

## THE CITY OF GOD AGAINST THE PAGANS

By Saint Aurelius Augustine

[Podcast 33 of 50]

BOOK SIXTEENTH.

[continues]

31. Of Isaac, who was born according to the promise, whose name was given on account of the laughter of both parents. After these things a son was born to Abraham, according to God's promise, of Sarah, and was called Isaac, which means laughter. For his father had laughed when he was promised to him, in wondering delight, and his mother, when he was again promised by those three men, had laughed, doubting for joy; yet she was blamed by the angel because that laughter, although it was for joy, yet was not full of faith. Afterwards she was confirmed in faith by the same angel. From this, then, the boy got his name. For when Isaac was born and called by that name, Sarah showed that her laughter was not that of scornful reproach, but that of joyful praise; for she said, "God hath made me to laugh, so that every one who hears will laugh with me." Then in a little while the bond maid was cast out of the house with her son; and, according to the apostle, these two women signify the old and new covenants,—Sarah representing that of the Jerusalem which is above, that is, the city of God.

32. Of Abraham's obedience and faith, which were proved by the offering up of his son in sacrifice; and of Sarah's death. Among other things, of which it would take too long time to mention the whole, Abraham was tempted about the offering up of his well-beloved son Isaac, to prove his pious obedience, and so make it known to the world, not to God. Now every temptation is not blameworthy; it may even be praiseworthy, because it furnishes probation. And, for the most part, the human mind cannot attain to self-knowledge otherwise than by making trial of its powers through temptation, by some kind of experimental and not merely verbal self-interrogation; when, if it has acknowledged the gift of God, it is pious, and is consolidated by stedfast grace and not puffed up by vain boasting. Of course Abraham could never believe that God delighted in human sacrifices; yet when the divine commandment thundered, it was to be obeyed, not disputed. Yet Abraham is worthy of praise, because he all along believed that his son, on being offered up, would rise again; for God had said to him, when he was unwilling to fulfil his wife's pleasure by casting out the bond maid and her son, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." No doubt He then goes on to say, "And as for the son of this bond woman, I will make him a great nation, because he is thy seed." How then is it said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," when God calls Ishmael also his seed? The apostle, in explaining this, says, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." In order, then, that the children of the promise may be the seed of Abraham, they are called in Isaac, that is, are gathered together in Christ by the call of grace. Therefore the father, holding fast from the first the promise which behoved to be fulfilled through this

son whom God had ordered him to slay, did not doubt that he whom he once thought it hopeless he should ever receive would be restored to him when he had offered him up. It is in this way the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews is also to be understood and explained. "By faith," he says, "Abraham overcame, when tempted about Isaac: and he who had received the promise offered up his only son, to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: thinking that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead;" therefore he has added, "from whence also he received him in a similitude." In whose similitude but His of whom the apostle says, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all?" And on this account Isaac also himself carried to the place of sacrifice the wood on which he was to be offered up, just as the Lord Himself carried His own cross. Finally, since Isaac was not to be slain, after his father was forbidden to smite him, who was that ram by the offering of which that sacrifice was completed with typical blood? For when Abraham saw him, he was caught by the horns in a thicket. What, then, did he represent but Jesus, who, before He was offered up, was crowned with thorns by the Jews? But let us rather hear the divine words spoken through the angel. For the Scripture says, "And Abraham stretched forth his hand to take the knife, that he might slay his son. And the Angel of the Lord called unto him from heaven, and said, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy beloved son for my sake." It is said, "Now I know," that is, Now I have made to be known; for God was not previously ignorant of this. Then, having offered up that ram instead of Isaac his son, "Abraham," as we read, "called the name of that

place The Lord seeth: as they say this day, In the mount the Lord hath appeared." As it is said, "Now I know," for Now I have made to be known, so here, "The Lord sees," for The Lord hath appeared, that is, made Himself to be seen. "And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham from heaven the second time, saying, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy beloved son for my sake; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess by inheritance the cities of the adversaries: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." In this manner is that promise concerning the calling of the nations in the seed of Abraham confirmed even by the oath of God, after that burnt-offering which typified Christ. For He had often promised, but never sworn. And what is the oath of God, the true and faithful, but a confirmation of the promise, and a certain reproof to the unbelieving? After these things Sarah died, in the 127th year of her life, and the 137th of her husband; for he was ten years older than she, as he himself says, when a son is promised to him by her: "Shall a son be born to me that am an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" Then Abraham bought a field, in which he buried his wife. And then, according to Stephen's account, he was settled in that land, entering then on actual possession of it,—that is, after the death of his father, who is inferred to have died two years before.

33. Of Rebecca, the grand-daughter of Nahor, whom Isaac took to wife. Isaac married Rebecca, the grand-daughter of Nahor, his father's brother, when he was forty years old, that is, in the 140th year of his father's life, three years after his mother's death. Now when a

servant was sent to Mesopotamia by his father to fetch her, and when Abraham said to that servant, "Put thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the Lord of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son Isaac of the daughters of the Canaanites," what else was pointed out by this, but that the Lord, the God of heaven, and the Lord of the earth, was to come in the flesh which was to be derived from that thigh? Are these small tokens of the foretold truth which we see fulfilled in Christ?

34. What is meant by Abraham's marrying Keturah after Sarah's death. What did Abraham mean by marrying Keturah after Sarah's death? Far be it from us to suspect him of incontinence, especially when he had reached such an age and such sanctity of faith. Or was he still seeking to beget children, though he held fast, with most approved faith, the promise of God that his children should be multiplied out of Isaac as the stars of heaven and the dust of the earth? And yet, if Hagar and Ishmael, as the apostle teaches us, signified the carnal people of the old covenant, why may not Keturah and her sons also signify the carnal people who think they belong to the new covenant? For both are called both the wives and the concubines of Abraham; but Sarah is never called a concubine (but only a wife). For when Hagar is given to Abraham, it is written, "And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife." And of Keturah, whom he took after Sarah's departure, we read, "Then again Abraham took a wife, whose name was Keturah." Lo, both are called wives, yet both are found to have been concubines; for the Scripture afterward says, "And Abraham gave his whole estate unto Isaac his son. But unto the sons of his

concubines Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from his son Isaac, (while he yet lived,) eastward, unto the east country." Therefore the sons of the concubines, that is, the heretics and the carnal Jews, have some gifts, but do not attain the promised kingdom; "For they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed, of whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called." For I do not see why Keturah, who was married after the wife's death, should be called a concubine, except on account of this mystery. But if any one is unwilling to put such meanings on these things, he need not calumniate Abraham. For what if even this was provided against the heretics who were to be the opponents of second marriages, so that it might be shown that it was no sin in the case of the father of many nations himself, when, after his wife's death, he married again? And Abraham died when he was 175 years old, so that he left his son Isaac seventy-five years old, having begotten him when 100 years old.

35. What was indicated by the divine answer about the twins still shut up in the womb of Rebecca their mother. Let us now see how the times of the city of God run on from this point among Abraham's descendants. In the time from the first year of Isaac's life to the seventieth, when his sons were born, the only memorable thing is, that when he prayed God that his wife, who was barren, might bear, and the Lord granted what he sought, and she conceived, the twins leapt while still enclosed in her womb. And when she was troubled by this struggle, and inquired of the Lord, she received this answer: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall overcome the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger."

The Apostle Paul would have us understand this as a great instance of grace; for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, the younger is chosen without any good desert, and the elder is rejected, when beyond doubt, as regards original sin, both were alike, and as regards actual sin, neither had any. But the plan of the work on hand does not permit me to speak more fully of this matter now, and I have said much about it in other works. Only that saying, "The elder shall serve the younger," is understood by our writers, almost without exception, to mean that the elder people, the Jews, shall serve the younger people, the Christians. And truly, although this might seem to be fulfilled in the Idumean nation, which was born of the elder (who had two names, being called both Esau and Edom, whence the name Idumeans), because it was afterwards to be overcome by the people which sprang from the younger, that is, by the Israelites, and was to become subject to them; yet it is more suitable to believe that, when it was said, "The one people shall overcome the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger," that prophecy meant some greater thing; and what is that except what is evidently fulfilled in the Jews and Christians?

36. Of the oracle and blessing which Isaac received, just as his father did, being beloved for his sake. Isaac also received such an oracle as his father had often received. Of this oracle it is thus written: "And there was a famine over the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; but dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. And abide in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all this land; and I will establish mine oath, which I sware

unto Abraham thy father: and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all this land: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham thy father obeyed my voice, and kept my precepts, my commandments, my righteousness, and my laws." This patriarch neither had another wife, nor any concubine, but was content with the twin-children begotten by one act of generation. He also was afraid, when he lived among strangers, of being brought into danger owing to the beauty of his wife, and did like his father in calling her his sister, and not telling that she was his wife; for she was his near blood-relation by the father's and mother's side. She also remained untouched by the strangers, when it was known she was his wife. Yet we ought not to prefer him to his father because he knew no woman besides his one wife. For beyond doubt the merits of his father's faith and obedience were greater, inasmuch as God says it is for his sake He does Isaac good: "In thy seed," He says, "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because that Abraham thy father obeyed my voice, and kept my precepts, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." And again in another oracle He says, "I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake." So that we must understand how chastely Abraham acted, because imprudent men, who seek some support for their own wickedness in the Holy Scriptures, think he acted through lust. We may also learn this, not to compare men by single good things, but to consider everything in each; for it may happen that one man has something in his life and character in which he excels another, and it may be far more excellent than that in which the other excels him. And thus, according to sound and true judgment, while continence is preferable to



marriage, yet a believing married man is better than a continent unbeliever; for the unbeliever is not only less praiseworthy, but is even highly detestable. We must conclude, then, that both are good; yet so as to hold that the married man who is most faithful and most obedient is certainly better than the continent man whose faith and obedience are less. But if equal in other things, who would hesitate to prefer the continent man to the married?

37. Of the things mystically prefigured in Esau and Jacob. Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob, grew up together. The primacy of the elder was transferred to the younger by a bargain and agreement between them, when the elder immoderately lusted after the lentiles the younger had prepared for food, and for that price sold his birthright to him, confirming it with an oath. We learn from this that a person is to be blamed, not for the kind of food he eats, but for immoderate greed. Isaac grew old, and old age deprived him of his eyesight. He wished to bless the elder son, and instead of the elder, who was hairy, unwittingly blessed the younger, who put himself under his father's hands, having covered himself with kid-skins, as if bearing the sins of others. Lest we should think this guile of Jacob's was fraudulent guile, instead of seeking in it the mystery of a great thing, the Scripture has predicted in the words just before, "Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a simple man, dwelling at home." Some of our writers have interpreted this, "without guile." But whether the Greek ἄπλαστος means "without guile," or "simple," or rather "without feigning," in the receiving of that blessing what is the guile of the man without guile? What is the guile of the simple, what the fiction of the man who does not lie, but a profound mystery of the truth? But what is the blessing itself? "See," he says, "the smell of my son is

as the smell of a full field which the Lord hath blessed: therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fruitfulness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: let nations serve thee, and princes adore thee: and be lord of thy brethren, and let thy father's sons adore thee: cursed be he that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." The blessing of Jacob is therefore a proclamation of Christ to all nations. It is this which has come to pass, and is now being fulfilled. Isaac is the law and the prophecy: even by the mouth of the Jews Christ is blessed by prophecy as by one who knows not, because it is itself not understood. The world like a field is filled with the odour of Christ's name: His is the blessing of the dew of heaven, that is, of the showers of divine words; and of the fruitfulness of the earth, that is, of the gathering together of the peoples: His is the plenty of corn and wine, that is, the multitude that gathers bread and wine in the sacrament of His body and blood. Him the nations serve, Him princes adore. He is the Lord of His brethren, because His people rules over the Jews. Him His Father's sons adore, that is, the sons of Abraham according to faith; for He Himself is the son of Abraham according to the flesh. He is cursed that curseth Him, and he that blesseth Him is blessed. Christ, I say, who is ours is blessed, that is, truly spoken of out of the mouths of the Jews, when, although erring, they yet sing the law and the prophets, and think they are blessing another for whom they erringly hope. So, when the elder son claims the promised blessing, Isaac is greatly afraid, and wonders when he knows that he has blessed one instead of the other, and demands who he is; yet he does not complain that he has been deceived, yea, when the great mystery is revealed to him, in his secret heart he at once eschews anger, and confirms the blessing. "Who then," he says, "hath hunted me

venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him, and he shall be blessed?" Who would not rather have expected the curse of an angry man here, if these things had been done in an earthly manner, and not by inspiration from above? O things done, yet done prophetically; on the earth, yet celestially; by men, yet divinely! If everything that is fertile of so great mysteries should be examined carefully, many volumes would be filled; but the moderate compass fixed for this work compels us to hasten to other things.

38. Of Jacob's mission to Mesopotamia to get a wife, and of the vision which he saw in a dream by the way, and of his getting four women when he sought one wife. Jacob was sent by his parents to Mesopotamia that he might take a wife there. These were his father's words on sending him: "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of the Canaanites. Arise, fly to Mesopotamia, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father, and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And my God bless thee, and increase thee, and multiply thee; and thou shalt be an assembly of peoples; and give to thee the blessing of Abraham thy father, and to thy seed after thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou dwellest, which God gave unto Abraham." Now we understand here that the seed of Jacob is separated from Isaac's other seed which came through Esau. For when it is said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," by this seed is meant solely the city of God; so that from it is separated Abraham's other seed, which was in the son of the bond woman, and which was to be in the sons of Keturah. But until now it had been uncertain regarding Isaac's twin-sons whether that blessing belonged to both or only to one of them; and if to one, which of them it was. This is now declared when Jacob is prophetically blessed by his

father, and it is said to him, "And thou shalt be an assembly of peoples, and God give to thee the blessing of Abraham thy father." When Jacob was going to Mesopotamia, he received in a dream an oracle, of which it is thus written: "And Jacob went out from the well of the oath, and went to Haran. And he came to a place, and slept there, for the sun was set; and he took of the stones of the place, and put them at his head, and slept in that place, and dreamed. And behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and the angels of God ascended and descended by it. And the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; fear not: the land whereon thou sleepest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and it shall be spread abroad to the sea, and to Africa, and to the north, and to the east: and all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed in thee and in thy seed. And, behold, I am with thee, to keep thee in all thy way wherever thou goest, and I will bring thee back into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done all which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awoke out of his sleep, and said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob arose, and took the stone that he had put under his head there, and set it up for a memorial, and poured oil upon the top of it. And Jacob called the name of that place the house of God." This is prophetic. For Jacob did not pour oil on the stone in an idolatrous way, as if making it a god; neither did he adore that stone, or sacrifice to it. But since the name of Christ comes from the chrisma or anointing, something pertaining to the great mystery was certainly represented in this. And the Saviour Himself is understood to bring this latter to

remembrance in the gospel, when He says of Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" because Israel who saw this vision is no other than Jacob. And in the same place He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Jacob went on to Mesopotamia to take a wife from thence. And the divine Scripture points out how, without unlawfully desiring any of them, he came to have four women, of whom he begat twelve sons and one daughter; for he had come to take only one. But when one was falsely given him in place of the other, he did not send her away after unwittingly using her in the night, lest he should seem to have put her to shame; but as at that time, in order to multiply posterity, no law forbade a plurality of wives, he took her also to whom alone he had promised marriage. As she was barren, she gave her handmaid to her husband that she might have children by her; and her elder sister did the same thing in imitation of her, although she had borne, because she desired to multiply progeny. We do not read that Jacob sought any but one, or that he used many, except for the purpose of begetting offspring, saving conjugal rights; and he would not have done this, had not his wives, who had legitimate power over their own husband's body, urged him to do it. So he begat twelve sons and one daughter by four women. Then he entered into Egypt by his son Joseph, who was sold by his brethren for envy, and carried there, and who was there exalted.

39. The reason why Jacob was also called Israel. As I said a little ago, Jacob was also called Israel, the name which was most prevalent among the people descended from him. Now this name was given him by the angel who wrestled with him on the way back from Mesopotamia, and who was most evidently a type of Christ. For when

Jacob overcame him, doubtless with his own consent, that the mystery might be represented, it signified Christ's passion, in which the Jews are seen overcoming Him. And yet he besought a blessing from the very angel he had overcome; and so the imposition of this name was the blessing. For Israel means seeing God, which will at last be the reward of all the saints. The angel also touched him on the breadth of the thigh when he was overcoming him, and in that way made him lame. So that Jacob was at one and the same time blessed and lame: blessed in those among that people who believed in Christ, and lame in the unbelieving. For the breadth of the thigh is the multitude of the family. For there are many of that race of whom it was prophetically said beforehand, "And they have halted in their paths."

40. How it is said that Jacob went into Egypt with seventy-five souls, when most of those who are mentioned were born at a later period. Seventy-five men are reported to have entered Egypt along with Jacob, counting him with his children. In this number only two women are mentioned, one a daughter, the other a grand-daughter. But when the thing is carefully considered, it does not appear that Jacob's offspring was so numerous on the day or year when he entered Egypt. There are also included among them the great-grandchildren of Joseph, who could not possibly be born already. For Jacob was then 130 years old, and his son Joseph thirty-nine; and as it is plain that he took a wife when he was thirty or more, how could he in nine years have great-grandchildren by the children whom he had by that wife? Now, since Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, could not even have children, for Jacob found them boys under nine years old when he entered Egypt, in what way are not only their sons but their grandsons reckoned among those seventy-five who then entered

Egypt with Jacob? For there is reckoned there Machir the son of Manasseh, grandson of Joseph, and Machir's son, that is, Gilead, grandson of Manasseh, great-grandson of Joseph; there, too, is he whom Ephraim, Joseph's other son, begot, that is, Shuthelah, grandson of Joseph, and Shuthelah's son Ezer, grandson of Ephraim, and great-grandson of Joseph, who could not possibly be in existence when Jacob came into Egypt, and there found his grandsons, the sons of Joseph, their grandsires, still boys under nine years of age. But doubtless, when the Scripture mentions Jacob's entrance into Egypt with seventy-five souls, it does not mean one day, or one year, but that whole time as long as Joseph lived, who was the cause of his entrance. For the same Scripture speaks thus of Joseph: "And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his brethren, and all his father's house: and Joseph lived 110 years, and saw Ephraim's children of the third generation." That is, his great-grandson, the third from Ephraim; for the third generation means son, grandson, great-grandson. Then it is added, "The children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born upon Joseph's knees." And this is that grandson of Manasseh, and great-grandson of Joseph. But the plural number is employed according to scriptural usage; for the one daughter of Jacob is spoken of as daughters, just as in the usage of the Latin tongue *liberi* is used in the plural for children even when there is only one. Now, when Joseph's own happiness is proclaimed, because he could see his great-grandchildren, it is by no means to be thought they already existed in the thirty-ninth year of their great-grandsire Joseph, when his father Jacob came to him in Egypt. But those who diligently look into these things will the less easily be mistaken, because it is written, "These are the names of the sons of Israel who entered into Egypt along with Jacob their father." For

this means that the seventy-five are reckoned along with him, not that they were all with him when he entered Egypt; for, as I have said, the whole period during which Joseph, who occasioned his entrance, lived, is held to be the time of that entrance.

41. Of the blessing which Jacob promised in Judah his son. If, on account of the Christian people in whom the city of God sojourns in the earth, we look for the flesh of Christ in the seed of Abraham, setting aside the sons of the concubines, we have Isaac; if in the seed of Isaac, setting aside Esau, who is also Edom, we have Jacob, who also is Israel; if in the seed of Israel himself, setting aside the rest, we have Judah, because Christ sprang of the tribe of Judah. Let us hear, then, how Israel, when dying in Egypt, in blessing his sons, prophetically blessed Judah. He says: "Judah, thy brethren shall praise thee: thy hands shall be on the back of thine enemies; thy father's children shall adore thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the sprouting, my son, thou art gone up: lying down, thou hast slept as a lion, and as a lion's whelp; who shall awake him? A prince shall not be lacking out of Judah, and a leader from his thighs, until the things come that are laid up for him; and He shall be the expectation of the nations. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's foal to the choice vine; he shall wash his robe in wine, and his clothes in the blood of the grape: his eyes are red with wine, and his teeth are whiter than milk." I have expounded these words in disputing against Faustus the Manichæan; and I think it is enough to make the truth of this prophecy shine, to remark that the death of Christ is predicted by the word about his lying down, and not the necessity, but the voluntary character of His death, in the title of lion. That power He Himself proclaims in the gospel, saying, "I have the power of laying down my life, and I have the power of taking it



again. No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself, and take it again." So the lion roared, so He fulfilled what He said. For to this power what is added about the resurrection refers, "Who shall awake him?" This means that no man but Himself has raised Him, who also said of His own body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And the very nature of His death, that is, the height of the cross, is understood by the single word, "Thou art gone up." The evangelist explains what is added, "Lying down, thou hast slept," when he says, "He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." Or at least His burial is to be understood, in which He lay down sleeping, and whence no man raised Him, as the prophets did some, and as He Himself did others; but He Himself rose up as if from sleep. As for His robe which He washes in wine, that is, cleanses from sin in His own blood, of which blood those who are baptized know the mystery, so that he adds, "And his clothes in the blood of the grape," what is it but the Church? "And his eyes are red with wine," [these are] His spiritual people drunken with His cup, of which the psalm sings, "And thy cup that makes drunken, how excellent it is!" "And his teeth are whiter than milk,"—that is, the nutritive words which, according to the apostle, the babes drink, being as yet unfit for solid food. And it is He in whom the promises of Judah were laid up, so that until they come, princes, that is, the kings of Israel, shall never be lacking out of Judah. "And He is the expectation of the nations." This is too plain to need exposition.

42. Of the sons of Joseph, whom Jacob blessed, prophetically changing his hands. Now, as Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob, furnished a type of the two people, the Jews and the Christians (although as pertains to carnal descent it was not the Jews but the Idumeans who came of the seed of Esau, nor the

Christian nations but rather the Jews who came of Jacob's; for the type holds only as regards the saying, "The elder shall serve the younger"), so the same thing happened in Joseph's two sons; for the elder was a type of the Jews, and the younger of the Christians. For when Jacob was blessing them, and laid his right hand on the younger, who was at his left, and his left hand on the elder, who was at his right, this seemed wrong to their father, and he admonished his father by trying to correct his mistake and show him which was the elder. But he would not change his hands, but said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be exalted; but his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." And these two promises show the same thing. For that one is to become "a people;" this one "a multitude of nations." And what can be more evident than that these two promises comprehend the people of Israel, and the whole world of Abraham's seed, the one according to the flesh, the other according to faith?

43. Of the times of Moses and Joshua the son of Nun, of the judges, and thereafter of the kings, of whom Saul was the first, but David is to be regarded as the chief, both by the oath and by merit. Jacob being dead, and Joseph also, during the remaining 144 years until they went out of the land of Egypt that nation increased to an incredible degree, even although wasted by so great persecutions, that at one time the male children were murdered at their birth, because the wondering Egyptians were terrified at the too great increase of that people. Then Moses, being stealthily kept from the murderers of the infants, was brought to the royal house, God preparing to do great things by him, and was nursed and adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh (that was the name of all the kings of Egypt), and became so great a man that he—yea, rather God, who

had promised this to Abraham, by him—drew that nation, so wonderfully multiplied, out of the yoke of hardest and most grievous servitude it had borne there. At first, indeed, he fled thence (we are told he fled into the land of Midian), because, in defending an Israelite, he had slain an Egyptian, and was afraid. Afterward, being divinely commissioned in the power of the Spirit of God, he overcame the magi of Pharaoh who resisted him. Then, when the Egyptians would not let God's people go, ten memorable plagues were brought by Him upon them,—the water turned into blood, the frogs and lice, the flies, the death of the cattle, the boils, the hail, the locusts, the darkness, the death of the first-born. At last the Egyptians were destroyed in the Red Sea while pursuing the Israelites, whom they had let go when at length they were broken by so many great plagues. The divided sea made a way for the Israelites who were departing, but, returning on itself, it overwhelmed their pursuers with its waves. Then for forty years the people of God went through the desert, under the leadership of Moses, when the tabernacle of testimony was dedicated, in which God was worshipped by sacrifices prophetic of things to come, and that was after the law had been very terribly given in the mount, for its divinity was most plainly attested by wonderful signs and voices. This took place soon after the exodus from Egypt, when the people had entered the desert, on the fiftieth day after the passover was celebrated by the offering up of a lamb, which is so completely a type of Christ, foretelling that through His sacrificial passion He should go from this world to the Father (for pascha in the Hebrew tongue means transit), that when the new covenant was revealed, after Christ our passover was offered up, the Holy Spirit came from heaven on the fiftieth day; and He is called in the gospel the Finger of God, because He recalls to our remembrance

the things done before by way of types, and because the tables of that law are said to have been written by the finger of God. On the death of Moses, Joshua the son of Nun ruled the people, and led them into the land of promise, and divided it among them. By these two wonderful leaders wars were also carried on most prosperously and wonderfully, God calling to witness that they had got these victories not so much on account of the merit of the Hebrew people as on account of the sins of the nations they subdued. After these leaders there were judges, when the people were settled in the land of promise, so that, in the meantime, the first promise made to Abraham began to be fulfilled about the one nation, that is, the Hebrew, and about the land of Canaan; but not as yet the promise about all nations, and the whole wide world, for that was to be fulfilled, not by the observances of the old law, but by the advent of Christ in the flesh, and by the faith of the gospel. And it was to prefigure this that it was not Moses, who received the law for the people on Mount Sinai, that led the people into the land of promise, but Joshua, whose name also was changed at God's command, so that he was called Jesus. But in the times of the judges prosperity alternated with adversity in war, according as the sins of the people and the mercy of God were displayed. We come next to the times of the kings. The first who reigned was Saul; and when he was rejected and laid low in battle, and his offspring rejected so that no kings should arise out of it, David succeeded to the kingdom, whose son Christ is chiefly called. He was made a kind of starting-point and beginning of the advanced youth of God's people, who had passed a kind of age of puberty from Abraham to this David. And it is not in vain that the evangelist Matthew records the generations in such a way as to sum up this first period from Abraham to David in

fourteen generations. For from the age of puberty man begins to be capable of generation; therefore he starts the list of generations from Abraham, who also was made the father of many nations when he got his name changed. So that previously this family of God's people was in its childhood, from Noah to Abraham; and for that reason the first language was then learned, that is, the Hebrew. For man begins to speak in childhood, the age succeeding infancy, which is so termed because then he cannot speak. And that first age is quite drowned in oblivion, just as the first age of the human race was blotted out by the flood; for who is there that can remember his infancy? Wherefore in this progress of the city of God, as the previous book contained that first age, so this one ought to contain the second and third ages, in which third age, as was shown by the heifer of three years old, the she-goat of three years old, and the ram of three years old, the yoke of the law was imposed, and there appeared abundance of sins, and the beginning of the earthly kingdom arose, in which there were not lacking spiritual men, of whom the turtle-dove and pigeon represented the mystery.

