up his own instead”]. This, indeed, was not done until after dead men had been admitted into the number of the gods, and some Apollo or other had been substituted for the sun.

XIX. As, therefore, Jeroboam set up the golden calves, lest the people, left without any visible sign of the divine presence, should return to the true worship of God at Jerusalem — not without the greatest damage, perhaps, and ruin, to his own kingdom — so Satan, taking thought for his own kingdom, which he had obtained in the world by so many various arts and manifold deceit — lest the idolaters, set in dangers and anxious for help, hearkening to the very voice of nature crying out to the Lord of nature, should begin ζητεῖν τὸν Κύριον, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὔροιεν, καίτοιγε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα,¹ as the apostle speaks — that is, “to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” — and so withdraw themselves from his dominion, superadded, upon that former error, this new one, by which, raised up into a false hope, they might not be able to be removed from their wicked prejudice.

XX. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*, sets forth this progress of superstition most excellently: “The Scythians, in ancient times, worshipped a scimitar; the Arabians, a stone; the Persians, a river; and, among other peoples, those who were yet more ancient set up marked pieces of wood, and placed pillars made of stones, which were also called ξόανα, because they were scraped and polished out of the material. In Icarus, certainly, the image of Diana was unworked wood; and that of Cithaeronian Juno, at Thespiae, a hewn trunk; and that of Samian Juno (as Aethlius says) was, at first, a plank, but afterwards, when Procles was Archon, was fashioned into the form of a statue. But after statues began to be formed, they were called βρέτη, from βροτός, because they resembled men. And at Rome, in ancient times, Varro the writer says, the statue of Mars was a spear, since craftsmen had not yet arrived at this handsome, but wicked, art. But after the art flourished, error increased. It is therefore now clear that they made, out of stones and wood, images resembling men.” So he; and thereafter he recounts, in order, who were the first, in various places, to fashion such images.

XXI. And this was the first success and εὐτυχία [good fortune] of Satan’s war against the human race, deprived of divine revelations, and left to itself. This was the wholesale origin of the defection from the foundation of natural theology. Here the prince of darkness laid the foundations of that dominion, which he has exercised, far and wide, over the greater part of mankind, through an innumerable succession of years.

1. Claude corrected a mistake in the Greek transcription on Acts 17:27.

CHAPTER IX. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY — CHAPTER VII.

The further progress of idolatry — Πολυθεϊσμός [Polytheism] ending in ἄντιθεϊσμῶ [anti-theism] — what Hellenism is — its beginnings uncertain, obscure — the opinion of the author of the book called the Wisdom of Solomon — gods and goddesses made by flattery — the mother of Demetrius worshipped by Adimantus, and Lamia, the courtesan of Poliorcetes, by the Athenians and Thebans — Demetrius's jibe against the Athenians — the opinion of Lactantius, and of Eusebius — the manner of Ἀποθέωσις [apotheosis] — the Jews feign that Terah, the father of Abraham, was the first ἁγαλματοποιόν [image-maker] — the origin of the fable — the agreement of the ancient Christians on this point — the testimony of Epiphanius; of Suidas; of John of Antioch — Haran died before his father — this was not, as Epiphanius supposed, the first such case since the founding of the world — Terah a holy man — Pindar ascribes the invention of αὐτόματα [self-moving things] to the Rhodians; Isidore, to Prometheus; most, to Daedalus — why he is said to have made

ἄγάλματα αὐτοκίνητα [self-moving images] — the statue of Memnon in Philostratus — several other matters.

I. Not yet had Satan brought to its final issue that impious scheming against God and men which, from the success related above, was seized with a fiercer and loftier lust to occupy God's throne. Under the pretext of Hellenism — that is, of the worship of dead men — he obtains his wish. By that superstition, he sets himself up, without any need of circuitous devices, as the very object of religious worship to wretched mankind. And thus πολυθεϊσμός [polytheism] ends in ἀντιθεϊσμῷ [anti-theism]. But it was not until many years, perhaps whole ages, had run their course, that this pinnacle of impiety and spiritual wickedness was reached. For mankind did not at once, from its first defection, procure for itself θεοὺς ἀνθρωποφυέας [gods of human origin]. It was in the worship of these that Hellenism consisted. Wearied of the heavenly bodies, which, moved by an inviolable law, could not satisfy the vanity and fluctuation of the human mind, men chose for themselves gods like unto themselves — accommodating, indulgent — whose ways they might imitate, and by whom they might obtain honours. Although, therefore, by “Hellenism” may rightly be understood a certain συλλογή [gathering together] and confusion of false religions in the worship of heaven, the sun, and the other heavenly bodies, of demons, of dead men, of images, and of fictitious phantoms — the whole idol-madness, in short, of the ancients — yet here we shall consider it separately from Sabaism, or the superstitious worship of the heavenly bodies, insofar as it introduced the worship of dead men and of images fashioned to the likeness of the human countenance.

II. That the origins of this superstition are doubtful, indeed most uncertain, all confess. Having related the opinions of others — which either

the standing of their authors, or their own verisimilitude, has brought into repute — we shall add some things which still seem wanting for drawing truth up out of the well.

III. Well known is the opinion of the author of the book called the Wisdom of Solomon, chapter 14, verses 13–20: Οὐτε γὰρ, ... ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, οὔτε εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἔσται. Κενοδοξία γὰρ ἀνθρώπων εἰσῆλθεν εἰς κόσμον, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο σύντομον αὐτῶν τέλος ἐπενοήθη. Ἀώρῳ γὰρ πένθει τρυχόμενος πατήρ, τοῦ ταχέως ἀφαιρεθέντος τέκνου εἰκόνα ποιήσας, τὸν τότε νεκρὸν ἄνθρωπον, νῦν ὡς θεὸν ἐτίμησε, καὶ παρέδωκε τοῖς ὑποχειρίοις μυστήρια, καὶ τελετάς. Εἴτα ἐν χρόνῳ κρατυνθὲν τὸ ἀσεβὲς ἔθος, ὡς νόμος ἐφυλάχθη, καὶ τυράννων ἐπιταγαῖς ἐθρησκεύετο τὰ γλυπτά. [For neither were they from the beginning, neither shall they be for ever. For by the vanity of men they entered into the world, and therefore shall they come shortly to an end. For a father afflicted with untimely mourning, when he had made an image of his child soon taken away, now honoured him as a god who was then a dead man, and delivered to those that were under him mysteries and rites. Then, in process of time, the ungodly custom, grown strong, was kept as a law, and graven images were worshipped by the commandments of tyrants.]

To which opinion he adds much more. And indeed the events that followed lend credence to it. Flattery made gods and goddesses without number. Let one or two examples be adduced: Τῶν δὲ Δημητρίου τοῦ βασιλέως κολάκων οἱ περὶ Ἀδείμαντον τὸν Λαμψακηνὸν νεῶν κατασκευασάμενοι Θρύῳ ὠνόμασαν Φίλας Ἀφροδίτης, καὶ τὸν τόπον Φιλαῖον ἐκάλεσαν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Δημητρίου μητρὸς Φίλας, ὡς φησι Διονύσιος ὁ τοῦ Τρύφωνος. [Of the flatterers of King Demetrius, those about Adimantus of Lampsacus, having built a temple at Thyreum, named it

the temple of Venus Philae, and called the place Philaeum, after Phila, the mother of Demetrius, as Dionysius, son of Tryphon, relates.] These are the words of Athenaeus, book VI: “From the flatterers of King Demetrius, Adimantus of Lampsacus built a temple, and set up statues in Thyreum, under the title of Venus Phila, and called the place Philaea, after Phila, the mother of Demetrius.” Likewise, the historian Demochares, cousin of Demosthenes, wrote that the whole people of the Athenians consecrated temples to Lamia, the courtesan of Demetrius Poliorcetes, and worshipped her with divine honours — as did, similarly, the Thebans — even while Demetrius himself detested the foul flattery, and declared openly that “among the dead there would never be found an Athenian citizen of great and lofty spirit.”

IV. There are, accordingly, those who suppose that images were first set up for the dead out of human affection, lest they be buried in oblivion along with the common herd, and that from this, in process of time, some seized the occasion for superstition in worshipping them; and there are others who think that men first reckoned the dead among the gods, and only afterwards set up images for them. Lactantius traces the beginning of setting up images, and of worshipping dead men with divine honours, to the foolish zeal of nations for their dead kings — so that to set up an image for someone, and to number him among the gods, appear to be the same thing. Eusebius, in the first book of his *Chronicle*, relates matters not unlike:

Ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰάφεθ ἐγενήθη Σερούχ (quod parórama superiùs notavimus) ὅστις πρῶτος ἦρξατο τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ, καὶ τοῦ δόγματος τῆς εἰδωλολατρείας, αὐτὸς γὰρ καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ τοὺς πάλαι γενομένους ἢ πολεμιστάς, ἢ ἡγεμόνας, καὶ τι πράζοντας ἀνδρείας ἢ ἀρετῆς ἄξιον ἐν τῷ βίῳ τοῦ μνημονεύεσθαι, καὶ ὥς ὄντας αὐτῶν προπάτορας ἀνδριᾶσι

στηλῶν ἐτίμησαν (nos stelas idololatricas erectas fuisse, longe antequam cuiquam in mentem venerat, homines mortuos divinis honoribus prosequi, superiùs docuimus), καὶ ὡς θεοὺς προσεκύνουν αὐτούς, καὶ ἐθυσίαζον. Οἱ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἄνθρωποι ἀγνοοῦντες τὴν τῶν προγόνων γνώμην, ὅτι ὡς προπάτορας καὶ ἀγαθῶν εὐρετὰς ἐτίμησαν μνήμας μόναις, ὡς θεοὺς ἐπουρανίους ἐτίμων.¹ [From the tribe of Japheth was born Serug (which slip we noted above), who first began Hellenism, and the doctrine of idolatry; for he, and those with him, honoured with statues on pillars those who had of old been warriors, or leaders, and had done anything in their lifetime worthy of valour or virtue to be remembered, regarding them as their forefathers (we showed above that idolatrous stelae had been erected long before it had occurred to anyone to pursue dead men with divine honours), and worshipped them as gods, and sacrificed to them. But the men who came after, being ignorant of the intention of their ancestors — that they had honoured them merely by memorials, as forefathers and discoverers of good things — worshipped them as gods of heaven.]

What he adds there, concerning the manner and form of ἀποθεώσεως [of apotheosis], deserves the closest attention of those acquainted with the ecclesiastical *diptycha* [two-leaf memorial tablets listing names for liturgical commemoration], and with the corrupt superstition that flowed from them: Ἦν δέ ... τὸ τῆς ἀποθεώσεως σχῆμα τοιοῦτον. Ἐν ταῖς ἱερατικαῖς αὐτῶν βίβλοις ἐτάσσοντο τὰ ὀνόματα αὐτῶν μετὰ τελευτῆν· καὶ κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν καιρὸν ἑορτὴν αὐτῷ ἐπετέλουν, λέγοντες τὰς αὐτῶν ψυχὰς εἰς τὰς τῶν μακάρων νήσους ἰέναι, καὶ μηκέτι κρίνεσθαι ἢ καίεσθαι πυρί. That is: having inserted the names of the dead into their sacred books, they instituted festal days in their memory, namely anniversaries, believing

their souls to have been received into the seats of the blessed, and not to be tormented by purgatorial fire.

V. The Jews feign that Terah, the father of Abraham, was the first maker of images and statues. By that fable they serve a history no less fabulous — that of Abraham cast into the fire for not worshipping the image of Nimrod. But it is remarkable with what consensus of the ancients this stale fiction is confirmed. Epiphanius:

Ναχώρ δὲ γεννᾷ τὸν Θάρρα· ἐντεῦθεν γέγονεν ἀνδριαντοπλασία ἀπὸ πηλουργίας καὶ κεραμικῆς ἐπιστήμης διὰ τῆς τοῦ Θάρρα τούτου τέχνης. — “Thara was begotten of Nachor; from that time images of clay and pottery-work were invented, Thara being the craftsman.” Similarly, Suidas: Θάρρα ἦν ἀγαλματοποιός, ἀπὸ διαφόρων ὑλῶν εἰκόνας ἐργαζόμενος, καὶ λέγων τούτους εἶναι θεοὺς καὶ ὀφείλειν προσκυνεῖσθαι, ὥς αἰτίους ἀγαθῶν. — “Terah was a fashioner of statues, making images out of diverse materials, and affirming these to be gods and worthy of worship, as authors of blessings.” And John Malalas of Antioch, book II: Ἦν γὰρ Θάρρα ἀγαλματοποιὸς πλαστουργῶν, ἀπὸ λίθων καὶ ξύλων θεοὺς ποιῶν, καὶ πιπράσκων, καὶ πλάνην ἀγαλμάτων καὶ εἰδωλολατρείας εἰσήγε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις διὰ ἀπεικονισμάτων τῶν προγόνων, αὐτῶν μάλιστα τῶν εὐρηκότων τὰ γράμματα καὶ τὰς τέχνας. — “Terah was a statuary, who fashioned gods out of stones and wood, and offered them for sale. He it was who entangled men in the superstitions of image-worship and idolatrous cult, by the fabrication of images in memory of their forefathers, especially of those who had been the inventors of letters and of the arts.”

VI. That Terah’s son Haran died before him, Scripture teaches us. That this then happened for the first time since the founding of the world, as a punishment upon the impious father, Epiphanius notes: Οὐδεὶς ... πώποτε

τῶν προτέρων ἀνθρώπων πρὸ πατρὸς υἱὸς ἔτελεύτα, ἀλλὰ πατέρες πρὸ παίδων τελευτῶντες τοὺς υἱοὺς διαδόχους κατελίμπανον — *Against Heresies*, book I, chapter 1: “Nor had any son among former men ever yet perished before his father, but fathers, departing this life before their children, left their sons behind as heirs.” He compares it to the case of Abel, answering that he was cut off by a violent death. But the learned man is manifestly deceived; for not only did Lamech before the Flood die some years before his own father, but the very same thing befell Peleg, Terah’s own great-great-grandfather, who died about two hundred years before the death of his father Eber. But this was the common opinion of the ancients. For my own part, I have no doubt that grave injury is done to the memory of a pious and holy man — who had left his own country with the very intention of going to Canaan (having, without doubt, χρηματισθείς [received a divine oracle], Genesis 11:31) — by these fables. For the accusation lacks all colour of truth, and is plainly a Jewish fiction to ascribe to the Rhodians some peculiar craft of ἀγαλματοουργία [image-making].

Pindar seems to hold this view, *Olympian* VII, lines 91–98:

Αὐτὰ δὲ σφισιν ὤπασε τέχναν
Πᾶσαν ἐπιχθονίων
Γλαυκῶπις ἀριστοπόνοις χερσὶ κρατεῖν·
Ἔργα δὲ ζωοῖσιν ἐρπόντεσσι θ’ ὁμοῖα κέλευθοιΦέρον.
Ἦν δὲ κλέος βαθύ.

— “And grey-eyed Minerva herself gave them such craft that they surpassed all mortals in the labour of their hands; and their works resembled, in their motion, animals and reptiles; and their glory was great.” The poet implies that the Rhodians were such craftsmen as could express living images of animals and reptiles, so lifelike that they seemed to move

along the road and in their course. Isidore, in the eighth book of the *Origins*, affirms that Prometheus first fashioned images of men out of clay, and that from him arose the art of erecting images and statues, and that for this reason the poets feigned that men were made by him.

VII. More celebrated still is the opinion of those who ascribe this craft to Daedalus. Hence the ancients called all statues Δαίδαλα [Daedala]. Others write that he invented statues αὐτοκίνητα καὶ αὐτόματα [self-moving and automatic]. These too were called, proverbially, τὰ Δαιδάλου ποιήματα [the works of Daedalus]. Most of the ancients held this opinion — as Plato, in the *Meno*: ΣΩ. Ὅτι ... τοῖς Δαιδάλου ἀγάλμασιν οὐ προσέσχηκας τὸν νοῦν· ἴσως δὲ οὐδ' ἔστι παρ' ὑμῖν. MEN. Πρὸς τί δὲ δὴ τοῦτο λέγεις; ΣΩ. Ὅτι καὶ ταῦτα, ἐὰν μὲν μὴ δεδεμένα ᾖ, ἀποδιδράσκει καὶ δραπετεύει. [Socrates: Because you have not paid attention to the statues of Daedalus — perhaps indeed there are none among you. Meno: What do you mean by this? Socrates: Because these too, unless they be bound fast, run away and make their escape.] Hence the statue of Hercules among the Tyrians, and of Bacchus among the Chians, were fastened with chains in their seats, because believed to be αὐτοκίνητα. Aristotle too mentions this, *Politics*, book I: Εἰ γάρ ... ἡδύνατο ἕκαστον τῶν ὀργάνων κελευσθὲν ἢ προαισθανόμενον ἀποτελεῖν τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔργον, ὥσπερ τὰ Δαιδάλου φασίν. — “If it were possible for each instrument, either commanded or anticipating, to perform its own work, as they say Daedalus’s statues do.”] And they say he did this by pouring quicksilver into the statues — as the same Aristotle shows, *On the Soul*, book I; a certain Philip is quoted as saying: Τὸν Δαίδαλον κινουμένην ποιῆσαι τὴν ξυλίνην Ἀφροδίτην ἐγγέοντα ἄργυρον χυτόν. [That Daedalus made the wooden Venus move by pouring in molten silver.]

VIII. The occasion of the fable was, without doubt, that Daedalus was the first among the Greeks to fashion images to the likeness of the human face and form, with the feet in particular distinctly rendered, and one set forward beyond the line of the other, as though prepared for walking. So Tzetzes resolves the riddle:

Τοὺς ἀνδριάντας πρότερον πρὸ χρόνων τοῦ Δαιδάλου
Ἐδημιούργουν ἄχειρας, ἄποδας, ἀομμάτους·
Πρῶτος δ' ὁ Δαίδαλος αὐτὸς διεῖλε χεῖρας, πόδας,
Δακτύλους διηρμόσατο, καὶ βλέφαρα καὶ τ' ἄλλα·
Ὅθεν ὁ μῦθος πέπτωκε κινεῖσθαι τὰ Δαιδάλεια.

[Statues, in the years before Daedalus, men used to fashion without hands, without feet, without eyes; but Daedalus was the first himself to divide the hands, the feet, to fit together the fingers, and the eyelids, and the rest — whence arose the fable that the works of Daedalus could move.]

So it is: the first statues were rough stones (λίθοι ἀργοί), without hands, feet, or eyes; but when Daedalus had set upon them all the marks pertaining to the outward form of man, the fable grew up that he had made statues αὐτοκίνητα. Diodorus Siculus, Palaephatus, and others relate similar things.

IX. Indeed Plato shows plainly enough that the ἀγάλματα fashioned by Daedalus were quite rude — as all things at their beginnings are imperfect, being invented in an imperfect state. So he says, *Hippias Major*, near the beginning: Εἰ ἄρα ... νῦν, ὦ Ἱππία, ὁ Βίας ἀναβιώη, γέλωτ' ἂν ὄφλοι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸν Δαίδαλὸν φασιν οἱ ἀνδριαντοποιοί, νῦν εἰ γενόμενος τοιαῦτ' ἐργάζοιτο οἷα ἦν ἀφ' ὧν τοῦνομ' ἔσχε, καταγέλαστον ἂν εἶναι. [If now, O Hippias, Bias should come to life again, he would provoke laughter among you — just as the statuary say of Daedalus, that if he, coming to

life now, should produce such works as those from which he got his name and fame, it would be ridiculous.]

X. It was, however, a great achievement to erect statues in the human form, with the hands extended and the feet distinct — since, after columns, stelae, rough stones, and βαιτύλια, dedicated to the sun, the moon, and the stars, the oldest statues of this kind appear to have been such as are exhibited on the monuments of the Egyptians — without hands, or with the hands glued to the sides, the feet joined, or rather terminating in a base. Hence Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, book VI, chapter 3, attributing something peculiar to the statue of Memnon, says: Λίθου δὲ εἶναι μέλανος· συμβεβηκέναι δὲ τὰ πόδε ἄμφω κατὰ τὴν ἀγαλματοποιίαν τὴν ἐπὶ Δαιδάλου. Which words the translator renders thus: “The statue is made of black stone, and, touching the ground with both feet joined, is fashioned according to Daedalus’s statuary art.” Of this interpretation, Scaliger pronounces it οὐδὲν ὀυγιές [nothing sound], *Animadversions on Eusebius*, to number 737; he himself renders it “having the feet joined together.” Similarly, he interprets the words of Apollodorus concerning the Palladium: Ἦν δὲ τῷ μεγέθει τρίπηχυ, τοῖς δὲ ποσὶ συμβεβηκός [It was, in size, three cubits, and had the feet joined together] according to some; “with feet so composed as to seem to walk,” according to others. From the force of the word, or its use in this subject, nothing can be certainly gathered. But if the statue of Memnon, with feet joined — that is, really without any distinct rendering of the feet at all, as commonly made among the Egyptians, as the images called *mummies* show — had been fashioned in that manner, there would be nothing peculiar in it, nor anything memorable on that score. Since, moreover, it was of the kind made ἐπὶ Δαιδάλῳ [after Daedalus], not πρὸ Δαιδάλου [before Daedalus], it seems to me that Philostratus indicates

clearly enough that it differed from the other Egyptian statues in this, that it was fashioned with the feet disjoined, after the manner of Daedalus.

XI. These, then, are very nearly all the matters that occur among the ancients concerning the origin of Hellenism and of ἀγαλματοποιία [image-making]. To these many more of the same kind might be added, were it our purpose to relate everything, rather than what suffices. What seems to us to come nearest the truth, or at least most closely to resemble it, we shall state in what next follows.

1. We decided to retain the Latin and the Greek, then provide a translation of both afterward for ease of reading. Normally, the Latin is directly translated.

CHAPTER X. OR, ON THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY — CHAPTER VIII.

The gods were sprung from men, all of them Eastern — the restorers of mankind after the Flood — the leaders of the Babylonian bands — Greece the workshop of the gods — for them, the East was the upper world; the West, the lower — Eastern things sacred to the gods; Western, to demons — the placing of idols in temples — the Capitoline Jupiter — the testimony of Porphyry — the fame of things done in the East — the deeds of the gods — nectar, the Babylonian wine — the first gods of the idolaters, themselves the first apostates from the true God — some memory of the true God's names retained after the confusion of tongues — this memory ascribed to idols — on the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton — the fables of Sanchuniathon — אֲדֹנַי [Adonai]; ἱερόν [Hieron]; אֲדָמָה [Adamah]; יְהוָה [Yah]; תְּהוֹ and בְּהוֹ [Tohu and Bohu]; Thoth, Theoth, Θεός [Theos], Bau; עֶרֶב [Ereb], Ἐρεβος [Erebos]; אֶרֶץ [Erets], Earth, etc.

I. That all those who were first reckoned among the number of the gods lived in the East can be demonstrated by sure arguments. From that quarter of the world, immediately after the confusion of tongues, the leaders of

tribes and families led out colonies into every part of the earth. These, in process of time, became אֲנָשֵׁי הַשֵּׁם [men of renown], “men celebrated in fame.” Whithersoever, moreover, they directed their journey, no one can doubt that the new flocks retained some report, however slight and obscure, of their great forefathers — namely, of Noah, Shem, Ham, and the rest. Recollecting these, on the one hand, as the founders of their own stock, and, on the other, as the fortunate ὀδηγούς [guides] of their wanderings — since they were by now given over wholly to every kind of superstition, and the traditions concerning the condition and deeds of these men had gradually, as commonly happens, been augmented — they imagined for themselves that these forefathers had possessed something θεῖον [divine] beyond the common lot of mankind. But since they knew that these men had spent their lives on earth, and in company with all others, they judged it fitting to suppose either that they had descended from heaven to accomplish outstanding deeds among men, or that, on account of the merits of their exploits, they had after death been in some manner translated to the heavens.

II. The Greeks were the chief fabricators of gods — to such a degree that Greece is not unfitly called the birthplace and workshop of the gods, and that superstition which consists in their worship is precisely that Hellenism with which we are here dealing. For them, the East was the upper world; the West, and whatever lay toward the northern regions of the world, they called the lower world. Those who crossed over into those parts of the earth were reckoned to have sailed to the lower world, or to have passed thither by whatever means — for no other reason than that they had received all their gods from the East. The river Lethe is in Gallaecia in Spain; Avernus in Italy; the Cimmerians, the Scythians by the Maeotic marsh, afterwards

called Huns; and certain others in Italy itself. Hence in religious worship θεοῖς τὰ ἀνατολικά, δαίμοσι δὲ τὰ δυτικά [the eastern things to the gods, the western to the demons] — as Porphyry attests, in his work *On the Cave of the Nymphs* in Homer's Ithaca. And so, although, as we showed above, the ancient temples dedicated to the sun had their sacred doors facing south, yet the sacred places set up for these idols always had their entrances toward the east, and the images faced toward the east, which those entering worshipped while themselves looking toward the west. The sole exception was the Capitoline Jupiter, who from ancient times had stood with his face turned toward the west, until, by the advice of the haruspices, he was turned to face the east — Cicero being consul, as he himself attests in his oration against Catiline, addressed to the Quirites. The same fact Porphyry teaches us: Ὡς ἂν σχεδόν ... πάντων τῶν ἱερῶν τὰ μὲν ἀγάλματα καὶ τὰς εἰσόδους ἔχόντων πρὸς ἀνατολὰς τετραμμένας· τῶν δὲ εἰσιόντων πρὸς δύσιν ἀφορώντων, ὅταν ἀντιπρόσωποι τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἔστῶτες τοῖς θεοῖς τιμὰς καὶ θεραπείας προσάγωσι. — “Nearly all temples have their statues and entrances facing the sunrise; those who enter look toward the sunset, where, standing with their faces turned toward the statues, they pay honour and worship to the gods.” To oppose this superstition, it was the custom of certain of the ancient Christians, on entering churches facing the east, to bow themselves in no less a degree toward the west, and, in some manner, to render an act of worship there also.

III. The first gods of the nations, then, sprung from men — whom, after the heavenly bodies had for some centuries been worshipped, they numbered among the gods — were the leaders of families and tribes, either such as had been famous in the East, or such as had served as leaders to peoples seeking new dwelling-places from the East. The fame of these,

mixed with fables, gradually passed into belief; and memory passed into worship. And so, whatever they had received, by report or by any tradition whatsoever, concerning the life, exploits, character, and wars of those great men — true and false, but for the most part false mingled with true — was related, as though it had fallen down from heaven, as the deeds and acts of divine beings. Nectar itself, the drink of the gods, was Babylonian wine. Χαίρειας ἐν Βαβυλῶνι οἶνον φησὶ γίνεσθαι τὸν καλούμενον νέκταρ — so Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, book I: “Chaereas relates that there is a wine in Babylon which the natives call nectar.” Hence nectar is πόμα θεῖον [a divine drink], which Suidas foolishly supposes to be called, as it were, νέοκταρ [new-making], διὰ τὸ νέους ποιοῦν τοὺς πίνοντας [because it makes those who drink it young]. And the author of the *Etymologicum*: Νέκταρ τὸ τῶν θεῶν πόμα οἶονεὶ τὸ συνέχον τοὺς πίνοντας αὐτὸ ἐν νεότητι. [Nectar, the drink of the gods, as it were that which keeps those who drink it in youth.] Others report other Greek origins for the word, all of them absurd, since it came into Greece from the East along with the gods themselves. Whence Strabo wisely warns that Greek etymologies are not to be sought in the names of barbarian peoples. That Noah was Saturn, Janus, and Bacchus; Ham, Jupiter Ammon; Japheth, Iapetus, and Neptune; Shem, Pluto, and Dis — this has long since been shown by others. There is no need to trace here the transformation of these and other figures out of the most common fables. As for those who afterwards, in Greece itself, increased the number of the gods, their history is more recent, and better known, than that I need dwell upon it.

IV. In these obscure traditions, then, and in the slight and corrupted fame of celebrated men — who either had first restored the human race after the Flood, or had led the Babylonian bands into the various regions of the earth

— Hellenism laid its foundations. These men the idolaters first exalted to the skies with admiration and praise, and afterward with superstitious worship — since most of them had stood forth as the authors and ringleaders of the most shameful defection from the true God. Hence, amid all that confusion which we shall gradually show to have crept into the superstition of the nations, many things are found in which almost all conspired unanimously. For fame handed down to posterity many reports concerning these great founders of various stocks. And so, after superstitious men had, by their vows and by a certain vain opinion, translated their great forefathers to heaven, they set up for them images fashioned to the form of man — partly lest their memory and praises should fall out of men’s minds, partly that they might set them, as it were, present before the senses (whereas, in worshipping the heavenly bodies, they had been content with pillars and rough stones). And this worship of images became, for the reasons stated above, well-nigh universal.

V. Furthermore: after the confusion of tongues, the builders of the tower, scattered hither and thither, retained in memory, in whatever fashion, some names of the true God, intending to hand them down to their sons and grandsons. These, however, in process of time, being ignorant of what or whom those great and venerable names referred to, imposed them all upon those new gods which they had adopted for themselves. Thus Sanchuniathon, among the forefathers of the Phoenicians who were afterward numbered among the gods, mentions Ἐλιοῦν, or Ὑψιστον [Elioun, or Hypsistos — “the Most High”], that is, עֶלְיֹן [Elyon]; and writes that he begot heaven and earth; and Ἴλος [Ilos], who is none other than אֱל [El]. יְהוָה [Yahweh] was the name of Jove, and Jovis, and Jupiter; this name Sanchuniathon renders as Ἰεῦω [Ieuo], relating that he had learned much

παρὰ Ἱερομβάλου τοῦ ἱερέως θεοῦ τοῦ Ἰεῡώ [from Hierombalus, priest of the god Ieuo]. Diodorus, indeed, in book I, says that the God to whom Moses ascribed his laws was called Ἰάω [Iao]; with which agrees an oracle in Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, book I:

Φράζεο τὸν πάντων ὕπατον θεὸν ἔμμεν Ἰάω.

[Know that Iao is the highest god of all.]

By which Satan attempts to ascribe an incommunicable name to other idols. Eusebius, in the *Demonstratio Evangelica*, book IV, the last chapter: Ἰωσὺς δὲ ἐστὶν Ἰάω σωτηρία, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ θεοῦ σωτήριον. [Joshua, moreover, is Iao-salvation, that is, the salvation of God.] Whence it is likely that in that other passage Eusebius wrote, from Sanchuniathon, Ἰάω, not Ἰεῡώ. Ἰάου occurs in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, book V — perhaps also corruptly for Ἰάω; and Ἰαωῖα in Origen, but doubtless corruptly: Ἀπὸ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν γραφῶν ... τὸν Ἰαωῖα παρ' Ἑβραίοις ὀνομαζόμενον, καὶ τὸν Σαβαώθ, καὶ τὸν Ἀδωναῖον, καὶ τὸν Ἐλωαῖον· τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν ληφθέντα ὀνόματα ἐπώνυμά ἐστι τοῦ καὶ ἐνὸς Θεοῦ· ὅπερ μὴ συνιέντες οἱ ἐχθροὶ Θεῶ, ὥς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὁμολογοῦσιν, ὡήθησαν ἄλλον μὲν εἶναι τὸν Ἰάω, ἕτερον δὲ τὸν Σαβαώθ. [From the Hebrew scriptures, the one called among the Hebrews Iaoia, and Sabaoth, and Adonaios, and Eloaios; but the names taken from the scriptures are all names of one and the same God — which, not understanding, the enemies of God, as they themselves confess, supposed Iao to be one being, and Sabaoth another.] — *Against Celsus*, book VI. He speaks of heretics, who had drawn their monstrous fictions from the puddles of paganism. For the rest, whether they learned these names — being epithets of the one true God — from the Scriptures, or from ancient tradition, comes to the same thing. Out of each single name a new deity is constructed. As for “Ἰαωῖα,” it is a corrupt reading for “Ἰάω.”

Reynolds, in his work *On Idolatry*, book II, chapter 3, was the first to suspect this corruption; Sandford, in the first book of his treatise *On the Descent of Christ into Hell*, restored the true reading; after him Grotius, on Matthew 22, and others.

VI. And hence it appears — a point worth noting in passing — that the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton was once known. The Jews, today and for many centuries past, are ignorant of it, and have so utterly forgotten the name of their own God that they are cast off by him to such a degree that they cannot even call upon his name. This was what he first disclosed to them when he adopted the whole nation as his peculiar people and church, Exodus 3. For although the name יהוה [Yahweh] was known to all the faithful from the founding of the world, yet God had made no use of it in any confirmation of his covenant, in any promise, but had used only the name אל שדי [El Shaddai]. After, therefore, that nation ceased to be God's people and church, all memory of that name of God — which he had graciously disclosed in that covenant-pact by which he adopted them as his peculiar people — they either wilfully cast away, or were punished with oblivion of it.

VII. Further: עליון [Elyon], האל [ha-El], אל [El] — the mighty God, the Most High — were turned into Ἥλιον [Helios — the Sun]. אדני [Adonai] became Adonis; Εὐάν and Εὐίος [Evan and Evius] derived their origin from אהיה [Ehyeh]; Ἐλελεῖ from הלללה [Halleluyah]. That cry, says Plutarch in his *Theseus*, σπεύδοντες ἀναφωνεῖν καὶ παιωνίζοντες εἰώθασιν [they are wont to shout out in haste and in triumphant exultation]. ἱερόν [sacred], a word applied to all things sacred, is said by some to be derived from ἱσις [Isis] — meaning nothing at all in Greek — and is nothing other than יה [Yah]. From אדמה [Adamah, “earth” or “ground”] came Ἅιδης [Hades] —

since, after God had said to Adam, “thou shalt return אֶל-הָאָדָמָה [el ha-adamah, “to the ground”],” that is, εἰς Ἅιδην [to Hades]. Jupiter Sabazius comes from Jehovah Sabaoth. I should weary the reader were I to enumerate everything of this kind that occurs.

VIII. Sanchuniathon feigns that the names of the chief things recorded in the creation of the world were the appellations of men, wise men, and kings, and from this he spins out long fables. Hesiod likewise wove his *Theogony* from no other source. From אֶרֶץ comes “Earth,” the greatest goddess among the English and the other peoples of Germany, as Tacitus attests, *Germania*, chapter 40: “In common, he says, they worship Erthum, that is, Mother Earth.” תְּהוּ and בְּהוּ [tohu and bohu] are Thoth and Theoth (whence also Θεός [God]), and Bau. עֶרֶב [Ereb, “evening”] is Ἐρεβος [Erebus]; and from that order of words found in Genesis 1, “and there was evening, and there was morning, one day” — אָחֳרָי וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד — many peoples came to reckon night before day. Of the Germans, Tacitus says: “They do not count the number of days, but of nights; thus, they reckon, thus they appoint, so that night appears to lead the day.” And indeed, it does lead it, for light comes out of darkness. The same custom continues among the English to this day: for a week we say “sennight” — that is, “seven nights” — and “fortnight,” that is, “fourteen nights,” for two weeks. And the ancient Britons too, whom we now call the Welsh, for whom a week is “Wythnos,” that is, eight nights, and two weeks “Pythefnos,” that is, fifteen nights — which is likewise a monument of Celtic origin. The same custom obtained among the ancient Gauls, flowing from the same fount of tradition, and not, as Caesar supposed, because they thought themselves sprung from Father Dis. Such, then, were the

beginnings of Hellenism, or of that confused superstition which overran well-nigh the whole world.

CHAPTER XI. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY — CHAPTER IX.

*B*ritish idolatry — the most ancient inhabitants of the island unknown; and whence Britain is so called — the origins of peoples and nations obscure — the cause of that obscurity — how great the ignorance in tracing them — the ignorance and malice of the Greeks and Latins — the ancients overwhelmed Jewish antiquities with lies — hence a shaky credit attaches to the rest — particular causes of the ignorance of British origins — the island's situation — the ambition and cunning of the learned in concealing past matters — the islands of Europe occupied by the posterity of Japheth, Genesis 10:5 — from the first settlement to Caesar's arrival on this island, all is wrapped in darkness — the testimony of Caesar — the interior of the island unknown to the Gauls — he holds the interior inhabitants to be αὐτόχθονες [natives of the soil] — Tacitus, a medley of very many peoples; both mistaken — the attempts of Camden and Boxborn to prove that the Britons and Gauls used the same tongue, and were the same people — Gomer, the eldest son of Japheth — from him the Cimbri — the Britons call themselves Komeroi or Cymry — what “Gomer” or “Cimbri” signifies —

the British Cimbri — another etymology of the name Cymro — Camber, son of Brutus — hence “Cambria” — whence “Britannia” is derived — the derivations of various authors rejected — πρυτανεία [prytany] — Brytona, a Cretan nymph — Britannia in Gaul — “Bridanium” — “Prid Cain” — most think it so called from Brutus the Trojan — this opinion attacked by Camden — Camden’s conjecture — “Brith,” “Tania” — learned men who accept it — arguments against it — Bochart’s conjecture the most probable — this island known to the Tyrians — ברת-אנך “barat anac,” called “the field of tin” — a defence of the conjecture against Hornius — British idolatry — the priests of the British rites, very well known — Origen writes that the Druids worshipped one God — that being the Sun — Tacitus, the same as the Gauls — the custom of pouring out prayers with hands spread toward heaven — Andraste, and Andate, Astarte, the Moon — Boadicea’s vow to her — the Gauls in Caesar; received from the Greeks of Massilia — unknown to the Britons — the most ancient Gauls lacked images — their gods, Teutates, Hesus, and Taranis — Teutates from Diw Taith, guide of the way — the Sun, its ... — Hesus, and “Haud” — Taranis, hence “Taran,” thunder, among the Welsh; “Thunder,” “Donder,” “Thursday” — the images of these gods — the Druids their priests — the spread of their superstition into Gaul and Germany — its rise in Britain — whence the Druids are named — Druis, king of the Celts — succeeded by Bardus — “Drw,” a magician — “Dru” and “Trou,” true, faithful — the true etymology, ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀρυός [from the oak] — “Drw” in British, an oak — the groves of oaks the seat of the superstition — the same men called Saronidae for the same reason — who the Bards were — their office — their memory among the Cambro-Britons, and name — Strabo noted — the peculiar dress of the Druids: white vestments in their rites — their academies and studies

— the concourse of young men to their teaching — its methods, privileges, and authority — the manner of teaching in their schools; the length of study; the advancement of students — the philosophy they taught — magic — the manner of their medicine — their peculiar theology — its chief doctrine: the immortality of souls; the end of the world — they taught also rhetoric, geography, astronomy, natural philosophy, ethics — the order among the Druids themselves — their authority in the commonwealth — under pretext of religion they meddled in all affairs — the excommunication of offenders — their rites: ἀνθρωποθυσία [human sacrifice]; two kinds of human victims — the custom of ἀνθρωποθυσία, from Diodorus, Caesar, Strabo, Dio, and others — the vain attempt of the Romans to abolish the superstition — Britain freed by the gospel — the beginnings of the Christian religion in this island — Joseph of Arimathea — Claudia — Pudens; concerning King Lucius — the correspondence between him and Eleutherius — Bede, the author of the history — an error in dating — Henry of Erfurt — Ado — the success of Eleutherius's letter, according to Geoffrey and Leland — whether Lucius undertook the apostolate — Camden yields to common prejudice — the falsity of the history shown — a summary of British history under the Romans — conquered by Claudius — reduced to a province; well-nigh destroyed by Suetonius Paulinus; pacified by Agricola — the royal name and authority abolished throughout the province — in the time of the Emperor Commodus, no king in Britain — not Lucius — Baronius's defence of the history examined — no Lucius holding a kingdom, either within or beyond Hadrian's Wall — who this Lucius was — the letter of Eleutherius a forgery.

I. That idolatrous superstition was carried into these British isles after the Flood, along with the first inhabitants, is as certain as it is uncertain who

those first inhabitants were, or whence the islands themselves came to be called Britain or British. For the earliest origins of almost all peoples and nations have been so obscured by the intervals of time, the vicissitudes of human affairs, the barbarism of the most ancient ages, and — in what followed nearest upon the first ages — the want of writers, together with the boldness of idle fabulists, that the most excellent minds generally toil in vain to dig them out. There are, accordingly, very many things which learned men frankly confess themselves wholly ignorant of; and I fear that some of the things they suppose themselves to know well are in truth known with greater loss to themselves and to the truth than those things which they perceive themselves entirely not to know — since the acceptance of falsehoods as truths drives us further from the truth than mere ignorance of it. In most matters, beyond what we learn from the Greeks and Romans, bare conjectures alone prevail. But with what good faith, religious scruple, and skill in ancient matters the most celebrated writers among them have conducted themselves in relating the origins of peoples, we have sufficiently learned from those things of which we have certain knowledge from elsewhere. No one is ignorant with what monstrous fables — concocted from vain traditions, or spun like spiders' webs out of their own brains — they strive, as if with one voice, to overwhelm the origins of the Jews with lies. I am not easily persuaded, therefore, to place confidence, in matters uncertain and where my mind hangs doubtful at every turn, in those whom I have found, in all matters of which I have certain knowledge, to have lied splendidly — nay, monstrously. There is no reason, therefore, to wonder that the origins of the British peoples lie hidden in darkness, since the same murky night presses upon the beginnings of almost every nation,

excepting only those which sacred Scripture has placed beyond the dice of controversy.

This, however, is peculiar to the Britons, along with a few others: that to the common calamity a twofold inconvenience has been added, both of them all too apt to increase the darkness of the most ancient times. For being islanders, and shut off from intercourse with the rest of the world, they had neither the means of communicating the memory of their own name to others, nor of acquiring for themselves the traditions or knowledge of others. Then, if it be lawful to believe so great a wickedness, after the use of letters became known, those among them who were reckoned the most sharp-sighted and wise — being held in perpetual admiration, and so that nothing might be known by anyone without their assistance (which Cicero, in his oration *For Murena*, shows the ancient jurists to have had in mind) — were unwilling to commit anything of antiquity to writing. Since, therefore, most, if not all, of what is necessary for accurately investigating the origins of these nations has been utterly blotted out by oblivion, it will suffice me to press upon such traces as remain, whether true or most probable.

II. That the inhabitants of these islands derived their origin from the posterity of Japheth, all agree, relying on the words of the Holy Spirit, Genesis 10:5: “By these,” that is, the sons of Japheth, “were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.” From these words down to the time of Caesar — how vast a void of ages! — one might apply the poet’s line: “Wherever I look, there is nothing but sea and sky, the one swollen with waves, the other menacing with clouds.” What traces of truth remain must be dug out by conjecture. For although it is most certain — contrary to the opinion of the most learned Camden — that these islands were known to the ancient

Greeks and Tyrians, yet no one has been found who committed anything about them to the memory of the ages. “What men originally inhabited Britain, whether natives or immigrants, is little known, as is usual among barbarians” — *Agricola*, chapter 11. In what obscurity all matters concerning Britain lay wrapped, even for that wisest of men, most abundantly furnished with all the world’s stores of learning, who spent several years in neighbouring Gaul, Caesar himself attests, book IV of the *Gallic War*, chapter 20: “He thought it would be of great use to him if he should but visit the island, examine the character of its people, and learn its places, harbours, and approaches — matters almost wholly unknown to the Gauls. For no one goes thither rashly except traders, and even to them nothing is known beyond the coastline and those regions which lie opposite Gaul.” He, in book V, chapter 12, sets down the interior inhabitants as aborigines, or αὐτόχθονες [natives of the soil]. “The interior part of Britain is inhabited by those who are said, by tradition, to have been born on the island itself” — as though, that is, the earth had sprouted men like mushrooms or vegetables. Tacitus is fuller, in the *Life of Agricola*, chapter 11: “But what men originally inhabited Britain, whether natives or immigrants, is little known, as is usual among barbarians. Their physical characteristics vary, and from this arguments are drawn. For the reddish hair of the inhabitants of Caledonia and their large limbs argue a German origin. The swarthy faces of the Silures, and their generally curly hair, and Spain lying opposite, give ground to believe that the ancient Iberians crossed over and occupied those settlements. Those nearest to Gaul resemble the Gauls — whether from the enduring force of common origin, or because, the lands running out in opposite directions, the climate has given the same character to bodies of similar situation: yet on the whole, taking a general

view, it is credible that the Gauls occupied the neighbouring soil.” It is absurd of him to suggest that these islands were inhabited by a mixed medley of neighbouring peoples; nearer the truth is his supposition that the inhabitants crossed over from Gaul. Indeed, it is long since most of the learned came round to the opinion of Camden, who asserts that the Gauls and Britons sprang from the same stock, and that the latter crossed over hither from Gaul. He maintains that the language of both peoples was the same — although Caesar and Tacitus scarcely agree — from the various words which ancient writers attest were in use among the Gauls, and which the Welsh, the genuine remnant of the ancient Britons, still retain. The same web Boxhorn has very recently attempted to weave further, with the help of Davies’s Lexicon, in his *Origines Gallicae*.

III. We have said that the inhabitants of the European islands derived their origin from the sons and posterity of Japheth. His eldest son, however, was called Gomer. Most think that the Cimbri sprang from him. And indeed the Welsh, who alone are the genuine posterity of the ancient Britons, call themselves Kymry — that is, Gomeri — their nation Cymru, and their tongue Cymraeg. Hence Camden contends that the ancient Britons were Cimbri, and crossed over hither from neighbouring Gaul, since the Gauls, the Cimbri, and the Celts are one and the same. Add to this that “Gomer” signifies “finishing,” from גמר, “to finish” — as though there had been something ominous in the naming, foretelling that they would occupy the ends of the earth. These things are indeed altogether probable, and I shall embrace them until someone teaches better. Nor should it be passed over in silence that most of the Britons, said to be called Kymry or Cambri, are supposed to take the name “Cambri” from Cambria — a name imposed on that part of the island which fell by lot to Camber, son of Brutus. All these

matters, however, we leave where we found them, content to have reported them, having nothing more certain at hand.

IV. So much for the inhabitants themselves. The name “Britannia” is most ancient. Many derivations of it have been devised by various authors — most of them false, if not all; some of them ridiculous. Elyot, a noble and learned man, in the dictionary which Cooper enlarged and published, supposes that Britain was named from the Greek word *πρυτανεία* [presidency]. The *πρυτανίς* at Athens was the president of the marketplace; and *πρυτανεία* was that Prytanic dignity — the term was also sometimes used to mean public markets. Since, therefore, the Greeks perceived this island to abound in goods suited for trade, they called it *πρυτανεία*, whence “Britannia” was born. But this conjecture errs in several ways: first, it renders these islands not merely known but thoroughly familiar to the most ancient Greeks — whereas Herodotus attests that he did not know whence the tin came, which they had from no other source than these islands. Then, although I would by no means say with Camden that these regions were utterly unknown to the Greeks before Caesar’s arrival, yet I have no doubt that they were called “British” long before anyone would dare to imagine the Athenians had put in here, since their *θαλασσοκρατία* [maritime supremacy] was of recent date. Bale derives the British name from Brytona, a Cretan nymph, who, to escape the violence of Minos attempting to ravish her, threw herself headlong into the waters. Lying Greece will supply anyone who asks with six hundred fables of this sort. Bede derives it from Britannia in Gaul, which was formerly called Armorica, and took its name from Britons who crossed over thither from here. But the delirium of Goropius Becanus exceeds the folly of all who would have “Britannia” derived, as it were, from “Bri-danium” — that is, as he himself interprets it,

“free Denmark” — although the British name was celebrated throughout the whole world before that of Denmark, or of the Danes, was known or had even come into being. Humphrey Lhuyd derives the name from “Prid” and “Cain,” two little British words signifying “fair form.” No one, so far as I know, supports this conjecture, although it is not quite so absurd as some others which have found defenders.

V. All these being rejected, two etymologies of this name remain, which, still supported by the votes of learned men, hold their ground. The first rests upon the story of the arrival on this island of Brutus, of Trojan blood; for it was once believed that the island was called Britannia, and its inhabitants Britons, from him. It is an old opinion, one that has found mention in some of the public records of the kings of this island. But this whole history has been assailed by Camden and Elyot, and, being dislodged from its place, is judged by most modern scholars to be worth no consideration at all. I shall go over wholly to their opinion, until I have some certain grounds for another account of the name. The second etymology is Camden’s own, who asserts that the name flowed from the British word “Brith.” “Brith,” as he says, signifies “painted,” and is indeed rendered by Davies in his dictionary as “particoloured” or “spotted.” To this word the Greek termination “-tania” was added, producing “Britannia.” Certainly, memory has recorded, by most authorities, that the Britons were accustomed to paint themselves, and that they were hence called “Picts” by the Romans. Caesar himself, book V of the *Gallic War*, chapter 14, relates: “All the Britons dye themselves with woad, which produces a blue colour, and this makes their appearance the more terrible in battle.” Very many, then, have gone over to this opinion of Camden. George Hornius, a most learned man, in his preface to Boxhorn’s *Origines Gallicae*, boldly declares, as though the matter were beyond

controversy, that the inhabitants were called Britons because they were painted over their whole bodies, since in their own tongue — that is, the Cimbric — “Prith” (he meant to say “Brith”) signifies “painted.” But if it be lawful to dissent from that greatest promoter of British antiquities, I confess I cannot subscribe to this conjecture — both for other reasons, and because, in setting it forth, that otherwise great and profoundly learned man contradicted himself. For by whom, pray, were the inhabitants of these islands called “Britten,” from “Brith,” or “the painted”? By themselves? But Camden had earlier shown — most truly — that they never called, or ever had called, themselves anything but “Cymry,” and their tongue “Cymraeg,” and from this the same learned man proves that they sprang from the ancient Cimbri. By the Greeks themselves, then? But he declares that these islands were utterly unknown to the Greeks before the time of Caesar — at least in the days of Polybius of Megalopolis — and maintains that none of the Greeks knew what manner of men possessed these shores, whether painted or elegantly clothed. He would have it, then, that the Greeks, on seeing the inhabitants of this island had dyed their bodies blue, learned from them how “painted” was said in their tongue, and added to that word the termination “-tania,” whence “Britannia” flowed — though they did not yet know what manner of men, fair or dark, had settled there. Nor would the Greeks have lacked, in their own tongue, words to express “painted” and “a painted people,” if the origin of the word is to be sought from them. Since, therefore, it is certain that the Britons never called themselves “Britten” or “painted,” from “Brith,” but constantly “Cymry”; and that this island was called “Britannia” long before the Greeks knew what or what manner of men possessed it; and since the composition of the name seems absurd, in which the Greek termination far outweighs the

Cimbric foundation — to say nothing of the fact that it does not seem altogether true to me that all Britons were, or were called, painted (for although Caesar attests that all dyed themselves blue, he does not for that reason say they were “painted,” and it is well known that there was a particular people, dwelling in Caledonia, which was specifically called “Picti”) — I cannot deny that all the hope I had for some time entertained, of gathering something certain about the origin of the British name from this great man’s conjecture, has been cut off.

VI. To disentangle the truth, that most learned man in every field, Samuel Bochart, applies a new conjecture, *Geographia Sacra*, part II, chapter 39. For having shown that these islands, surrounded by ocean, were known to the Greeks, and were called Cassiterides from the lead and tin with which they abound, he teaches that this island was likewise known to the Tyrians, and was, for the same reason, called בֶּרֶת אֲנָךְ, “barat anac,” or “the land” or “field of tin”; and from this it may seem that, among the Greeks and Latins, the name “Britannia” arose. The matter is too long for me, occupied otherwise, to dwell upon. I shall briefly say what I think: whether because — all other explanations having been long and attentively weighed — they either wholly displease, or please me less, or because this great man’s conjecture recommends itself by its very novelty; or because my mind senses some light of truth shining out of it amid the deepest darkness — I confess that it appeals to me above all the others. I know that this derivation of the British name has been censured and rejected by that most learned George Hornius, in his *Introduction to Ancient Geography*, and in his preface to Boxhorn’s *Origines Gallicanae*. On what ground? On this: that the Phoenicians did not obtain θαλαττοκρατία [sea-power], and sail these seas, until very late — after other peoples, in seventh or eighth place,

among whom were some Greeks. And so, by the same stroke, he both rejects the etymology of “Britannia,” and strives to overthrow the foundation of many other things which Bochart seems to me, by heroic effort and with wonderful success, to have dug out of darkness. I have no wish to put my sickle to another man’s harvest; I shall only say that it seems strange to me that anyone, relying on the good faith and authority of the Greeks, could bring himself to believe that the Phoenicians — who had planted colonies in Greece itself many centuries before the Greeks ever set foot from home — had, in comparison with the Greeks, only late come to survey the maritime regions of the world.

VII. But whatever, in the end, the true origin of this island’s name may be, and whoever its most ancient inhabitants were, this is most certain: that the Britons were most thoroughly stained with idolatrous superstition. From the remotest antiquity, however, the priests of the British rites were better known — whose discipline spread far and wide into other nations — than the very deities whom the Britons worshipped through their ministration. These were the Druids, of whom we shall treat hereafter. That they “taught the worship of one God,” Origen affirms, in his commentary on Ezekiel, chapter 4. If this be true, that one God was the sun himself, not the most holy Creator of heaven and earth, from the knowledge of whom the savage superstition of the Druids stood at the farthest remove. To him the moon was added, worshipped by the women. Hence Dio, *History*, book LXII: Ἡ Βουνδουῖκα τὴν χεῖρα ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνατείνασα εἶπε, χάριν τε σοὶ ἔχω, ὦ Ἄνδράστη, καὶ προσεπικαλοῦμαι σε γυνὴ γυναῖκα. [Boudica, raising her hand to heaven, said: I give thanks to thee, O Andraste, and I, a woman, call upon thee, a woman.] The moon, moreover, was commonly the queen of heaven, and among the Britons the giver of victory. And because they

worshipped the heavenly bodies, Tacitus, in the *Life of Agricola*, relates that they poured out their prayers with hands raised to heaven — as does Dio concerning Boadicea. That the superstition of the Druids arose in Britain, Caesar affirms, book VI of the *Gallic War*, chapter 13: “The system is thought to have been devised in Britain, and thence transferred into Gaul; and now those who wish to study the matter more thoroughly generally travel thither for the sake of learning it.” Tacitus too, to prove that the Gauls occupied the neighbouring land, adds: “You may detect their rites by the persuasion of their superstitions.” That the Gauls, however, worshipped Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva, Caesar relates. We have shown elsewhere that they received both the names and the worship of these from the Greeks of Marseilles. From them, too, they learned the use of images and statues — a thing unknown to the ancient Gauls, as Lucan attests:

*“And the mournful images of the gods lack all art,
and stand shapeless on hewn trunks.*

*Their very rudeness, and the squalor of the already rotting wood,
strike men with awe.”* — book III, line 412.

This superstition, then, never invaded Britain. The most ancient deities of the Gauls, held in common with the Britons, were those which the same Lucan mentions, book I, line 444:

*“And those with whose dread blood merciless
Teutates is appeased, and Hesus,
bristling with savage altars, and Taranis,
whose altar is no gentler than that of Scythian Diana.”*

Some think Teutates derives from “Diw Taith” — British words signifying “guide of the way.” We have shown above that almost all the

peoples scattered from Babylon worshipped the sun as the guide of their journeys and wanderings. That Moloch, the idol of the Ammonites, was the sun, all the learned agree; we shall relate his rites in the exposition of Jewish idolatry. Nothing anywhere in the superstition of the nations comes near or resembles this, except what Caesar has recorded of the Gauls — who received all their religious worship from the Britons — in the *Gallic War*, book VI, chapter 16: “They have images of immense size, whose limbs, woven of wicker-work, they fill with living men; these being set alight, the men, surrounded by the flame, are put to death.” Teutates, then, was the sun. Who Hesus was is uncertain — and, to see the uncertainty of conjectures, Gosselin, in Bochart, derives the name from a Hebrew word signifying “strong”; Camden, from “Haud,” a British word denoting a dog.

VIII. Taranis is derived from “Tarande,” that is, “thunder”; so it is called by the Welsh, as by the English “thonder,” by the Flemish “donder” — whence “dondersdag” and “thundersday,” or “Thursday.” They understood by it some deity presiding over the air; unless perhaps we should think it named from “Tarian,” which is a shield or buckler. But I would rather derive it from “Taran,” since it was their custom to appease him with the most savage victims.

IX. That they worshipped any θεοὺς ἀνθρωποφυεῖς [gods of human origin],¹ there exists no testimony or record. Yet, in the process of time, they set up, according to Gildas, various images to these idols. “In Britain there are these very diabolical portents, almost surpassing the Egyptian in number, some of whose deformed features we still behold, stiffly staring with grim faces, within or outside the deserted walls, in their accustomed manner.” No more is recorded of the idols of the Britons, though without doubt the chaos of superstition among them was very great. But the

superstition of these islands was better known through its ministers than through its gods; of these, therefore, we must treat.

X. The Druids, or Druidae, presided over the British rites. By this name they were celebrated throughout the whole Celtic, or Cimbric, nation everywhere. Παρά τε Κελτοῖς καὶ Γαλάταις τοὺς καλουμένους Δρυΐδας. [Among the Celts and the Galatians, those called Druids.] Diogenes Laertius, in the proem of his work. That Britain gave origin to this order of men and their superstition, we have already shown from Caesar. Concerning the etymology of the word, the learned do not agree. Most uncertain are the things reported of Dryis, and of his successor Bardus, kings of the Celts, and other matters which Bale has collected. Montanus says that “Dry” signifies a magician, and that the Druids were so called by the Greeks because they were magicians. Vossius thinks the name flowed from “Dru,” or “Trou,” a German word signifying “truthful” and “faithful,” as the English “true.” The more common, and doubtless truer, derivation of the word is that first given by Pliny, book XVI, the last chapter: “The Druids,” he says, “hold nothing more sacred than the mistletoe, and the tree on which it grows (provided it be an oak). They choose groves of oak trees for their own sake, nor do they perform any rites without that foliage — so that they may even seem, by this Greek interpretation, to be called Druids for that reason.” Δρυΐς [dryis] is “oak”; and “Druids,” ἀπὸ τῆς δρυός [from the oak]. Add that “dru” in British sounds the same. That the Druids performed their rites in groves of oaks and oak-forests, all acknowledge. “Groves cut down, sacred to savage superstitions”, says Tacitus, *Annals*, book XIV, chapter 30. For the same reason they were also called Saronidae. Θεολόγους Σαρωνίδας ὀνομάζουσι² [They call their theologians Saronidae]

— says Diodorus, book V, chapter 31 — that is, from the oaks. Whence Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus*:

Ἡ πολλὰς ἐφύπερθε Σαρωνίδας ὕγρὸς ἰάων ἤειρεν.

“Certainly many an oak above did the moist Iao raise up.”

On which passage the scholiast notes, Σαρωνίδας δρυῖς [Saronidae are oaks], and adds the reasoning behind the word. That the sign of Jupiter among the Celts was the tallest oak, Maximus of Tyre also attests.

XI. Whether the Bards were of the Druids, appointed to a particular task, or a different class of men altogether, is uncertain. Lucan celebrates their office, book I, line 447:

*"You too, O Bards, who send forth the brave souls of men slain in war,
with your praises, into a long age;
secure yourselves, you poured forth countless songs."*

And Marcellinus: “The Bards sang the illustrious deeds of brave men, composed in heroic verse, to the sweet strains of the lyre.” And before him Diodorus, as above: Εἰσὶ δέ ... παρ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ ποιηταὶ μελῶν, οὓς Βάρδους ὀνομάζουσιν. [Among them there are also poets of songs, whom they call Bards.] Similarly, also Posidonius, in Athenaeus, book VI: Τὰ δὲ ἀκούσματα αὐτῶν εἰσὶν οἱ καλούμενοι Βάρδοι, ποιηταὶ δὲ οὗτοι τυγχάνουσι, μετ’ ᾧδῆς ἐπαίνους λέγοντες. [Those to whom they listen are called Bards; these are poets, who utter praises with song.] There are still, among the Cambro-Britons, some occupied with weaving verses and genealogies, whom they call bards.

XII. Strabo, book IV, distributes the priests among the Celts into three classes: Bards, Vates, and Druids. He would have spoken more correctly had he said there were two classes, Bards and Druids — for he assigns to the Vates what properly belonged to the Druids. Οὐάτες δέ ... ἱεροποιοὶ καὶ

φυσιολόγοι. [The Vates perform sacrifices, and speculate — or teach — concerning the nature of things/natural philosophers.] For we have shown from Caesar that the Druids presided over all the rites.

XIII. The Druids used a peculiar dress, by which they might draw to themselves the veneration of the common people. John Theophilus relates that he found this represented on six stone images. “Each,” he says, “was seven feet tall, bare-footed, with head uncovered, wearing a Greek cloak and hood, with a pointed beard reaching to the groin, and forked around the nostril passages; in their hands a book and a Diogenic staff; with severe brow and gloomy expression, fixing their gaze upon the ground with head bent sideways.” In their rites they wore white vestments, as Pliny attests, book XVI, the last chapter: “The priest, clad in a white robe, climbs the tree; cuts it with a golden sickle; it is caught in a white cloak.” They established their academies of study in the groves —

"You dwell in deep forests, in remote groves."

— Lucan, book I, line 453.

XIV. There they held schools crowded with studious youth. “To them”, says Caesar, in the passage cited above, chapter 13, “a great number of young men flock together for the sake of instruction.” Mela too, book III, chapter 2: “They teach much to the noblest of the nation, secretly and for as long as twenty years.” That so many years were spent in study before they were advanced to their doctorate, Caesar attests: “Some remain twenty years in training.” The allurements of study, the privileges of students, and the very great authority of those who had advanced. “The Druids”, says Caesar, “are accustomed to be exempt from war, and do not pay taxes along with the rest; they are free from military service, and exempt from all public burdens. Drawn by such great rewards, many come of their own accord to

be trained, and are sent by their kinsmen and parents.” Their authority we shall presently see. He also relates their method of instruction: “They are said to learn by heart a great number of verses, and they do not think it right to commit these sacred matters to writing, although in almost all other matters, in their public and private accounts, they use Greek letters. This they seem to me to have established for two reasons: because they do not wish their teaching to be spread among the common people, nor those who learn, trusting to writing, to devote less effort to memory — which generally happens to most people, that, relying on the aid of writing, they relax their diligence in learning thoroughly, and their memory” — Caesar, as above, chapter 14. They cultivated a varied philosophy, and one of almost every kind. Pliny ascribes magic to them, book XXX, chapter 1: “But why should I mention these things, in an art that has even crossed the ocean and reached the very void of nature? Britain to this day celebrates it in amazement, with such great ceremonies that it might seem to have taught it to the Persians.”

XV. They were also physicians, as the same Pliny attests, book XXX, chapter 1: “The reign of Tiberius Caesar abolished the Druids, and this class of seers and physicians.” That they practised a medicine mixed with magic, the same author teaches, book XVI, chapter 44.

XVI. In theology they taught many peculiar things, some of them excellent. That they were wise in a singular way, and set apart from others, Lucan notes, book I, line 450:

*“And you, O Druids, having laid aside your weapons,
took up again your barbaric rites
and the sinister custom of your sacred things:
to you alone is it given to know the gods and the powers of heaven,*

or to you alone not to know them.”

The chief doctrine of their theology was that souls do not perish, nor does the world. Ἀφθάρτους δὲ λέγουσι τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ τὸν κόσμον. [They say that souls and the world are indestructible.] — says Strabo. And Caesar, as above, chapter 14: “Above all, they wish to inculcate this: that souls do not perish, but pass after death from one body to another, and they think that by this belief men are most greatly spurred on to valour, the fear of death being disregarded.” These words of Caesar Lucan render splendidly, book I, line 454:

*“Through your teaching,
the shades do not seek the silent abodes of Erebus,
and the pale realms of deep Dis;
the same spirit rules the limbs in another world;
if what you sing is truly known, death is but the middle of a long life.
Happy indeed, in their error,
are the peoples over whom the Bear looks down,
whom that greatest of terrors, the fear of death, does not oppress;
hence their minds are prone to rush upon the sword,
and their souls capable of death,
and it is thought cowardly to spare a life that will return.”*

That the world would at length be destroyed by fire and water, they also taught. Ἐπικρατήσιν δέ ποτε καὶ πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ [Fire and water shall someday prevail], as Strabo has it — though it is doubtful whether their meaning has been rightly understood, since perhaps, from ancient tradition, they taught that the world, once destroyed by water, would again be consumed by fire.

XVII. They also gave attention to eloquence and rhetoric. “Thus says Mela, book III, chapter 2, “They have, moreover, their own eloquence, and the Druids as masters of their wisdom.” And well known to all is the symbolic image of the Ogmian Hercules.

XVIII. They mixed geography and astronomy with their theology likewise. The same Mela: “These profess to know the size and shape of the earth and of the world, and the motions of the heavens and of the stars.” And Caesar himself, as above, chapter 14: “They discuss and hand down to the young much concerning the stars and their motion, concerning the size of the world and of the earth, concerning the nature of things.” To these they added ethics, as Diogenes attests, proem, section 6: Καί φασι τοὺς Δρυΐδας αἰνιγματωδῶς ἀποφθεγγομένους φιλοσοφῆσαι, σέβειν θεοὺς, καὶ μηδὲν κακὸν δρᾶν, καὶ ἀνδρείαν ἀσκεῖν. [They say the Druids philosophised in riddling utterances: to worship the gods, to do nothing evil, and to practise courage.]

XIX. Though very numerous, they maintained among themselves such an order that one presided over all the rest as a kind of pope. Caesar says, as above, chapter 13: “When he dies, if any of the rest is outstanding in dignity, he succeeds; but if there are several equals, the succession is decided by the vote of the Druids; sometimes they even contend for the chief place by arms” — a thing we know to have happened at Rome, too, among Christians.

XX. With what favour and authority they prevailed among the peoples, the same author teaches us: “They are concerned with matters divine; they see to public and private sacrifices; they interpret religious observances. They settle almost all public and private disputes; and if any crime has been committed, if a murder has taken place, if there is a dispute about an

inheritance or about boundaries, the same men decide, and fix the penalties.” Thus, meddling in others’ affairs, they thrust themselves, under pretext of religion, into every public and private matter — themselves meanwhile exempt from every duty owed to the commonwealth, tending their own dominion within another’s. Since, however, they did not ordinarily hold the office of magistrate, and so had neither the fasces or axes, nor the power of life and death, which are absolutely necessary for compelling obedience, one may justly ask how they compelled the peoples to keep within the bounds of duty, and to be obedient to them in all things. To this inconvenience, then, a remedy was found in the invention of a political-religious excommunication; and thus a certain Caesaro-papal authority was completed. “If anyone, whether private person or public official, does not abide by their decree, they forbid him the sacrifices. This is, among them, the most severe penalty. Those upon whom this ban has been laid are reckoned among the number of the impious and the criminal; all avoid them, shunning their approach and their conversation, lest they suffer some harm from the contagion; nor is justice granted them when they seek it, nor is any honour shared with them.” There is no one, or next to no one, who does not perceive that this whole mystery of iniquity was long ago carried over into Christianity.

XXI. There remain their rites, and the worship of the gods. These were various, and almost all monstrous. When Caesar, after his first entry into this island, had returned — or rather, had been put to flight — “the Britons, offering various sacrifices, indulged themselves in the slaughter of cattle; they sacrificed there forty thousand oxen, and a hundred thousand sheep, and birds of various kinds not easily numbered; besides thirty thousand wild beasts of every sort gathered together.” These are the words of Geoffrey,

book I, chapter 24 — that is, of a man of the most reckless boldness and impudence in inventing whatever he pleases. The chief thing recorded by trustworthy authors concerning the sacrifices of the Druids is ἀνθρωποθυσία [human sacrifice]. There were, however, two kinds of human victims among them: the first private, when someone, that is, devoted either himself or another for the safety of a third party. Caesar asserts, as above, chapter 16 — “Those afflicted with more serious diseases, and those engaged in battles and dangers, either sacrifice men as victims, or vow that they will sacrifice themselves, and employ the Druids as ministers for these sacrifices; because they believe that, unless a man’s life is given in exchange for a man’s life, the power of the immortal gods cannot otherwise be appeased.” This, as is clear from Strabo and others, was the form of that immolation: the victim being brought to the altar, the priest sprinkled its forehead with wine, or, where this was lacking, some other liquid; then, seizing the topmost hairs with his left hand, he poured libations upon the fire, offering prayers or vows to the gods at the same time; presently the victim itself was struck with a sword — as Cluverius observes. The other kind was public, and not unlike, as we have observed above, the manner in which Moloch was worshipped in the East. Thus Caesar, as above, “And publicly they have established sacrifices. Others have images of immense size, whose limbs, woven of wicker, they fill with living men; these being set alight, the men, surrounded by the flame, are put to death.” This he says of the Gauls, who received the Druids themselves, and this whole superstition, from the Britons. Similarly Strabo, book IV:

Ἄνθρωπον γὰρ κατεσπείσμενον παίσαντες εἰς νῶτον μαχαίρα, ἔμαντεύοντο ἐκ τοῦ σφραδασμοῦ, ἔθνον δὲ οὐκ ἄνευ Δρυϊδῶν, καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ἀνθρωποθυσιῶν εἶδη λέγεται· καὶ γὰρ κατετόξευόν τινας, καὶ ἀνεσταύρουν

έν τοῖς ἱεροῖς, καὶ κατασκευάζοντες κολοσσὸν χόρτου, καὶ ξύλον ἐμβalόντες εἰς τοῦτον, βοσκήματα καὶ παντοῖα θηρία καὶ ἀνθρώπους ὠλοκαύτουν. [For, having struck a man, consecrated beforehand, in the back with a sword, they divined from his convulsions; nor did they sacrifice without the Druids; and other kinds of human sacrifice are also spoken of — for they shot some with arrows, and impaled others on stakes in their sacred places; and, constructing a colossal figure of hay, and casting wood into it, they burnt whole herds and every kind of wild beast, and men.]

Of the public victims, by which men were sacrificed, besides that recorded by Caesar, he reports here three other kinds: either they were struck down by the sacrificial sword, or pierced with arrows, or even driven onto crosses; to which he adds that custom of burning men shut up within colossal images. Yet another kind of death, employed in these sacrifices, Diodorus records, book V, chapter 32: Τοὺς κακούργους ... κατὰ πενταετηρίδα φυλάξαντες ἀνασκολοπίζουσι τοῖς θεοῖς, καὶ μετ' ἄλλων πολλῶν ἀπαρχῶν καθαγίζουσι πυρὰς παμμεγέθεις κατασκευάζοντες. [Having kept criminals for five years, they impale them for the gods, and, together with many other first-fruits, burn them, building enormous pyres.] By fire, therefore, by the sword, by arrows, by the cross, and by sharpened stakes, as it pleased them, they put men to death as sacrifices. Nor was this crime perpetrated only upon the guilty: “They even go so far as to punish the innocent”, says Caesar, as above. With what monstrous savagery, moreover, the Britons conducted themselves at their public sacrifices, Dio attests, book LXII of his *History*:

Τοῖς τε ἀλικομένοις ἀνθρώποις ὑπ' αὐτῶν οὐδὲν τῶν δεινοτάτων ἐστὶν ὃ τι οὐκ ἐγίνετο. Καὶ ὃ δὴ δεινότατον καὶ θηριωδέστατον ἔπραξαν· τὰς γὰρ γυναῖκας τὰς εὐγενεστάτας, καὶ εὐπρεπεστάτας, γυμνὰς ἐκρέμασαν, καὶ

τοὺς τε μαστοὺς αὐτῶν περιέτεμον, καὶ τοῖς στόμασι σφῶν προσέρραπτον, ὅπως ὥς καὶ ἐσθίουσαι αὐτοὺς ὀρῶντο. Καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο πασσάλοις ὀξέσι διὰ παντὸς τοῦ σώματος κατὰ μῆκος ἀνέπειραν· καὶ ταῦτα πάντα θύοντές τε ἄμα, καὶ ἐστιώμενοι, καὶ ὑβρίζοντες, ἔν τε τοῖς ἄλλοις σφῶν ἱεροῖς, καὶ ἐν τῷ τῆς Ἀνδάτης μάλιστα ἄλσει ἐποίουν. [Upon those taken captive, every kind of the most grievous atrocity was inflicted. And this was the cruellest and most savage act of all: they hung up the noblest and most honourable women, naked, and, having cut off their breasts, sewed them to their own mouths, so that they might seem to be eating them. They then transfixed the women, through the whole length of the body, with sharpened stakes; and they did all this while performing their sacred rites at the same time, feasting, and behaving insolently, both in their other temples, and especially in the grove of Andate.] And such were we Britons — slaves of Satan of this kind.

XXII. On account of these unspeakable sacrifices, the Romans attempted to abolish the whole superstition of the Druids. Strabo, concerning the Gauls, book IV, chapter 4: Τοῦτων δ' ἔπαυσαν αὐτοὺς Ῥωμαῖοι, καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὰς θυσίας καὶ μαντείας ὑπεναντίως τοῖς παρ' ἡμῖν νομίμοις. [The Romans put a stop to these things among them, and to their sacrifices and divinations, which were contrary to our customs.] And Suetonius, in his *Claudius*, chapter 25: “He utterly abolished among the Gauls the religion of the Druids, one of dire savagery, which under Augustus had only been forbidden to Roman citizens.” That is, he wished to do so in Gaul, but in vain; the seat and origin of the superstition, Britain, remained untouched. Only on the island of Mona were the Druids slain, and the groves cut down, by Suetonius Paulinus. Tacitus relates the event, *Annals*, XIV, chapter 30: “On the shore stood the opposing battle-line, dense with arms and men,

with women running between them ... and round about, the Druids, raising their hands to heaven and pouring out dreadful curses, struck the soldiers with the strangeness of the sight, so that, as though their limbs were fixed, they offered their motionless bodies to wounds. Then, roused by the exhortations of their general, and spurring one another on lest they should fear a womanish and fanatical horde, they advanced their standards, cut down all who opposed them, and wrapped them in their own fire. A garrison was afterwards placed over the conquered; and the groves, sacred to their savage superstitions, were cut down: for they held it lawful to drench their altars with the blood of captives, and to consult the gods through the entrails of men.”

XXIII. This impious superstition, however, was at length, by the mercy of God, gradually removed by the heavenly truth of the Christian religion. And although this island was “utterly cut off from the whole world,” and lay most remote from the fount and sanctuary of those waters which flowed forth to heal the nations, yet, by God’s gracious provision, the messengers and heralds of divine grace were brought hither almost from the very cradle of the gospel itself. Peter — Simeon Metaphrastes and the Menology; Paul — Theodoret, and Sophronius; Simon Zelotes — Dorotheus; Aristobulus, whom Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Romans — Nicephorus; Joseph of Arimathea — almost all, especially the more recent of our own countrymen, Bale, Parker, Foxe, Camden, and others — assert to have preached the gospel here; and, concerning Joseph, scarcely anyone doubts. Hence the most ancient Christian writers, Tertullian and Origen, record that Britain received the Christian faith — the latter, in his commentary on Ezekiel, chapter 4; the former, in his book *Against the Jews*, chapter 7. Martial too

celebrates Claudia Rufina, a British woman, most noble and most learned, book XI, epigram 54:

*“Though Claudia Rufina is sprung from the blue-painted Britons,
why has she the heart of the Latin people?
What beauty of form!
The mothers of Italy might believe her a Roman,
the women of Athens their own.”*

That she was that Claudia whom Paul mentions, 2 Timothy 4:21, learned men judge, and the dates agree. Add that he links her with Pudens, whom the same Martial also celebrates, book VII, epigram 10:

*“You compel me, Pudens,
with my own pen and hand, to correct my little books.
O, how greatly you approve of me and love me,
wishing to have my trifles in the original hand.”*

XXIV. Many too have written that King Lucius — to whom is attributed a letter to Pope Eleutherius, together with Eleutherius’s reply — was, of all kings, the first to embrace the Christian faith; just as no fewer have related that Philip the Arab was the first Christian emperor. But to deal freely, and as befits one to whom nothing is dearer than truth, I confess frankly that it has long been the case that the credit of that epistolary correspondence — if not of the whole history of this Lucius — and of many other things commonly appended to history, has been quite suspect to me.

XXV. The history, so far as I know, was first committed to memory by Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, book I, chapter 4. He says that Lucius wrote to Eleutherius in the year of the Lord 156. Nauclerus follows him; but Baronius, in his *Annals*, shows that Eleutherius did not preside over the Roman church before the year of Christ 178. There is, then, an error in the

dating. Henry of Erfurt reports that this happened in the year 196, in the nineteenth year of the Emperor Verus (who by no means reigned so many years). Ado, in his Chronicle, arranges the time more correctly, and writes that Eleutherius lived and governed the Roman church under the Emperor Commodus — which is true, for the end of Eleutherius's third year falls at the beginning of Commodus's reign. Let this, then, be the time at which that epistolary exchange between King Lucius and Eleutherius took place, if it ever took place at all. Geoffrey of Monmouth relates the success of the undertaking at greater length: "Without delay, the peoples of the nations, flocking together from every side, follow the king's example, and, cleansed in the same font, are restored to the heavenly kingdom. The blessed teachers therefore (namely Fugatius and Damian, sent from Rome by Eleutherius), having destroyed paganism throughout almost the whole island, dedicated the temples, which had been founded in honour of many gods, to the one God and his saints, and filled them with various orders of clergy. There were then in Britain twenty-eight flamens, and three archflamens. The rest of the judges in the island were subject to their authority. These, according to the apostle's command, they rescued from idolatry, and where there had been flamens they placed bishops, and where there had been archflamens, archbishops. The sees of the archflamens had been in three of the noblest cities, namely London, York, and the City of the Legions — which, ancient walls and buildings attest, was situated above the river Usk, in Glamorgan. To these three, then, once the superstition had been swept away, twenty-eight bishops were made subject." So he — a man who knew nothing at all of shame. How childishly he invented all this will at once appear. British superstition never had more flamens or archflamens than Geoffrey of Monmouth had. For the rest, I would not deny that he has rightly disclosed

the origin of that distinction among the ministers of the Christian rites, the Roman church itself confessing as much, *Decretals*, part I, distinction 21: “Among priests, a certain distinction has been preserved, so that some are called simply priests, others archpriests, others chorepiscopi, others bishops, others archbishops or metropolitans, others primates, others patriarchs, others supreme pontiffs; this distinction was chiefly introduced from the gentiles, who called some of their flamens simply flamens, others archflamens, others protoflamens.” So says the author of the distinction, nakedly and openly. More modestly, and within the bounds of restraint, the more learned Leland writes: “It remains that I relate the event that removed so great a superstition from the midst. It was provided by Roman edict that neither the practice nor the reputation of the Druids’ religion should any longer be shown in the provinces. Yet the barbarous nations clung tenaciously to their ancestral rites, handed down and received from the Druids themselves so many ages before — until Christ the Saviour, best and greatest, having dispersed the darkness of error and gross ignorance, poured forth, through his guiding Spirit, a light visible to the whole world. Then that great Lucius, the immortal glory of the Britons, spurning the discipline of the Druids, willed that the evangelical teaching should be shared by all his people. Elvanus and Medwinus, therefore, noble British orators, were sent by Lucius to Eleutherius at Rome; and Fugatius, together with Damian, was sent back hither from Rome, and firmly established, God graciously willing it, a religion that would never perish.” Certain Bavarian writers add — as Bale attests, *Scriptores Britannici*, century I, chapter 29 — that this Lucius afterwards undertook an apostolate, and converted their own nation to the faith, and count it a glory to them to have been converted by so great a king; but our own countrymen protest against this, affirming that Lucius

never set foot outside his own kingdom, but died at Gloucester, in the twelfth year of his reign. The most learned Camden (in whose footsteps Selden treads, in his *Analecta Anglo-Britannica*) yields to the common prejudice. For having most accurately woven together the history of those times from the most approved historians, and having set plainly before all eyes that the state and condition of British affairs, from the days of Claudius Caesar, who had reduced the island to the form of a province, left no room for such a king — one who should hold the whole island under his rule, as this Lucius is imagined to have done — he nevertheless thought it prudent to insert this very history into his work, though the very order of events and of times which he himself sets forth cries out that it should be utterly rejected.

XXVI. To root out of men's minds an opinion so great, so deeply implanted, so ancient, is not the business of my talents, nor my purpose. But since falsehood, nowhere, has much strength or firmness, if I obtain from my readers this one thing, which is most fair — that they bring nothing here prejudged — I have no doubt that I shall persuade even the φιλόρχαιοι [lovers of antiquity] that I have grounds for my suspicion — grounds sufficiently just, indeed most weighty, and not mine alone.

XXVII. Britain — twice attempted almost in vain by Julius Caesar, neglected by Augustus and Tiberius, whose ocean shells, cast up on the Gallic shore, Caligula triumphed over, surrounded by his mighty army, worn down by civil wars and factional strife, its inhabitants obeying various kings — was attacked through the praetor Aulus Plautius by Claudius Caesar, reduced to the form of a province, and handed over to Plautius to govern. Dio and Suetonius relate at length the history of what he did on this island. So great was the glory of this victory in those days that the senate

decreed not only the name “Britannicus,” and a most splendid triumph, to Claudius himself, but also an ovation to Plautius, and the ornaments of a triumph to Vespasian, who pursued the remnants of the war. Nor do the poets celebrate less the addition of this province to the empire. So Seneca the Tragedian, in the *Octavia*, act I: “To whom the whole world obeyed, beyond the ocean, and to whom the Britons, until then unknown to our leaders and free of their own right, gave up their backs.” To which he presently adds: “Behold, he who first placed a yoke upon the Britons, and covered unknown straits with such great fleets, and, safe among barbarous peoples and savage seas ...” The first little verse was commonly read: “Lo! he who first reached the shores of the Tanais,” etc. “Lo, he who comes to the Britons,” Scaliger restored, in his notes on Tibullus, but without doubt one should read: “Lo! he who first laid the yoke upon the shores of the Thames” — since Claudius was the first to cross the Thames, as the most learned Camden observed. Of the same Claudius, Seneca the elder had earlier sung, in his *Apocolocyntosis* of Claudius Caesar: “He it was who bade the Britons, beyond the shores of the known sea, and the sky-blue-shielded Brigantes, bow their necks to Roman chains, and bade the ocean itself tremble at the new laws of the Roman axe.” Most elegant, too, are those epigrams which the great Scaliger produced in his *Catalecta*. It pleases me to append some of them:

“A land never violated by Ausonian triumphs fell prostrate,

Caesar, struck by your thunderbolt.

And the Ocean beholds your altars beyond itself:

what is the boundary of the world shall not be the boundary of empire.

A people, conquered by none before, never yet beheld in any triumph,

lies inviolate beneath your titles.

*Long seen as a fable, and hidden in the midst of the sea,
it has now given its free neck to the victor.
Britain, free, having endured neither enemy nor king,
which lies far off, beyond our world
— happy in adversity, and crushed by favourable fortune,
will be shared between us and you, O Caesar.
Father Mars, and Quirinus, guardian of our race,
and both Caesars, set in the great heaven
— you behold the unknown Britons under Latin law:
the sun bends this side of our empire.”*

The Britons, however, rising up again in tumult, on account of the civil discords among the petty kings who had accepted the Roman yoke (for it is a dream of Geoffrey's, which no one but he would dream, that one king ruled the island in Caesar's day, or afterwards) — this same Claudius put down, through the propraetor P. Ostorius. Tacitus has faithfully recorded that war. Under Nero's reign, the whole nation, stirred by the wrongs and the great spirit of Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, and all the peoples in it, attempted bravely and vigorously — but in vain — to throw off the Roman yoke from their necks and recover their ancestral liberty. The end of the war, under the administration of Suetonius Paulinus, was, for that nation, partly destruction, partly servitude. After Nero's death, while civil war held almost the whole world torn apart under Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian, the Silures and the Ordovices, and other peoples, took courage to such a degree that they gave occasion for that most disastrous war in which Julius Agricola, propraetor, father-in-law of the historian Tacitus, brought the whole island under the power of the Romans, and compelled it to live by Roman law — only one petty king being left, with a precarious

authority, in some part of the island, namely Cogidumnus, so that here too they might have a king as an instrument of servitude. In that war Galgacus, the last of the Britons, was defeated. The northern part of the island, being left, as rugged and unfruitful, to the barbarians, Agricola reduced the rest, plainly and fully — as Camden puts it — into a province, and, as Tacitus attests, handed it over to his successor peaceful and secure. The royal name having been abolished, and all that authority of the petty kings whom the people had formerly venerated, Britain became a praesidial, or Caesarean, province. Under Nerva it remained quiet; Spartian reports that Trajan brought some rebellious elements back into order. Hadrian restrained the barbarians, who were attacking the province from the northern parts of the island with wars and brigandage, by building a wall eighty miles long — as the same Spartian relates. Nor was the reign of the Antonines, Pius and the Philosopher, free from wars or tumults in this island; all of these, however, were suppressed by the valour of Lollius Urbicus and Calpurnius Agricola. Under Commodus, too, the province itself was for a time full of seditions; and barbarous nations, crossing the wall, gave the Romans and Britons a great deal of trouble, and several times inflicted great slaughter upon the inhabitants who dwelt nearest the wall. But upon the arrival of Ulpus Marcellus — as Dio and Lampridius relate — everything was so pacified that, down to the death of Commodus, nothing seems to have been attempted against the Roman peace. Given this state and condition of British affairs, I confess frankly that, such is my dullness, I cannot see where that Lucius could have been, who held this whole island ἀνυπεύθυνος [unaccountable to any], and, as he is called in the letter of Eleutherius, the vicar of God alone; for it is altogether too likely that he was not in this Britain of ours. It seems quite a different island that he distributes

among archbishops and bishops, by the consent of the British nobility; a different London, a different York, over which he presided — for ours here lay under the dominion of the Romans.

XXVIII. To this Cardinal Baronius adds much more, at the year of Christ 183, where he presents and defends this history of Lucius. First, then, “the Romans never, before this time, possessed the whole of Britain; but it is clear that very many peoples remained unconquered in it, who often gave the Roman armies trouble; and again, it is certain that those peoples in Britain who had been subdued by the Romans very often revolted, and rebelled entirely. For, to pass over more remote times, it is certain, on the authority of Julius Capitolinus, that a British war broke out under Marcus Aurelius, but was suppressed by Calpurnius Agricola, sent thither by Marcus. Again, after the death of Marcus, it was renewed under the reign of Commodus, to such a degree that the Britons (as Lampridius writes) wished to set up another emperor against him, refusing altogether to obey Commodus; but the same author affirms that everything was settled by his generals. Dio adds further that the British war, in these times of Commodus, was the greatest of all, but was utterly extinguished by Ulpian Marcellus.”

XXIX. It is strange that Baronius, a most learned and cautious man, did not notice that these things are both ἀσύστατα [inconsistent], and, where they contain truth, seek the very throat of the cause which he undertook to defend. They are ἀσύστατα, in that he implies that Lucius reigned among peoples unconquered by the Romans, and who often revolted from Roman rule, and who wished to set up another emperor against Commodus. For these were plainly different things. The peoples said to be unconquered by the Romans were the barbarians beyond the wall, and they alone. Those who most often rebelled against the Romans were the provincial Britons.

Those who wished to set up another emperor were the Roman garrison soldiers — so that it is plainly impossible that one and the same man should have ruled over all these. Moreover, he cuts his own throat with his own sword, when he teaches, on Dio's authority, that the British war was utterly extinguished under Commodus's reign, by Ulpian Marcellus — and so that the whole province had peacefully submitted to Roman power. For, given that state of affairs which we showed above, it was impossible for Lucius to hold a kingdom in the province; nor will anyone ever believe it, who is not ignorant of what a Roman praesidial province is. Then, no writers, whether trustworthy or untrustworthy, have recorded anything of any such defection of the Britons from Roman rule, by which they should have set up for themselves a king holding the whole island under his dominion — such as, even when they were their own masters and free, they never had. We have shown that war was several times stirred up against the Romans, now by one, now by another or by several combined, with their forces joined; but this was always extinguished within a short time. That, amid these tumults, there arose such a king as Lucius is imagined to be, is a thing that not only the most mendacious Geoffrey, but the letter of Eleutherius too, could only be believed by those blinded by excessive prejudice.

Well known is that saying of Tacitus concerning the state of the Britons at this time: "Rarely did two or three states come together to ward off a common danger; and so, while they fight individually, they are all conquered"— *Agricola*, chapter 12. "But in the province itself there were always some of the people who were untamed," says Baronius, over whom Lucius could have ruled. But who, pray, were these unconquered peoples? Wretched barbarians, driven from their own settlements, without king or law, dwelling in the most desolate groves and mountains and corners of the

island — over whom no faithful history teaches that any king held supreme rule; nor would it teach it, were Geoffrey to come back to life. Add that this conjecture contradicts every tradition, whether of actual events or invented ones; for it supposes that rude and unconquered barbarians received the faith before the provincials — a fiction against which every monument of ancient history protests, and every historian who writes that, in Lucius’s time, not some wild and rustic folk, but the province itself, embraced the faith. Hence Sabellicus says that “Britain, of all provinces, was the first to receive publicly, by ordinance, the name of Christ” — against which the letter of Eleutherius protests, which represents Lucius as governing the whole British kingdom by the counsel of the nobility. Since, therefore, these grounds are altogether weak, he proceeds, in his answers to objections, to state that he is: “Dio relates that the Britons crossed that wall which had been placed between them and the Roman camps. By which it is plainly signified that Britain, at that time, was so divided that the Romans occupied that part which lay on this side of the wall, while the Britons freely possessed the other, situated beyond the wall — who often, crossing that wall, provoked the Romans to battle. Thus, then, nothing prevents Lucius from having been king of Britain, however much the Romans held part of the island — since he might have been king of that further part, which the Britons freely possessed.”

But this is οὐδὲν ὑγιές [nothing sound]: for, first, the most learned man was deceived by Dio’s translator; for Dio did not write that the Britons crossed the wall, as the Latin version has it, but that certain nations of the island, most hostile to the Britons properly so called, crossed the wall. Τῶν γάρ ... ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἐθνῶν ὑπερβεβηκότων τὸ τεῖχος. [For, of the nations in the island, having crossed the wall ...] — book LXXII; and writers always

distinguish these peoples from the Britons — although it should not be doubted that many of the Britons, or the most ancient inhabitants of the island, spent their lives beyond the wall. It is in that part of the island, then, which lies outside Hadrian's Wall, that the cardinal would have Lucius reign. But how many of our countrymen, pray, know where that wall was built and run? Whoever believes that what is said of Lucius, and of a British kingdom, applies to some petty barbarian king beyond the wall, believes something no one else does. Nor is it doubted whether some Lucius, somewhere in the world, was converted to the faith of Christ, but whether such a king as this — one who governed a British kingdom under God alone, and whom Eleutherius, bishop of Rome, was to instruct in the administration of the kingdom — publicly embraced the Christian faith. To say nothing of Geoffrey's archflamens and flamens, which this fiction, along with London, York, and the City of the Legions, or Caerleon, casts out beyond Hadrian's Wall. Who, pray, ever heard that Fugatius and Damian, passing by the Roman province, which embraced almost the whole present kingdom of England and Wales, betook themselves to the barbarians beyond the wall? This too utterly overturns that fable: that it is most certain and most well-known that those barbarous nations who held the trans-mural parts of the island did not submit to the yoke of Christ until long afterwards, and after provincial Britain had for some centuries already publicly received the Christian faith — a fact sufficiently established from Gildas alone, in his *On the Ruin of Britain*.

In the third place, then, but only in passing, and as if scarcely believing it himself, the cardinal adds: "Moreover, this Lucius could also have been some petty king, set up in Britain under Roman dominion, and obedient to the Roman empire." Although he dispatches this answer in a single word, as

though scarcely to be compared with what he had set forth above, it is nevertheless most certain that the whole history lacks not only credibility and probability, but even the colour of truth, unless it is sought from this quarter. Let us see, then, briefly, whether even this can in any way be reconciled with what is said of Lucius, and what the letter of Eleutherius proclaims concerning him. First, then, among the approved historians who have written of British affairs — Dio, Julius Capitolinus, and Lampridius — there is the deepest silence concerning any such petty king; nor is anything said by them that would suggest that there was, in the whole province, any petty king possessed of royal authority; indeed, they so describe the state and condition of those times as to indicate that there was none. Then, the letter asserts that Lucius wrote to Eleutherius to have the Roman laws sent to him — a thing which, while none of the trans-mural peoples, most hostile to the very name of Rome, would have done, so no one among the provincials had need to send envoys to Rome to bring back laws which they saw expounded and administered throughout the whole province by its highest officials. Indeed, the poet suggests that the Britons were thoroughly versed in Roman law long before this time: “Eloquent Gaul has taught the Britons to plead cases.” Nor did those petty kings, whom the Romans tolerated anywhere as instruments of servitude, have such power over their subjects that it lay within their own discretion which laws they should use; it is even ridiculous that a petty king under Roman dominion, who, as the cardinal puts it, “obeyed the Roman empire”, should have sought imperial laws from the bishop of Rome. But what has this to do with the Lucius of Eleutherius — not to mention of Geoffrey — who is set over the whole kingdom of Britain as the vicar of God, subject to him alone, and administering it by the counsel of his subjects? Then, this

supposititious Eleutherius, whose letter savours not at all of the spirit of those most ancient times, condemns and rejects the imperial laws, as unsuited to the civil administration of a kingdom — a thing the true Eleutherius would neither have done, nor dared to do. For my own part, I would by no means deny that some Lucius, perhaps sprung of royal blood, and of the greatest authority even among the Britons, took up the profession of the Christian religion about that time, and promoted the faith to the best of his ability. But that the fabulists have transformed him into a great king — and, because it was well known that no one succeeded him in a kingdom, into an ἄτεκνον [childless] one — and that the letter said to be from Eleutherius to him is fictitious, no one, I think, will deny, who turns his mind away from inveterate prejudices toward the knowledge and consideration of the truth.

1. Claude supplied θεοῦς.
2. Claude supplied Θεολόγους.

CHAPTER XII. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY. CHAPTER X.

*K*nowledge of the true God — he who alone can be known was called unknown — the well-known δεισιδαιμονία [superstitiousness] of the city of Athens — the city's division according to the names and worship of idols — a twofold superstition among the Jews — what πάγος [hill] signifies — most nations acknowledge one natural God — Antisthenes, the Brahmins — Sophocles — Menander — the books of Numa found, and burned — Valerius Soranus — Orpheus — Homer — Prudentius — the name of seven letters.

I. Amid this darkness, and this confusion of all things and all religions, it is plain that very many retained some knowledge and memory of the one true God — infinitely removed from all those fictitious gods whom they superstitiously worshipped. This the writings of almost all the historians and philosophers teach. For how few of the ancient sages are there who do not celebrate some divine nature, existing above all things, ruling all, preserving all, and disposing all things at its own pleasure? Yet although this true God alone displays τὸ γνωστόν [that which is knowable] of himself

in all things — to such a degree that he alone can be known, because he alone truly is, and can in no way be wholly unknown, because he is God — nevertheless, because men did not think fit to retain the knowledge of this one true God, he alone was called ἄγνωστος [unknown]. Whence, whenever mention had to be made of the God of the Jews, it was customary to add, Ὅστις ποτε οὗτός ἐστιν [whoever he finally is] — as in Dio, *History*, book 36. And, Νῆ τὸν ἄγνωστον ἐν Ἀθήναις. [By the unknown god at Athens.] — in Lucian's *Philopatris*. Καὶ ταῦτα Ἀθήνησιν, οὗ ἄγνώστων δαιμόνων βωμοὶ ἱδρύνται [And this at Athens, where altars to unknown deities have been set up] — as in Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, book VI, chapter 2: “And this at Athens, where altars have been set up to unknown gods.” The inscription had “gods” (θεῶν); Philostratus substituted “spirits” (δαιμόνων), after the manner of the Pythagoreans. The rise of this cult is attributed to Socrates, who, as Justin attests, *First Apology*, “exhorted the Athenians” πρὸς θεοῦ τοῦ ἄγνώστου αὐτοῦς διὰ λόγου ζητήσεως ἐπίγνωσιν προουτρέπετο — “he exhorted them to the knowledge of that unknown God, through the inquiry of reason.”

II. But whatever Socrates did, it is most certain that Paul seized his occasion, from the inscription of the Altar of Epimenides — which, among others, was dedicated θεῷ ἄγνώστῳ [to the unknown god] — for proclaiming the true God. And this was at Athens, where there was scarcely anything but the sacred, since the city itself was ὅλη βωμός, ὅλη θύμα θεοῖς, καὶ ἀνάθεμα [wholly an altar, wholly a sacrifice to the gods, and a votive offering] — as Xenophon attests, *On the Constitution of the Athenians*. For they divided the whole city into parts distinguished by the names of the gods: 1. Κρόνου Πάγος [the Hill of Cronos]; 2. Πᾶνος Πάγος [the Hill of Pan]; 3. Ποσειδῶνος Πάγος [the Hill of Poseidon]; 4. Ἄρειος

Πάγος [the Hill of Ares, the Areopagus]; 5. Ἑρμοῦ Πάγος [the Hill of Hermes] — thus they constituted the city. Now πάγος among the Greeks does not signify a Latin *pagus* [village], but a rock. The quarters of the city were so named because upon each was set some stone (that is, a pillar or stele) consecrated to this or that idol; whence the use of the word was first extended to signify some part of the city. The same thing was done at Jerusalem as at Athens: Jeremiah 11:13, “For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, altars to burn incense unto Baal.”

III. Nor were altars to the unknown God set up at Athens alone: Πρὸς αὐτῷ δὲ ἐστὶν ἀγνώστων θεῶν βωμός [Near it also is an altar of the unknown gods] — Pausanias, in his *Eliaca*. That this unknown God was one alone, they have sometimes confessed. “The nations have many gods, but one natural God,” said Antisthenes, in Cicero’s *On the Nature of the Gods*. “That great living thing, and the soul of the world,” said the Pythagoreans. To this God all assigned, at the very least, the supreme place in the heavens. So the Brahmins instruct Apollonius, in Philostratus, book III, chapter 11: Τὴν μὲν γὰρ δὴ πρώτην καὶ τελειωτάτην ἔδραν ἀποδοτέον θεῷ γενέτορι τοῦδε τοῦ ζώου, τοῖς δὲ ὑπ’ ἐκείνῃ θεοῖς, οἱ τὰ μέρη αὐτοῦ κυβερνῶσι. [For the first and most perfect seat must be given to the god who is the begetter of this living creature; and the second to the gods beneath him, who govern its parts.]

IV. Indeed, some, under the guidance and auspices of reason, went so far as to think that, for the sake of this one Maker-God, all idolatrous worship ought to be cast aside. Excellently Sophocles — see the *Fragments*:

Εἷς ταῖς ἀληθείαισιν, εἷς ἔστιν θεός, etc. [In truth there is one, one only God, etc.]

— that is:

*“There is one God, who alone built the fabric of heaven,
the dark-blue back of the sea, and the unbridled winds.*

*But we, poor wretches, wandering in heart,
have fashioned for ourselves a solace for our calamities:
images of the gods, of stone or wood, or wrought of molten gold, or of
ivory;*

*to these, while we sacrifice,
while on the appointed day we render them solemn honours,
we suppose ourselves pious.”*

And Justin, in his *Apology* to the Emperor: Τῷ δὲ καὶ μὴ δεῖν χειρῶν [ἔργα] ἀνθρώποις προσκυνεῖν, Μενάνδρῳ τῷ κωμικῷ καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα φήσασιν, ταῦτὰ φράζομεν [That the works of men’s hands ought not to be worshipped, we say the same as Menander the comic poet, and those who have said the like].

V. It is probable, too, that those books of Numa Pompilius, found beneath the Janiculum in the year 556 from the founding of the city, and ordered burned by the senate in a public assembly — since, upon their being read, Quintus Petilius, the urban praetor, undertook an oath that they tended toward the dissolution of religion — taught the worship of one God, and that without images.

VI. Lactantius shows that the gentiles of their own time held that this one God ought to be called the supreme Jupiter. Hence Valerius Soranus: “Jupiter almighty, begetter of kings, of things, and of gods, and mother of

the gods — one God, and all things.” Concerning him is that most famous golden poem of Orpheus to Musaeus:

Μοῦνον δὲ ἐσόρα κόσμοιο ἄνακτα·
Εἷς ἐστ’, αὐτογενής· ἐνὸς ἕκγονα πάντα τέτυκται,
Ἐν δ’ αὐτὸς περιγίγνεται· οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν
Εἰσοράει θνητῶν, αὐτὸς δὲ γε πάντας ὁρᾶται.
[Worship him alone, the king of this world:
he is one, existing of himself, who created all things,
and himself subsists within them;
never beheld by the light of any mortal’s eye,
he beholds all mortals].

And again: Εἷς Ζεύς, εἷς Ἀΐδης, εἷς ἥλιος εἷς Διόνυσος, Εἷς θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι — that is: “Jupiter is one, Pluto is one, Bacchus too is one, the sun is one, one God in all things.” This is he of whom Virgil, following Homer, so often solemnly sings: “The father of gods and king of men.” They would also have him be Serapis, as in the epigram:

Ἑπτὰ με φωνήεντα θεὸν μέγαν ἄφθιτον αἰνεῖ
Γράμματα, τῶν πάντων ἀκάματον πατέρα,
Εἰμὶ δ’ ἐγὼ πάντων χίλυς ἄφθιτος,
ἥ τὰ λυρώδῃ Ἠρμιοσάμην δίνης οὐρανίοιο μέλη.
[The seven vowel-letters proclaim me the great,
imperishable god, the untiring father of all things;
I am the imperishable lyre of all things,
who tuned the heavenly, whirling melodies.]

For Serapis is a name of seven letters (ἑπταγράμματον), and was so called, as Hesychius attests — unless one should think the name Jehovah is signified by the ἑπτὰ φωνήεντα [seven vowel-letters]. Rightly, then, does

Tertullian teach, *Apology*, chapter 17, that “even the worshippers of idols, when in straits, raise their eyes to heaven, and, forgetting their gods, call by nature upon the one God.” Similar things are found in Justin’s *On the Monarchy of God* and in his *Apologies*; in Athenagoras’s *Legation*; in Clement, *Stromata* III; in Arnobius, *Against the Gentiles*, book II; in Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, book XI, chapter 9; in Theodoret’s *On the Cure of Greek Maladies*, book II. Excellently, in the *Apotheosis*, Prudentius, lines 268–277:

*“Consult the ravings of bearded Plato;
consult too the goatish Cynics, whatever they dream,
and the nerves of argument which Aristotle has bound in twisted coils;
all these, though a doubtful labyrinth and error,
winding about them, leads them astray —
though they too are wont to promise a hen, or a cock,
as though some clinician-god should deign to show himself fair to the dying*

—
*yet, when it comes at last to the rule of reason and of art,
they draw their turbid perceptions, and their quarrelsome arguments,
tangled in rugged measures, together into one single deity.”*

That all these notions of the one God, though held fast by the wisest of the nations, did not lead them to glorify him with worship and obedience as God, the apostle shows most clearly, Epistle to the Romans, chapter 1.

CHAPTER XIII. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY. CHAPTER XI.

A new and pestilent corruption of the notions of the one supreme God — the Homeric Jupiter occupies his place — contempt for the true God — Cicero's judgement concerning the religion of the Jews — the Cretan Jupiter, where born, and where he died — the opinion of Papinius and Callimachus — the tomb of Jupiter in Crete — the scholiast of Callimachus — the shade of Jupiter — Summanus — Dis Pater, who and what the manes were — images fashioned to the likeness of bodies — souls in heaven and shades among the dead — the remnants of Sabaism — notions of the true God confused with the superstition of Jupiter and the Sun — the twelve gods — the origin of the superstition — the worship of δαιμόνια [daemons], ancient and recent — the banquet of the dodekatheon — the nameless throng of gods.

I. The ancient enemy of mankind, abusing this obscure notion of the one supreme God, assailed the idolaters with a new and wonderful piece of trickery. He substituted one of the fictitious gods into the place of the true God, and feigned that all the others either sat beside that Most High, or

served him. This was the Homeric Jupiter, who most foolishly boasts of his power over the lesser deities, *Iliad*, book VIII, lines 5–27:

Κέκλυτέ μευ, πάντες τε θεοὶ πᾶσαι τε θεαῖναι, ὦφρ' εἴπω,
τά με θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι κελεύει.

Μήτε τις οὖν θήλεια θεὸς τό γε μήτε τις ἄρσιν
Πειράτω διακέρσαι ἐμὸν ἔπος, ἀλλ' ἅμα πάντες
Αἰνεῖτ', ὅφρα τάχιστα τελευτήσω τάδε ἔργα.
Ὅν δ' ἂν ἐγὼν ἀπάνευθε θεῶν ἐθέλοντα νοήσω
Ἐλθόντ' ἢ Τρώεσσιν ἀρηγέμεν ἢ Δαναοῖσι,
Πληγεῖς οὐ κατὰ κόσμον ἐλεύσεται Οὐλύμπόνδε·
Ἦ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἡρόεντα,
Τῇλε μάλ', ἥχι βάθιστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον,
Ἐνθα σιδήρειαί τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός,
Τόσσον ἔνερθ' Αἶδεω ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης·
Γνώσεται ἔπειθ' ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων.
Εἰ δ' ἄγε πειρήσασθε, θεοί, ἵνα εἴδετε πάντες·
Σειρὴν χρυσεῖην ἐξ οὐρανόθεν κρεμάσαντες
Πάντες τ' ἐξάπτεσθε θεοὶ πᾶσαι τε θεαῖναι·
Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἐρύσαιτ' ἐξ οὐρανόθεν πεδίωνδε
Ζῆν' ὕπατον μῆστωρ', οὐδ' εἰ μάλα πολλὰ κάμοιτε.
Ἄλλ' ὅτε δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ πρόφρων ἐθέλοιμι ἐρύσσαι,
Αὐτῇ κεν γαίῃ ἐρύσαιμι αὐτῇ τε θαλάσῃ·
Σειρὴν μὲν κεν ἔπειτα περὶ ῥίον Οὐλύμποιο
Δησαίμην, τὰ δέ κ' αὖτε μετήορα πάντα γένοιτο.
Τόσσον ἐγὼ περὶ τ' εἰμὶ θεῶν περὶ τ' εἴμ' ἀνθρώπων.

[Hear me, all ye gods, and all ye goddesses,
while I speak what my heart within my breast bids me.

Let neither goddess nor god attempt to thwart my word;
but all together assent, that I may most swiftly bring these matters to their
end.

Whomsoever I shall perceive minded to go apart from the gods,
to aid either the Trojans or the Danaans, that one,
struck in unseemly fashion, shall return to Olympus;
or I shall seize and hurl him into misty Tartarus,
far away, where is the deepest gulf beneath the earth
— where are gates of iron and a threshold of bronze,
as far below Hades as heaven is from earth.

Then shall he know how far I am the mightiest of all the gods.

Come, try me, gods, that ye all may know:
hang a golden cord from heaven, and lay hold of it, all ye gods and
goddesses
— yet could ye not drag down to the plain from heaven Zeus the supreme
counsellor,
strive as hard as ye might; but if I in turn should wish to draw it in earnest,
I would drag up earth itself and sea withal,
and then would I bind the cord about a peak of Olympus,
and all those things would hang aloft
— by so much am I above the gods and above men.]

So he; all of which Eustathius vainly attempts to accommodate to the doctrine of the Stoics, of Plato, and of others concerning natural things — but he there twists the words of Homer to a meaning of which the poet himself never had the least suspicion, no otherwise than Donatus does in explaining the plots of Terence. Excellently Plato, in the *Phaedrus*: “If anyone, having no faith in the poetic fables, should wish to reduce them by

some rustic wisdom to a fitting sense, he will assuredly need a great deal of leisure.” This Jupiter, however, to whom they assigned the prerogative of supreme dominion, and whatever they judged proper to the supreme God, was none other than that most notorious Cretan scoundrel — or rather the Devil himself, masked under the tradition of that Cretan Jupiter. The greatest of orators, in his speech to the pontiffs *For His House*, chapter 57: ““Thee, O Capitoline, whom, on account of his benefits, the Roman people named ‘Best,’ and, on account of his power, ‘Greatest’; and thee, Queen Juno,” etc. — the Best and Greatest God, the Capitoline image, the husband of Juno, Statius, with the most shameful confusion, imagines to be one and the same, *Thebaid*, book IV, line 782: “As the Berecynthian mother, while she bids the trembling Curetes leap and dance about the infant Thunderer.”

II. And so, although they professed one supreme deity, they utterly spurned the one God as he had actually revealed himself. Hence their contempt for the religion of the Jews, who alone had the knowledge of the one true God. Cicero, in his oration *For Lucius Flaccus*, chapter 28, is the most abundant witness. “Every state, Laelius, has its own religion; we have ours. While Jerusalem still stood” (that is, while Judaea was still its own master, not yet subjected to the Romans — for the city had by no means yet been destroyed at that time), “and while the Jews were at peace, still the religion of their rites was abhorrent to the splendour of this empire, to the dignity of our name, to the institutions of our forefathers — and now the more so, because that nation has shown by arms what it thinks of our rule; how dear it was to the immortal gods, it has shown by being conquered, by being made tributary, by being enslaved.”

III. Hence, concerning that Jupiter of theirs — whom they knew to be a man sprung from men — they were never able to work out any consistent

account. That most learned poet, who acknowledges that his Thunderer was once a child, nevertheless denies that he died, *Thebaid*, book I, line 277: “Yet this honour of a temple is pleasing to thee; guilty Ida is well pleased, and lying Crete, which feigns thy shade.” Which he had drawn from Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus*:

Zeũ, σὲ μὲν Ἰδαίοισιν ἐν οὐρεσί φασι γενέσθαι,
Zeũ, σὲ δ’ ἐν Ἀρκαδίῃ· πότεροι, πάτερ, ἐψεύσαντο;
Κρηῖτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται· καὶ γὰρ τάφον, ὦ ἄνα, σεῖο
Κρηῖτες ἐτεκτίναντο· σὺ δ’ οὐ θάνες, ἐσσί γὰρ αἰεὶ.
[Zeus, they say thou wast born on the Idaean mountains;
Zeus, they say in Arcadia: which, father, have lied?
The Cretans, ever liars: for indeed, O king,
the Cretans built a tomb for thee —
yet thou art not dead, for thou art forever.]

— that is: “Jupiter, they say indeed that thou wast born on the Idaean mountains; Jupiter, that thou wast born in Arcadia: which have lied, father — the ever-lying Cretans? For indeed, O king, the Cretans built thy tomb; but thou art not dead, for thou art forever.” But to acquit the Cretans of the charge of lying about the tomb of Jupiter, they devised no unclever fiction, which the old scholiast on Callimachus records: Ἐν Κρήτῃ ... ἐπὶ τῷ τάφῳ τοῦ Μίνωος, ἐπιγέγραπτο· Μίνωος τοῦ Διὸς τάφος· τῷ χρόνῳ δὲ τὸ τοῦ Μίνωος ἀπηλείφθη, ὥστε περιλειφθῆναι Διὸς τάφος· ἐκ τούτου λέγουσι Κρηῖτες τὸν τάφον τοῦ Διός. [In Crete, he says, upon the tomb of Minos was inscribed: “The tomb of Minos, son of Zeus.” In time, the name of Minos was effaced, so that only “the tomb of Zeus” remained; from this the Cretans say it is the tomb of Zeus.]

IV. On this account Athenagoras, in his *Legation*, mocks Callimachus, because, while believing his Jupiter to have been born of men, he would not admit the tomb of a mortal man. He was foolish, too, when he asked which had lied — the Arcadians or the Cretans — each claiming the birth of Jupiter for themselves; whereas Cicero, book III *On the Nature of the Gods*, teaches that there were three Jupiters, of whom the first two were begotten of Aether and Caelus, in Arcadia, and the third, born of Saturn, in Crete. Philostratus, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, book II, also relates that the sophist Antiochus pleaded the cause of the Cretans concerning the tomb of Jupiter; and Lactantius proves, from Euhemerus, that he was indeed buried there.

V. Pluto himself, too, was nothing other than the shade of the dead Jupiter; whence he was called Summanus — that is, the chief of the shades (*manes*). Whence the beginning of the formula of devotion: “Dis Pater, or the shade of Jupiter, or by whatever other name it is lawful to call him.” For Salmasius most rightly observes, in his *Diatribes on Loans*, that those whose souls had been received into heaven had their shades placed among the dead. For these *manes* were, as it were, images of bodies lacking a soul, which the Greeks called σκιαί [shades] and εἴδωλα καμόντων [phantoms of the dead] — concerning which the most learned Reynolds discourses at length and excellently, in his *Lectures Against Bellarmine*, who contends that an εἴδωλον is merely the image of a false thing, or of something that never existed. This shade Lucretius calls “air deprived of light” book IV, line 369. Thus, the image of Hercules, though he had long since been numbered among the gods, is placed by Homer among the dead. And that image of Achilles, which was raised up from the shades by Apollonius the magician, demanded that sacred rites be established for it by the

Thessalians, as to a god. The soul, therefore, was not the shade which they placed above; nor was it the body, which they saw fail on earth; but an image so fashioned to the likeness of the body that it might be seen and recognised by those to whom he whose shade it was had been known — yet not touched. So Aeneas, in Virgil, *Aeneid* II, line 771: “As I sought her ... the unhappy image and very shade of Creusa herself seemed before my eyes, a likeness larger than the known form.” Deiphobus’s shade, too, was mutilated, after the likeness of the body which Menelaus had cruelly maimed, *Aeneid* VI, line 494: “And here he saw Deiphobus, son of Priam, his whole body torn, his face cruelly mangled.”

This Jupiter, then, whom all confessed to have been born, whom most held to have been buried, and whose shade they placed among the dead, they strove to raise up to the throne of the supreme God, and to drain out into him the entire knowledge of the one true God. Hence, too, in the worship of the nations, and in all their rites, there was ever a wondrous confusion — no less absurd, and no less ridiculous, than that which Plautus contrived in his double *Amphitryon* and double *Sosia*.

VI. Nor does the heap of confusion end here. Among almost all idolaters everywhere, Sabaism — that is, the worship of the heavenly bodies — firmly held some station at least, if not the very one it had held from the beginning. In this the Sun alone was supreme, the highest, almost a Lunar God as well. He too usurped the place of the Most High God. This we have shown above at greater length. Hence a new delusion, a new mockery arose — as though it had pleased the ancient serpent to make sport of wretched little men, enslaved to blindness and to crimes. The notions of the true God, the Cretan Jupiter (or Satan masked in that idol), and the Sun, a heavenly

body — the best and the worst — were all confounded together into one idol.

VII. But this wretched confusion of idolatrous superstition went still further. In heaven, angels — the noblest of creatures — serve the true God, awaiting his nod in all things. Some knowledge of these, too, the nations retained, as in Orpheus:

Σῶ δὲ θρόνῳ πυρόεντι παριστᾶσιν πολύμοχθοι
Ἄγγελοι, οἷσι μέμηλε βροτοῖς ὥς πάντα τελεῖται.

[By thy fiery throne stand the toil-worn angels,
whose care it is that all things be accomplished for mortals.]

But even here that word of Jude, verse 10, holds true: Ὅσα φυσικῶς, ὥς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα, ἐπίστανται, ἐν τούτοις φθείρονται [What things they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves]. These angels they transformed into what I know not what lesser gods — makers of the world, and inferior governors, to be adored and worshipped with the utmost religion and divine cult. In their Hellenism, they substituted for these, in place of God and his angels, the gods of what they call the “greater nations,” who always stood beside Jupiter, and were chiefly deified men — embracing, in place of God and his angels, mere shades of Jupiter and of the gods of the greater nations.

VIII. They imagined, too, that lesser deities, minor stars, served the Sun. Chiefly they invented the twelve signs of the zodiac; hence twelve gods of the second rank — or eleven, together with Jupiter himself — were also admitted into Hellenism. Ennius comprised them all in this couplet: “Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jove, Neptune, Vulcan, Apollo.” Others say that there were twelve besides Jupiter himself, assigned to him as counsellors and assessors. So Seneca: “Jupiter, indeed,

sends the second sort of lightning, but by the counsel's decision; for he summons the twelve gods." Hence, they were called the "consenting gods," because their assent was sought on every decree passed in heaven. Whence that saying of Augustine: "Who can bear it, that happiness has been placed neither among the consenting gods, whom they say are called into Jupiter's council, nor among the gods they call select?" Others reckon eleven besides Jupiter himself: "If Jupiter should bring with him eleven gods besides himself" — Plautus, *Epidicus*, act V, scene 1, line 4: "Twelve gods, more than there are immortal gods in heaven, now aid and assist me", *ibid.*, act V, scene 2, line 10 — by which he implies that there are that same number in heaven. And Demochares: Ὡ Θεόφραστε, Ἀθηναῖοι ἦσαν ἄλλ' οὐχ οἱ δώδεκα θεοὶ οἱ δικάζοντες ["O Theophrastus, the judges were Athenian men, not the twelve gods"]. To all these together altars were erected in many places — in the territory of Ilium: Ἐπὶ τῷ Λεκτῷ βωμὸς τῶν δώδεκα θεῶν δαίκνυται· καλοῦσι δ' Ἀγαμέμνονος ἱδρυμα [At Lectum is shown an altar of the twelve gods; they call it the foundation of Agamemnon] — Strabo, *Geography*, book XIII, chapter 1; and again: Εἴτ' Ἀχαιῶν λιμὴν ὅπου οἱ βωμοὶ τῶν δώδεκα θεῶν [Then the Harbour of the Achaeans, where the altars of the twelve gods are]. And at Athens, in the very marketplace, by the tyrant Pisistratus — as Thucydides attests, *History*, book VI. These, according to Apollodorus, were called in as arbiters between Neptune and Minerva, disputing over the name of Athens, and before them Mars, accused of the slaying of Halirrhothius, pleaded his cause for his life on the Areopagus — that is, "at the rock," so called afterwards from that trial. Hence the δωδεκάθεος [twelve-god] banquet of Augustus, in Suetonius, at which so many guests were present, adorned in the guise of the gods.

IX. The rise of the superstition, according to Herodotus, book II, chapter 4, was from Egypt: Δώδεκα θεῶν ... ἐπωνυμίας ἔλεγον πρώτους Αἰγυπτίους νομίσαι, καὶ Ἕλληνας παρὰ σφέων ἀναλαβεῖν. [They say the Egyptians were the first to devise the naming of the twelve gods, and that the Greeks took it over from them.] But among the Egyptians the twelve gods were nothing other than the twelve signs of the zodiac.

X. Among these they preferred one, as we have said, infinitely above all the rest, and imagined that all the others ordered themselves according to his will. Whence that saying of Plautus, in the *Casina*, act II, scene 5, line 23: “So long as this one Jupiter is favourable to you, take care you count those lesser gods for nothing.” And Ulysses, of Hector, to Achilles, in Homer:

Μαίνεται ἐκπάγλως πίσυνος Διῖ, οὐδέ τι τίει
Ἀνέρας οὐδὲ θεούς.

— that is: “He rages boundlessly, trusting in Jove,
and reveres neither mortals nor gods.”

These, then, they supposed to perform a kind of mediatorial office, on behalf of mortals, before that supreme God. No scene occurs more frequently among the poets than that of gods of the second rank interceding with the Most High, on behalf of those with whom they had some connection. So Venus, on behalf of the Trojans in peril, in Virgil, *Aeneid* X, lines 18–20: “O father! O eternal power over gods and men! Seest thou how the Rutulians exult? And Turnus is borne through the midst upon his splendid horses?” Such too are those words of Pindar, *Pythian* VI, line 23:

Μάλιστα μὲν Κρονίδαν,
Βαρύοπα στεροπᾶν κεραυνῶν τε πρύτανιν,
Θεῶν σέβεσθαι.

[Above all, to reverence the son of Cronos,
deep-voiced lord of lightnings and of thunders,
among the gods.]

The mediators themselves, moreover, mortals pursued with orations and with prayers — just as still today, among the Papists, is practised the worship of δαιμόνια [lesser divine beings] — on which the most learned Mede's *Discourse on the Apostasy of the Latter Times* should be consulted. And thus, God and the angels, the sun and the signs of the zodiac, the Cretan Jupiter, and other dead men, being confounded together by a dreadful madness of superstition, all notions of the one God were rendered utterly corrupt, vain, and useless.

XI. There is no need for us to say anything further concerning the remaining rabble of gods, whose origin is most uncertain. Plautus distributes them into the upper gods, the lower gods, and those in between; elsewhere into the great, the least, and the household gods. Ovid calls them the “plebs of the upper gods,” in the *Ibis*, line 79: “You too, plebs of the upper gods — Fauns, and Satyrs, and Lares, and rivers, and Nymphs, and the race of demigods.” In fashioning fables about these, the ancients scarcely ever agreed among themselves anywhere; hence Pausanias, in his *Boeotica*, having recounted the opinion of the Thebans concerning certain gods, adds: Καὶ Μεγαρεῦσιν ἐς αὐτὴν οὐχ ὁμολογοῦσι· διάφορα καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ, ὥς τὸ πολὺ, ἀλλήλοις λέγουσιν Ἕλληνες. [Nor do the Megarians agree with this; and the rest of the Greeks generally say different things from one another concerning them.] — that is: “The Greeks generally disagree among themselves about these matters.” They distributed them all into fixed classes, assigning some to heaven, who were called ὑπερουράνιοι [above heaven], ἐνουράνιοι [within heaven], and ἐπουράνιοι [heavenly];

some to the air, who were ἐναιθέριοι [in the ether] and ἐναέριοι [in the air]; others to earth and sea, who were commonly called ἐπίγειοι [earthly], and, more specifically, ἐπιχθόνιοι [of the land], ἐνάλιοι [of the sea], θαλάττιοι [maritime], ἐνθαλάττιοι [in the sea]; others to the underworld, who were called ὑπόγειοι [subterranean], χθόνιοι [chthonic], ὑποχθόνιοι, καταχθόνιοι [beneath the earth]; and they were named too from their particular offices and cares: ἐστιοῦχοι [hearth-keepers], πολιοῦχοι [city-keepers], πατρῶοι [ancestral], ξένιοι [of hospitality], πατριοι [paternal], ἀγοραῖοι [of the marketplace], ἐπικάρπιοι [of the harvest], στράτιοι [of the army], τροπαιοῦχοι [trophy-bearers], ἱκέσιοι [of suppliants], τρόπαιοι, ἀποτρόπαιοι [averters of evil], λύσιοι [releasers], καθάρσιοι [purifiers], σωτῆρες [saviours], ἀσφάλειοι [securers], παλαμναῖοι [avengers of bloodshed], προστρόπαιοι [of supplication], γενέθλιοι [of birth], γαμήλιοι [of marriage], and so forth. There is scarcely anyone who does not know that Popery has carried this whole apparatus of the pagan stage over into the Christian religion.

CHAPTER XIV. OR, ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF IDOLATRY. CHAPTER XII.

The progress of idolatry into every kind of confusion — the peculiar gods adopted by each nation for itself — the αὐτοθεῖσμός [self-deification] of very many — the ἐκθέωσις [deification] of Alexander among the Lacedaemonians — the fable of Tiberius wishing to number Christ among the gods — in fashioning images, and in painting the gods, every sense of religion despised — the madness of the Egyptians — penalties established by law against foreign gods, inflicted only upon the worshippers of the one true God — the truly golden words of Justin Martyr.

I. We have spoken of those whom the multitude of idolaters, by common and universal consent, religiously venerated throughout almost the whole world. As polytheism grew ever stronger, every nation, every city, all peoples, adopted for themselves whatever gods they pleased. Whether in earnest or in jest, publicly or privately, from ancient tradition or on the strength of present authority, out of vain affections — everywhere the most abundant crop of deities sprang up. Pausanias relates these origins of new gods, *Attica*, book I: Θεὸν ... δὲ Ἀμφιάραον πρώτοις Ὀρωπίοις κατέστη

νομίζειν· ὕστερον δὲ καὶ πάντες Ἕλληνας ἡγῶνται· καταλέξει δὲ καὶ ἄλλους ἔχω γενομένους τότε ἀνθρώπους, οἳ θεῶν Ἕλλησι τιμὰς ἔχουσι, τοῖς δὲ ἀνάκεινται πόλεις — that is: “The Oropians were the first of all to number Amphiaraus among the gods, whom the rest of the Greeks afterward followed. I can also enumerate others, who, though formerly men, the Greeks have honoured as divine, and to whom cities have even been consecrated.” For everywhere the custom eventually prevailed that, whenever anyone had pleased mankind, he became a god; for every people had the right to number in the ranks of the gods whomsoever they pleased. And hence no small controversy arose between the Roman tax-farmers and the Greeks. For since it was provided by the censorial law that the land of the immortal gods should not pay tribute, the tax-farmers stoutly denied that any who had once been men were immortal — as Marcus Tullius attests, *On the Nature of the Gods*, book III.

II. Alexander too, and Caligula, Claudius, Domitian, and other monsters of wickedness, wished to be reckoned gods while living — careless, perhaps, of what they should be once dead, among the shades below. Callisthenes, in Curtius, elegantly mocks this madness: “So then,” he says, “you and I, Cleo, are to make gods? Is the king to receive the authority of his own divinity from us? I should like to see your power tested: make some man a king, if you can make him a god — it is easier to bestow an empire than the heavens” — Quintus Curtius, book VIII, chapter 5. Against the Lacedaemonians, however, for denying him the right of Deity, force was threatened, until they admitted him by that custom which Cicero denies to have been lawful — he who so vehemently attacks the Clodian dedication of his own house. “Since Alexander wishes to be a god, let him be a god.” The Athenians, too, at that same time, fined the orator Demades ten talents,

because he had tried to persuade them to acknowledge Alexander as a god — as Athenaeus attests, book V — although they themselves afterwards paid divine honours, while he was yet living and present, to Demetrius Poliorcetes, who was but the smallest fraction of an Alexander. Claudius's αὐτοθεῖσμός [self-deification] vanished at the sound of thunder; for, fleeing into his tent, he said, “This is a god — not Claudius.”

III. From this custom among the nations there arose a fable: that Tiberius attempted to number Christ among the Roman gods, but, the senate refusing, abandoned the proposal. Would that it had never occurred to good men to spread abroad fables of this kind! God forbid that anyone hereafter should give them credit.

IV. Kings, too, and Roman emperors, numbered among the gods whomsoever they pleased; and all of them, after Julius, were judged by the senate to be either gods or public enemies. Hence the jest of the dying Vespasian: “I think I am becoming a god.” But since he who was to be reckoned a god generally had, of necessity, to die in the purple, hence Eutropius says of Diocletian, “It befell him — a thing that has happened to no man since the birth of mankind — that, although he had died a private citizen, he was nevertheless numbered among the gods.” This, however, was by no means universally true. Alexander ordered divine honours and sacrifices to be paid to his friend Hephaestion, Curtius, book X. And Antoninus Caracalla himself — a monster among men — was numbered among the gods by Macrinus, who had killed him, as Aelius Spartianus attests. Concerning Hadrian, who first sacrificed his beloved Antinous, that he might use his entrails for μαντείας [divinations] and μαγγανείας [sorceries], and afterwards numbered him among the gods, setting up his images throughout the whole world, there is a dreadful account in Dio's

History, book LXIX — an impiety which Clement, in his *Exhortation*, and Tertullian, in his *Apology*, deservedly attack. Private individuals, too, were permitted to worship privately whomsoever they pleased. Witness the saying of Cornelia to her son Gaius Gracchus: “When I am dead, you shall offer funeral rites to me, and shall call upon the shade-gods of your parent; and at that time let it not shame you to seek the prayers of that god whom, living and present, you left neglected and forsaken.”

V. Here, indeed, this contempt for all religion, and for every notion of Deity, was carried so far that it became at last mere sport to mix the most shameful crimes with these disgraceful superstitions. What outrages were practised in fashioning and painting the images of the gods, let the reader see in Pliny, book XXXV, chapters 9 and 10. Nothing was more customary among painters (of whom Cicero says, “We know all our gods by that face which painters and sculptors have chosen to give them”) than to paint the goddesses in the likeness of their favourite courtesans — as did Arellius, who was never without a passion for some woman. And that image which Clodius consecrated in Cicero’s house, under the name of the Goddess of Liberty, Cicero himself proves, in his oration *To the Pontiffs, For His House*, to have been a courtesan of Tanagra. Thus, nowhere more than in religion itself do they seem to have cast off every sense of religion. Mankind, then, being conquered, the ancient serpent triumphed indeed — and was not content merely to hold them bound to himself, but must further hold them captive for his sport, and set them foully at war and in arms against one another, for the sake of the most absurd superstitions. Such is that notable proof of human blindness and misery, labouring under Satan’s yoke, which the satirist exhibits among the neighbouring peoples of Egypt, *Satire XV*, lines 33–38 — the Crocodile, torch of war:

*“Between neighbours an old and ancient feud,
an undying hatred, and a wound never to be healed,
still burns between Ombi and Tentyra.
On both sides the utmost fury rages among the common people,
because each place hates the deities of its neighbours;
since each believes that those alone are to be counted gods whom it itself
worships.”*

He writes, moreover, that both peoples carried on this fight, begun for such a cause, until the victors devoured the vanquished, lines 77–83:

*“Here one, in excessive terror,
stumbles headlong in his flight, and is caught;
and he, cut into countless pieces and morsels,
so that one dead man might suffice for many, is devoured,
bones and all gnawed away, by the victorious mob;
nor did they cook him in a boiling cauldron, or on spits —
so long and so tedious did it seem to them to wait for the fire,
content instead with the raw corpse.”*

I am persuaded, almost with the credit of history, that the poet has related this incredible ferocity of the Egyptians in good faith — moved partly by the inbred and blind fury of so many, still raging today over dissensions in matters of almost no consequence to religion at all, and partly by the crimes of a not dissimilar kind which some, Christians in name only, have themselves perpetrated against the innocent professors of the Christian religion.

VI. But however the idolaters carried on their quarrels and enmities among themselves, in this they all seem to have conspired: to spurn the one true God, and his worship. For although it was provided by law at Athens

that no one should venerate ξένα δαιμόνια [strange deities], and at Rome, by the Twelve Tables, “that no one should have separate gods, nor privately worship new or foreign gods unless they had been publicly adopted” — yet no one can be found to have been prosecuted for violating religion, on account of any other god besides those publicly adopted for worship, except one who worshipped the one true God alone. (Socrates alone is the exception, whose accusation ran: Ἀδικεῖ Σωκράτης οὓς μὲν ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεοὺς οὐ νομίζων, ἕτερα δὲ καινὰ δαιμόνια ἐσηγούμενος. [Socrates does wrong, in that he does not acknowledge the gods the city acknowledges, but introduces other, new deities.] But with the rise of Christianity, this madness of men, and this envy of Satan, broke out with the greatest fury. This blindness and rage the most ancient Christian writer, Justin, most elegantly reproaches to the philosopher-emperors; and with his truly golden words it pleases me to bring this digression to a close:

Μόνοι ... μισούμεθα δι’ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ· καὶ μηδὲν ἀδικοῦντες ὡς ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἀναιρούμεθα· ἄλλων ἀλλαχοῦ καὶ δένδρα σεβομένων καὶ ποταμούς, καὶ μῦς καὶ αἰλούρους, καὶ κροκοδείλους, καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων τὰ πολλά· καὶ οὐ τῶν αὐτῶν ὑπὸ πάντων τιμωμένων, ἀλλὰ ἄλλων ἀλλαχόσε, ὡς εἶναι ἀσεβεῖς ἀλλήλοις πάντας, διὰ τὸ μὴ τὰ αὐτὰ σέβειν. Ὅπερ μόνον ἐγκαλεῖν ἡμῖν ἔχετε, ὅτι μὴ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ὑμῖν σέβομεν θεοὺς, μηδὲ τοῖς ἀποθανοῦσι χοὰς καὶ κνίσας καὶ ἐν γραφαῖς στεφάνους καὶ θυσίας φέρομεν· ὅτι γὰρ οὐ τὰ αὐτά, παρ’ οἷς μὲν θεοί, παρ’ οἷς δὲ θηρία, παρ’ οἷς δ’ ἱερεῖα νενομισμένα ἐστίν, ἀκριβῶς ἐπίστασθε.

[We alone are hated on account of the name of Christ; and though we do nothing wrong, we are put to death as though we were sinners — while others, elsewhere, worship trees, and rivers, and mice, and cats, and crocodiles, and many of the irrational animals; and not the same creatures

are honoured by all, but different ones in different places, so that all are, in effect, impious toward one another, because they do not worship the same things. This alone you have to charge against us as a crime: that we do not worship the same gods as you, nor pour out libations and the savour of fat to the dead, nor offer crowns and sacrifices to images and statues — although you know exactly that the very same animals are, among some, deities, among others, wild beasts, and among others still, sacrificial victims.]