

**The Irenaues Effect**

# **Against Heresies by Irenaeus A Commentary**

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Acknowledgments.....	4
Introduction .....	5
Chapter 1: His Purpose in Writing.....	8
Chapter 2: His Life and Character .....	9
Chapter 3: The Gospel According to Irenaeus.....	10
Chapter 4: Irenaeus' Statement of Faith.....	17
Commentary Summary: Irenaeus' Statement of Faith.....	47
Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures .....	48
Chapter 6: His Teaching on The Resurrection .....	112
Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter V.....	121
Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter XII.....	135
Chapter 7: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven .....	148
Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter IX .....	158
Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter X .....	174
Commentary Conclusions: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven .....	185
Chapter 8: On the Nature of Man.....	186
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII.....	206
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIX .....	222
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XL .....	231
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XLI.....	237
Commentary Summary: On the Nature of Man.....	245
Chapter 9: The Name Chreistos .....	249
Chapter 10: Baptismal Regeneration.....	250
Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter XVII .....	255
Chapter 11: The Teaching of Marcion and the Gnostics.....	262
Chapter 12: Teaching on the Atonement .....	287
Chapter 13: Refutation of the Teaching of the Transmigration of Souls .....	313
Chapter 14: The Gospel of Judas a Fake.....	317
Chapter 15: Intelligent Design in Creation .....	319
Chapter 16: The Gnostic Doctrine of the Seed .....	322
Chapter 17: The Passion of Christ.....	343
Chapter 18: Irenaeus Believed Jesus' Age about 50 Years .....	349
Chapter 19: Spiritual Gifts.....	355
Chapter 20: The Theory of Apostolic Succession.....	379
Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter III .....	396
Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter IV .....	402
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXVI.....	414
A Summary of Irenaeus' Vision of the Heretics .....	425
A Summary of Irenaeus' Vision of the Church.....	426
Commentary Summary: The Theory of Apostolic Succession .....	430
Chapter 21: The Church .....	433
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIII.....	461
Commentary Summary: The Church.....	463
Chapter 22: Communion .....	467
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XVII .....	479
Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter II.....	498
Commentary Summary: Communion .....	502
Chapter 23: The Priesthood .....	517

Commentary Summary: The Priesthood.....	523
Chapter 24: The Law .....	544
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XII.....	554
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XIII .....	576
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XIV.....	587
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XV .....	597
Commentary Summary: The Law.....	634
Chapter 25: The Spiritual Man .....	647
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIII.....	659
Chapter 26: A Refutation of Two Gods.....	661
Chapter 28: Physical Death.....	672
Chapter 29: The Devil and Governments .....	678
Chapter 30: Free Will.....	685
Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXVII.....	696
Commentary Summary: Free Will.....	697
Chapter 31: Future Events.....	727
Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter XXXIII.....	765
Commentary Summary .....	789
Chapter 32: Faith and Love .....	805
Chapter 33: Repentance .....	807
Commentary Summary: Repentance .....	810
Chapter 34: Gnosticism.....	815
Appendix I: Aeon - Source: Wikipedia.....	872
Epilogue: .....	874
Bibliography.....	880

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I started reading the Ante-Nicene Fathers some time after purchasing the set of ten books on April 7, 2010. I started with the third book containing Terullian's writing and I found myself taking notes on the white pages in the back of the book. I was going to the Walnut Valley Vineyard Church where Mark Maki was the pastor. His wife Julianne assisted him. Mark has been a mentor to me from the time we first met in college at UCLA. I was going to Julianne's Bible study at that time, where Mark and Julianne eventually met. I still had much to work on, but when Mark came, he went right to the head of the class. Mark was on fire for God then. He still is.

I did not start out to write a book. I just found myself taking copious notes. Mark did not encourage or discourage me. I found myself reading and taking notes with every free moment I had. I took notes at lunchtime at work. I spent an hour or two when I got home doing the same. On work trips, on weekends, on vacations, on holidays, I was always writing something. On top of this, I got married in May of 2010. Mark and Julianne facilitated our getting together, and my wife, Kathie, and I have a strong marriage because of them. I must also give credit to my wife who never complained over the four years it took to write this book. She gave me time after work and in between times. She facilitated my writing, making it possible for me to have a peace and space to process my thoughts and feelings. I am so thankful.

As time went on, and I progressed to the final draft, I found myself hearing a voice as it were asking me questions such as, "What about this?", or "That doesn't sound right!", or "Hmmm, are you sure you are done with that?" Mark used to say I knew his sermons better than he did since I did the tape ministry. Yes we did cassette tapes when we started the Walnut Valley Vineyard back in 2000. We progressed to CDs, and then to downloads from the internet. I credit Mark and Julianne with that voice behind me saying, "This is the way."

I must also give credit to Rod Walti, my coworker at Smart and Final, and friend and brother in the Lord. Rod and I do Bible study every day at lunch with as many people as we can get to come. Our friend and coworker, and brother in the Lord, Kevin Kelford, has also been coming regularly, and has stirred and inspired us with his questions. This has been a time for me to process my thoughts about Irenaeus' writing in a real life setting. The feedback I received from these times was invaluable to me.

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## Introduction

Have you ever wondered why the early church took the path that it did? History tells us many things about the early church but it does not tell us why these things happened. My own history is difficult enough to unpack. I was raised in the Roman Catholic Church and was in Catholic School for the most part from kindergarten through the eighth grade. When I was in the eighth grade, I received the sacrament of Confirmation as well. I believed in God. But when I became an adult and was in college, the truth really became important to me. I had to know things for myself, and not just because my mother or father said so. God felt distant to me. I could not just pretend to have faith any more. That is, I could not just believe because the Church said to. Whether God was real or not, I had to know for myself. I had to hear from Him myself. My prayer was, “God, if you are there, I need to hear from you!”

I began my quest for truth in college while still attending Mass every Sunday. I did not want to pretend I believed something I did not. It wasn’t that I didn’t believe. I just didn’t know what to believe. I began to ask questions. I wanted to know what others really believed. Were they just pretending or was God real to them? There was a “Jesus Freak” at the Lucky Market where I worked, first as a box boy and then as a checker. Gary was very friendly in the checkout line, even shaking hands with customers as he met them while ringing up their groceries. He always had a big smile on his face as shoppers came through his line. He was married and had a child and was built like a Mac truck. He actually was a weight lifter. I wanted to cross him off my list of potential truth tellers right away, so I asked him to go get coffee after work one day. He was more than willing since he did that regularly with people at work, or those he met in the checkout line, “telling them about Jesus.” “Have you met Mr. Jesus?” he asked me, more than once. In the milkbox when we stocked milk, on the floor when we stocked shelves, or in the break room, Gary would always want to talk about Jesus.

As we sat in the coffee shop sipping our coffee, I waited for his spiel. But he just sat there looking at me. After about a half an hour, I tried to prod him. “Aren’t you going to give me your spiel?” I asked him. “I don’t have a spiel,” he said to me. “You talk!” Well, that was not what I expected. I didn’t know what to say. But I decided I would not waste the moment so I started to talk, which I really wasn’t sure I could do. As I talked, he just listened. No, he genuinely listened. I could tell. I came from an alcoholic family, and I knew what insanity was. This was something I had never encountered before. His genuineness really struck me.

He invited me to his church that Sunday, and I decided to go, just to check it out. I could still go to Mass later. So I went. It was rather informal, and in a recreation center, not a real church. Chairs were placed around in concentric circles, and people would just stand up and talk about their week, and what Jesus had done for them. There was a prayer at the end, after what I thought was the main speaker. Afterwards, when we met at his house, he had a present for me. He gave me a parallel New Testament with four different translations in it. He told me to read it.

I remember in Catholic School we had a book entitled, “The Bible.” We would cover it every year, as we did all our books, with grocery bag book covers. We never opened this book however. Finally one year one of the students asked the teacher why we had to cover it since we never read it. We just kept it in our desk every year. So the next day the teacher said to get the book out, and we would start reading it. We got through the book of Exodus, reading a little each day and talking about it. Finally we were told to stop reading it, apparently because we might misinterpret it. That was in the third or fourth grade. We never opened the Bible again until the eighth grade. Then we were given a Catholic version of the New Testament, and read only the passages that were the basis of the seven sacraments. And of course, we studied our Catechisms to prepare for Confirmation.

As I think about reading the Bible in the third grade, I distinctly remember, after putting the book away in my desk, I felt something that I didn’t feel when I put my math book away. I will never forget that feeling of freedom I felt inside after reading it.

So as I started to read the parallel New Testament that my friend at work, Gary, gave me after church, I remembered that same feeling. Sure enough it happened again. “What was with that book?” I thought to myself. Every time I finished reading it for the day, I felt a joy I could not explain.

I only understood snippets of what I was reading. As I read through the Gospels, I decided Jesus was a very good man. It would be great if it were true. But how could I be sure? As I started to read the epistle to the

Romans, I drew a blank. Nothing he said made sense. I could not understand even a single word. But the feeling was still there. I tried to locate where the feeling was coming from, but I could not tell. As I started to read Romans again for the third or fourth time, I decided to just read it and not try to understand it. As I read it, the feeling grew stronger. I kept reading and realized that the feeling was coming from what I was reading, yet it was outside of me. My prayer had been answered. God was speaking to me through His word. I began to understand a little of what He was saying. I stopped at Romans 10:8-10, which says **Romans 10 (NASB):8** But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

It couldn't be that easy, I thought. But it was, and is.

I began a quest for truth from that moment until now. Although I only understood a little of what He was saying to me then through His word, I realized that God was real, and that I would understand a lot more if I continued in His word, and not only heard what He was saying, but did what He was teaching me.

As I look back on my quest for truth of over thirty-eight years, I realize I strove to find His pathway and stay in it. I have found much truth in Him, and yet I know there is always more. We never arrive until we see Jesus, and we are like Him. Then we will know as we are known.

Could it be that the early Church was on such a quest, and was trying to stay on the pathway that was shown them by the apostles, and at the same time recover what they had lost by the apostles' absence? The early church had the precepts of what came to be known as the Apostle's Creed, but seemed to be trying to rediscover a scriptural foundation for the many traditions that had cropped up in the apostles' absence. Why else would Irenaeus write such a large volume explaining what he perceived to be the truth the Church held. As we study Irenaeus' writings, we will try to identify the truth that the Church of his time held, and also separate what were merely the traditions which the Church held as well. I define traditions as anything that cannot be supported by the 66 books of the Bible, excluding the Apocrypha. We will go on a quest for truth. Hopefully we will find the truth that Irenaeus so earnestly sought himself. Will you go on this quest with me?

Irenaeus lived between 120 and 202 A.D. He was bishop of Lyons which is located in present day France. He wrote a five book series entitled "Against Heresies." Some fifty-five fragments exist of his writing. Irenaeus quotes the Scriptures more than 1200 times, and many of his quotes are quite lengthy. He quotes 28 of the 49 books in the Old Testament, and 25 of the 27 books in the New Testament. He was a very strong Christian, I feel. He was passionate in his writing, and a genuine seeker of truth, and defender of the faith. He loved truth, as we will see in his writings. Locked in a deadly battle of truth and error with the Gnostics, he was fighting for the survival of the church. In as much as he spoke the truth, he was God's instrument in this regard. Though I do not agree with everything he said, I believe he was a very powerful and effective witness for the truth in his time.

In reading Irenaeus, we see that he never loses sight of his goal, that is, to refute Gnosticism. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with Gnostic beliefs, as I was when I first read Irenaeus, you will learn a little in each segment here of his writings. The Gnostic beliefs are not one homogeneous whole, but vary from author to author so that they are difficult to understand as one complete doctrinal system. I have included a section on Gnostic beliefs at the end of this volume for further reference so that the reader can get more understanding as needed.

Now when we read Irenaeus, we must be careful not to read our own tradition back into his writings. In other words, we must not see more or less than he actually wrote. My method has been to give an extended passage of Irenaeus' writing, sometimes a whole chapter, so that the reader can get a feel for the context. When I quote him, I try to be fair and give as much of the quote as possible so that the reader can get the sense of his writing without having to do too much extra research. His first two books are very polemical and we must be patient when reading him. The good part is coming. I have here in this volume included whatever struck me as important in his writings. At the beginning of a chapter I give an extended quote from Against Heresies. I use a different font so that the reader may know when the quote begins and when it ends. After each quote, I write a Summary portion, and restate what I hear Irenaeus saying in the passage. I then offer my own opinions as well under the Commentary portion.

Philip Schaff comments on Irenaeus in the following excerpt from his book series, History of the Christian Church. He says,

"Irenaeus, who sprang from the Eastern church, and used the Greek language, but labored in the West, holds a kind of mediating position between the two branches of the church, and may be taken as, on the whole, the most moderate and sound representative of ecclesiastical orthodoxy in the ante-Nicene period. He is as decided against Gnosticism as Tertullian, without overlooking the speculative want betrayed in that system. His refutation of the Gnosis, written between 177 and 192, is the leading polemic work of the second century. In the first book of this work Irenaeus gives a full account of the Valentinian system of Gnosis; in the second book he begins his refutation in philosophical and logical style; in the third, he brings against the system the catholic tradition and the holy scriptures, and vindicates the orthodox doctrine of the unity of God, the creation of the world, the incarnation of the Logos, against the docetic denial of the true humanity of Christ and the Ebionitic denial of his true divinity; in the fourth book he further fortifies the same doctrines, and, against the antinomianism of the school of Marcion, demonstrates the unity of the Old and New Testaments; in the fifth and last book he presents his views on eschatology, particularly on the resurrection of the body—so offensive to the Gnostic spiritualism—and at the close treats of Antichrist, the end of the world, the intermediate state, and the millennium." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff , Volume 2, Chapter XII, page 511-512.**

Something to consider...

When churches were planted by the apostles, their converts relied on the presence of the apostle, and the teaching they received from him orally. They may or may not have had a copy of the Old Testament. The apostle could not stay in the same place for very long. As the apostles then moved from place to place, they would receive reports from the various churches that they had planted. As the need arose, and as the Lord led them, the apostle Paul for example would write to the church he had planted and give them further instruction, encouragement, and correction. The church then had more light in which to walk. Since the New Testament was not completed yet, they did not have as much light as they would have when the New Testament was finally finished. Gradually, the writings of Paul, Peter, John, James, Matthew, Mark and Luke were gathered by the various churches and the New Testament began to emerge. When we consider the fact that the Revelation of John was not given until 95 A.D. or so, we can more readily understand that the early churches were in a period of growth, and that their doctrinal knowledge was not complete. Each church began with the oral teaching of the apostle who planted them, and then some time later either received an epistle directed to them or one of the other churches that the apostles wrote to. They would have looked on these epistles as an increase of their knowledge, but not a replacement of the oral teaching that they had already received and come to rely on. It was by this process that the early churches valued their oral traditions as much as the written word. We can see this in Irenaeus' writing. It was only after all of the New Testament had been gathered that the churches realized their true value. By this time, there were many other writings by worthy men, but men who did not have the eyewitness authority that the first apostles had. It took time for the churches to sort out these writings from the apostolic writings. It is now recognized that the Easter letter of Athanasius in 360 A.D., which lists all of the books in the canon of the Old and New Testament, was the time that the churches finally acknowledged that the canon was closed. With this understanding, we can more readily see why the early church developed many traditions that were based on a perception of what was taught rather than what was actually taught by the first apostles. What these traditions were, but more importantly, what the truth of the matter is according to Scripture is the focus of this study.

# Chapter 1: His Purpose in Writing

In his introduction to Book 5, Irenaeus tells us the purpose of his writings.

## Book 5: Preface.

In the four preceding books, my very dear friend, which I put forth to thee, all the heretics have been exposed, and their doctrines brought to light, and these men refuted who have devised irreligious opinions. [I have accomplished this by adducing] something from the doctrine peculiar to each of these men, which they have left in their writings, as well as by using arguments of a more general nature, and applicable to them all. 4449 *Ex ratione universis ostensionibus procedente. The words are very obscure.* Then I have pointed out the truth, and shown the preaching of the Church, which the prophets proclaimed (as I have already demonstrated), but which Christ brought to perfection, and the apostles have handed down, from whom the Church, receiving [these truths], and throughout all the world alone preserving them in their integrity (*bene*), has transmitted them to her sons. Then also—having disposed of all questions which the heretics propose to us, and having explained the doctrine of the apostles, and clearly set forth many of those things which were said and done by the Lord in parables—I shall endeavour, in this the fifth book of the entire work which treats of the exposure and refutation of knowledge falsely so called, to exhibit proofs from the rest of the Lord's doctrine and the apostolical epistles: [thus] complying with thy demand, as thou didst request of me (since indeed I have been assigned a place in the ministry of the word); and, labouring by every means in my power to furnish thee with large assistance against the contradictions of the heretics, as also to reclaim the wanderers and convert them to the Church of God, to confirm at the same time the minds of the neophytes, that they may preserve steadfast the faith which they have received, guarded by the Church in its integrity, in order that they be in no way perverted by those who endeavour to teach them false doctrines, and lead them away from the truth. It will be incumbent upon thee, however, and all who may happen to read this writing, to peruse with great attention what I have already said, that thou mayest obtain a knowledge of the subjects against which I am contending. For it is thus that thou wilt both controvert them in a legitimate manner, and wilt be prepared to receive the proofs brought forward against them, casting away their doctrines as filth by means of the celestial faith; but following the only true and steadfast Teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.

**Summary:** Irenaeus' purpose includes at least these five points:

- Expose the heretics and their doctrines
- Show the preaching of the Church
- Reclaim the wanderers and convert them to the Church of God
- Confirm the minds of the neophytes and guard them from false doctrine
- Help his readers to become followers of the only true and steadfast Teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ

**Commentary:** Without doubt, Irenaeus wants to show the error of the Gnostic teachings and refute them. And he lays down the rule that would describe his method throughout his writing when he says that he first states, “something from the doctrine peculiar to each of these men, which they have left in their writings, as well as by using arguments of a more general nature, and applicable to them all.” And, “Then I have pointed out the truth, and shown the preaching of the Church, which the prophets proclaimed (as I have already demonstrated), but which Christ brought to perfection, and the apostles have handed down, from whom the Church, receiving [these truths], and throughout all the world alone preserving them in their integrity (*bene*),

has transmitted them to her sons." If we remember this statement as we read Irenaeus, it will greatly help us to understand his thinking. It is these statements which express his passion more than anything else.

## Chapter 2: His Life and Character

Philip P. Schaff wrote this about Irenaeus.

"Little is known of Irenaeus except what we may infer from his writings. He sprang from Asia Minor, probably from Smyrna, where he spent his youth. He was born between A.D. 115 and 125. He enjoyed the instruction of the venerable Polycarp of Smyrna, the pupil of John, and of other "Elders," who were mediate or immediate disciples of the apostles. The spirit of his preceptor passed over to him. "What I heard from him" says he, "that wrote I not on paper, but in my heart, and by the grace of God I constantly bring it afresh to mind." Perhaps he also accompanied Polycarp on his journey to Rome in connexion with the Easter controversy (154). He went as a missionary to Southern Gaul which seems to have derived her Christianity from Asia Minor. During the persecution in Lugdunum and Vienne under Marcus Aurelius (177), he was a presbyter there and witnessed the horrible cruelties which the infuriated heathen populace practiced upon his brethren. The aged and venerable bishop, Pothinus, fell a victim, and the presbyter took the post of danger, but was spared for important work.

He was sent by the Gallican confessors to the Roman bishop Eleutherus (who ruled A.D. 177–190), as a mediator in the Montanistic disputes.

After the martyrdom of Pothinus he was elected bishop of Lyons (178), and labored there with zeal and success, by tongue and pen, for the restoration of the heavily visited church, for the spread of Christianity in Gaul, and for the defence and development of its doctrines. He thus combined a vast missionary and literary activity. If we are to trust the account of Gregory of Tours, he converted almost the whole population of Lyons and sent notable missionaries to other parts of pagan France.

After the year 190 we lose sight of Irenaeus. Jerome speaks of him as having flourished in the reign of Commodus, *i.e.*, between 180 and 192. He is reported by later tradition (since the fourth or fifth century) to have died a martyr in the persecution under Septimus Severus, A.D. 202, but the silence of Tertullian, Hippolytus, Eusebius, and Epiphanius makes this point extremely doubtful. He was buried under the altar of the church of St. John in Lyons. This city became again famous in church history in the twelfth century as the birthplace of the Waldensian martyr church, the *Pauperes de Lugduno*."

**History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff , Volume II, Chapter XIII, Section 182, page 748-750.**

## Chapter 3: The Gospel According to Irenaeus

### Book 3: Chapter IX.—One and the same God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is He whom the prophets foretold, and who was declared by the Gospel. Proof of this, at the outset, from St. Matthew's Gospel.

1. This, therefore, having been clearly demonstrated here (and it shall yet be so still more clearly), that neither the prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in His own person, did acknowledge any other Lord or God, but the God and Lord supreme: the prophets and the apostles confessing the Father and the Son; but naming no other as God, and confessing no other as Lord: and the Lord Himself handing down to His disciples, that He, the Father, is the only God and Lord, who alone is God and ruler of all; —it is incumbent on us to follow, if we are their disciples indeed, their testimonies to this effect. For Matthew the apostle— knowing, as one and the same God, Him who had given promise to Abraham, that He would make his seed as the stars of heaven,

3373 Gen. xv. 5. and Him who, by His Son Christ Jesus, has called us to the knowledge of Himself, from the worship of stones, so that those who were not a people were made a people, and she beloved who was not beloved 3374 Rom. ix. 25. —declares that John, when preparing the way for Christ, said to those who were boasting of their relationship [to Abraham] according to the flesh, but who had their mind tinged and stuffed with all manner of evil, preaching that repentance which should call them back from their evil doings, said, “O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [to our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” 3375 Matt. iii. 7. He preached to them, therefore, the repentance from wickedness, but he did not declare to them another God, besides Him who made the promise to Abraham; he, the forerunner of Christ, of whom Matthew again says, and Luke likewise, “For this is he that was spoken of from the Lord by the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough into smooth ways; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” 3376 Matt. iii. 3. There is therefore one and the same God, the Father of our Lord, who also promised, through the prophets, that He would send His forerunner; and His salvation—that is, His Word —He caused to be made visible to all flesh, [the Word] Himself being made incarnate, that in all things their King might become manifest. For it is necessary that those [beings] which are judged do see the judge, and know Him from whom they receive judgment; and it is also proper, that those which follow on to glory should know Him who bestows upon them the gift of glory.

2. Then again Matthew, when speaking of the angel, says, “The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in sleep.” 3377 Matt. i. 20. Of what Lord he does himself interpret: “That it may be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” 3378 Matt. ii. 15.

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us.” 3379 Matt. i. 23. David likewise speaks of Him who, from the virgin, is Emmanuel: “Turn not away the face of Thine anointed. The Lord hath sworn a truth to David, and will not turn from him. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy seat.” 3380 Ps. cxxxii.

11. And again: “In Judea is God known; His place has been made in peace, and His dwelling in Zion.” 3381 Ps. lxxvi. 1. Therefore there is one and the same God, who was proclaimed by the prophets and announced by the Gospel; and His Son, who was of the fruit of David’s body, that is, of the virgin of [the house of] David, and Emmanuel; whose star also Balaam thus prophesied: “There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a leader shall rise in Israel.” 3382 Num. xxiv. 17. But Matthew says that the Magi, coming from the east, exclaimed “For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him;” 3383 Matt. ii. 2. and that, having been led by the star into the house of Jacob to

Emmanuel, they showed, by these gifts which they offered, who it was that was worshipped; *myrrh*, because it was He who should die and be buried for the mortal human race; *gold*, because He was a King, “of whose kingdom is no end;” 3384 *Luke i. 33*. and *frankincense*, because He was God, who also “was made known in Judea,” 3385 *Ps. Ixxvi. 1*, and was “declared to those who sought Him not.” 3386 *Isa. Ixv. 1*. [A beautiful idea for poets and orators, but not to be pressed dogmatically.]

3. And then, [speaking of His] baptism, Matthew says, “The heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God, as a dove, coming upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 3387 *Matt. iii. 16*. For Christ did not at that time descend upon Jesus, neither was Christ one and Jesus another: but the Word of God—who is the Saviour of all, and the ruler of heaven and earth, who is Jesus, as I have already pointed out, who did also take upon Him flesh, and was anointed by the Spirit from the Father—was made Jesus Christ, as Esaias also says, “There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise from his root; and the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of God, shall fill Him. He shall not judge according to glory, 3388 This is after the version of the Septuagint, οὐ κατὰ τὴν δόξαν: but the word δόξα may have the meaning *opinio* as well as *gloria*. If this be admitted here, the passage would bear much the same sense as it does in the authorized version, “He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes.” nor reprove after the manner of speech; but He shall dispense judgment to the humble man, and reprove the haughty ones of the earth.” 3389 *Isa. xi. 1*, etc. And again Esaias, pointing out beforehand His unction, and the reason why he was anointed, does himself say, “The Spirit of God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me: He hath sent Me to preach the Gospel to the lowly, to heal the broken up in heart, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and sight to the blind; to announce the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance; to comfort all that mourn.” 3390 *Isa. Ixi. 1*. For inasmuch as the Word of God was man from the root of Jesse, and son of Abraham, in this respect did the Spirit of God rest upon Him, and anoint Him to preach the Gospel to the lowly. But inasmuch as He was God, He did not judge according to glory, nor reprove after the manner of speech. For “He needed not that any should testify to Him of man, 3391 This is according to the Syriac Peschito version. for He Himself knew what was in man.” 3392 *John ii. 25*. For He called all men that mourn; and granting forgiveness to those who had been led into captivity by their sins, He loosed them from their chains, of whom Solomon says, “Every one shall be holden with the cords of his own sins.” 3393 *Prov. v. 22*. Therefore did the Spirit of God descend upon Him, [the Spirit] of Him who had promised by the prophets that He would anoint Him, so that we, receiving from the abundance of His unction, might be saved. Such, then, [is the witness] of Matthew.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms “This, therefore, having been clearly demonstrated here (and it shall yet be so still more clearly), that neither prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in His own person, did acknowledge any other Lord or God, but the God and Lord supreme: the prophets and the apostles confessing the Father and the Son; but naming no other as God, and confessing no other as Lord.” Irenaeus continues as he adds, “and the Lord Himself handing down to His disciples, that He, the Father, is the only God and Lord, who alone is God and ruler of all;” Irenaeus then concludes, that “it is incumbent on us to follow, if we are their disciples indeed, their testimonies to this effect.” Irenaeus then argues, “For Matthew the apostle—knowing, as one and the same God, Him who had given promise to Abraham, that He would make his seed as the stars of heaven,” referring to Genesis 15:5, “and Him who, by His Son Christ Jesus, has called us to the knowledge of Himself, from the worship of stones, so that those who were not a people were made a people, and she beloved who was not beloved, referring to Romans 9:25, “—declares that John, when preparing the way for Christ, said to those who were boasting of their relationship [to Abraham] according to the flesh, but who had their mind tinged and stuffed with all manner of evil, preaching that repentance which should call them back from their evil doings, said, “O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [to our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,” referring to

Matthew 3:7. Irenaeus continues as he then argues, “He preached to them, therefore, the repentance from wickedness, but he did not declare to them another God, besides Him who made the promise to Abraham; he, the forerunner of Christ, of whom Matthew again says, and Luke likewise, “For this is he that was spoken of from the Lord by the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough into smooth ways; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God,” referring to Matthew 3:3. And Irenaeus thus affirms, “There is therefore one and the same God, the Father of our Lord, who also promised, through the prophets, that He would send His forerunner;” Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “and His salvation—that is, His Word—He caused to be made visible to all flesh, [the Word] Himself being made incarnate, that in all things their King might become manifest.” Irenaeus then concludes, “For it is necessary that those [beings] which are judged do see the judge, and know Him from whom they receive judgment; and it is also proper, that those which follow on to glory should know Him who bestows upon them the gift of glory.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus points out, Then again Matthew, when speaking of the angel, says, “The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in sleep,” referring to Matthew 1:20. Irenaeus then affirms, “Of what Lord he does himself interpret: “That it may be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my son,” referring to Matthew 2:15. Irenaeus then adds, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us,” referring to Matthew 1:23. Irenaeus then affirms, “David likewise speaks of Him who, from the virgin, is Emmanuel: “Turn not away the face of Thine anointed. The Lord hath sworn a truth to David, and will not turn from him. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy seat,” referring to Psalm 132:11. And Irenaeus then adds, “And again: “In Judea is God known; His place has been made in peace, and His dwelling in Zion,”” referring to Psalm 76:1 in the Septuagint. Irenaeus then concludes, “Therefore there is one and the same God, who was proclaimed by the prophets and announced by the Gospel; and His Son, who was of the fruit of David’s body, that is, of the virgin of [the house of] David, and Emmanuel; whose star also Balaam thus prophesied: “There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a leader shall rise in Israel,” referring to Numbers 24:17. Irenaeus then adds, “But Matthew says that the Magi, coming from the east, exclaimed “For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him,” referring to Matthew 2:2, “and that, having been led by the star into the house of Jacob to Emmanuel, they showed, by these gifts which they offered, who it was that was worshipped; *myrrh*, because it was He who should die and be buried for the mortal human race; *gold*, because He was a King, “of whose kingdom is no end,” referring to Luke 1:33, “and *frankincense*, because He was God, who also “was made known in Judea,” referring to Psalm 126:1, “and was “declared to those who sought Him not,” referring to Isaiah 65:1.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues as he adds, “And then, [speaking of His] baptism, Matthew says, “The heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God, as a dove, coming upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” referring to Matthew 3:16,17. Irenaeus continues as he points out, “For Christ did not at that time descend upon Jesus, neither was Christ one and Jesus another: but the Word of God—who is the Saviour of all, and the ruler of heaven and earth, who is Jesus, as I have already pointed out, who did also take upon Him flesh, and was anointed by the Spirit from the Father—was made Jesus Christ, as Esaias also says, “There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise from his root; and the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of God, shall fill Him. He shall not judge according to glory, nor reprove after the manner of speech; but He shall dispense judgment to the humble man, and reprove the haughty ones of the earth,” referring in context to Isaiah 11:1-4. Irenaeus then adds, “And again Esaias, pointing out beforehand His unction, and the reason why he was anointed, does himself say, “The Spirit of God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me: He hath sent Me to preach the Gospel to the lowly, to heal the broken up in heart, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and sight to the blind; to announce the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance; to comfort all that mourn,” referring to Isaiah 61:1. Irenaeus then explains, “For inasmuch as the Word of God was man from the root of Jesse, and son of Abraham, in this respect did the Spirit of God rest upon Him, and anoint Him to preach the Gospel to the lowly. But inasmuch as He was God, He did not judge according to glory, nor reprove after the manner of speech. For “He needed not that any should testify to Him of man, for He Himself knew what was in man,”

referring to John 2:25. Irenaeus thus concludes, “For He called all men that mourn; and granting forgiveness to those who had been led into captivity by their sins, He loosed them from their chains, of whom Solomon says, “Every one shall be holden with the cords of his own sins,” referring to Proverbs 5:22. Irenaeus then affirms, “Therefore did the Spirit of God descend upon Him, [the Spirit] of Him who had promised by the prophets that He would anoint Him, so that we, receiving from the abundance of His unction, might be saved. Such, then, [is the witness] of Matthew.”

**Commentary:** In these paragraphs, Irenaeus is refuting the Gnostic notion that the God of the Old Testament was an angry god, and not the Creator of all things, but only the creator of this world. The Gnostics believed Him to be the Demiurge, and that there was another unknown god who created all things. Irenaeus is stating in paragraph one that this is not the case. Irenaeus thus affirms “This, therefore, having been clearly demonstrated here (and it shall yet be so still more clearly), that neither the prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in His own person, did acknowledge any other Lord or God, but the God and Lord supreme: the prophets and the apostles confessing the Father and the Son; but naming no other as God, and confessing no other as Lord: and the Lord Himself handing down to His disciples, that He, the Father, is the only God and Lord, who alone is God and ruler of all.” It is in his refuting the Gnostics that we see and hear, in Irenaeus’ statements, the Gospel message.

Irenaeus then argues, “For Matthew the apostle— knowing, as one and the same God, Him who had given promise to Abraham, that He would make his seed as the stars of heaven,” referring to **Genesis 15 (NASB):5** And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

Irenaeus continues his argument adding, “and Him who, by His Son Christ Jesus, has called us to the knowledge of Himself, from the worship of stones, so that those who were not a people were made a people, and she beloved who was not beloved, referring to **Romans 9 (NASB):5** And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

Irenaeus then concludes by adding, “—declares that John, when preparing the way for Christ, said to those who were boasting of their relationship [to Abraham] according to the flesh, but who had their mind tinged and stuffed with all manner of evil, preaching that repentance which should call them back from their evil doings, said, “O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [to our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,” referring to **Matthew 3 (NKJV):7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Irenaeus continues as he then argues, “He preached to them, therefore, the repentance from wickedness, but he did not declare to them another God, besides Him who made the promise to Abraham; he, the forerunner of Christ, of whom Matthew again says, and Luke likewise, “For this is he that was spoken of from the Lord by the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough into smooth ways; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God,” referring to **Matthew 3 (HCSB):3** For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said: A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make His paths straight!

And to **Luke 3 (NKJV):3** And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth; 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

And Irenaeus thus affirms, “There is therefore one and the same God, the Father of our Lord, who also promised, through the prophets, that He would send His forerunner;” Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “and His salvation—that is, His Word —He caused to be made visible to all flesh, [the Word] Himself being made incarnate, that in all things their King might become manifest.” Irenaeus then concludes, “For it is necessary that those [beings] which are judged do see the judge, and know Him from whom they receive judgment; and it is also proper, that those which follow on to glory should know Him who bestows upon them the gift of glory.”

When Irenaeus rightly points out to us that “there is therefore one and the same God, the Father of our Lord, who also promised, through the prophets, that He would send His forerunner,” he is showing us the consistency of the Gospel message. This is what the Gospels do. The Gospels show us that it was the one true God who spoke long ago through the prophets that there would be a redeemer, and they then show the fulfillment of their prophecies. The fulfillment of prophecies which were hundreds, even thousands of years before they came to pass, gives us strong confidence in the Gospel message. And there was not just one prophecy but many. Irenaeus is pointing out to us that the Gospels corroborate with the prophecies of old, and prove that the Gospel message is the true. Not only so, but when Irenaeus states that “His salvation—that is, His Word —He caused to be made visible to all flesh, [the Word] Himself being made incarnate, that in all things their King might become manifest,” he is giving us a most certain affirmation of the deity of Christ. And again, Irenaeus shows the reasonableness of God who allows those He judges to see their judge and to “know Him from whom they receive judgment.” Irenaeus argues well that, “it is also proper, that those which follow on to glory should know Him who bestows upon them the gift of glory.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues to build his case against the Gnostics by proving from the Scripture that the God who spoke by the prophets of things to come has signed His name as Jesus Christ by fulfilling those things that He has foretold. Irenaeus quotes Matthew again and shows by the many prophecies that Matthew records, and their fulfillment, that this Jesus is the promised redeemer of the human race.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus thus points out, “Then again Matthew, when speaking of the angel, says, “The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in sleep,” referring to **Matthew 1 (HCSB):20** But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit.

Irenaeus then affirms, “Of what Lord he does himself interpret: “That it may be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my son,” referring to **Matthew 2 (HCSB):15** He stayed there until Herod’s death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: Out of Egypt I called My Son.

Irenaeus then adds, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us,” referring in context to **Matthew 1 (NKJV):22** So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

Irenaeus then affirms, “David likewise speaks of Him who, from the virgin, is Emmanuel: “Turn not away the face of Thine anointed. The Lord hath sworn a truth to David, and will not turn from him. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy seat,” referring to **Psalm 132 (NASB):11** The LORD has sworn to David A truth from which He will not turn back: “Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne.

And Irenaeus then adds, “And again: “In Judea is God known; His place has been made in peace, and His dwelling in Zion,”” referring to **Psalm 76 (Septuagint):1** God is known in Judea: his name is great in Israel. 2 And his place has been in peace, and his dwelling-place in Sion.

Irenaeus then concludes, “Therefore there is one and the same God, who was proclaimed by the prophets and announced by the Gospel; and His Son, who was of the fruit of David’s body, that is, of the virgin of [the house of] David, and Emmanuel; whose star also Balaam thus prophesied: “There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a leader shall rise in Israel,” referring to **Numbers 24 (NASB):17** “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.

Irenaeus then adds, “But Matthew says that the Magi, coming from the east, exclaimed “For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him,” referring in context to **Matthew 2 (NASB):1** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived unexpectedly in Jerusalem, 2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

Irenaeus continues as he adds, “and that, having been led by the star into the house of Jacob to Emmanuel, they showed, by these gifts which they offered, who it was that was worshipped; *myrrh*, because it was He who should die and be buried for the mortal human race; *gold*, because He was a King,” referring in context to **Matthew 2 (NKJV):9** When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Irenaeus continues and adds, “of whose kingdom is no end,” referring in context to **Luke 1 (NKJV):30** Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Irenaeus continues as he adds, “and *frankincense*, because He was God, who also “was made known in Judea,” referring to Psalm 126:1, “and was “declared to those who sought Him not,” referring to **Isaiah 65 (HCSB):1** “I was sought by those who did not ask; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said: Here I am, here I am, to a nation that was not called by My name.

Irenaeus points out that the Lord appeared to Israel, a nation which did not call on His name. Irenaeus here affirms the heart of the Gospel message. That is, God foretold the birth of His Son, who came to die for “the mortal human race.” And God foretold that this Son of God would be the King whose kingdom would have no end. And God foretold that it was He Himself who would be revealed in the flesh and come to those who did not ask for Him, or seek Him, or call on His name.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues as he adds, “And then, [speaking of His] baptism, Matthew says, “The heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God, as a dove, coming upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” referring to **Matthew 3 (NKJV):16** When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Irenaeus continues as he points out, “For Christ did not at that time descend upon Jesus, neither was Christ one and Jesus another: but the Word of God—who is the Saviour of all, and the ruler of heaven and earth, who is Jesus, as I have already pointed out, who did also take upon Him flesh, and was anointed by the Spirit from the Father—was made Jesus Christ, as Esaias also says, “There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise from his root; and the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of God, shall fill Him. He shall not judge according to glory, nor reprove after the manner of speech; but He shall dispense judgment to the humble man, and reprove the haughty ones of the earth,” referring in context to **Isaiah 11 (NKJV):1** There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. 3 His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; 4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

Irenaeus then adds, “And again Esaias, pointing out beforehand His unction, and the reason why he was anointed, does himself say, “The Spirit of God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me: He hath sent Me to preach the Gospel to the lowly, to heal the broken up in heart, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and sight to the blind; to announce the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance; to comfort all that mourn,”

referring to **Isaiah 61 (NKJV):1** “The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn.

Irenaeus then explains, “For inasmuch as the Word of God was man from the root of Jesse, and son of Abraham, in this respect did the Spirit of God rest upon Him, and anoint Him to preach the Gospel to the lowly. But inasmuch as He was God, He did not judge according to glory, nor reprove after the manner of speech. For “He needed not that any should testify to Him of man, for He Himself knew what was in man,” referring in context to **John 2 (HCSB):24** Jesus, however, would not entrust Himself to them, since He knew them all 25 and because He did not need anyone to testify about man; for He Himself knew what was in man.

Irenaeus thus concludes, “For He called all men that mourn; and granting forgiveness to those who had been led into captivity by their sins, He loosed them from their chains, of whom Solomon says, “Every one shall be holden with the cords of his own sins,” referring to **Proverbs 5 (NASB):22** His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin.

Irenaeus then affirms, “Therefore did the Spirit of God descend upon Him, [the Spirit] of Him who had promised by the prophets that He would anoint Him, so that we, receiving from the abundance of His unction, might be saved. Such, then, [is the witness] of Matthew.”

To summarize, Irenaeus explains that Jesus was both man and God. To repeat, Irenaeus states, “For inasmuch as the Word of God was man from the root of Jesse, and son of Abraham, in this respect did the Spirit of God rest upon Him, and anoint Him to preach the Gospel to the lowly. But inasmuch as He was God, He did not judge according to glory, nor reprove after the manner of speech. For “He needed not that any should testify to Him of man for He Himself knew what was in man.” This is a clear affirmation by Irenaeus of the true identity of the Son of God who was both God and man as the Scriptures testify.

Irenaeus rightly explains that this anointed one came to free those “let into captivity by their sins” as Isaiah had prophesied. And truly just as Solomon said, we are all held captive by our own sins.

Irenaeus concludes mightily, “Therefore did the Spirit of God descend upon Him, [the Spirit] of Him who had promised by the prophets that He would anoint Him, so that we, receiving from the abundance of His unction, might be saved.” Such, then, [is the witness] of Matthew.”

Irenaeus testifies to the Gospel message of Matthew. This is the Gospel according to Irenaeus. And I think it is in accordance with the Spirit of God, and the word of God.

## Chapter 4: Irenaeus' Statement of Faith

### Book 1: Chapter X.—Unity of the faith of the Church throughout the whole world.

1. The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations 2786 “Of God” is added from the old Latin of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father “to gather all things in one,” 2787 Eph. i. 10. and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess” 2788 Phil. ii. 10, 11. to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send “spiritual wickednesses,” 2789 Eph. vi. 12. and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.

2. As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions 2790 Probably referring to the Churches in Palestine. of the world. But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth. Nor will any one of the rulers in the Churches, however highly gifted he may be in point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these (for no one is greater than the Master); nor, on the other hand, will he who is deficient in power of expression inflict injury on the tradition. For the faith being ever one and the same, neither does one who is able at great length to discourse regarding it, make any addition to it, nor does one, who can say but little diminish it.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, begins by affirming that, “The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in”:

- 1.) “one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them;”
- 2.) “and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation;”
- 3.) “and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets” the following:
  - “the dispensations of God,”
  - “and the advents,”

- “and the birth from a virgin,”
  - “and the passion,”
  - “and the resurrection from the dead,”
  - “and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord,”
  - “and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father”
- 4.) This was done in order “to gather all things in one,” referring to Ephesians 1:10, “and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess,” to Him,” referring to Philippians 2:10,11.
- 5.) “and that He should execute just judgment towards all;”
- 6.) In order “that He may send “spiritual wickednesses,” referring to Ephesians 6:12, “and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire;”
- 7.) “but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, “As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it.” Irenaeus continues as he further asserts, “She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth.” Not only so, but Irenaeus continues as he asserts further, “For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth.” Irenaeus then affirms, “Nor will any one of the rulers in the Churches, however highly gifted he may be in point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these (for no one is greater than the Master);” But he then asserts, “nor, on the other hand, will he who is deficient in power of expression inflict injury on the tradition.”

Irenaeus then concludes, “For the faith being ever one and the same, neither does one who is able at great length to discourse regarding it, make any addition to it, nor does one, who can say but little diminish it.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus writes that the Church throughout the whole world “has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith.” He then goes on to enumerate the beliefs of the Church. This writing of Irenaeus has been referred to as his Rule of Faith. Actually, it is an early version of the Apostle’s Creed according to Philip Schaff. Here is a quote from Schaff, as background.

“There was at first no prescribed formula of faith binding upon all believers. Each of the leading churches framed its creed (in a sort of independent congregational way), according to its wants, though on the same basis of the baptismal formula, and possibly after the model of a brief archetype which may have come down from apostolic days. Hence we have a variety of such rules of faith, or rather fragmentary accounts of them, longer or shorter, declarative or interrogative, in the ante-Nicene writers, as Irenaeus of Lyons (180), Tertullian of Carthage (200), Cyprian of Carthage (250), Novatian of Rome (250), Origen of Alexandria (250), Gregory Thaumaturgus (270), Lucian of Antioch (300), Eusebius of Caesarea (325), Marcellus of Ancyra (340), Cyril of Jerusalem (350), Epiphanius of Cyprus (374), Rufinus of Aquileja (390), and in the Apostolic

Constitutions). Yet with all the differences in form and extent there is a substantial agreement, so that Tertullian could say that the *regula fidei* was "*una omnino, sola immobilis et irreformabilis.*" They are variations of the same theme. We may refer for illustration of the variety and unity to the numerous orthodox and congregational creeds of the Puritan churches in New England, which are based upon the Westminster standards." **History of the Christian Church, Philip Schaff, Volume 2, chapter XII, section 140.**

There are several Scriptures which support Irenaeus' statements in paragraph one, and they leave us in no doubt that Irenaeus believed in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and that He is Lord and Christ, Savior and King. This chapter of his writing is a very strong statement of his faith. Apparently, Irenaeus believed these truths to be universally acknowledged in the Church in his time, and he did not feel it was necessary to provide Scriptural support for them. However, it is important to know the Biblical truths on which these statements are based.

For point number one, in the **Summary** above, that there is "One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them," we could list the following:

- That God is creator is the testimony in the first verse of the book of Genesis as we read in **Genesis 1 (NASB):1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- It was Moses who received the ten commandments. Topping the list of commandments was the command to worship God alone as in **Exodus 20 (NKJV):1** And God spoke all these words, saying: 2 "I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- That He alone is God was the belief of King Hezekiah as in **2 Kings 19 (NASB):15** Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, who are enthroned *above* the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth."
- And in **2 Kings 19 (NASB):19** "Now, O LORD our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God."
- It was the belief of King David as in **Psalm 86 (NASB):10** For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God.
- It was also the belief of the prophet Isaiah as we read in **Isaiah 37 (NASB):16** "O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth."
- And in **Isaiah 37 (NASB):20** "Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God."
- And again in **Isaiah 44 (NASB):8** 'Do not tremble and do not be afraid; Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other Rock? I know of none."
- And again in **Isaiah 45 (NASB):14** Thus says the LORD, "The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush And the Sabeans, men of stature, Will come over to you and will be yours; They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains And will bow down to you; They will make supplication to you: ' Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.'"
- And again in **Isaiah 45 (NASB):21** "Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.

- As to the fact that God is almighty, this was revealed to Abraham in **Genesis 17 (NASB):1** Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.
- Again in **Genesis 18 (NASB):14** "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."
- And the prophet Jeremiah also testifies as in **Jeremiah 32 (NASB):17** 'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You, 18 who shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God. The LORD of hosts is His name;
- And again in **Jeremiah 32 (NASB):27** "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"
- And this was the testimony of Jesus as Matthew records in **Matthew 19 (NASB):26** And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
- That God is our Father is the testimony of David in **1 Chronicles 29 (NASB):10** So David blessed the LORD in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed are You, O LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever.
- This also was the testimony of Isaiah the prophet as in **Isaiah 63 (HCSB):16** Yet You are our Father, even though Abraham does not know us and Israel doesn't recognize us. You, Yahweh, are our Father; from ancient times, Your name is our Redeemer.
- He is our potter as in **Isaiah 64 (HCSB):8** Yet LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our potter; we all are the work of Your hands.
- And Jesus taught us to pray to God, our Father, as in **Matthew 6 (NKJV):7** And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

For point number two, in the **Summary** above, that there is “One Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation,” we could list the following:

- This is testified in the Gospel of Luke as we read in **Luke 1 (NKJV):30** Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” 34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” 35 And the angel answered and said to her, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*
- Again this is testified to in the Gospel of Matthew as in **Matthew 1 (NKJV):18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall

call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

- And in **John 1 (NASB)**:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- And in **John 1 (NASB)**:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- And in **1 Timothy 1 (NASB)**:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.
- And in **Romans 9 (NASB)**:5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

For point number three, that “The Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets” the following:

- “the dispensations of God,”
- “and the advents,”
- “and the birth from a virgin,”
- “and the passion,”
- “and the resurrection from the dead,”
- “and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord,”
- “and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father”

we could list the following:

- ❖ Regarding the dispensations of God, or the times that God has appointed beforehand...
  - Job’s testimony was that God’s purpose will prevail as in **Job 42 (NASB)**:2 "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
  - Isaiah speaks as in **Isaiah 44 (NKJV)**:9 Those who make an image, all of them *are* useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They *are* their own witnesses; They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed. 10 Who would form a god or mold an image *That* profits him nothing? 11 Surely all his companions would be ashamed; And the workmen, they *are* mere men. Let them all be gathered together, Let them stand up; Yet they shall fear, They shall be ashamed together.
  - And Isaiah says as in **Isaiah 44 (NKJV)**:26 Who confirms the word of His servant, And performs the counsel of His messengers; Who says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited,’ To the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’ And I will raise up her waste places; 27 Who says to the deep, ‘Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers’; 28 Who says of Cyrus, ‘*He is* My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”’
  - Luke records Paul’s address on Mars hill in Athens in **Acts 17 (NKJV)**:24 “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His

offspring.' 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

❖ Regarding "the advents, the birth from a virgin, and the passion," there are a long continuing line of prophecies.

- We start with the prediction that He would be the seed of the woman in **Genesis 3 (NASB):15** And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
- He was to be the promised offspring of Abraham as in **Genesis 12 (NKJV):1** Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
- He was to be the promised seed of Isaac as in **Genesis 17 (HCSB):19** But God said, "No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac. I will confirm My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his future offspring.
- He was to be the promised seed of Jacob as in **Numbers 24 (NKJV):17** "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult. 18 "And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession, While Israel does valiantly. 19 Out of Jacob One shall have dominion, And destroy the remains of the city."
- He was to come from the tribe of Judah as in **Genesis 49 (NASB):10** "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.
- He was to be heir of the throne of David as in **Isaiah 9 (NASB):6** For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.
- He was to be born in Bethlehem, as in **Micah 5 (NASB):2** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."
- He was to be born of a virgin as in **Isaiah 7 (HCSB):14** Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.
- There was to be a massacre of children after his birth, as in **Jeremiah 31 (NASB):15** Thus says the LORD, "A voice is heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; She refuses to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more."
- There would be a flight of Jesus' parents into Egypt as in **Hosea 11 (NASB):1** When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.
- He was to be the savior of the world as in **Isaiah 45 (NASB):21** "Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.
- And in **Isaiah 49 (NASB):26** "I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; And all flesh will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."
- He would bring light to those in darkness as in **Isaiah 9 (NASB):1** But there will be no *more*

gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make *it* glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

- He would heal the sick as in **Isaiah 53 (NASB):4** Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.
- He would be a prophet like Moses as in **Deuteronomy 18 (NASB):15** "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.
- He will bring justice to the nations as in **Isaiah 42 (NKJV):1** "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2 He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice*, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.
- He would speak in parables as in **Psalm 78 (NASB):2** I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, 3 Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us.
- And we read why He spoke to them in parables in **Isaiah 6 (NASB):9** He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' 10 "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."
- Jesus explained this in **Matthew 13 (NASB):13** Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ' YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; 15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'
- He was to be rejected by men and his own people as in **Isaiah 53 (NASB):3** He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
- He, as Israel's King, would come to them on a donkey as in **Zechariah 9 (NASB):9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- He would offer himself as their king and be rejected as in **Isaiah 53 (NKJV):7** He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. 9 And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.
- All would forsake Him at His death as in **Zechariah 13 (NASB):7** "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.
- He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver as in **Zechariah 11 (NASB):12** I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give *me* my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty

*shekels* of silver as my wages. 13 Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, *that* magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty *shekels* of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

- He was to be betrayed by a friend as in **Psalm 41 (NASB):9** Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.
  - His bones were not to be broken and his garments would be divided and lots cast for his clothing and his hands and feet would be pierced as in **Psalm 22 (NKJV):14** I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; 17 I can count all My bones. They look *and* stare at Me. 18 They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.
  - He would be beaten and mocked as in **Isaiah 50 (NASB):6** I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.
  - And in **Psalm 22 (NASB):6** But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. 7 All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: 8 "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."
- ❖ Regarding His second advent, we could list the following:
- **Isaiah 11 (NASB):10** Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious. 11 Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. 12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.
  - **Daniel 7 (NASB):13** "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
  - **Zechariah 12 (NASB):9** And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.
  - And Jesus Himself spoke of His second coming as in **Matthew 24 (NASB):30** And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. 31 And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.
- ❖ Regarding “the resurrection from the dead,” we could list the following:
- Isaiah prophesied as in **Isaiah 53 (NKJV):10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. 11 He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

- And David prophesied as in **Psalm 110 (NASB):**8 I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. 10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. 11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.
- And David prophesied as in **Psalm 110 (NASB):**1 Of David. A psalm. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
- And Job prophesied as in **Job 19 (NASB):**25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; 27 I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!
- And in the Psalms the sons of Korah wrote as in **Psalm 49 (NASB):**14 As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation. 15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah.
- And Asaph prophesied as in **Psalm 73 (NASB):**23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. 24 With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
- ❖ Regarding “the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord,” we could list the following:
  - In Luke’s Gospel, he records the words of Jesus Himself that He was resurrected in His flesh as in **Luke 24 (NKJV):**36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” 37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38 And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” 40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took *it* and ate in their presence.
  - Jesus continues in Luke’s Gospel and explains that He had to suffer **Luke 24 (NKJV):**44 Then He said to them, “These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.” 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endowed with power from on high.”
  - Luke records His bodily ascension into heaven in the flesh as in **Luke 24 (NKJV):**50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.
  - Then in the Psalms it is stated as in **Psalm 68 (NASB):**18 You have ascended on high, You have led captive *Your* captives; You have received gifts among men, Even *among* the rebellious also, that the LORD God may dwell *there*.
  - And Paul interprets this for us in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON

HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.”

9 (Now this *expression*, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

- And **Hebrews 9 (NASB):24** For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;
- ❖ Regarding “His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father,” we could list the following:
  - **Daniel 7 (NASB):13** “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
  - Luke tells us in the book of Acts that He will come just as He left as in **Acts 1 (NASB):9** And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”
  - And Matthew records His glorious return in the words of Jesus Himself as in **Matthew 24 (NKJV):25** See, I have told you beforehand. 26 “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. 29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

For point number four, that these things were done in order “to gather all things in one,” referring in context to Ephesians 1:10, “and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race,” in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess,” to Him,” referring in context to Philippians 2:9-11, we could list the following:

- **Ephesians 1 (NASB):10** with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,
- **Philippians 2 (NASB):9** For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- The resurrection of the dead is prophesied by Daniel as in **Daniel 12 (NASB):2** “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.
- And Isaiah prophesied as in **Isaiah 45 (NASB):22** “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the

earth; For I am God, and there is no other. 23 "I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear *allegiance*.

- And the apostle Paul writes as in **Romans 14 (NASB)**:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD." 12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.
- And again Paul tells us by the word of the Lord in **Philippians 2 (NKJV)**:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

For point number five, that the Church believes that "He will execute just judgment towards all," we could list the following Scriptures:

- **Genesis 18 (NASB)**:25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are *treated* alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"
- Moses proclaims as in **Deuteronomy 32 (NASB)**:3 "For I proclaim the name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God! 4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.
- This is the testimony of the Psalms as in **Psalm 98 (NASB)**:8 Let the rivers clap their hands, Let the mountains sing together for joy 9 Before the LORD, for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness And the peoples with equity.
- This is also the testimony of Isaiah in **Isaiah 11 (NASB)**:4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.
- **2 Corinthians 5 (NASB)**:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
- **2 Timothy 4 (NASB)**:1 solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

For point number six, that the Church believes that "He will send "spiritual wickednesses," referring to Ephesians 6:12, "and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire," we could list the following:

- **Matthew 25 (NASB)**:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;
- **Matthew 25 (NASB)**:46 "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."
- The apostle John also prophesied as in **Revelation 20 (NKJV)**:10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him

who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

For point number seven, that the Church believes that “He will, “in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory,” we could list the following:

- **Matthew 25 (NASB):**46 "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."
- **John 3 (NASB):**36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
- **Romans 8 (NASB):**28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
- **Philippians 3 (NASB):**20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, “As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it.” Irenaeus continues as he further asserts, “She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth.” Not only so, but Irenaeus continues as he asserts further, “For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth.” Irenaeus then affirms, “Nor will any one of the rulers in the Churches, however highly gifted he may be in point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these (for no one is greater than the Master);” But he then asserts, “nor, on the other hand, will he who is deficient in power of expression inflict injury on the tradition.”

Irenaeus then concludes, “For the faith being ever one and the same, neither does one who is able at great length to discourse regarding it, make any addition to it, nor does one, who can say but little diminish it.”

We must understand that Irenaeus is fighting heresy here. His point is that it is the belief in “this faith,” which is “ever one and the same,” that is unique, and the distinctive of the Church in his time. Irenaeus is highlighting the similarities of the churches rather than the dissimilarities. Certainly there were slight differences between the church of Rome and the churches in Asia for example. In about 196 A.D., Victor, Bishop of Rome, attempted to excommunicate the churches of Asia because they did not celebrate Easter on the

15<sup>th</sup> of the month Nissan (Hebrew for April), but on the 14th of the month of Nissan. Irenaeus was actually instrumental in resolving this controversy. Eusebius of Caesarea (*Church History*, V, xxiv) notes:

"But this did not please all the bishops. And they besought him to consider the things of peace, and of neighborly unity and love. Words of theirs are extant, sharply rebuking Victor. Among them was Irenaeus, who, sending letters in the name of the brethren in Gaul over whom he presided, maintained that the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord should be observed only on the Lord's day. He fittingly admonishes Victor that he should not cut off whole churches of God which observed the tradition of an ancient custom." (source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter\\_controversy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter_controversy))

This controversy was ongoing in the church very early on. Yet, Irenaeus is correct as he states, "the import of the tradition is one and the same."

That being said, even so, we must admit that Irenaeus is exaggerating the extent of the unity of the Church in his time. He is doing so for the purpose of earnestly defending the faith, and is merely stating that all who are of the faith, that is, who are true believers, teach the truths he mentions in paragraph 1. However, in doing so, his statements seem to encourage an unrealistic vision of the church which goes far beyond what was actually taking place in the churches of his time. We have only to look ahead in history to the Council of Nicea to see that such unity as he describes here had not yet been reached. What his exaggeration does is to secularize the Church. That is, we see that the Church, rather than being a spiritual body that is becoming more and more like its head, is becoming an institution that is trying to look good on the outside with a profession of unity that it does not yet have on the inside. Irenaeus is trying to hold the Church together with a lie.

When we have faith in Jesus Christ we are baptized into His body and become members of His Church which is His body. But we do not become perfect overnight. As members of the body of Christ, we start out as carnal, that is, as babes in Christ, and progress to maturity as we grow up into Him in all things. We must drink the milk first, and then the solid food as Paul taught the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):1** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. **2** I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, **3** for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? **4** For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men?

The problem in Corinth was their flesh. They needed to discipline their flesh, and put off the jealousy and the strife and all the other things relating to their fleshly nature in order to become spiritual, and to be led by the Spirit. And this was no less a problem in the early Church as it is in our day. We also must discipline our flesh if we ever hope to have the unity Paul speaks of in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):1** Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, **3** being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

This process of discipline will go on until we all reach complete unity, ready for Christ's coming as in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):7** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. **8** Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." **9** (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) **11** And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

It is Jesus who is building His church as in **Matthew 16 (NASB):18** "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

We must not substitute our own goals for His goal. His goal is complete unity in the Spirit, and the Lord has given gifts to His Church so that this unity will one day take place. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who has given members to the body of Christ to perform different functions so that the members of the body will build up the body and cause growth in the body as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Paul's goal was to present the Church to Christ as a pure virgin as in **2 Corinthians 11 (NASB):1** I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.

This should be our goal as well. Let us discipline our flesh and become spiritual men and women of God. Let us also not walk in blind obedience and service to the traditions of our forefathers. Rather, let us seek to clarify what our forefathers said, and give ourselves the right to become healthier than they were. In this way we will be continually seeking the truth and not just maintaining the status quo. For the truth is very much better than fantasy. And our God is a God of truth who seeks worshippers to worship Him in Spirit and in truth as Jesus said in **John 4 (NIV):23** Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Just for clarification, I am not talking about a new perspective here, but a right perspective that is in conformity with the Scriptures from first to last. We look at more of Irenaeus' writing to form a true perspective of his statement of faith.

## **Book 2: Chapter XXX.—Absurdity of their styling themselves spiritual, while the Demiurge is declared to be animal.**

... 9. Justly, therefore, do we convict them of having departed far and wide from the truth. For if the Saviour formed the things which have been made, by means of him (the Demiurge), he is proved in that case not to be inferior but superior to them, since he is found to have been the former even of themselves; for they, too, have a place among created things. How, then, can it be argued that these men indeed are spiritual, but that he by whom they were created is of an animal nature? Or, again, if (which is indeed the only true supposition, as I have shown by numerous arguments of the very clearest nature) He (the Creator) made all things freely, and by His own power, and arranged and finished them, and His will is the substance <sup>3257</sup> That is, as Massuet notes, all things derive not only their existence, but their *qualities*, from His will. Harvey proposes to read *causa* instead of *substantia*, but the change seems needless. of all things, then He is discovered to be the one only God who created all things, who alone is Omnipotent, and who is the only Father rounding and forming all things, visible and invisible, such as may be perceived by our senses and such as cannot, heavenly and earthly, "by the word of His power;" <sup>3258</sup> *Heb. i. 3.* and He has fitted and arranged all things by His wisdom, while He contains all things, but He Himself can be contained by no one: He is the Former, He the Builder, He the Discoverer, He the Creator, He the Lord of all; and there is no one besides Him, or above Him, neither has He any mother, as they falsely ascribe to Him; nor is there a second God, as Marcion has imagined; nor is there a Pleroma of thirty Æons, which has been shown a vain supposition; nor is there any such being as Bythus or Proarche; nor are there a series of heavens; nor is there a virginal light <sup>3259</sup> That is, *Barbelos*: comp. i. 29, 1. nor an unnameable Æon, nor, in fact, any one of those things which are madly dreamt of by these, and by all the heretics. But there is one only God, the Creator—He who is above every Principality, and Power, and Dominion, and Virtue: He is Father, He is God, He the Founder, He the Maker, He the Creator, who

made those things by Himself, that is, through His Word and His Wisdom— heaven and earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them: He is just; He is good; He it is who formed man, who planted paradise, who made the world, who gave rise to the flood, who saved Noah; He is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of the living: He it is whom the law proclaims, whom the prophets preach, whom Christ reveals, whom the apostles make known

3260 “Tradunt,” literally, *hand down*, to us, and in whom the Church believes. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: through His Word, who is His Son, through Him He is revealed and manifested to all to whom He is revealed; for those [only] know Him to whom the Son has revealed Him. But the Son, eternally co-existing with the Father, from of old, yea, from the beginning, always reveals the Father to Angels, Archangels, Powers, Virtues, and all to whom He wills that God should be revealed.

**Summary:** In paragraph nine, Irenaeus is speaking of the Gnostics as he begins, “Justly, therefore, do we convict them of having departed far and wide from the truth.” Irenaeus argues against the Gnostics as he says, “For if the Saviour formed the things which have been made, by means of him (the Demiurge), he is proved in that case not to be inferior but superior to them, since he is found to have been the former even of themselves; for they, too, have a place among created things.” Irenaeus asks, “How, then, can it be argued that these men indeed are spiritual, but that he by whom they were created is of an animal nature?” Irenaeus then affirms, “Or, again, if (which is indeed the only true supposition, as I have shown by numerous arguments of the very clearest nature) He (the Creator) made all things freely, and by His own power, and arranged and finished them, and His will is the substance of all things, then He is discovered to be the one only God who created all things, who alone is Omnipotent, and who is the only Father rounding and forming all things, visible and invisible, such as may be perceived by our senses and such as cannot, heavenly and earthly, “by the word of His power,” referring in part to Hebrews 1:3, “and He has fitted and arranged all things by His wisdom, while He contains all things, but He Himself can be contained by no one:” Irenaeus clearly affirms that, “He is the Former, He the Builder, He the Discoverer, He the Creator, He the Lord of all; and there is no one besides Him, or above Him, neither has He any mother, as they falsely ascribe to Him; nor is there a second God, as Marcion has imagined; nor is there a Pleroma of thirty Æons, which has been shown a vain supposition; nor is there any such being as Bythus or Proarche; nor are there a series of heavens; nor is there a virginal light nor an unnameable Æon, nor, in fact, any one of those things which are madly dreamt of by these, and by all the heretics. But there is one only God, the Creator—He who is above every Principality, and Power, and Dominion, and Virtue: He is Father, He is God, He the Founder, He the Maker, He the Creator, who made those things by Himself, that is, through His Word and His Wisdom— heaven and earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them: He is just; He is good; He it is who formed man, who planted paradise, who made the world, who gave rise to the flood, who saved Noah; He is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of the living: He it is whom the law proclaims, whom the prophets preach, whom Christ reveals, whom the apostles make known to us, and in whom the Church believes.” Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: through His Word, who is His Son, through Him He is revealed and manifested to all to whom He is revealed; for those [only] know Him to whom the Son has revealed Him. But the Son, eternally co-existing with the Father, from of old, yea, from the beginning, always reveals the Father to Angels, Archangels, Powers, Virtues, and all to whom He wills that God should be revealed.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph nine, it is evident that Irenaeus is speaking to the Gnostics since he identifies them as “having departed far and wide from the truth,” who say that “the Saviour formed the things which have been made, by means of him (the Demiurge).” Irenaeus argues effectively that, “he,” the Savior, “is proved in that case not to be inferior but superior to them, since he is found to have been the former even of themselves; for they, too, have a place among created things.” Again, Irenaeus identifies them as Gnostics as he asks, “How, then, can it be argued that these men indeed are spiritual, but that he by whom they were created is of an animal nature?” Irenaeus then affirms that the “only true supposition,” which he has “shown by numerous arguments of the very clearest nature,” is that “He (the Creator) made all things freely, and by His own power, and arranged and finished them, and His will is the substance of all things.” He is therefore, Irenaeus testifies, “discovered to be the one only God who created all things, who alone is Omnipotent, and who is the only Father

rounding and forming all things, visible and invisible, such as may be perceived by our senses and such as cannot, heavenly and earthly, “by the word of His power,” referring in part to **Hebrews 1 (NASB):3** Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and He has fitted and arranged all things by His wisdom, while He contains all things, but He Himself can be contained by no one.” Irenaeus states clearly and without ambiguity that, “He is the Former, He the Builder, He the Discoverer, He the Creator, He the Lord of all; and there is no one besides Him, or above Him, neither has He any mother, as they falsely ascribe to Him; nor is there a second God, as Marcion has imagined; nor is there a Pleroma of thirty Æons, which has been shown a vain supposition; nor is there any such being as Bythus or Proarache; nor are there a series of heavens; nor is there a virginal light nor an unnameable Æon, nor, in fact, any one of those things which are madly dreamt of by these, and by all the heretics.”

Irenaeus is absolutely clear in who He believes in as he testifies, “But there is one only God, the Creator—He who is above every Principality, and Power, and Dominion, and Virtue: He is Father, He is God, He the Founder, He the Maker, He the Creator, who made those things by Himself, that is, through His Word and His Wisdom—heaven and earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them.” That is, Irenaeus encourages us to make no mistake about this, that “He is just; He is good; He it is who formed man, who planted paradise, who made the world, who gave rise to the flood, who saved Noah; He is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of the living: He it is whom the law proclaims, whom the prophets preach, whom Christ reveals, whom the apostles make known to us, and in whom the Church believes.”

Again, Irenaeus is emphatic, declaring, “He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: through His Word, who is His Son, through Him He is revealed and manifested to all to whom He is revealed.” When he says “for those [only] know Him to whom the Son has revealed Him,” he is referring to **Matthew 11 (NASB):27** “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Irenaeus again leaves no doubt who he believes the Son is when he testifies, “But the Son, eternally co-existing with the Father, from of old, yea, from the beginning, always reveals the Father to Angels, Archangels, Powers, Virtues, and all to whom He wills that God should be revealed.” Irenaeus is fighting the heresy of Gnosticism, and he argues against it potently. He very plainly believes that God is one and the same as the supreme God spoken of in the Old Testament, and that He is the same one Jesus testifies to in the New Testament, which fact the Gnostics deny saying that there is another god behind God as it were.

## Book 2: Chapter XXXV.—Refutation of Basilides, and of the opinion that the prophets uttered their predictions under the inspiration of different gods.

...

4. Now, that the preaching of the apostles, the authoritative teaching of the Lord, the announcements of the prophets, the dictated utterances of the apostles, 3306 The words are “*apostolorum dictatio*,” probably referring to the *letters* of the apostles, as distinguished from their *preaching* already mentioned, and the ministration of the law—all of which praise one and the same Being, the God and Father of all, and not many diverse beings, nor one deriving his substance from different gods or powers, but [declare] that all things [were formed] by one and the same Father (who nevertheless adapts [His works] to the natures and tendencies of the materials dealt with), things visible and invisible, and, in short, all things that have been made [were created] neither by angels, nor by any other power, but by God alone, the Father—are all in harmony with our statements, has, I think, been sufficiently proved, while by these weighty arguments it has been shown that there is but one God, the Maker of all things. But that I may not be thought to avoid that series of proofs which may be derived from the Scriptures of the Lord (since, indeed, these Scriptures do much more evidently and clearly proclaim this very point), I shall, for the benefit of those at least who do not bring a depraved mind to bear upon them, devote a special book to the Scriptures referred to, which shall

fairly follow them out [and explain them], and I shall plainly set forth from these divine Scriptures proofs to [satisfy] all the lovers of truth. 3307 This last sentence is very confused and ambiguous, and the editors throw but little light upon it. We have endeavoured to translate it according to the ordinary text and punctuation, but strongly suspect interpolation and corruption. If we might venture to strike out "has Scripturas," and connect "his tamen" with "prædicantibus," a better sense would be yielded, as follows: "But that I may not be thought to avoid that series of proofs which may be derived from the Scriptures of the Lord (since, indeed, these Scriptures do much more evidently and clearly set forth this very point, to those at least who do not bring a depraved mind to their consideration), I shall devote the particular book which follows to them, and shall," etc.

**Summary:** In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, "Now, that the preaching of the apostles, the authoritative teaching of the Lord, the announcements of the prophets, the dictated utterances of the apostles, and the ministration of the law," all "praise one and the same Being, the God and Father of all, and not many diverse beings, nor one deriving his substance from different gods or powers, but [declare] that all things [were formed] by one and the same Father (who nevertheless adapts [His works] to the natures and tendencies of the materials dealt with), things visible and invisible, and, in short, all things that have been made [were created] neither by angels, nor by any other power, but by God alone, the Father—are all in harmony with our statements, has, I think, been sufficiently proved, while by these weighty arguments it has been shown that there is but one God, the Maker of all things." Irenaeus then explains his purpose as he states, "But that I may not be thought to avoid that series of proofs which may be derived from the Scriptures of the Lord (since, indeed, these Scriptures do much more evidently and clearly proclaim this very point), I shall, for the benefit of those at least who do not bring a depraved mind to bear upon them, devote a special book to the Scriptures referred to, which shall fairly follow them out [and explain them], and I shall plainly set forth from these divine Scriptures proofs to [satisfy] all the lovers of truth."

**Commentary:** In paragraph four, we have a very strong statement of the faith of Irenaeus as he clearly affirms that "the preaching of the apostles, the authoritative teaching of the Lord, the announcements of the prophets, the dictated utterances of the apostles, and the ministration of the law," all "praise one and the same Being, the God and Father of all, and not many diverse beings, nor one deriving his substance from different gods or powers, but [declare] that all things [were formed] by one and the same Father (who nevertheless adapts [His works] to the natures and tendencies of the materials dealt with), things visible and invisible." Taken in summary, "all things that have been made [were created] neither by angels, nor by any other power, but by God alone, the Father," Irenaeus affirms.

And, Irenaeus believes that all of these things are in harmony with his arguments. He believes that his arguments for one God and Father of all, who created all things, are "weighty." And in addition, Irenaeus believed that the "Scriptures do much more evidently and clearly proclaim this very point." Irenaeus thus clearly points to the Scriptures as the source of his strongest arguments against Gnostic beliefs.

In the first two books of Against Heresies, Irenaeus offers many reasonable arguments that refute Gnostic beliefs. Now, Irenaeus states that he will provide a Scriptural defense of his statements. It is the Scriptures, he affirms, which "do much more evidently and clearly proclaim" that "all things that have been made [were created] neither by angels, nor by any other power, but by God alone, the Father."

### **Book 3: Chapter XIX.—Jesus Christ was not a mere man, begotten from Joseph in the ordinary course of nature, but was very God, begotten of the Father most high, and very man, born of the Virgin.**

1. But again, those who assert that He was simply a mere man, begotten by Joseph, remaining in the bondage of the old disobedience, are in a state of death having been not as yet joined to the Word of God the Father, nor receiving liberty through the Son, as He does Himself declare: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." 3665 John viii. 36. But, being ignorant of Him

who from the Virgin is Emmanuel, they are deprived of His gift, which is eternal life; 3666 Rom. vi. 23. and not receiving the incorruptible Word, they remain in mortal flesh, and are debtors to death, not obtaining the antidote of life. To whom the Word says, mentioning His own gift of grace: "I said, Ye are all the sons of the Highest, and gods; but ye shall die like men." 3667 Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7. He speaks undoubtedly these words to those who have not received the gift of adoption, but who despise the incarnation of the pure generation of the Word of God, 3668 The original Greek is preserved here by Theodoret, differing in some respects from the old Latin version: καὶ ἀποστεροῦντας τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ἀνόδου καὶ ἀχαιριστοῦντας τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν σαρκωθέντι λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ λόγος ἄνθρωπος ... ἵνα ὁ ἄνθρωπος τὸν λόγον χωρήσας, καὶ τὴν νίοθεσίαν λαβὼν, νίος γένηται Θεοῦ. The old Latin runs thus: "fraudantes hominem ab ea ascensione quae est ad Dominum, et ingrate exsistentes Verbo Dei, qui incarnatus est propter ipsos. Propter hoc enim Verbum Dei homo, et qui Filius Dei est, Filius Hominis factus est ... commixtus Verbo Dei, et adoptionem percipiens fiat filius Dei." [A specimen of the liberties taken by the Latin translators with the original of Irenæus. Others are much less innocent.] defraud human nature of promotion into God, and prove themselves ungrateful to the Word of God, who became flesh for them. For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God. For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first, incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are, so that the corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality, that we might receive the adoption of sons?

2. For this reason [it is, said], "Who shall declare His generation?" 3669 Isa. liii. 8. since "He is a man, and who shall recognise Him?" 3670 Jer. xvii. 9. But he to whom the Father which is in heaven has revealed Him, 3671 Matt. xvi. 16. knows Him, so that he understands that He who "was not born either by the will of the flesh, or by the will of man," 3672 John i. 13. is the Son of man, this is Christ, the Son of the living God. For I have shown from the Scriptures, 3673 See above, iii. 6. that no one of the sons of Adam is as to everything, and absolutely, called God, or named Lord. But that He is Himself in His own right, beyond all men who ever lived, God, and Lord, and King Eternal, and the Incarnate Word, proclaimed by all the prophets, the apostles, and by the Spirit Himself, may be seen by all who have attained to even a small portion of the truth. Now, the Scriptures would not have testified these things of Him, if, like others, He had been a mere man. But that He had, beyond all others, in Himself that pre-eminent birth which is from the Most High Father, and also experienced that pre-eminent generation which is from the Virgin, 3674 Isa. vii. 14. the divine Scriptures do in both respects testify of Him: also, that He was a man without comeliness, and liable to suffering; 3675 Isa. liii. 2 that He sat upon the foal of an ass; 3676 Zech. ix. 9 that He received for drink, vinegar and gall; 3677 Ps. lxxix. 21. that He was despised among the people, and humbled Himself even to death and that He is the holy Lord, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Beautiful in appearance, and the Mighty God, 3678 Isa. ix. 6. coming on the clouds as the Judge of all men; 3679 Dan. vii. 13.—all these things did the Scriptures prophesy of Him.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues, "But again, those who assert that He was simply a mere man, begotten by Joseph, remaining in the bondage of the old disobedience, are in a state of death having been not as yet joined to the Word of God the Father, nor receiving liberty through the Son, as He does Himself declare: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," referring to John 8:36. Irenaeus continues his argument as he says, "But, being ignorant of Him who from the Virgin is Emmanuel, they are deprived of His gift, which is eternal life," referring to Romans 6:23, "and not receiving the incorruptible Word, they remain in mortal flesh, and are debtors to death, not obtaining the antidote of life." Irenaeus testifies, "To whom the Word says, mentioning His own gift of grace: "I said, Ye are all the sons of the Highest, and gods; but ye shall die like men," referring to Psalm 82:6-7. Irenaeus interprets this verse as he says, "He speaks undoubtedly these words

to those who have not received the gift of adoption, but who despise the incarnation of the pure generation of the Word of God, defraud human nature of promotion into God, and prove themselves ungrateful to the Word of God, who became flesh for them.” Irenaeus explains, “For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God.” Irenaeus then adds, “For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality.” Irenaeus concludes as he asks, “But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first, incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are, so that the corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality, that we might receive the adoption of sons?”

Irenaeus continues his argument in paragraph 2 as he says, “For this reason [it is, said], “Who shall declare His generation?” referring to Isaiah 53:8, “since “He is a man, and who shall recognize Him?” referring to Jeremiah 17:9. Irenaeus explains, “But he to whom the Father which is in heaven has revealed Him,” referring in context to Matthew 16:16-17, “knows Him, so that he understands that He who “was not born either by the will of the flesh, or by the will of man,” referring in context to John 1:12-13, “is the Son of man, this is Christ, the Son of the living God.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For I have shown from the Scriptures, that no one of the sons of Adam is as to everything, and absolutely, called God, or named Lord. But that He is Himself in His own right, beyond all men who ever lived, God, and Lord, and King Eternal, and the Incarnate Word, proclaimed by all the prophets, the apostles, and by the Spirit Himself, may be seen by all who have attained to even a small portion of the truth,” referring in part to 1 Timothy 1:17 and Romans 9:5 and John 1:14. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Now, the Scriptures would not have testified these things of Him, if, like others, He had been a mere man. But that He had, beyond all others, in Himself that pre-eminent birth which is from the Most High Father, and also experienced that pre-eminent generation which is from the Virgin,” referring to Isaiah 7:14, “the divine Scriptures do in both respects testify of Him.” Irenaeus then adds, “also, that He was a man without comeliness, and liable to suffering,” referring in context to Isaiah 53:1-4, “that He sat upon the foal of an ass,” referring to Zechariah 9:9, “that He received for drink, vinegar and gall,” referring to Psalm 69:21, “that He was despised among the people, and humbled Himself even to death,” referring to Isaiah 53:3 and Philippians 2:8, “and that He is the holy Lord, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Beautiful in appearance, and the Mighty God,” referring to Isaiah 9:6, “coming on the clouds as the Judge of all men,” referring to Daniel 7:13, Matthew 26:64, Psalm 96:12-13 “—all these things did the Scriptures prophesy of Him.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues, “But again, those who assert that He was simply a mere man, begotten by Joseph, remaining in the bondage of the old disobedience, are in a state of death having been not as yet joined to the Word of God the Father, nor receiving liberty through the Son, as He does Himself declare: “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,” referring to **John 8 (NASB):36** “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Yes, man is in “the bondage of the old disobedience,” and in a state of spiritual death before he has faith in Christ as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins. 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Irenaeus continues his argument as he says, “But, being ignorant of Him who from the Virgin is Emmanuel, they are deprived of His gift, which is eternal life,” referring to **Romans 6 (NASB):23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “and not receiving the incorruptible Word, they remain in mortal flesh, and are debtors to death, not obtaining the antidote of life.” This is supported by the Scriptures. Paul addresses the Ephesians as saints in **Ephesians 1 (NASB):1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us that the Ephesians were dead in sin but raised to life in Christ Jesus as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we

were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Irenaeus then testifies, “To whom the Word says, mentioning His own gift of grace: “I said, Ye are all the sons of the Highest, and gods; but ye shall die like men,” referring to **Psalm 82 (NASB):6** I said, “You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High. 7 “Nevertheless you will die like men And fall like *any* one of the princes.”

Irenaeus interprets this verse as he then says, “He speaks undoubtedly these words to those who have not received the gift of adoption, but who despise the incarnation of the pure generation of the Word of God, defraud human nature of promotion into God, and prove themselves ungrateful to the Word of God, who became flesh for them.” Verse 5 in Psalm 82 seems to support Irenaeus’ interpretation as in **Psalm 82 (NASB):5** They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken.

Jesus Himself refers to this verse in **John 10 (HCSB):31** Again the Jews picked up rocks to stone Him. 32 Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. Which of these works are you stoning Me for?” 33 “We aren’t stoning You for a good work,” the Jews answered, “but for blasphemy, because You—being a man—make Yourself God.” 34 Jesus answered them, “Isn’t it written in your scripture, I said, you are gods? 35 If He called those whom the word of God came to ‘gods’—and the Scripture cannot be broken—36 do you say, ‘You are blaspheming’ to the One the Father set apart and sent into the world, because I said: I am the Son of God? 37 If I am not doing My Father’s works, don’t believe Me. 38 But if I am doing them and you don’t believe Me, believe the works. This way you will know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father.” 39 Then they were trying again to seize Him, yet He eluded their grasp.

Irenaeus continues as he explains, “For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God.” Irenaeus may here be drawing from **Galatians 4 (NASB):4** But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Irenaeus then adds, “For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality.” Irenaeus concludes as he asks, “But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first, incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are, so that the corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality, that we might receive the adoption of sons?” Irenaeus and Scripture agree here. He evidently is also drawing from Paul’s writing to the Corinthians as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB):51** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. 55 O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And from **Romans 8 (NASB):23** And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

And also from **2 Corinthians 5 (NASB):4** For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

Irenaeus is also drawing from the epistles of James and Peter as in **James 1 (NASB):18** In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

Then Peter speaks of the imperishable, or incorruptible, the living and enduring word of God, as the seed by which we are born again as in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):23** for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

Irenaeus continues his argument in paragraph 2 as he says, “For this reason [it is, said], “Who shall declare His generation?” referring to **Isaiah 53 (Septuagint):8** In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken away from the earth: because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death.

Also as in **Isaiah 53 (NASB):8** By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due*?

Irenaeus continues his thought as he says, “since “He is a man, and who shall recognize Him?” referring to **Jeremiah 17 (NASB):9** “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

Irenaeus explains, “But he to whom the Father which is in heaven has revealed Him,” referring in context to **Matthews 16 (NASB):16** Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “knows Him, so that he understands that He who “was not born either by the will of the flesh, or by the will of man,” referring in context to **John 1 (NASB):12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And Irenaeus concludes, “is the Son of man, this is Christ, the Son of the living God.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For I have shown from the Scriptures, that no one of the sons of Adam is as to everything, and absolutely, called God, or named Lord. But that He is Himself in His own right, beyond all men who ever lived, God, and Lord, and King Eternal, and the Incarnate Word, proclaimed by all the prophets, the apostles, and by the Spirit Himself, may be seen by all who have attained to even a small portion of the truth,” possibly referring in part to **1 Timothy 1 (NASB):17** Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

And to **Romans 9 (NASB):5** whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

And to **John 1 (NASB):14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Now, the Scriptures would not have testified these things of Him, if, like others, He had been a mere man. But that He had, beyond all others, in Himself that pre-eminent birth which is from the Most High Father, and also experienced that pre-eminent generation which is from the Virgin,” referring **Isaiah 7 (NASB):14** “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

And Irenaeus continues as he says, “the divine Scriptures do in both respects testify of Him.” Irenaeus then adds, “also, that He was a man without comeliness, and liable to suffering,” referring in context to **Isaiah 53 (NASB):1** Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

Again, Irenaeus adds, “that He sat upon the foal of an ass,” referring to **Zechariah 9 (NASB):9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And again, Irenaeus adds, "that He received for drink, vinegar and gall," referring to **Psalm 69 (NASB):21** They also gave me gall for my food And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

This was fulfilled in **Matthew 27 (NASB):34** they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink.

And Irenaeus testifies, "that He was despised among the people, and humbled Himself even to death," referring to **Isaiah 53 (NASB):3** He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

And to **Philippians 2 (NASB):8** Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And again Irenaeus testifies, "and that He is the holy Lord, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Beautiful in appearance, and the Mighty God," referring to **Isaiah 9 (NASB):6** For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

And Irenaeus adds, "coming on the clouds as the Judge of all men," referring to **Daniel 7 (NASB):13** "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

And to **Matthew 26 (NASB):64** Jesus said to him, "You have said it *yourself*; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

And to **Psalm 96 (NASB):12** Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy 13 Before the LORD, for He is coming, For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness And the peoples in His faithfulness.

Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, "—all these things did the Scriptures prophesy of Him." Such is the testimony of Irenaeus.

## **Book 4: Chapter VI.—Explanation of the words of Christ, "No man knoweth the Father, but the Son," etc.; which words the heretics misinterpret. Proof that, by the Father revealing the Son, and by the Son being revealed, the Father was never unknown.**

1. For the Lord, revealing Himself to His disciples, that He Himself is the Word, who imparts knowledge of the Father, and reproving the Jews, who imagined that they, had [the knowledge of] God, while they nevertheless rejected His Word, through whom God is made known, declared, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son has willed to reveal [Him]." 3857 **Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22.** Thus hath Matthew set it down, and Luke in like manner, and Mark 3858 Not now to be found in Mark's Gospel. the very same; for John omits this passage. They, however, who would be wiser than the apostles, write [the verse] in the following manner: "No man knew the Father, but the Son; nor the Son, but the Father, and he to whom the Son has willed to reveal [Him];" and they explain it as if the true God were known to none prior to our Lord's advent; and that God who was announced by the prophets, they allege not to be the Father of Christ.

2. But if Christ did then [only] begin to have existence when He came [into the world] as man, and [if] the Father did remember [only] in the times of Tiberius Cæsar to provide for [the wants of] men, and His Word was shown to have not always coexisted with His creatures; [it may be remarked that] neither then was it necessary that another God should be proclaimed, but [rather] that the reasons for so great carelessness and neglect on His part should be made the subject of investigation. For it is fitting that no such question should arise, and gather such strength, that it would indeed both change God, and destroy our faith in that Creator who supports us by means of His creation. For as we do direct our faith towards the Son, so also should we possess a firm and immovable love towards the Father. In his book against Marcion, Justin 3859 Photius, 125, makes

mention of Justin Martyr's work, *λόγοι κατὰ Μαρκίωνος*. See also Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, book iv. c. 18, where this passage of Irenaeus is quoted. [The vast importance of Justin's startling remark is that it hinges on the words of Christ Himself, concerning His antecedents and notes as set forth in the Scriptures, St. John v. 30–39.] does well say: "I would not have believed the Lord Himself, if He had announced any other than He who is our framer, maker, and nourisher. But because the only-begotten Son came to us from the one God, who both made this world and formed us, and contains and administers all things, summing up His own handiwork in Himself, my faith towards Him is steadfast, and my love to the Father immoveable, God bestowing both upon us."

3. For no one can know the Father, unless through the Word of God, that is, unless by the Son revealing [Him]; neither can he have knowledge of the Son, unless through the good pleasure of the Father. But the Son performs the good pleasure of the Father; for the Father sends, and the Son is sent, and comes. And His Word knows that His Father is, as far as regards us, invisible and infinite; and since He cannot be declared [by any one else], He does Himself declare Him to us; and, on the other hand, it is the Father alone who knows His own Word. And both these truths has our Lord declared. Wherefore the Son reveals the knowledge of the Father through His own manifestation. For the manifestation of the Son is the knowledge of the Father; for all things are manifested through the Word. In order, therefore, that we might know that the Son who came is He who imparts to those believing on Him a knowledge of the Father, He said to His disciples: 3860 [A most emphatic and pregnant text which Irenaeus here expounds with great beauty. The reference (St. Matt. xi. 27) seems to have been inadvertently omitted in this place where the repetition is desirable.] "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him;" thus setting Himself forth and the Father as He [really] is, that we may not receive any other Father, except Him who is revealed by the Son.

4. But this [Father] is the Maker of heaven and earth, as is shown from His words; and not he, the false father, who has been invented by Marcion, or by Valentinus, or by Basilides, or by Carpocrates, or by Simon, or by the rest of the "Gnostics," falsely so called. For none of these was the Son of God; but Christ Jesus our Lord [was], against whom they set their teaching in opposition, and have the daring to preach an unknown God. But they ought to hear [this] against themselves: How is it that He is unknown, who is known by them? for, whatever is known even by a few, is not unknown. But the Lord did not say that both the Father and the Son could not be known at all (*in totum*), for in that case His advent would have been superfluous. For why did He come hither? Was it that He should say to us, "Never mind seeking after God; for He is unknown, and ye shall not find Him;" as also the disciples of Valentinus falsely declare that Christ said to their *Æons*? But this is indeed vain. For the Lord taught us that no man is capable of knowing God, unless he be taught of God; that is, that God cannot be known without God: but that this is the express will of the Father, that God should be known. For they shall know 3861 The ordinary text reads *cognoscunt*, i.e., do know; but Harvey thinks it should be the future—*cognoscent*. Him to whomsoever the Son has revealed Him.

5. And for this purpose did the Father reveal the Son, that through His instrumentality He might be manifested to all, and might receive those righteous ones who believe in Him into incorruption and everlasting enjoyment (now, to believe in Him is to do His will); but He shall righteously shut out into the darkness which they have chosen for themselves, those who do not believe, and who do consequently avoid His light. The Father therefore has revealed Himself to all, by making His Word visible to all; and, conversely, the Word has declared to all the Father and the Son, since He has become visible to all. And therefore the righteous judgment of God [shall fall] upon all who, like others, have seen, but have not, like others, believed.

6. For by means of the creation itself, the Word reveals God the Creator; and by means of the world [does He declare] the Lord the Maker of the world; and by means of the formation [of man] the Artificer who formed him; and by the Son that Father who begat the Son: and these things do indeed address all men in the same manner, but all do not in the same way believe them. But by the law and

the prophets did the Word preach both Himself and the Father alike [to all]; and all the people heard Him alike, but all did not alike believe. And through the Word Himself who had been made visible and palpable, was the Father shown forth, although all did not equally believe in Him; but all saw the Father in the Son: for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father. And for this reason all spake with Christ when He was present [upon earth], and they named Him God. Yea, even the demons exclaimed, on beholding the Son: "We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." 3862 *Mark i. 24*. And the devil looking at Him, and tempting Him, said: "If Thou art the Son of God;" 3863 *Matt. iv. 3; Luke iv. 3*. —all thus indeed seeing and speaking of the Son and the Father, but all not believing [in them].

7. For it was fitting that the truth should receive testimony from all, and should become [a means of] judgment for the salvation indeed of those who believe, but for the condemnation of those who believe not; that all should be fairly judged, and that the faith in the Father and Son should be approved by all, that is, that it should be established by all [as the one means of salvation], receiving testimony from all, both from those belonging to it, since they are its friends, and by those having no connection with it, though they are its enemies. For that evidence is true, and cannot be gainsaid, which elicits even from its adversaries striking 3864 *Singula*, which with Massuet we here understand in the sense of *singularia*, testimonies in its behalf; they being convinced with respect to the matter in hand by their own plain contemplation of it, and bearing testimony to it, as well as declaring it. 3865 Some, instead of *significantibus*, read *signantibus*, "stamping it as true." But after a while they break forth into enmity, and become accusers [of what they had approved], and are desirous that their own testimony should not be [regarded as] true. He, therefore, who was known, was not a different being from Him who declared "No man knoweth the Father," but one and the same, the Father making all things subject to Him; while He received testimony from all that He was very man, and that He was very God, from the Father, from the Spirit, from angels, from the creation itself, from men, from apostate spirits and demons, from the enemy, and last of all, from death itself. But the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end, and without Him no man can attain the knowledge of God. For the Son is the knowledge of the Father; but the knowledge of the Son is in the Father, and has been revealed through the Son; and this was the reason why the Lord declared: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, save the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal [Him]." 3866 *Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22*. Harvey observes here, that "it is remarkable that this text, having been correctly quoted a short time previously in accordance with the received Greek text, ὃ ἐὰν βούλητας οὐ νίος ἀποκαλύψαι, the translator now not only uses the single verb *revelaverit*, but says pointedly that it was so written by the venerable author." It is probable, therefore, that the previous passage has been made to harmonize with the received text by a later hand; with which, however, the Syriac form agrees. For "shall reveal" was said not with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Word had begun to manifest the Father when He was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time. For the Son, being present with His own handiwork from the beginning, reveals the Father to all; to whom He wills, and when He wills, and as the Father wills. Wherefore, then, in all things, and through all things, there is one God, the Father, and one Word, and one Son, and one Spirit, and one salvation to all who believe in Him.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "For the Lord, revealing Himself to His disciples, that He Himself is the Word, who imparts knowledge of the Father, and reproving the Jews, who imagined that they, had [the knowledge of] God, while they nevertheless rejected His Word, through whom God is made known, declared, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son has willed to reveal [Him]," referring to Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22. Irenaeus then affirms, "Thus hath Matthew set it down, and Luke in like manner, and Mark the very same; for John omits this passage." Irenaeus then testifies, "They, however, who would be wiser than the apostles, write [the verse] in the following manner: "No man knew the Father, but the Son; nor the Son, but the Father, and he to whom the Son

has willed to reveal [Him];” and they explain it as if the true God were known to none prior to our Lord’s advent; and that God who was announced by the prophets, they allege not to be the Father of Christ.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus argues, “But if Christ did then [only] begin to have existence when He came [into the world] as man, and [if] the Father did remember [only] in the times of Tiberius Cæsar to provide for [the wants of] men, and His Word was shown to have not always coexisted with His creatures; [it may be remarked that] neither then was it necessary that another God should be proclaimed, but [rather] that the reasons for so great carelessness and neglect on His part should be made the subject of investigation.” Irenaeus then continues his argument as he adds, “For it is fitting that no such question should arise, and gather such strength, that it would indeed both change God, and destroy our faith in that Creator who supports us by means of His creation. For as we do direct our faith towards the Son, so also should we possess a firm and immovable love towards the Father.” Irenaeus continues as he notes, “In his book against Marcion, Justin does well say: “I would not have believed the Lord Himself, if He had announced any other than He who is our framer, maker, and nourisher. But because the only-begotten Son came to us from the one God, who both made this world and formed us, and contains and administers all things, summing up His own handiwork in Himself, my faith towards Him is steadfast, and my love to the Father immovable, God bestowing both upon us.””

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues his argument as he reasons, “For no one can know the Father, unless through the Word of God, that is, unless by the Son revealing [Him]; neither can he have knowledge of the Son, unless through the good pleasure of the Father.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But the Son performs the good pleasure of the Father; for the Father sends, and the Son is sent, and comes,” referring to Matthew 10:40, Matthew 15:24, Luke 4:43, and John 5:22,36. Irenaeus then explains, “And His Word knows that His Father is, as far as regards us, invisible and infinite; and since He cannot be declared [by any one else], He does Himself declare Him to us; and, on the other hand, it is the Father alone who knows His own Word. And both these truths has our Lord declared. Wherefore the Son reveals the knowledge of the Father through His own manifestation. For the manifestation of the Son is the knowledge of the Father; for all things are manifested through the Word. In order, therefore, that we might know that the Son who came is He who imparts to those believing on Him a knowledge of the Father, He said to His disciples: “No man knoweth the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him,” again referring to Matthew 11:27. Irenaeus concludes, “thus setting Himself forth and the Father as He [really] is, that we may not receive any other Father, except Him who is revealed by the Son.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies against the Gnostics as he says, “But this [Father] is the Maker of heaven and earth, as is shown from His words; and not he, the false father, who has been invented by Marcion, or by Valentinus, or by Basilides, or by Carpocrates, or by Simon, or by the rest of the “Gnostics,” falsely so called. For none of these was the Son of God; but Christ Jesus our Lord [was], against whom they set their teaching in opposition, and have the daring to preach an unknown God.” Irenaeus then argues against the Gnostics as he reasons, “But they ought to hear [this] against themselves: How is it that He is unknown, who is known by them? for, whatever is known even by a few, is not unknown.” Irenaeus concludes against the Gnostics, “But the Lord did not say that both the Father and the Son could not be known at all (*in totum*), for in that case His advent would have been superfluous. For why did He come hither? Was it that He should say to us, “Never mind seeking after God; for He is unknown, and ye shall not find Him;” as also the disciples of Valentinus falsely declare that Christ said to their *Æons*?” Irenaeus then judges, “But this is indeed vain. For the Lord taught us that no man is capable of knowing God, unless he be taught of God; that is, that God cannot be known without God: but that this is the express will of the Father, that God should be known. For they shall know Him to whomsoever the Son has revealed Him.”

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “And for this purpose did the Father reveal the Son, that through His instrumentality He might be manifested to all, and might receive those righteous ones who believe in Him into incorruption and everlasting enjoyment (now, to believe in Him is to do His will); but He shall righteously shut out into the darkness which they have chosen for themselves, those who do not believe, and who do consequently avoid His light.” Irenaeus again testifies, “The Father therefore has revealed Himself to all, by making His Word visible to all; and, conversely, the Word has declared to all the Father and the Son, since He has become visible to all. And therefore the righteous judgment of God [shall fall] upon all who, like others, have seen, but have not, like others, believed.”

In paragraph six, Irenaeus continues, “For by means of the creation itself, the Word reveals God the Creator; and by means of the world [does He declare] the Lord the Maker of the world; and by means of the formation [of man] the Artificer who formed him; and by the Son that Father who begat the Son: and these things do indeed address all men in the same manner, but all do not in the same way believe them,” referring in part to Romans 1:18-20. Irenaeus affirms, “But by the law and the prophets did the Word preach both Himself and the Father alike [to all]; and all the people heard Him alike, but all did not alike believe,” echoing Jesus’ words in John 5:37-40. Irenaeus then adds, “And through the Word Himself who had been made visible and palpable, was the Father shown forth, although all did not equally believe in Him; but all saw the Father in the Son: for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father,” referring to John 14:9. Irenaeus then affirms, “And for this reason all spake with Christ when He was present [upon earth], and they named Him God. Yea, even the demons exclaimed, on beholding the Son: “We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God,” referring to Mark 1:23-24. Irenaeus then affirms, “And the devil looking at Him, and tempting Him, said: “If Thou art the Son of God,” referring to Matthew 4:3 and Luke 4:3. And Irenaeus concludes, “—all thus indeed seeing and speaking of the Son and the Father, but all not believing [in them].”

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, “For it was fitting that the truth should receive testimony from all, and should become [a means of] judgment for the salvation indeed of those who believe, but for the condemnation of those who believe not; that all should be fairly judged, and that the faith in the Father and Son should be approved by all, that is, that it should be established by all [as the one means of salvation], receiving testimony from all, both from those belonging to it, since they are its friends, and by those having no connection with it, though they are its enemies.” Irenaeus continues as he concludes, “For that evidence is true, and cannot be gainsaid, which elicits even from its adversaries striking testimonies in its behalf; they being convinced with respect to the matter in hand by their own plain contemplation of it, and bearing testimony to it, as well as declaring it. But after a while they break forth into enmity, and become accusers [of what they had approved], and are desirous that their own testimony should not be [regarded as] true.” Irenaeus then boldly testifies, “He, therefore, who was known, was not a different being from Him who declared “No man knoweth the Father,” but one and the same, the Father making all things subject to Him; while He received testimony from all that He was very man, and that He was very God, from the Father, from the Spirit, from angels, from the creation itself, from men, from apostate spirits and demons, from the enemy, and last of all, from death itself.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end, and without Him no man can attain the knowledge of God,” referring to John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. Irenaeus continues as he reasons, “For the Son is the knowledge of the Father; but the knowledge of the Son is in the Father, and has been revealed through the Son; and this was the reason why the Lord declared: “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, save the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal [Him],” referring again to Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22. Irenaeus then testifies, “For “shall reveal” was said not with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Word had begun to manifest the Father when He was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time. For the Son, being present with His own handiwork from the beginning, reveals the Father to all; to whom He wills, and when He wills, and as the Father wills.” And Irenaeus thus concludes, “Wherefore, then, in all things, and through all things, there is one God, the Father, and one Word, and one Son, and one Spirit, and one salvation to all who believe in Him.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “For the Lord, revealing Himself to His disciples, that He Himself is the Word, who imparts knowledge of the Father, and reproving the Jews, who imagined that they, had [the knowledge of] God, while they nevertheless rejected His Word, through whom God is made known, declared, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son has willed to reveal [Him],” referring to **Matthew 11 (NASB):27** All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

And Luke reads as in **Luke 10 (NASB):22** All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

Irenaeus then affirms, “Thus hath Matthew set it down, and Luke in like manner, and Mark the very

same; for John omits this passage.” We note here that this passage is not found in Mark as Irenaeus asserts.

Irenaeus then states, “They, however, who would be wiser than the apostles, write [the verse] in the following manner: “No man *knew* the Father, but the Son; nor the Son, but the Father, and he to whom the Son has willed to reveal [Him];” and they explain it as if the true God were known to none prior to our Lord’s advent; and that God who was announced by the prophets, they allege not to be the Father of Christ.”

What Irenaeus intimates here in paragraph one is that Jesus Christ is the living expression of God’s word. Everything He did in life and death was according to and in fulfillment of the Word of God. That is why Irenaeus tells us that the Lord revealed Himself to His disciples that “He Himself is the Word,” and Irenaeus speaks of Him by that name, “the Word.” Being “the Word,” Jesus is able to impart knowledge of the Father. Irenaeus is correct in his judgment of the Jews, who did not have a personal relationship, that is a relationship of the heart, with the Lord. Their ignorance was so great that they rejected the very Word of God who came to show them and connect them with the Father who is the one and only God. Irenaeus is also correct in his summary dismissal of the Gnostic beliefs that the true God was not known prior to our Lord’s advent, and that the God announced by the prophets was not the Father of Christ. This is a serpent’s head which Irenaeus effectively cuts off.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus argues, “But if Christ did then [only] begin to have existence when He came [into the world] as man, and [if] the Father did remember [only] in the times of Tiberius Cæsar to provide for [the wants of] men, and His Word was shown to have not always coexisted with His creatures; [it may be remarked that] neither then was it necessary that another God should be proclaimed, but [rather] that the reasons for so great carelessness and neglect on His part should be made the subject of investigation.” Irenaeus is saying that, rather than believe that God is fickle, careless, and guilty of neglecting His own creation, it makes more sense to look closer and deeper into His plan and purpose.

Irenaeus then continues his argument as he adds, “For it is fitting that no such question should arise, and gather such strength, that it would indeed both change God, and destroy our faith in that Creator who supports us by means of His creation.” To direct our faith to anyone else but the Creator of the universe is true folly. “For as we do direct our faith towards the Son, so also should we possess a firm and immovable love towards the Father,” Irenaeus tells us. In other words, to have faith in the Son is to receive the love of the Son for the Father. To believe in the Son is to share in the love relationship of the Son with the Father. This is true wisdom.

Irenaeus continues as he notes, “In his book against Marcion, Justin does well say: “I would not have believed the Lord Himself, if He had announced any other than He who is our framer, maker, and nourisher. But because the only-begotten Son came to us from the one God, who both made this world and formed us, and contains and administers all things, summing up His own handiwork in Himself, my faith towards Him is stedfast, and my love to the Father immovable, God bestowing both upon us.”” Irenaeus quotes Justin Martyr, who lived between A.D. 110-165. Justin makes sense.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues his argument as he reasons, “For no one can know the Father, unless through the Word of God, that is, unless by the Son revealing [Him]; neither can he have knowledge of the Son, unless through the good pleasure of the Father.” Irenaeus thus shows us the unity of the purpose of God between the Father and the Son. He affirms here that the Son made it clear that there was no other Father than His own. Irenaeus affirms, “But the Son performs the good pleasure of the Father; for the Father sends, and the Son is sent, and comes,” referring to **John 5 (NASB):36** But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of John*; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me. **37** And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.

Irenaeus then explains, “And His Word knows that His Father is, as far as regards us, invisible and infinite; and since He cannot be declared [by anyone else], He does Himself declare Him to us; and, on the other hand, it is the Father alone who knows His own Word. And both these truths has our Lord declared.” That is, the Son is the only one who can show us the Father. The Father is “invisible and infinite,” yet known by the Son. “Wherefore the Son reveals the knowledge of the Father through His own manifestation,” Irenaeus explains.

“For the manifestation of the Son is the knowledge of the Father,” he affirms. Irenaeus here reminds us of Jesus’ dialog with His disciples in the Gospel of John. Jesus begins by describing His home with the Father

as in **John 14 (NASB):1** "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. 7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

But Philip then asks Jesus to just "show us the Father" and we're good as we read in **John 14 (NASB):8** Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

Jesus then patiently explains to Philip and the other disciples that He "reveals the knowledge of the Father through His own manifestation" as in **John 14 (HCSB):9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been among you all this time without your knowing Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. The Father who lives in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves. 12 "I assure you: The one who believes in Me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "for all things are manifested through the Word. In order, therefore, that we might know that the Son who came is He who imparts to those believing on Him a knowledge of the Father, He said to His disciples: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him," again referring to **Matthew 11 (NASB):27** All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

Irenaeus echoes Jesus' words in **John 14 (NASB):6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Irenaeus concludes, "thus setting Himself forth and the Father as He [really] is, that we may not receive any other Father, except Him who is revealed by the Son."

Knowledge of the Father through the Son is ultimately a gift from the Father. The words Jesus spoke in Matthew 11:27, that "no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*," are a declaration by Jesus that thus set "Himself forth and the Father as He [really] is, that we may not receive any other Father, except Him who is revealed by the Son."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies against the Gnostics as he says, "But this [Father] is the Maker of heaven and earth, as is shown from His words." That is, the very words of Jesus testify that His Father is the Maker of heaven and earth. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "and not he, the false father, who has been invented by Marcion, or by Valentinus, or by Basilides, or by Carpocrates, or by Simon, or by the rest of the "Gnostics," falsely so called. For none of these was the Son of God; but Christ Jesus our Lord [was], against whom they set their teaching in opposition, and have the daring to preach an unknown God." Irenaeus then argues against the Gnostics as he reasons, "But they ought to hear [this] against themselves: How is it that He is unknown, who is known by them? for, whatever is known even by a few, is not unknown." Irenaeus concludes against the Gnostics, "But the Lord did not say that both the Father and the Son could not be known at all (*in totum*), for in that case His advent would have been superfluous. For why did He come hither? Was it that He should say to us, "Never mind seeking after God; for He is unknown, and ye shall not find Him;" as also the disciples of Valentinus falsely declare that Christ said to their *Æons*?" Irenaeus then judges, "But this is indeed vain. For the Lord taught us that no man is capable of knowing God, unless he be taught of God; that is, that God cannot be known without God: but that this is the express will of the Father, that God should be known. For they shall know Him to whomsoever the Son has revealed Him." Irenaeus makes perfect sense here.

It is obvious to Irenaeus that this unknown god of Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, and the other Gnostics is an invention. The knowledge of the Gnostics is false knowledge, not being based in reality or verifiable. If God wanted to remain unknown, certainly it is in His power to do so. The reality is that Jesus Christ came to make Him known. Rather than the Gnostic invention that says, "Never mind seeking after God; for He is

unknown, and ye shall not find Him," He tells us to seek Him as in **Psalm 105 (NASB):4** Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually.

And all who seek to know Him will find Him through the Son, as He Himself has said in the scripture, as in **Deuteronomy 4 (NASB):29** "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

This is the promise of God to all who would seek Him. He is worthy of praise.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, "And for this purpose did the Father reveal the Son, that through His instrumentality He might be manifested to all, and might receive those righteous ones who believe in Him into incorruption and everlasting enjoyment (now, to believe in Him is to do His will); but He shall righteously shut out into the darkness which they have chosen for themselves, those who do not believe, and who do consequently avoid His light." Irenaeus again testifies, "The Father therefore has revealed Himself to all, by making His Word visible to all; and, conversely, the Word has declared to all the Father and the Son, since He has become visible to all. And therefore the righteous judgment of God [shall fall] upon all who, like others, have seen, but have not, like others, believed."

Irenaeus is saying that the Lord had a purpose all along for His creation. His intent was that through the instrumentality of the Son, He might be manifested to all, and receive those righteous ones who believe in Him to be with Him in everlasting enjoyment. Those who choose unbelief also, according to His design, shall be shut out into darkness. This is a righteous judgment of God on those who believe not though they have seen and heard the Word of the Father.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus continues as he reasons, "For by means of the creation itself, the Word reveals God the Creator; and by means of the world [does He declare] the Lord the Maker of the world; and by means of the formation [of man] the Artificer who formed him; and by the Son that Father who begat the Son: and these things do indeed address all men in the same manner, but all do not in the same way believe them," echoing Paul's words in **Romans 1 (NASB):18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Irenaeus affirms, "But by the law and the prophets did the Word preach both Himself and the Father alike [to all]; and all the people heard Him alike, but all did not alike believe," echoing Jesus' words in **John 5 (NASB):37** "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. 38 "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. 39 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

Irenaeus then adds, "And through the Word Himself who had been made visible and palpable, was the Father shown forth, although all did not equally believe in Him; but all saw the Father in the Son: for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father," referring again to **John 14 (NASB):9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

Moreover, the world of creation does not reveal the Father in a way that is personal and relational. And so the Father spoke through the law and the prophets, and all the people heard Him alike. And still the Father sent His Son as "the visible of the Father."

Irenaeus then affirms, "And for this reason all spake with Christ when He was present [upon earth], and they named Him God." Christ was named God by those who spoke with Him on earth, that is, His disciples as we read in **John 1 (NASB):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

This was intimated also by John the Baptist as recorded by the apostle John in **John 1 (NASB):14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said,

'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

Again, that Jesus was God is also stated by Paul in **Romans 9 (NASB):5** whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Irenaeus then adds, "Yea, even the demons exclaimed, on beholding the Son: "We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God," referring to **Mark 1 (NASB):23** Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

Irenaeus then affirms, "And the devil looking at Him, and tempting Him, said: "If Thou art the Son of God," referring to **Matthew 4 (NASB):3** And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

And **Luke 4 (NASB):3** And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

And Irenaeus concludes, "—all thus indeed seeing and speaking of the Son and the Father, but all not believing [in them]."

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, "For it was fitting that the truth should receive testimony from all, and should become [a means of] judgment for the salvation indeed of those who believe, but for the condemnation of those who believe not; that all should be fairly judged, and that the faith in the Father and Son should be approved by all, that is, that it should be established by all [as the one means of salvation], receiving testimony from all, both from those belonging to it, since they are its friends, and by those having no connection with it, though they are its enemies." Irenaeus shows us that faith in the Father and the Son has been established by all as the one means of salvation for those who believe. Those who do not believe are fairly judged as enemies of the truth, while those who do believe are judged as its friends.

Irenaeus continues as he concludes, "For that evidence is true, and cannot be gainsaid, which elicits even from its adversaries striking testimonies in its behalf; they being convinced with respect to the matter in hand by their own plain contemplation of it, and bearing testimony to it, as well as declaring it. But after a while they break forth into enmity, and become accusers [of what they had approved], and are desirous that their own testimony should not be [regarded as] true." Irenaeus is fighting heresy. Irenaeus then boldly testifies, "He, therefore, who was known, was not a different being from Him who declared 'No man knoweth the Father,' but one and the same, the Father making all things subject to Him; while He received testimony from all that He was very man, and that He was very God, from the Father, from the Spirit, from angels, from the creation itself, from men, from apostate spirits and demons, from the enemy, and last of all, from death itself." Irenaeus then affirms, "But the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end, and without Him no man can attain the knowledge of God," referring to **John 14 (NASB):6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

And **Acts 4 (NASB):12** "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Irenaeus continues as he reasons, "For the Son is the knowledge of the Father; but the knowledge of the Son is in the Father, and has been revealed through the Son; and this was the reason why the Lord declared: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, save the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal [Him]," referring again to Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22. Irenaeus then testifies, "For "shall reveal" was said not with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Word had begun to manifest the Father when He was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time. For the Son, being present with His own handiwork from the beginning, reveals the Father to all; to whom He wills, and when He wills, and as the Father wills." And Irenaeus thus concludes as he affirms, "Wherefore, then, in all things, and through all things, there is one God, the Father, and one Word, and one Son, and one Spirit, and one salvation to all who believe in Him."

## **Commentary Summary: Irenaeus' Statement of Faith**

Irenaeus shows us that faith in the Father and the Son has been established by all as the one means of salvation for those who believe. Those who do not believe are fairly judged as enemies of the truth, while those who do believe are judged as its friends. It is Irenaeus' strong statement of faith that "He, therefore, who was known, was not a different being from Him who declared "No man knoweth the Father," but one and the same, the Father making all things subject to Him; while He received testimony from all that He was very man, and that He was very God, from the Father, from the Spirit, from angels, from the creation itself, from men, from apostate spirits and demons, from the enemy, and last of all, from death itself."

Irenaeus further testifies that "the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end, and without Him no man can attain the knowledge of God." Irenaeus teaches us that the Father was known from the beginning of creation as he says that the words "shall reveal" were not said "with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Word had begun to manifest the Father when He was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time. For the Son, being present with His own handiwork from the beginning, reveals the Father to all; to whom He wills, and when He wills, and as the Father wills." It is the Father who sent His Son that He might be further known to man. And so Irenaeus concludes this section with a final statement of faith as he says, "Wherefore, then, in all things, and through all things, there is one God, the Father, and one Word, and one Son, and one Spirit, and one salvation to all who believe in Him."

## Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures

### Book 2: Chapter XXVIII.—Perfect knowledge cannot be attained in the present life: many questions must be submissively left in the hands of God.

1. Having therefore the truth itself as our rule and the testimony concerning God set clearly before us, we ought not, by running after numerous and diverse answers to questions, to cast away the firm and true knowledge of God. But it is much more suitable that we, directing our inquiries after this fashion, should exercise ourselves in the investigation of the mystery and administration of the living God, and should increase in the love of Him who has done, and still does, so great things for us; but never should fall from the belief by which it is most clearly proclaimed that this Being alone is truly God and Father, who both formed this world, fashioned man, and bestowed the faculty of increase on His own creation, and called him upwards from lesser things to those greater ones which are in His own presence, just as He brings an infant which has been conceived in the womb into the light of the sun, and lays up wheat in the barn after He has given it full strength on the stalk. But it is one and the same Creator who both fashioned the womb and created the sun; and one and the same Lord who both reared the stalk of corn, increased and multiplied the wheat, and prepared the barn.

2. If, however, we cannot discover explanations of all those things in Scripture which are made the subject of investigation, yet let us not on that account seek after any other God besides Him who really exists. For this is the very greatest impiety. We should leave things of that nature to God who created us, being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit; but we, inasmuch as we are inferior to, and later in existence than, the Word of God and His Spirit, are on that very account 3213 Or, "to that degree." destitute of the knowledge of His mysteries. And there is no cause for wonder if this is the case with us as respects things spiritual and heavenly, and such as require to be made known to us by revelation, since many even of those things which lie at our very feet (I mean such as belong to this world, which we handle, and see, and are in close contact with) transcend our knowledge, so that even these we must leave to God. For it is fitting that He should excel all [in knowledge]. For how stands the case, for instance, if we endeavour to explain the cause of the rising of the Nile? We may say a great deal, plausible or otherwise, on the subject; but what is true, sure, and incontrovertible regarding it, belongs only to God. Then, again, the dwelling-place of birds—of those, I mean, which come to us in spring, but fly away again on the approach of autumn—though it is a matter connected with this world, escapes our knowledge. What explanation, again, can we give of the flow and ebb of the ocean, although every one admits there must be a certain cause [for these phenomena]? Or what can we say as to the nature of those things which lie beyond it? 3214 Comp. Clem. Rom. *Ep. to Cor.*, c. xx.; and August, *De. Civit Dei*, xvi. 9. What, moreover, can we say as to the formation of rain, lightning, thunder, gatherings of clouds, vapours, the bursting forth of winds, and such like things; or tell as to the storehouses of snow, hail, and other like things? [What do we know respecting] the conditions requisite for the preparation of clouds, or what is the real nature of the vapours in the sky? What as to the reason why the moon waxes and wanes, or what as to the cause of the difference of nature among various waters, metals, stones, and such like things? On all these points we may indeed say a great deal while we search into their causes, but God alone who made them can declare the truth regarding them.

3. If, therefore, even with respect to creation, there are some things [the knowledge of] which belongs only to God, and others which come within the range of our own knowledge, what ground is there for complaint, if, in regard to those things which we investigate in the Scriptures (which are throughout spiritual), we are able by the grace of God to explain some of them, while we must leave others in the hands of God, and that not only in the present world, but also in that which is to come, so that God should for ever teach, and man should for ever learn the things taught him by God? As the apostle has said on this point, that, when other things have been done away, then these three, "faith, hope, and charity, shall endure." 3215 1 Cor. xiii. 13. For faith, which has respect to our

Master, endures 3216 "Permanet firma,"—no doubt corresponding to the μένει of the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Harvey here remarks, that "the author seems to misapprehend the apostle's meaning.... There will be no longer room for hope, when the substance of things hoped for shall have become a matter of fruition; neither will there be any room for faith, when the soul shall be admitted to see God as He is." But the best modern interpreters take the same view of the passage as Irenæus. They regard the νυνὶ δέ of St. Paul as not being *temporal*, but *logical*, and conclude therefore the meaning to be, that *faith and hope, as well as love, will, in a sense, endure for ever.* Comp., e.g., Alford, *in loc.* unchangeably, assuring us that there is but one true God, and that we should truly love Him for ever, seeing that He alone is our Father; while we hope ever to be receiving more and more from God, and to learn from Him, because He is good, and possesses boundless riches, a kingdom without end, and instruction that can never be exhausted. If, therefore, according to the rule which I have stated, we leave some questions in the hands of God, we shall both preserve our faith uninjured, and shall continue without danger; and all Scripture, which has been given to us by God, shall be found by us perfectly consistent; and the parables shall harmonize with those passages which are perfectly plain; and those statements the meaning of which is clear, shall serve to explain the parables; and through the many diversified utterances [of Scripture] there shall be heard 3217 The Latin text is here untranslateable. Grabe proposes to read, "*una consonans melodia in nobis sentietur;*" while Stieren and others prefer to exchange αἰσθήσεται for ἀσθήσεται. one harmonious melody in us, praising in hymns that God who created all things. If, for instance, any one asks, "What was God doing before He made the world?" we reply that the answer to such a question lies with God Himself. For that this world was formed perfect 3218 "Apotelesticos." This word, says Harvey, "may also refer to the vital energy of nature, whereby its effects are for ever reproduced in unceasing succession." Comp. Hippol., *Philos.*, vii. 24. by God, receiving a beginning in time, the Scriptures teach us; but no Scripture reveals to us what God was employed about before this event. The answer therefore to that question remains with God, and it is not proper 3219 We here follow Grabe, who understands *decet. Harvey less simply explains the very obscure Latin text.* for us to aim at bringing forward foolish, rash, and blasphemous suppositions [in reply to it]; so, as by one's imagining that he has discovered the origin of matter, he should in reality set aside God Himself who made all things.

4. For consider, all ye who invent such opinions, since the Father Himself is alone called God, who has a real existence, but whom ye style the Demiurge; since, moreover, the Scriptures acknowledge Him alone as God; and yet again, since the Lord confesses Him alone as His own Father, and knows no other, as I shall show from His very words, —when ye style this very Being the fruit of defect, and the offspring of ignorance, and describe Him as being ignorant of those things which are above Him, with the various other allegations which you make regarding Him,—consider the terrible blasphemy [ye are thus guilty of] against Him who truly is God. Ye seem to affirm gravely and honestly enough that ye believe in God; but then, as ye are utterly unable to reveal any other God, ye declare this very Being in whom ye profess to believe, the fruit of defect and the offspring of ignorance. Now this blindness and foolish talking flow to you from the fact that ye reserve nothing for God, but ye wish to proclaim the nativity and production both of God Himself, of His Ennœa, of His Logos, and Life, and Christ; and ye form the idea of these from no other than a mere human experience; not understanding, as I said before, that it is possible, in the case of man, who is a compound being, to speak in this way of the mind of man and the thought of man; and to say that thought (ennœa) springs from mind (sensus), intention (enthymesis) again from thought, and word (logos) from intention (but which logos? 3220 The Greek term λόγος, as is well known, denotes both *ratio* (reason) and *sermo* (speech). Some deem the above parenthesis an interpolation. for there is among the Greeks one logos which is the principle that thinks, and another which is the instrument by means of which thought is expressed); and [to say] that a man sometimes is at rest and silent, while at other times he speaks and is active. But since God is 3221 Comp. i. 12, 2. all mind, all reason, all active spirit, all light, and always exists one and the same, as it is both beneficial for us to think of God, and as we learn regarding Him from the Scriptures, such feelings and divisions [of

operation] cannot fittingly be ascribed to Him. For our tongue, as being carnal, is not sufficient to minister to the rapidity of the human mind, inasmuch as that is of a spiritual nature, for which reason our word is restrained 3222 "Suffugatur;" some read "suffocatur;" and Harvey proposes "suffragatur," as the representative of the Greek ψηφίζεται. The meaning in any case is, that while ideas are instantaneously formed in the human mind, they can be expressed through means of words only fractionally, and by successive utterances. within us, and is not at once expressed as it has been conceived by the mind, but is uttered by successive efforts, just as the tongue is able to serve it.

5. But God being all Mind, and all Logos, both speaks exactly what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks. For His thought is Logos, and Logos is Mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father Himself. He, therefore, who speaks of the mind of God, and ascribes to it a special origin of its own, declares Him a compound Being, as if God were one thing, and the original Mind another. So, again, with respect to Logos, when one attributes to him the third 3223 Thus: *Bythus, Nous, Logos*. place of production from the Father; on which supposition he is ignorant of His greatness; and thus Logos has been far separated from God. As for the prophet, he declares respecting Him, "Who shall describe His generation?" 3224 Isa. liii. 8. But ye pretend to set forth His generation from the Father, and ye transfer the production of the word of men which takes place by means of a tongue to the Word of God, and thus are righteously exposed by your own selves as knowing neither things human nor divine.

6. But, beyond reason inflated [with your own wisdom], ye presumptuously maintain that ye are acquainted with the unspeakable mysteries of God; while even the Lord, the very Son of God, allowed that the Father alone knows the very day and hour of judgment, when He plainly declares, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father only." 3225 Mark xiii. 32. The words, "neither the angels which are in heaven," are here omitted, probably because, as usual, the writer quotes from memory. If, then, the Son was not ashamed to ascribe the knowledge of that day to the Father only, but declared what was true regarding the matter, neither let us be ashamed to reserve for God those greater questions which may occur to us. For no man is superior to his master. 3226 Comp. Matt. x. 24; Luke xi. 40. If any one, therefore, says to us, "How then was the Son produced by the Father?" we reply to him, that no man understands that production, or generation, or calling, or revelation, or by whatever name one may describe His generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable. Neither Valentinus, nor Marcion, nor Saturninus, nor Basilides, nor angels, nor archangels, nor principalities, nor powers [possess this knowledge], but the Father only who begat, and the Son who was begotten. Since therefore His generation is unspeakable, those who strive to set forth generations and productions cannot be in their right mind, inasmuch as they undertake to describe things which are indescribable. For that a word is uttered at the bidding of thought and mind, all men indeed well understand. Those, therefore, who have excogitated [the theory of] emissions have not discovered anything great, or revealed any abstruse mystery, when they have simply transferred what all understand to the only-begotten Word of God; and while they style Him unspeakable and unnameable, they nevertheless set forth the production and formation of His first generation, as if they themselves had assisted at His birth, thus assimilating Him to the word of mankind formed by emissions.

7. But we shall not be wrong if we affirm the same thing also concerning the substance of matter, that God produced it. For we have learned from the Scriptures that God holds the supremacy over all things. But whence or in what way He produced it, neither has Scripture anywhere declared; nor does it become us to conjecture, so as, in accordance with our own opinions, to form endless conjectures concerning God, but we should leave such knowledge in the hands of God Himself. In like manner, also, we must leave the cause why, while all things were made by God, certain of His creatures sinned and revolted from a state of submission to God, and others, indeed the great majority, persevered, and do still persevere, in [willing] subjection to Him who formed them, and also of what nature those are who sinned, and of what nature those who persevere,—[we must, I say, leave the cause of these things] to God and His Word, to whom alone He said, "Sit at my right hand,

until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." 3227 *Ps. cx. 1.* But as for us, we still dwell upon the earth, and have not yet sat down upon His throne. For although the Spirit of the Saviour that is in Him "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God," 3228 *1 Cor. ii. 10.* yet as to us "there are diversities of gifts, differences of administrations, and diversities of operations;" 3229 *1 Cor. xii. 4, 5,* 6. and we, while upon the earth, as Paul also declares, "know in part, and prophesy in part." 3230 *1 Cor. xiii. 9.* Since, therefore, we know but in part, we ought to leave all sorts of [difficult] questions in the hands of Him who in some measure, [and that only.] bestows grace on us. That eternal fire, [for instance,] is prepared for sinners, both the Lord has plainly declared, and the rest of the Scriptures demonstrate. And that God foreknew that this would happen, the Scriptures do in like manner demonstrate, since He prepared eternal fire from the beginning for those who were [afterwards] to transgress [His commandments]; but the cause itself of the nature of such transgressors neither has any Scripture informed us, nor has an apostle told us, nor has the Lord taught us. It becomes us, therefore, to leave the knowledge of this matter to God, even as the Lord does of the day and hour [of judgment], and not to rush to such an extreme of danger, that we will leave nothing in the hands of God, even though we have received only a measure of grace [from Him in this world]. But when we investigate points which are above us, and with respect to which we cannot reach satisfaction, [it is absurd 3231 Massuet proposes to insert these words, and some such supplement seems clearly necessary to complete the sense. But the sentence still remains confused and doubtful.] that we should display such an extreme of presumption as to lay open God, and things which are not yet discovered, 3232 [Gen. xl. 8; Deut. xxix. 29; Ps. cxxxii.] as if already we had found out, by the vain talk about emissions, God Himself, the Creator of all things, and to assert that He derived His substance from apostasy and ignorance, so as to frame an impious hypothesis in opposition to God.

8. Moreover, they possess no proof of their system, which has but recently been invented by them, sometimes resting upon certain numbers, sometimes on syllables, and sometimes, again, on names; and there are occasions, too, when, by means of those letters which are contained in letters, by parables not properly interpreted, or by certain [baseless] conjectures, they strive to establish that fabulous account which they have devised. For if any one should inquire the reason why the Father, who has fellowship with the Son in all things, has been declared by the Lord alone to know the hour and the day [of judgment], he will find at present no more suitable, or becoming, or safe reason than this (since, indeed, the Lord is the only true Master), that we may learn through Him that the Father is above all things. For "the Father," says He, "is greater than I." 3233 *John xiv. 28.* The Father, therefore, has been declared by our Lord to excel with respect to knowledge; for this reason, that we, too, as long as we are connected with the scheme of things in this world, should leave perfect knowledge, and such questions [as have been mentioned], to God, and should not by any chance, while we seek to investigate the sublime nature of the Father, fall into the danger of starting the question whether there is another God above God. 3234 [On the great matter of the περιχώρησις, the subordination of the Son, etc., Bull has explored Patristic doctrine, and may well be consulted here. *Defens. Fid. Nicænæ*, sect. iv.; see also vol. v. 363]

9. But if any lover of strife contradict what I have said, and also what the apostle affirms, that "we know in part, and prophesy in part," 3235 *1 Cor. xiii. 9.* and imagine that he has acquired not a partial, but a universal, knowledge of all that exists, —being such an one as Valentinus, or Ptolemæus, or Basilides, or any other of those who maintain that they have searched out the deep 3236 "Altitudines," literally, *heights.* things of God,—let him not (arraying himself in vainglory) boast that he has acquired greater knowledge than others with respect to those things which are invisible, or cannot be placed under our observation; but let him, by making diligent inquiry, and obtaining information from the Father, tell us the reasons (which we know not) of those things which are in this world, —as, for instance, the number of hairs on his own head, and the sparrows which are captured day by day, and such other points with which we are not previously acquainted,—so that we may credit him also with respect to more important points. But if those who are *perfect* do not yet understand the very things in their hands, and at their feet, and before their eyes, and on the earth,

and especially the rule followed with respect to the hairs of their head, how can we believe them regarding things spiritual, and super-celestial,3237 [Wisdom ix. 13, 17. A passage of marvellous beauty.] and those which, with a vain confidence, they assert to be above God? So much, then, I have said concerning numbers, and names, and syllables, and questions respecting such things as are above our comprehension, and concerning their improper expositions of the parables: [I add no more on these points,] since thou thyself mayest enlarge upon them.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues, “Having therefore the truth itself as our rule and the testimony concerning God set clearly before us, we ought not, by running after numerous and diverse answers to questions, to cast away the firm and true knowledge of God.” Instead, Irenaeus advises, “But it is much more suitable that we, directing our inquiries after this fashion, should exercise ourselves in the investigation of the mystery and administration of the living God, and should increase in the love of Him who has done, and still does, so great things for us;” And Irenaeus warns, “but never should fall from the belief by which it is most clearly proclaimed that this Being alone is truly God and Father, who both formed this world, fashioned man, and bestowed the faculty of increase on His own creation, and called him upwards from lesser things to those greater ones which are in His own presence, just as He brings an infant which has been conceived in the womb into the light of the sun, and lays up wheat in the barn after He has given it full strength on the stalk.” Irenaeus concludes wisely, ”But it is one and the same Creator who both fashioned the womb and created the sun; and one and the same Lord who both reared the stalk of corn, increased and multiplied the wheat, and prepared the barn.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus encourages, “If, however, we cannot discover explanations of all those things in Scripture which are made the subject of investigation, yet let us not on that account seek after any other God besides Him who really exists. For this is the very greatest impiety. We should leave things of that nature to God who created us, being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit;” Irenaeus then argues, “but we, inasmuch as we are inferior to, and later in existence than, the Word of God and His Spirit, are on that very account destitute of the knowledge of His mysteries.” Irenaeus then wisely points out, “And there is no cause for wonder if this is the case with us as respects things spiritual and heavenly, and such as require to be made known to us by revelation, since many even of those things which lie at our very feet (I mean such as belong to this world, which we handle, and see, and are in close contact with) transcend our knowledge, so that even these we must leave to God.” Irenaeus then reasons wisely, “For it is fitting that He should excel all [in knowledge]. For how stands the case, for instance, if we endeavour to explain the cause of the rising of the Nile? We may say a great deal, plausible or otherwise, on the subject; but what is true, sure, and incontrovertible regarding it, belongs only to God. Then, again, the dwelling-place of birds—of those, I mean, which come to us in spring, but fly away again on the approach of autumn—though it is a matter connected with this world, escapes our knowledge. What explanation, again, can we give of the flow and ebb of the ocean, although every one admits there must be a certain cause [for these phenomena]? Or what can we say as to the nature of those things which lie beyond it? What, moreover, can we say as to the formation of rain, lightning, thunder, gatherings of clouds, vapours, the bursting forth of winds, and such like things; or tell as to the storehouses of snow, hail, and other like things? [What do we know respecting] the conditions requisite for the preparation of clouds, or what is the real nature of the vapours in the sky? What as to the reason why the moon waxes and wanes, or what as to the cause of the difference of nature among various waters, metals, stones, and such like things? On all these points we may indeed say a great deal while we search into their causes, but God alone who made them can declare the truth regarding them.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues as he reasons, “If, therefore, even with respect to creation, there are some things [the knowledge of] which belongs only to God, and others which come within the range of our own knowledge, what ground is there for complaint, if, in regard to those things which we investigate in the Scriptures (which are throughout spiritual), we are able by the grace of God to explain some of them, while we must leave others in the hands of God, and that not only in the present world, but also in that which is to come, so that God should for ever teach, and man should for ever learn the things taught him by God?” Irenaeus refers to the Apostle Paul as he says, “As the apostle has said on this point, that, when other things have been done

away, then these three, “faith, hope, and charity, shall endure,” referring to 1 Corinthians 13:13. Irenaeus explains wisely, “For faith, which has respect to our Master, endures unchangeably, assuring us that there is but one true God, and that we should truly love Him for ever, seeing that He alone is our Father; while we hope ever to be receiving more and more from God, and to learn from Him, because He is good, and possesses boundless riches, a kingdom without end, and instruction that can never be exhausted.” Irenaeus’ trust in the Scripture is unwavering as he reasons, “If, therefore, according to the rule which I have stated, we leave some questions in the hands of God, we shall both preserve our faith uninjured, and shall continue without danger; and all Scripture, which has been given to us by God, shall be found by us perfectly consistent; and the parables shall harmonize with those passages which are perfectly plain; and those statements the meaning of which is clear, shall serve to explain the parables; and through the many diversified utterances [of Scripture] there shall be heard one harmonious melody in us, praising in hymns that God who created all things.” Irenaeus is convincing as he affirms, “If, for instance, any one asks, “What was God doing before He made the world?” we reply that the answer to such a question lies with God Himself. For that this world was formed perfect by God, receiving a beginning in time, the Scriptures teach us; but no Scripture reveals to us what God was employed about before this event. The answer therefore to that question remains with God, and it is not proper for us to aim at bringing forward foolish, rash, and blasphemous suppositions [in reply to it]; so, as by one’s imagining that he has discovered the origin of matter, he should in reality set aside God Himself who made all things.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus speaks directly to the Gnostics as he says, “For consider, all ye who invent such opinions, since the Father Himself is alone called God, who has a real existence, but whom ye style the Demiurge; since, moreover, the Scriptures acknowledge Him alone as God; and yet again, since the Lord confesses Him alone as His own Father, and knows no other, as I shall show from His very words, —when ye style this very Being the fruit of defect, and the offspring of ignorance, and describe Him as being ignorant of those things which are above Him, with the various other allegations which you make regarding Him,—consider the terrible blasphemy [ye are thus guilty of] against Him who truly is God.” Irenaeus acknowledges the possibility that the Gnostics believe in God as he says, “Ye seem to affirm gravely and honestly enough that ye believe in God; but then, as ye are utterly unable to reveal any other God, ye declare this very Being in whom ye profess to believe, the fruit of defect and the offspring of ignorance.” Irenaeus now documents the Gnostic errors as he states, “Now this blindness and foolish talking flow to you from the fact that ye reserve nothing for God, but ye wish to proclaim the nativity and production both of God Himself, of His Ennœa, of His Logos, and Life, and Christ; and ye form the idea of these from no other than a mere human experience;” Irenaeus points out that the Gnostics were “not understanding, as I said before, that it is possible, in the case of man, who is a compound being, to speak in this way of the mind of man and the thought of man; and to say that thought (ennœa) springs from mind (sensus), intention (enthymesis) again from thought, and word (logos) from intention (but which logos? for there is among the Greeks one logos which is the principle that thinks, and another which is the instrument by means of which thought is expressed); and [to say] that a man sometimes is at rest and silent, while at other times he speaks and is active.” Irenaeus then points out, “But since God is all mind, all reason, all active spirit, all light, and always exists one and the same, as it is both beneficial for us to think of God, and as we learn regarding Him from the Scriptures, such feelings and divisions [of operation] cannot fittingly be ascribed to Him.” Irenaeus then explains, “For our tongue, as being carnal, is not sufficient to minister to the rapidity of the human mind, inasmuch as that is of a spiritual nature, for which reason our word is restrained within us, and is not at once expressed as it has been conceived by the mind, but is uttered by successive efforts, just as the tongue is able to serve it.”

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “But God being all Mind, and all Logos, both speaks exactly what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks. For His thought is Logos, and Logos is Mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father Himself.” Irenaeus points out the error of the Gnostics as he says, “He, therefore, who speaks of the mind of God, and ascribes to it a special origin of its own, declares Him a compound Being, as if God were one thing, and the original Mind another.” And again, Irenaeus shows the error of the Gnostics as he says, “So, again, with respect to Logos, when one attributes to him the third place of production from the Father; on which supposition he is ignorant of His greatness; and thus Logos has been far separated from God.” Irenaeus then testifies, “As for the prophet, he declares respecting Him, “Who shall describe His generation?” referring to Isaiah 53:8. And again Irenaeus shows the error of the Gnostics as he

says, “But ye pretend to set forth His generation from the Father, and ye transfer the production of the word of men which takes place by means of a tongue to the Word of God, and thus are righteously exposed by your own selves as knowing neither things human nor divine.”

In paragraph six, Irenaeus rebukes the Gnostics as he says, “But, beyond reason inflated [with your own wisdom], ye presumptuously maintain that ye are acquainted with the unspeakable mysteries of God; while even the Lord, the very Son of God, allowed that the Father alone knows the very day and hour of judgment, when He plainly declares, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father only,” referring to Mark 13:32. Irenaeus then exhorts, “If, then, the Son was not ashamed to ascribe the knowledge of that day to the Father only, but declared what was true regarding the matter, neither let us be ashamed to reserve for God those greater questions which may occur to us.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For no man is superior to his master,” referring to Matthew 10:24. Irenaeus then humbly admits, “If any one, therefore, says to us, “How then was the Son produced by the Father?,” we reply to him, that no man understands that production, or generation, or calling, or revelation, or by whatever name one may describe His generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable.” Yet, Irenaeus points out that, “Neither Valentinus, nor Marcion, nor Saturninus, nor Basilides, nor angels, nor archangels, nor principalities, nor powers [possess this knowledge], but the Father only who begat, and the Son who was begotten.” Irenaeus earnestly contends for the faith as he affirms, “Since therefore His generation is unspeakable, those who strive to set forth generations and productions cannot be in their right mind, inasmuch as they undertake to describe things which are indescribable.” Irenaeus then points out the folly of the Gnostics as he argues, “For that a word is uttered at the bidding of thought and mind, all men indeed well understand. Those, therefore, who have excogitated [the theory of] emissions have not discovered anything great, or revealed any abstruse mystery, when they have simply transferred what all understand to the only-begotten Word of God; and while they style Him unspeakable and unnameable, they nevertheless set forth the production and formation of His first generation, as if they themselves had assisted at His birth, thus assimilating Him to the word of mankind formed by emissions.”

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But we shall not be wrong if we affirm the same thing also concerning the substance of matter, that God produced it. For we have learned from the Scriptures that God holds the supremacy over all things. But whence or in what way He produced it, neither has Scripture anywhere declared;” Irenaeus rebukes the Gnostics as he continues, “nor does it become us to conjecture, so as, in accordance with our own opinions, to form endless conjectures concerning God, but we should leave such knowledge in the hands of God Himself.” Irenaeus then asserts, “In like manner, also, we must leave the cause why, while all things were made by God, certain of His creatures sinned and revolted from a state of submission to God, and others, indeed the great majority, persevered, and do still persevere, in [willing] subjection to Him who formed them, and also of what nature those are who sinned, and of what nature those who persevere,” and then Irenaeus wisely advises, “[we must, I say, leave the cause of these things] to God and His Word, to whom alone He said, “Sit at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool,” referring to Psalm 110:1. Irenaeus then testifies, “But as for us, we still dwell upon the earth, and have not yet sat down upon His throne. For although the Spirit of the Saviour that is in Him “searcheth all things, even the deep things of God,” referring to 1 Corinthians 2:10, “yet as to us “there are diversities of gifts, differences of administrations, and diversities of operations,” referring to 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, “and we, while upon the earth, as Paul also declares, “know in part, and prophesy in part,” referring to 1 Corinthians 13:9. Irenaeus continues as he exhorts, “Since, therefore, we know but in part, we ought to leave all sorts of [difficult] questions in the hands of Him who in some measure, [and that only,] bestows grace on us.” Irenaeus continues as he reminds us, “That eternal fire, [for instance,] is prepared for sinners, both the Lord has plainly declared, and the rest of the Scriptures demonstrate. And that God foreknew that this would happen, the Scriptures do in like manner demonstrate, since He prepared eternal fire from the beginning for those who were [afterwards] to transgress [His commandments],” Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “but the cause itself of the nature of such transgressors neither has any Scripture informed us, nor has an apostle told us, nor has the Lord taught us.” Irenaeus continues as he exhorts, “It becomes us, therefore, to leave the knowledge of this matter to God, even as the Lord does of the day and hour [of judgment], and not to rush to such an extreme of danger, that we will leave nothing in the hands of God, even though we have received only a measure of grace [from Him in this world].” And Irenaeus warns, “But when we investigate points which are above us, and with respect to which we cannot

reach satisfaction, [it is absurd that we should display such an extreme of presumption as to lay open God, and things which are not yet discovered, referring to Genesis 40:8, Deuteronomy 29:29, and Psalm 131, “as if already we had found out, by the vain talk about emissions, God Himself, the Creator of all things, and to assert that He derived His substance from apostasy and ignorance, so as to frame an impious hypothesis in opposition to God.”

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus concludes against the Gnostics, “Moreover, they possess no proof of their system, which has but recently been invented by them, sometimes resting upon certain numbers, sometimes on syllables, and sometimes, again, on names; and there are occasions, too, when, by means of those letters which are contained in letters, by parables not properly interpreted, or by certain [baseless] conjectures, they strive to establish that fabulous account which they have devised.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For if any one should inquire the reason why the Father, who has fellowship with the Son in all things, has been declared by the Lord alone to know the hour and the day [of judgment], he will find at present no more suitable, or becoming, or safe reason than this (since, indeed, the Lord is the only true Master), that we may learn through Him that the Father is above all things. For “the Father,” says He, “is greater than I,” referring to John 14:28. And Irenaeus then warns the Gnostics, “The Father, therefore, has been declared by our Lord to excel with respect to knowledge; for this reason, that we, too, as long as we are connected with the scheme of things in this world, should leave perfect knowledge, and such questions [as have been mentioned], to God, and should not by any chance, while we seek to investigate the sublime nature of the Father, fall into the danger of starting the question whether there is another God above God.”

And in paragraph nine, Irenaeus continues to warn the Gnostics, as he says “But if any lover of strife contradict what I have said, and also what the apostle affirms, that “we know in part, and prophesy in part,” referring again to 1 Corinthians 13:9, “and imagine that he has acquired not a partial, but a universal, knowledge of all that exists, —being such an one as Valentinus, or Ptolemæus, or Basilides, or any other of those who maintain that they have searched out the deep things of God,—let him not (arraying himself in vainglory) boast that he has acquired greater knowledge than others with respect to those things which are invisible, or cannot be placed under our observation; but let him, by making diligent inquiry, and obtaining information from the Father, tell us the reasons (which we know not) of those things which are in this world, —as, for instance, the number of hairs on his own head, and the sparrows which are captured day by day, and such other points with which we are not previously acquainted,—so that we may credit him also with respect to more important points.” Irenaeus points out the obvious as he says, “But if those who are *perfect* do not yet understand the very things in their hands, and at their feet, and before their eyes, and on the earth, and especially the rule followed with respect to the hairs of their head, how can we believe them regarding things spiritual, and super-celestial, and those which, with a vain confidence, they assert to be above God?” Irenaeus concludes as he says, “So much, then, I have said concerning numbers, and names, and syllables, and questions respecting such things as are above our comprehension, and concerning their improper expositions of the parables: [I add no more on these points,] since thou thyself mayest enlarge upon them.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues, “Having therefore the truth itself as our rule and the testimony concerning God set clearly before us, we ought not, by running after numerous and diverse answers to questions, to cast away the firm and true knowledge of God.” Irenaeus’ confession is that he has the truth as his rule. Irenaeus believed that the testimony concerning God was set clearly before the Church in his time.

Therefore, Irenaeus advises, “But it is much more suitable that we, directing our inquiries after this fashion, should exercise ourselves in the investigation of the mystery and administration of the living God, and should increase in the love of Him who has done, and still does, so great things for us;” By “investigation” here, Irenaeus means the study of the Scriptures as he will state in paragraph two, and as he most certainly has done himself.

Irenaeus continues as he warns, “but never should fall from the belief by which it is most clearly proclaimed that this Being alone is truly God and Father, who both formed this world, fashioned man, and bestowed the faculty of increase on His own creation, and called him upwards from lesser things to those greater ones which are in His own presence, just as He brings an infant which has been conceived in the womb into the light of the sun, and lays up wheat in the barn after He has given it full strength on the stalk.” Irenaeus

concludes wisely, "But it is one and the same Creator who both fashioned the womb and created the sun; and one and the same Lord who both reared the stalk of corn, increased and multiplied the wheat, and prepared the barn."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus encourages, "If, however, we cannot discover explanations of all those things in Scripture which are made the subject of investigation, yet let us not on that account seek after any other God besides Him who really exists. For this is the very greatest impiety. We should leave things of that nature to God who created us, being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit;" We see here that Irenaeus believed the Scriptures to be the word of God. This is certainly in agreement with Paul's statement to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3 (NASB):16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Irenaeus looked to the Scriptures as the source of his knowledge of God and things spiritual. The Scriptures don't tell us everything about everything, he says in paragraph two, but they do tell us the truth about God.

Irenaeus continues as he argues, "but we, inasmuch as we are inferior to, and later in existence than, the Word of God and His Spirit, are on that very account destitute of the knowledge of His mysteries." This is a humble admission of a creature. Irenaeus then wisely points out, "And there is no cause for wonder if this is the case with us as respects things spiritual and heavenly, and such as require to be made known to us by revelation, since many even of those things which lie at our very feet (I mean such as belong to this world, which we handle, and see, and are in close contact with) transcend our knowledge, so that even these we must leave to God." Is this not common sense? The mysteries of God and "things spiritual and heavenly" are revealed through a revelation from God to man, for there is no other way that man could know of them.

Irenaeus then reasons wisely, "For it is fitting that He should excel all [in knowledge]. For how stands the case, for instance, if we endeavour to explain the cause of the rising of the Nile? We may say a great deal, plausible or otherwise, on the subject; but what is true, sure, and incontrovertible regarding it, belongs only to God. Then, again, the dwelling-place of birds—of those, I mean, which come to us in spring, but fly away again on the approach of autumn—though it is a matter connected with this world, escapes our knowledge. What explanation, again, can we give of the flow and ebb of the ocean, although every one admits there must be a certain cause [for these phenomena]? Or what can we say as to the nature of those things which lie beyond it? What, moreover, can we say as to the formation of rain, lightning, thunder, gatherings of clouds, vapours, the bursting forth of winds, and such like things; or tell as to the storehouses of snow, hail, and other like things? [What do we know respecting] the conditions requisite for the preparation of clouds, or what is the real nature of the vapours in the sky? What as to the reason why the moon waxes and wanes, or what as to the cause of the difference of nature among various waters, metals, stones, and such like things? On all these points we may indeed say a great deal while we search into their causes, but God alone who made them can declare the truth regarding them."

Scripture is a revelation of God to man, and is inspired by God as Irenaeus plainly says. Irenaeus also argues that there is so much we don't even know about nature, and, if we investigate, we may search into the causes of natural phenomena like "the rising of the Nile," or the "flow and ebb of the ocean." But God alone knows that totality of truth about the things that He Himself has made, as Irenaeus says.

To summarize, in paragraph two, Irenaeus says that there are many things we cannot explain in Scripture, but that should not lead us to seek after "any other God besides Him who really exists." He says that "the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit." He says that we were not there when the Word was spoken and, since the Mysteries of God deal with things heavenly and spiritual, the knowledge of such things "are made known to us by revelation." Therefore we should not wonder that there is much we don't know or understand in the Scriptures, for there is also much that we don't know about nature and the physical world. We may discover much about the truth of such things, "but God alone who made them can declare the truth regarding them."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues as he reasons, "If, therefore, even with respect to creation, there are some things [the knowledge of] which belongs only to God, and others which come within the range of our own knowledge, what ground is there for complaint, if, in regard to those things which we investigate in the

Scriptures (which are throughout spiritual), we are able by the grace of God to explain some of them, while we must leave others in the hands of God, and that not only in the present world, but also in that which is to come, so that God should for ever teach, and man should for ever learn the things taught him by God?" Irenaeus speaks sound words here. Irenaeus then refers to the Apostle Paul as he says, "As the apostle has said on this point, that, when other things have been done away, then these three, "faith, hope, and charity, shall endure," referring to **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Irenaeus presses his point that the Scriptures are spiritual and we are only able by the grace of God to explain some of them, "while we must leave others in the hands of God." How right he is that God will forever teach us the things about Himself, and man forever "learn the things taught him by God. And when all things are done away, just as the Scriptures say, "faith, hope, and charity, shall endure" as we read in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Irenaeus then explains wisely, "For faith, which has respect to our Master, endures unchangeably, assuring us that there is but one true God, and that we should truly love Him for ever, seeing that He alone is our Father; while we hope ever to be receiving more and more from God, and to learn from Him, because He is good, and possesses boundless riches, a kingdom without end, and instruction that can never be exhausted." Irenaeus' trust in the Scripture is unwavering as he reasons, "If, therefore, according to the rule which I have stated, we leave some questions in the hands of God, we shall both preserve our faith uninjured, and shall continue without danger; and all Scripture, which has been given to us by God, shall be found by us perfectly consistent; and the parables shall harmonize with those passages which are perfectly plain; and those statements the meaning of which is clear, shall serve to explain the parables; and through the many diversified utterances [of Scripture] there shall be heard one harmonious melody in us, praising in hymns that God who created all things." Irenaeus is convincing as he affirms, "If, for instance, any one asks, "What was God doing before He made the world?" we reply that the answer to such a question lies with God Himself. For that this world was formed perfect by God, receiving a beginning in time, the Scriptures teach us; but no Scripture reveals to us what God was employed about before this event. The answer therefore to that question remains with God, and it is not proper for us to aim at bringing forward foolish, rash, and blasphemous suppositions [in reply to it]; so, as by one's imagining that he has discovered the origin of matter, he should in reality set aside God Himself who made all things."

Again, Irenaeus has spoken sound words. We could also add that the Scriptures also say that we walk by faith and not by sight as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (NASB):6** Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— **7** for we walk by faith, not by sight— **8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

And the Scriptures also say that the knowledge of God is higher than our thoughts as in **Isaiah 55 (NASB):8** "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. **9** "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. **10** "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; **11** So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.

Irenaeus firmly believed that the Scriptures were given to us by God and that we would find them "perfectly consistent" if we would trust Him with the hard questions, leaving these "in the hands of God." And the statements where the meaning is clear shall help clarify the parables and other things in the word of God that are not so clear. Irenaeus encourages us to let the answers to questions we cannot answer "remain with God."

To summarize, in paragraph three, Irenaeus says that some things are "within the range of our own knowledge" and "therefore some things [the knowledge of] which belongs only to God." He says, "we are able by the grace of God to explain some of them, while we must leave others in the hands of God." The fact is that God will "forever teach" and man will "forever learn the things taught him by God." And after all, "faith, hope, and charity shall endure." Irenaeus says that all Scripture "has been given to us by God" and "shall be found by us perfectly consistent" if "we leave some questions in the hands of God." Irenaeus gives us an example of a

silly question, that is, “What was God employed about before He made the world?” The Scriptures do not say, and since such knowledge is beyond us, “it is not proper for us to aim at bringing forward foolish, rash, and blasphemous suppositions [in reply to it]; so, as by one’s imagining that he has discovered the origin of matter, he should in reality set aside God Himself who made all things.” These are wise words.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus speaks directly to the Gnostics as he says, “For consider, all ye who invent such opinions, since the Father Himself is alone called God, who has a real existence, but whom ye style the Demiurge; since, moreover, the Scriptures acknowledge Him alone as God; and yet again, since the Lord confesses Him alone as His own Father, and knows no other, as I shall show from His very words, —when ye style this very Being the fruit of defect, and the offspring of ignorance, and describe Him as being ignorant of those things which are above Him, with the various other allegations which you make regarding Him,— consider the terrible blasphemy [ye are thus guilty of] against Him who truly is God.”

Irenaeus boldly challenges the Gnostics calling their beliefs “terrible blasphemy.” The Gnostics actually believed that there was another god above the God of the prophets, that is, who was above the God of the Old Testament.

Now Irenaeus acknowledges the possibility that the Gnostics believe in God as he says, ”Ye seem to affirm gravely and honestly enough that ye believe in God; but then, as ye are utterly unable to reveal any other God, ye declare this very Being in whom ye profess to believe, the fruit of defect and the offspring of ignorance.” Irenaeus now documents the Gnostic errors as he states, “Now this blindness and foolish talking flow to you from the fact that ye reserve nothing for God, but ye wish to proclaim the nativity and production both of God Himself, of His Ennœa, of His Logos, and Life, and Christ; and ye form the idea of these from no other than a mere human experience;” Gnostic beliefs are rather complex and often contradict each other. We will present a more complete discussion of Gnostic beliefs in **Chapter 34: Gnosticism**.

Irenaeus continues as he points out that the Gnostics were “not understanding, as I said before, that it is possible, in the case of man, who is a compound being, to speak in this way of the mind of man and the thought of man; and to say that thought (ennœa) springs from mind (sensus), intention (enthymesis) again from thought, and word (logos) from intention (but which logos? for there is among the Greeks one logos which is the principle that thinks, and another which is the instrument by means of which thought is expressed); and [to say] that a man sometimes is at rest and silent, while at other times he speaks and is active.” Irenaeus then points out, “But since God is all mind, all reason, all active spirit, all light, and always exists one and the same, as it is both beneficial for us to think of God, and as we learn regarding Him from the Scriptures, such feelings and divisions [of operation] cannot fittingly be ascribed to Him.” Irenaeus then explains, “For our tongue, as being carnal, is not sufficient to minister to the rapidity of the human mind, inasmuch as that is of a spiritual nature, for which reason our word is restrained within us, and is not at once expressed as it has been conceived by the mind, but is uttered by successive efforts, just as the tongue is able to serve it.”

Irenaeus thoughts in paragraph four seem to indicate that he heard something special in the word of God that made it stand out as different from the words of men. It reminds me of what the Scripture says about Jesus, that “never man spoke like this man,” as in **John 7 (NASB):45** The (officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, “Why did you not bring Him?” **46** The officers answered, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.”

To summarize, in paragraph four, Irenaeus now points to the source of these silly questions. It is the Gnostics who “invent such opinions” such as the Demiurge, whom they say is the Father, that is God. Yet the Gnostics claim that this, the real God, is actually the “fruit of defect, and the offspring of ignorance,” and “ignorant of those things which are above Him.” Irenaeus says such opinions are blasphemy “against Him who truly is God” alone. Irenaeus says that the Gnostics “seem to affirm gravely and honestly enough” that they believe in God, but they then declare this very Being in whom they profess to believe, “the fruit of defect and the offspring of ignorance.” Even though they are “utterly unable to reveal any other God,” they still “reserve nothing for God,” and in this way let blindness and foolish talking flow to themselves, forming their ideas “from no other than a mere human experience.” Irenaeus says in essence that it takes time for man to express his thoughts and may take successive efforts to express what his mind thinks. The human mind is “of a spiritual nature,” he says, and thinks faster than the tongue can utter speech.

The words of the Gnostics are a pretension of knowledge. There is no history to them that shows a unity

of purpose in comparison to the word of God which has abundant proofs such as the fulfillment of prophecy and the testimony of miracles.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “But God being all Mind, and all Logos, both speaks exactly what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks. For His thought is Logos, and Logos is Mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father Himself.” Irenaeus points out the error of the Gnostics as he says, “He, therefore, who speaks of the mind of God, and ascribes to it a special origin of its own, declares Him a compound Being, as if God were one thing, and the original Mind another.” Apparently the Gnostics were ascribing to the mind of God “a special origin of its own.” Irenaeus says that to do this is to declare “Him a compound Being as if God were one thing, and the original Mind another.”

And again, Irenaeus shows the error of the Gnostics as he says, “So, again, with respect to Logos, when one attributes to him the third place of production from the Father; on which supposition he is ignorant of His greatness; and thus Logos has been far separated from God.” Apparently, the Gnostics were attributing to the Logos “the third place of production from the Father,” making the Logos “far separated from God.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “As for the prophet, he declares respecting Him, “Who shall describe His generation?” referring to **Isaiah 53 (Septuagint):8** In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken away from the earth: because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death.

This verse is also translated as in **Isaiah 53 (NASB):8** By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due*?

I believe Irenaeus means to say by this Scripture that no one could trace his generation, or beginning.

And again Irenaeus shows the error of the Gnostics as he says, “But ye pretend to set forth His generation from the Father, and ye transfer the production of the word of men which takes place by means of a tongue to the Word of God, and thus are righteously exposed by your own selves as knowing neither things human nor divine.”

Irenaeus says that the prophet declared, respecting the Logos, that His generation was indescribable. But the Gnostics say that His generation is from the Father. This does not agree with the Word of God, and so Irenaeus says that they “transfer the production of the word of men which takes place by means of a tongue to the Word of God.” Thus they are “exposed” by their pretending by which it is evident they know nothing either “human or divine.”

In paragraph six, Irenaeus rebukes the Gnostics as he says, “But, beyond reason inflated [with your own wisdom], ye presumptuously maintain that ye are acquainted with the unspeakable mysteries of God; while even the Lord, the very Son of God, allowed that the Father alone knows the very day and hour of judgment, when He plainly declares, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father only,” referring to **Mark 13 (NASB):32** “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone*.”

Irenaeus then exhorts, “If, then, the Son was not ashamed to ascribe the knowledge of that day to the Father only, but declared what was true regarding the matter, neither let us be ashamed to reserve for God those greater questions which may occur to us.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For no man is superior to his master,” referring to **Matthew 10 (NASB):24** “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.

Irenaeus then humbly, as a true son of the Creator, admits, “If any one, therefore, says to us, “How then was the Son produced by the Father?” we reply to him, that no man understands that production, or generation, or calling, or revelation, or by whatever name one may describe His generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable.” Irenaeus then argues that, “Neither Valentinus, nor Marcion, nor Saturninus, nor Basilides, nor angels, nor archangels, nor principalities, nor powers [possess this knowledge], but the Father only who begat, and the Son who was begotten.” Irenaeus earnestly contends for the faith as he says, “Since therefore His generation is unspeakable, those who strive to set forth generations and productions cannot be in their right mind, inasmuch as they undertake to describe things which are indescribable.” In fact, they have been deceived by demons as Paul says in **1 Timothy 4 (NASB):1** But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.

Irenaeus then points out the folly of the Gnostics as he argues, “For that a word is uttered at the bidding

of thought and mind, all men indeed well understand. Those, therefore, who have excogitated [the theory of] emissions have not discovered anything great, or revealed any abstruse mystery, when they have simply transferred what all understand to the only-begotten Word of God; and while they style Him unspeakable and unnameable, they nevertheless set forth the production and formation of His first generation, as if they themselves had assisted at His birth, thus assimilating Him to the word of mankind formed by emissions." What exactly the "theory emissions" was is difficult to say. But from Irenaeus' writing here he seems to describe the Gnostic belief that the Son of God was generated by another being known to the Gnostics when this being had a thought, and then spoke that thought. So the word that was spoken was the emission, much like the word of mankind is formed in the mind and then spoken. This is nothing but pure fantasy, and the imaginings of men.

To summarize, in paragraph six, Irenaeus says that we should not be "ashamed to reserve for God those greater questions which may occur to us," even as Jesus Himself acknowledged that He did not know the day or the hour of His return and the coming judgment day, but only the Father. Irenaeus says the Gnostics don't know what "is in fact indescribable," that is, how the Son was begotten. Irenaeus says "His generation is unspeakable" and those who pretend to understand this try to "set forth the production and formation of His first generation, as if they themselves had assisted at His birth, thus assimilating Him to the word of mankind formed by emissions."

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus rolls on, continuing his argument that knowledge of some things are to be left in the hands of God since there is no way for us to know them without His revealing them to us. This is the plain statement of Scripture in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):10** For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. **11** For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

This, he says, is true of the origin of matter which He says the Scriptures tell us that God produced but not how He produced it. Irenaeus says it does not "become us to conjecture, so as, in accordance with our own opinions, to form endless conjectures concerning God, but we should leave such knowledge in the hands of God Himself." Again the Scripture says the same in **Hebrews 11 (NASB):1** By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

It is by faith that we understand.

However, Irenaeus then says "we must leave the cause why, while all things were made by God, certain of His creatures sinned and revolted from a state of submission to God, and others, indeed the great majority, persevered, and do still persevere, in [willing] subjection to Him who formed them, and also of what nature those are who sinned, and of what nature those who persevere." This statement makes it sound as if there are some, "indeed the great majority," who were born without sin, and persevere in submission to God "who formed them." Yet there are others who "sinned and revolted from a state of submission to God." And, it seems it is an open question to Irenaeus "of what nature those are who sinned, and of what nature those who persevere." The Scriptures are clear on both questions. When Adam sinned, he passed sin upon the entire human race as stated in **Romans 5 (NASB):12** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

And in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB):21** For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

All are spiritually dead in sin until they accept Christ as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, **2** in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. **3** Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

All stand condemned until they accept Christ as Jesus tells us in **John 3 (NASB):18** "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Irenaeus does use the word "creatures." He therefore could be referring to the angels who did not fall when Lucifer fell when he says that "others, indeed the great majority, persevered, and do still persevere, in [willing] subjection to Him who formed them." However he is not clear here.

Irenaeus then wisely advises, “—[we must, I say, leave the cause of these things] to God and His Word, to whom alone He said, “Sit at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool,” referring to **Psalm 110 (NASB):1** A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “But as for us, we still dwell upon the earth, and have not yet sat down upon His throne. For although the Spirit of the Saviour that is in Him “searcheth all things, even the deep things of God,” referring to **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):10** For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “yet as to us “there are diversities of gifts, differences of administrations, and diversities of operations,” referring to **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):4** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*.

Irenaeus then continues, “and we, while upon the earth, as Paul also declares, “know in part, and prophesy in part,” referring to **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

Irenaeus continues as he exhorts, “Since, therefore, we know but in part, we ought to leave all sorts of [difficult] questions in the hands of Him who in some measure, [and that only,] bestows grace on us.” And Irenaeus reminds us, “That eternal fire, [for instance,] is prepared for sinners, both the Lord has plainly declared, and the rest of the Scriptures demonstrate. And that God foreknew that this would happen, the Scriptures do in like manner demonstrate, since He prepared eternal fire from the beginning for those who were [afterwards] to transgress [His commandments];” This is stated in **Matthew 25 (NASB):41** “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

And in **Mark 9 (HCSB):42** “But whoever causes the downfall of one of these little ones who believe in Me—it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. 43 And if your hand causes your downfall, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and go to hell—the unquenchable fire, [44 where Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.] 45 And if your foot causes your downfall, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell— [the unquenchable fire, 46 where Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.] 47 And if your eye causes your downfall, gouge it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

Irenaeus concludes by asserting, “but the cause itself of the nature of such transgressors neither has any Scripture informed us, nor has an apostle told us, nor has the Lord taught us.” But the Scriptures most certainly do inform us of the cause of the nature of such transgressors. The cause is the sin of Adam. The nature is the Adamic nature which the whole human race inherits as descendants of Adam.

Irenaeus then continues as he exhorts, “It becomes us, therefore, to leave the knowledge of this matter to God, even as the Lord does of the day and hour [of judgment], and not to rush to such an extreme of danger, that we will leave nothing in the hands of God, even though we have received only a measure of grace [from Him in this world].”

Yes, we who believe have been given a measure of faith and gifts differing according to the grace given to us, as we read in **Romans 12 (NASB):3** For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

Then also in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):7** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Irenaeus then warns, “But when we investigate points which are above us, and with respect to which we cannot reach satisfaction, [it is absurd that we should display such an extreme of presumption as to lay open God, and things which are not yet discovered, referring to Genesis 40:8, Deuteronomy 29:29, and Psalm 131,

"as if already we had found out, by the vain talk about emissions, God Himself, the Creator of all things, and to assert that He derived His substance from apostasy and ignorance, so as to frame an impious hypothesis in opposition to God."

Irenaeus gives us wise counsel as he draws from **Genesis 40 (NASB):8** Then they said to him, "We have had a dream and there is no one to interpret it." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *it* to me, please."

And from **Deuteronomy 29 (NASB):29** "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law

And from **Psalm 131 (NASB):1** O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me. 2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child *rests* against his mother, My soul is like a weaned child within me. 3 O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever.

Our work is to believe in Him whom He has sent as in **John 6 (NASB):29** Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

For without faith, it is impossible to please God as we read in **Hebrews 11 (NASB):6** And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus concludes against the Gnostics, "Moreover, they possess no proof of their system, which has but recently been invented by them, sometimes resting upon certain numbers, sometimes on syllables, and sometimes, again, on names; and there are occasions, too, when, by means of those letters which are contained in letters, by parables not properly interpreted, or by certain [baseless] conjectures, they strive to establish that fabulous account which they have devised." Irenaeus then testifies, "For if any one should inquire the reason why the Father, who has fellowship with the Son in all things, has been declared by the Lord alone to know the hour and the day [of judgment], he will find at present no more suitable, or becoming, or safe reason than this (since, indeed, the Lord is the only true Master), that we may learn through Him that the Father is above all things. For "the Father," says He, "is greater than I," referring to **John 14 (NASB):28** "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

And Irenaeus warns the Gnostics, "The Father, therefore, has been declared by our Lord to excel with respect to knowledge; for this reason, that we, too, as long as we are connected with the scheme of things in this world, should leave perfect knowledge, and such questions [as have been mentioned], to God, and should not by any chance, while we seek to investigate the sublime nature of the Father, fall into the danger of starting the question whether there is another God above God." This is what Paul warns us to avoid in **2 Timothy 2 (NASB):23** But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

And in paragraph nine, Irenaeus continues to warn the Gnostics, as he says "But if any lover of strife contradict what I have said, and also what the apostle affirms, that "we know in part, and prophesy in part," referring again to **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

Continuing, Irenaeus argues, "and imagine that he has acquired not a partial, but a universal, knowledge of all that exists,—being such an one as Valentinus, or Ptolemæus, or Basilides, or any other of those who maintain that they have searched out the deep things of God,—let him not (arraying himself in vainglory) boast that he has acquired greater knowledge than others with respect to those things which are invisible, or cannot be placed under our observation; but let him, by making diligent inquiry, and obtaining information from the Father, tell us the reasons (which we know not) of those things which are in this world, —as, for instance, the number of hairs on his own head, and the sparrows which are captured day by day, and such other points with which we are not previously acquainted,—so that we may credit him also with respect to more important points." Irenaeus then reasons rightly, "But if those who are *perfect* do not yet understand the very things in their hands, and at their feet, and before their eyes, and on the earth, and especially the rule followed with respect to the hairs of their head, how can we believe them regarding things spiritual, and super-celestial, and those which, with a vain confidence, they assert to be above God?" Irenaeus concludes as he says, "So much, then, I have said concerning numbers, and names, and syllables, and questions respecting such things as are above our comprehension, and concerning their improper expositions of the parables: [I add no more on these

points,] since thou thyself mayest enlarge upon them."

We see here in this chapter that Irenaeus argues from the Scriptures, and that he believes that the Scriptures were inspired by God, and are His words. And his arguments agree with the Scriptures, though this is not always the case as we shall see. However, I believe he does his best to agree with the Scriptures, and we see here that he trusts and relies on the Scriptures, and esteems them as the word of God.

## Book 3: Preface.

Thou hast indeed enjoined upon me, my very dear friend, that I should bring to light the Valentinian doctrines, concealed, as their votaries imagine; that I should exhibit their diversity, and compose a treatise in refutation of them. I therefore have undertaken—showing that they spring from Simon, the father of all heretics—to exhibit both their doctrines and successions, and to set forth arguments against them all. Wherefore, since the conviction of these men and their exposure is in many points but one work, I have sent unto thee [certain] books, of which the first comprises the opinions of all these men, and exhibits their customs, and the character of their behaviour. In the second, again, their perverse teachings are cast down and overthrown, and, such as they really are, laid bare and open to view. But in this, the third book I shall adduce proofs from the Scriptures, so that I may come behind in nothing of what thou hast enjoined; yea, that over and above what thou didst reckon upon, thou mayest receive from me the means of combating and vanquishing those who, in whatever manner, are propagating falsehood. For the love of God, being rich and ungrudging, confers upon the suppliant more than he can ask from it. Call to mind then, the things which I have stated in the two preceding books, and, taking these in connection with them, thou shalt have from me a very copious refutation of all the heretics; and faithfully and strenuously shalt thou resist them in defence of the only true and life-giving faith, which the Church has received from the apostles and imparted to her sons. For the Lord of all gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel, through whom also we have known the truth, that is, the doctrine of the Son of God; to whom also did the Lord declare: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and Him that sent Me." 3308 Luke x. 16.

**Summary:** Irenaeus here states that the reason he is writing is to "bring to light the Valentinian doctrines," and to "exhibit their diversity, and compose a treatise in refutation of them." Irenaeus asserts that the Gnostic heretics "spring from Simon, the father of all heretics." Irenaeus unqualifiedly wants to "exhibit both their doctrines and successions, and to set forth arguments against them all." Irenaeus explains that his first book "comprises the opinions of all these men, and exhibits their customs, and the character of their behaviour." In the second book, he casts down and overthrows "their perverse teachings," and lays them "bare and open to view." However, "in this third book," Irenaeus's goal is to "adduce proofs from the Scriptures" in order to provide the reader with "the means of combating and vanquishing those who, in whatever manner, are propagating falsehood." Irenaeus notes, "For the love of God, being rich and ungrudging, confers upon the suppliant more than he can ask from it," reminding us of Ephesians 3:20-21. Irenaeus wishes to provide the reader with "a very copious refutation of all the heretics." By doing so, the reader "faithfully and strenuously" will be able to "resist them in defence of the only true and life-giving faith, which the Church has received from the apostles and imparted to her sons." Irenaeus states that the "Lord of all gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel, through whom also we have known the truth, that is, the doctrine of the Son of God," in order that we might faithfully pass it on as the Lord declared, "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and Him that sent Me," referring to Luke 10: 16.

**Commentary:** Irenaeus states the reasons he is writing Against Heresies as he state the following:

- "that I should bring to light the Valentinian doctrines, concealed, as their votaries imagine;"
- "that I should exhibit their diversity, and compose a treatise in refutation of them;"
- "to exhibit both their doctrines and successions, and to set forth arguments against them all."

- To show “the opinions of all these men,” and exhibit “their customs, and the character of their behaviour.”
- To cast down and overthrow “their perverse teachings” and show them to be “such as they really are, laid bare and open to view.”
- To “adduce proofs from the Scriptures” in order to show their teachings false.
- To provide “the means of combating and vanquishing those who, in whatever manner, are propagating falsehood.”
- To provide “a very copious refutation of all the heretics;”
- To provide a defense “of the only true and life-giving faith, which the Church has received from the apostles and imparted to her sons.”
- That all may know that “Lord of all gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel, through whom also we have known the truth, that is, the doctrine of the Son of God; to whom also did the Lord declare: “He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and Him that sent Me.”

These are lofty goals for Irenaeus, and he is to be commended for having them. The important thing to note here is that Irenaeus’ reason for writing his third book was to “adduce proofs from the Scriptures” in order to combat and vanquish “those who, in whatever manner, are propagating falsehood.” He was also writing to equip others, using the Scriptures, in order that they may have the means to “faithfully and strenuously” resist heretics “in defense of the only true and life-giving faith which the Church has received from the apostles and imparted to her sons.” Irenaeus is unflinching in his staunch defense of the truth of the Gospel against any and all heresy. The Lord, he says, “gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel, through whom also we have known the truth, that is, the doctrine of the Son of God.” The Lord also said as much in **Luke 10 (NASB):16** “The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.”

The Church, Irenaeus says, has received from the apostles this “only true and life-giving faith” and has imparted it to her sons. So the Lord works through those who are in the body of Christ in order that other sons and daughters may be added to the Church, and these might know the doctrine of the Son of God. Doctrine is simply Biblical truth, and teaching material from the word of God. The doctrine or teaching of the Son of God is what Jesus taught as revealed by those closest to Him as we read in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):19** So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

The apostles’ words are recorded in the Scriptures. Irenaeus wanted to give us “a very copious refutation of all the heretics” so that we might resist them with the truth. As Christians we are to take up the sword of the Spirit as in **Ephesians 6 (NASB):17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

And in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):12** For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In this segment of his writing, we notice that Irenaeus desires to propagate the truth which he sees in the Scriptures. That is, Irenaeus is not trying to back up his own perception with Scripture references, but rather to “adduce proofs from the Scriptures,” that is, to show what the Scriptures teach by using the Scriptures themselves. Let us remember Irenaeus’ words, “For the love of God, being rich and ungrudging, confers upon the suppliant more than he can ask from it,” reminding us of Paul’s words in **Ephesians 3 (KJV):20** Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

## **Book 3: Chapter I.—The apostles did not commence to preach the Gospel, or to place anything on record until they were endowed with the gifts and**

## **power of the Holy Spirit. They preached one God alone, Maker of heaven and earth.**

1. We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.

3309 See 1 Tim. iii. 15, where these terms are used in reference to the Church. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed "perfect knowledge," as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews 3310 On this and similar statements in the Fathers, the reader may consult Dr. Roberts's *Discussions on the Gospels*, in which they are fully criticised, and the Greek original of St. Matthew's Gospel maintained. in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.

2. These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ the Son of God. If any one do not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that "We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith." Irenaeus then asserts, "For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed "perfect knowledge," as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles." Irenaeus then asserts, "For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge:" Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, "they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God." Irenaeus continues as he records, "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church." Irenaeus also records, "After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter." Irenaeus then testifies, that "Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ the Son of God." Irenaeus then warns, "If any one do not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics."

**Commentary:** Picture yourself in a world where no one has ever heard of Moses or Elijah or the prophets or Jesus, or even God, the Father. This would truly be a dark place. But this is the world the apostles preached to when they went outside Israel's borders. It is no wonder that those who heard the message of the Gospel had second thoughts. At first, it sounded like something they had heard in their cultural religion. The Gospel began by being additional knowledge in their thinking. Then they began to assimilate some of the concepts and blend it with their original understanding of the world. Gradually, they began to understand that the Gospel was life changing. It turned their world upside down as the Book of Acts says of Paul and Silas in Thessalonica in **Acts 17 (NASB):6** When they did not find them, they *began* dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also;

For some, it meant a career change overnight. If they were selling idols, they needed to quit and find another livelihood. Of course, this was not easy. If you were a Jew living in a Gentile land, the Gospel was life changing but in a different way. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises in the Old Testament. This took a while to sink in. What they had waited for through the centuries had finally come to pass. It was too good to be true at first. For some, it really was too good to be true, and they rejected it. For others, the truth of the message persuaded them, and God began to increase in their lives.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that, "We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith." To Irenaeus, the Scriptures were the ground and pillar of our faith. This echoes what Paul tells Timothy in **2 Timothy 3 (NASB):16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

And the Psalmist tells us in **Psalm 119 (NASB):105** Nun. Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Note that "Nun" is the Hebrew letter for "N".

Now Jesus also teaches this in **John 8 (NASB):31** So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

The word of God is all important if we are to know the truth and be free. Now we note that Paul in 1 Timothy tells us that the church is the pillar and support of the truth as we read in **1 Timothy 3 (NASB):14** I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; 15 but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

The church is pictured by Paul as the pillar and support of the truth, but not the pillar and ground of our faith. We don't believe in the Church, and so we are saved. We believe in the truth of the Word of God, and thus we are saved. So the Church is the pillar and support of the truth as Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 3:14-15, and it is the truth in the Scriptures that is the pillar and ground of our faith, as Irenaeus says. That is, the Scriptures tell us about Jesus, and we believe in Him and we are saved. It is our faith in Him that gives us relationship with Him. And this relationship is nurtured by the word of God.

Irenaeus then asserts, "For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed "perfect knowledge," as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles." Apparently, the Gnostics were trying to add to the Gospel message by saying that the apostles told only part of the truth, and that they, the Gnostics, preached the complete truth. Irenaeus then asserts, "For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge." The apostles were to be invested with power from on high as Jesus promised in **Luke 24 (NASB):31** "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

And Jesus spoke to them just before ascended. Jesus told the disciples that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in not many days as in **Acts 1 (HCSB):4** While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "This," He said, "is what you heard from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Jesus then told the disciples that they would be invested with power when the promise of the Holy Spirit came upon them as we read in **Acts 1 (HCSB):6** So when they had come together, they asked Him, “Lord, are You restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

And all this happened just as Jesus promised as we read in **Acts 2 (NASB):1** When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God.”

The message of the Gospel preached by the apostles was the true Gospel, and it cannot be improved upon. The apostles did preach the truth of the Gospel. Their message was perfect, or complete, in that it contained all we need to know to be saved. However, when Irenaeus says that the apostles had “perfect knowledge,” he leads us to believe that there was something extra that the apostles received when the Holy Spirit came upon them. In **Book 4: Chapter XXVI, paragraph 2**, of his writing, Irenaeus says, “Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father.” Irenaeus believed that the apostles had received a gift of truth when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We will talk more about this in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**. For now, we must understand that there were about 120 people in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost as Luke records in **Acts 1 (NASB):13** When they had entered *the city*, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the son of James*. 14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the women*, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. 15 At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said...

When the Holy Spirit then came at Pentecost, it was the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus gave them in Acts 1:4-5. But the promise was not for the apostles only, but for the whole church as Peter tells us in **Acts 2 (HCSB):13** But some sneered and said, “They’re full of new wine!” 14 But Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them: “Men of Judah and all you residents of Jerusalem, let me explain this to you and pay attention to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it’s only nine in the morning. 16 On the contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17 And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. 18 I will even pour out My Spirit on My male and female slaves in those days, and they will prophesy.

Peter tells us in Acts 2:16 that the promise that Jesus spoke of was the same promise that the Holy Spirit spoke of through the prophet Joel as we read in **Joel 2 (NASB):28** “It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Then when Peter had finished preaching the first Gospel message, the people were convicted and asked him what they should do as we read in **Acts 2 (NASB):37** Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”

Peter tells us in verse 39 that this promise, that is, the same promise that Jesus promised the apostles, “is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” That is,

the promise Jesus made to the disciples that they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit was a promise for the whole Church. This is the statement of the apostle Peter himself.

Now Jesus taught the apostles when He was with them that their knowledge was incomplete, and that, when the Holy Spirit came, He would guide them into all truth as in **John 16 (NASB):12** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The apostles, and the rest of the disciples in the upper room, were just men when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and baptized them with His presence. They did not receive a “gift of truth,” but the “gift of the Holy Spirit” who would be the guide who would lead them into all truth. The Holy Spirit was not just for the apostles but for all, both men and women, as many as the Lord will call to Himself. The Lord by the Holy Spirit revealed the truth of the New Testament Scriptures to the apostles, and He illuminates that truth to us, their disciples. In other words, the same truth that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into is the same truth that He guides us into. Only He does not reveal to us more than He revealed through the apostles. The word of God is complete in the 49 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament.

Irenaeus is defending the Church against heresy, and the heresy he is defending against was that of the Gnostics who were calling into question the truth of the Gospel, and were even adding other gospel writings beside the four of Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John. However, when Irenaeus says of the apostles, “For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed “perfect knowledge,” as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles,” we must not allow ourselves to elevate the apostles to a sort of untouchable place where they could do no wrong. The apostles gave us the word of God by the Spirit of God, as Peter testifies in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Our trust is not in the apostles, but in God who spoke by the apostles. As the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into truth, and they spoke and wrote the words the Holy Spirit gave them, so we are guided by the same Holy Spirit into the truth that was written by the Holy Spirit through the apostles. The Holy Spirit revealed His truth through the apostles, and the Holy Spirit illuminates our minds to understand and know this same truth.

Now, in addition, Irenaeus used the word “unlawful” as he states that “it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed “perfect knowledge,” as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles.” This word “unlawful” seems to be used by Irenaeus to indicate that he is in a place of authority in the Church. Indeed, he was a bishop of Lyons in southern France after Pothinius, starting about 177 A.D. It is interesting that we do not hear of any of the apostles in any of their writings state that anything is unlawful except in the case of Peter in his visit to the house of Cornelius as in **Acts 10 (NASB):28** And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

Jesus did not say that they would be instantly filled with perfect or complete knowledge when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and filled them. He said the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. An example of how the Holy Spirit did this is given us in the Scriptures. In the book of Acts, it is recorded that the apostles did not know at first that the Gospel was meant for the Gentiles. This knowledge was only gradually revealed to them. Peter was the first to be guided by the Holy Spirit into this truth as we read in **Acts 10 (NASB):44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 47 “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?” 48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

Peter later tells the whole story of what happened at the house of Cornelius, and how he came to know that the Gentiles were meant to hear the Gospel as well. He tells this to those of the circumcision at Jerusalem who took issue with him about eating with uncircumcised men as we read in **Acts 11 (NKJV):1** Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when

Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, 3 saying, “You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!” 4 But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying: 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. 6 When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ 8 But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’ 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ 10 Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. 12 Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14 who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” 18 When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

The apostles and elders and those of the circumcision in Jerusalem at first did not know that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles as this story illustrates. Even after the day of Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out, Peter himself did not know this. God spoke by the Holy Spirit to him in a vision, and also to Cornelius the centurion in Caesarea by an angel as we read in Acts 10, so that they all would believe that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. The apostles did not therefore have perfect or complete or all knowledge as the words of Irenaeus could be interpreted to mean. This is not to say that they did not preach by the Holy Spirit or write the Gospels by the Holy Spirit, or that the word of God which we have received through them is imperfect or can be improved upon. The apostles walked by faith as this story in Acts illustrates so well. To walk by faith is to not walk by sight as Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 5 (NASB):6** Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight—8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

The apostles were eyewitnesses of the Lord Jesus as Peter records in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):16** For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

The apostles did not make up the Gospels from their own imagination but spoke of what they saw and heard. And Peter tells us that they have the prophetic word more sure as we read again in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):19** So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The word translated “moved” in verse 21 is φερόμενοι (pronounced pheromenoi) in the Greek, and is in the nominative, plural, masculine, participle, present, passive form of φέρω (pronounced phero), meaning to bear, to carry, to bring. So we could also translate this verse as “but men carried by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” In other words, those who wrote the Scriptures were inspired by God to write them, and were carried by the Holy Spirit so that they wrote the words of God, and not their own.

Paul says the same in **2 Timothy 3 (NASB):16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

Irenaeus himself also has said so well that we can know what is revealed, but we cannot go beyond that. Even the apostles testified that they knew in part as we read in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):9** For we know in

part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

The time when the perfect will come is revealed by John in **1 John 3 (NASB):2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

When we see Jesus, we will be like Him, and we will know fully as we have been fully known. Until then, we know in part, just as the apostles did.

Now, Irenaeus continues as he records, “Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church.” There is no historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome, but it is in Irenaeus’ testimony that he was.

Irenaeus also records, “After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter.” Irenaeus then testifies, that “Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ the Son of God.” Irenaeus then warns, “If any one do not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics.”

Irenaeus very strongly stands with the apostles and the prophets declaring that there is “one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ the Son of God.” I stand strong with Irenaeus here. This is a very strong assertion by Irenaeus of the truth of the Scriptures, and his own reliance on them.

## Book 3: Chapter II.—The heretics follow neither Scripture nor tradition.

1. When, however, they are confuted from the Scriptures, they turn round and accuse these same Scriptures, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and [assert] that they are ambiguous, and that the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition. For [they allege] that the truth was not delivered by means of written documents, but *vivâ voce*: wherefore also Paul declared, “But we speak wisdom among those that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world.”

**3311 1 Cor. ii. 6.** And this wisdom each one of them alleges to be the fiction of his own inventing, forsooth; so that, according to their idea, the truth properly resides at one time in Valentinus, at another in Marcion, at another in Cerinthus, then afterwards in Basilides, or has even been indifferently in any other opponent, **3312** This is Harvey’s rendering of the old Latin, *in illo qui contra disputat*. who could speak nothing pertaining to salvation. For every one of these men, being altogether of a perverse disposition, depraving the system of truth, is not ashamed to preach himself.

2. But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth. For [they maintain] that the apostles intermingled the things of the law with the words of the Saviour; and that not the apostles alone, but even the Lord Himself, spoke as at one time from the Demiurge, at another from the intermediate place, and yet again from the Pleroma, but that they themselves, indubitably, unsulliedly, and purely, have knowledge of the hidden mystery: this is, indeed, to blaspheme their Creator after a most impudent manner! It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition.

3. Such are the adversaries with whom we have to deal, my very dear friend, endeavouring like

slippery serpents to escape at all points. Where-fore they must be opposed at all points, if per-chance, by cutting off their retreat, we may succeed in turning them back to the truth. For, though it is not an easy thing for a soul under the influence of error to repent, yet, on the other hand, it is not altogether impossible to escape from error when the truth is brought alongside it.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus records of the heretics, “When, however, they are confuted from the Scriptures, they turn round and accuse these same Scriptures, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and [assert] that they are ambiguous, and that the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition.” Irenaeus testifies, “For [they allege] that the truth was not delivered by means of written documents, but *vivâ voce*: wherefore also Paul declared, “But we speak wisdom among those that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world,” referring to 1 Corinthians 2:6. Irenaeus also records, “And this wisdom each one of them alleges to be the fiction of his own inventing, forsooth; so that, according to their idea, the truth properly resides at one time in Valentinus, at another in Marcion, at another in Cerinthus, then afterwards in Basilides, or has even been indifferently in any other opponent who could speak nothing pertaining to salvation.” Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “For every one of these men, being altogether of a perverse disposition, depraving the system of truth, is not ashamed to preach himself.”

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In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “Such are the adversaries with whom we have to deal, my very dear friend, endeavouring like slippery serpents to escape at all points.” Irenaeus then nobly states, “Where-fore they must be opposed at all points, if per-chance, by cutting off their retreat, we may succeed in turning them back to the truth. For, though it is not an easy thing for a soul under the influence of error to repent, yet, on the other hand, it is not altogether impossible to escape from error when the truth is brought alongside it.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus records of the heretics, “When, however, they are confuted from the Scriptures, they turn round and accuse these same Scriptures, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and [assert] that they are ambiguous, and that the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition.” Irenaeus testifies here that he used the Scriptures to confute the heretics.

Irenaeus testifies, “For [they allege] that the truth was not delivered by means of written documents, but *vivâ voce*: wherefore also Paul declared, “But we speak wisdom among those that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world,” referring to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

Irenaeus also records, “And this wisdom each one of them alleges to be the fiction of his own inventing, forsooth; so that, according to their idea, the truth properly resides at one time in Valentinus, at another in Marcion, at another in Cerinthus, then afterwards in Basilides, or has even been indifferently in any other opponent who could speak nothing pertaining to salvation.” Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “For every one of these men, being altogether of a perverse disposition, depraving the system of truth, is not ashamed to preach himself.”

Irenaeus is saying that the heretics, even after presented with the truth in the Scriptures, do not receive it but claim to have heard the truth *vivâ voce*, that is, by word of mouth, and that each of these heretics, in particular Marcion, Valentinus, Cerinthus. and Basilides, has their own version of the truth, which does not agree with the Scriptures but is really a preaching of the heretic himself, as if he was a savior. These heretics also will agree with anyone else who opposes Irenaeus and his fellow believers.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus records, “But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth.” Irenaeus then explains, “For [they maintain] that the apostles intermingled the things of the law with the words of the Saviour; and that not the apostles alone, but even the Lord Himself, spoke as at one time from the Demiurge, at another from the intermediate place, and yet again from the Pleroma, but that they themselves, indubitably, unsulliedly, and purely, have knowledge of the hidden mystery: this is, indeed, to blaspheme their Creator after a most impudent manner! It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition.”

Irenaeus is saying that the tradition originating from the apostles, and “which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches,” is not enough to convert the heretics because the heretics say they have discovered the unadulterated truth. He says that the heretics use the Scriptures but insert their various meanings into the words of Jesus and the apostles in accordance with their beliefs about the Demiurge and the Pleroma. Irenaeus concludes by saying, “It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition.”

So Irenaeus is saying that he believes in both the Scripture and tradition as valid sources of truth, as long as that tradition originated from an apostle, being “preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches.” But these heretics that Irenaeus was speaking to were claiming that their tradition enabled them to know the truth of the Scriptures. Irenaeus refused to accept this tradition as valid, knowing that it did not originate with the apostles. He is also saying that he believes in a succession of presbyters in the Churches which preserves tradition handed down by the apostles. We will discuss this second belief in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**. But here we will simply comment on Irenaeus’ belief in this tradition handed down by the apostles.

First of all, Irenaeus does not define what this tradition is, but I believe it was a way of interpreting the Gospels in such a way that agrees with his statement of faith in **Book 1: Chapter X**, which is also discussed in **Chapter 4: Irenaeus’ Statement of Faith**. I don’t think that the tradition he speaks of in this chapter was a hidden meaning of some sort in the Scriptures that was passed down and followed by rote by the churches. That is, in Irenaeus’ mind, the tradition handed down by the apostles was not something that disagreed with the Scriptures or was something extra, in addition to, the Scriptures. Rather it was a right way of interpreting them that followed after truth and held fast to relationship with Jesus, the head of the Church.

Whatever Irenaeus believed, it is very important that we today do not break the commands of God in order to keep our tradition, which Jesus defines as the rules of men as He pointed out in **Matthew 15 (HCSB):1** Then Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to Jesus and asked, 2 “Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they don’t wash their hands when they eat!” 3 He answered them, “And why do you break God’s commandment because of your tradition? 4 For God said: Honor your father and your mother; and, The one who speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death. 5 But you say, ‘Whoever tells his father or mother, “Whatever benefit you might have received from me is a gift committed to the temple”— 6 he does not have to honor his father.’ In this way, you have revoked God’s word because of your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said: 8 These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 9 They worship Me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commands of men.” 10 Summoning the crowd, He told them, “Listen and understand: 11 It’s not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” 12 Then the disciples came up and told Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard this statement?” 13 He replied, “Every plant that My heavenly Father didn’t plant will be uprooted. 14 Leave them alone! They are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit.” 15 Then Peter replied to Him, “Explain this parable to us.” 16 “Are even you still lacking in understanding?” He asked. 17 “Don’t you realize that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a man. 19 For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. 20 These are the things that defile a man, but eating with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

We must be very careful that we don’t become blind guides as a result of holding to traditions rather

than to the simple truth found in the word of God. We are not to teach for doctrines the rules of men. We are not to make the word of God void by our tradition, as many of the Jews in Jesus' day did. We must obey our Master rather than men.

Irenaeus gives a place to tradition that is second to the Scriptures. It is evident that the Church in Irenaeus' day missed having the apostolic government of the Church in place, and tried to substitute tradition as a support for what they thought they heard the apostles teach them. Suppose we imagine ourselves to have lived during the time of Irenaeus. There were no typewriters, or computers, or cell phones. At first, the churches of the Romans did not have the epistles to the Corinthians, or the Ephesians, or the Galatians. Likewise, the churches at Corinth did not have the epistle to the Romans or the other epistles. Paul wrote to the needs of the specific church he was writing to. The weight of his epistles was only realized later. Copies of the Old Testament would not have been in ready supply to the Gentile churches, let alone the churches in Israel who would have been ostracized from the Jewish synagogues.

At first, each church would have to rely on the words preached to them by an apostle or even just a disciple, depending on how the word of God reached them. As the churches grew, the apostles realized the need for correction or simply further instruction. This is why the epistles were written. None of the apostles knew they were writing the New Testament. Neither did the churches. As time went on, the churches became aware of the other writings of the apostles, and each began to collect them as they were able. As we see the epistles to differ depending on the churches the apostles were writing to, it is evident that different churches had different understandings of what was preached. The words preached had a definite place in the hearts of the churches, but it was only later that they realized that they needed to check their perception of what was preached with the written word. This took time. It is no wonder that the churches only gradually became confident that the canon was closed. They had to be sure that there were no more writings of an apostle to be gathered. Would their perception change if a new writing, a Scripture, were found? Therefore they relied on the words they heard from the beginning which became the tradition of each church. Irenaeus recognized this and in order to get the churches to give up this reliance on tradition, he encouraged all to follow the tradition of the Church of Rome as he says in **Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 1**, "For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre- eminent authority," We will discuss this in detail in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**.

It does seem that Irenaeus is trying in his writing to find Scriptural support for all that the Church was teaching in his time. However, it is evident that he at times simply relied on the tradition that was being taught by the Church during his life time as if it were an addition to the Scriptures, but had the weight of supposed apostolic origin. The churches should have recognized that the canon was closed when the last apostle died, but of course there was no announcement by angel or man that this was so. They did not have the instantaneous communication that we have now. In Irenaeus' time, it took time for the canon of Scripture to be recognized as closed. Looking back, we count the historical closure to be official with the Easter letter of Athanasius in 367 A.D. This time period, an interval of 267 years, allowed this supposed tradition of apostolic origin to accumulate in the Church, and to grow stronger and not weaker. We will look at what this tradition was as we read Irenaeus' writings.

## **Book3: Chapter VII.—Reply to an objection founded on the words of St. Paul (2 Cor. iv. 4). St. Paul occasionally uses words not in their grammatical sequence.**

1. As to their affirming that Paul said plainly in the Second [Epistle] to the Corinthians, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not," 3358 **2 Cor. iv. 4**. and maintaining that there is indeed one god of this world, but another who is beyond all principality, and beginning, and power, we are not to blame if they, who give out that they do themselves know mysteries beyond God, know not how to read Paul. For if any one read the passage thus—according to Paul's custom, as I show elsewhere, and by many examples, that he uses transposition of words—"In whom God," then pointing it off, and making a slight interval, and at the same time read also the

rest [of the sentence] in one [clause], "hath blinded the minds of them of this world that believe not," he shall find out the true [sense]; that it is contained in the expression, "God hath blinded the minds of the unbelievers of this world." And this is shown by means of the little interval [between the clause]. For Paul does not say, "the God of this world," as if recognising any other beyond Him; but he confessed God as indeed God. And he says, "the unbelievers of this world," because they shall not inherit the future age of incorruption. I shall show from Paul himself, how it is that God has blinded the minds of them that believe not, in the course of this work, that we may not just at present distract our mind from the matter in hand, [by wandering] at large.

2. From many other instances also, we may discover that the apostle frequently uses a transposed order in his sentences, due to the rapidity of his discourses, and the impetus of the Spirit which is in him. An example occurs in the [Epistle] to the Galatians, where he expresses himself as follows: "Wherefore then the law of works? 3359 This is according to the reading of the old Italic version, for it is not so read in any of our existing manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. It was added, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator." 3360 Gal. iii. 19. For the order of the words runs thus: "Wherefore then the law of works? Ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator, it was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made,"— man thus asking the question, and the Spirit making answer. And again, in the Second to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he says, "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus Christ 3361 This world is not found in the second quotation of this passage immediately following. shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him 3362 This world is not found in the second quotation of this passage immediately following. with the presence of his coming; [even him] whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." 3363 2 Thess. ii. 8. Now in these [sentences] the order of the words is this: "And then shall be revealed that wicked, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the presence of His coming." For he does not mean that the coming of the Lord is after the working of Satan; but the coming of the wicked one, whom we also call Antichrist. If, then, one does not attend to the [proper] reading [of the passage], and if he do not exhibit the intervals of breathing as they occur, there shall be not only incongruities, but also, when reading, he will utter blasphemy, as if the advent of the Lord could take place according to the working of Satan. So therefore, in such passages, the *hyperbaton* must be exhibited by the reading, and the apostle's meaning following on, preserved; and thus we do not read in that passage, "the god of this world," but, "God," whom we do truly call God; and we hear [it declared of] the unbelieving and the blinded of this world, that they shall not inherit the world of life which is to come.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus chides the Gnostics as he says, "As to their affirming that Paul said plainly in the Second [Epistle] to the Corinthians, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not," referring to 2 Corinthians 4:4, "and maintaining that there is indeed one god of this world, but another who is beyond all principality, and beginning, and power, we are not to blame if they, who give out that they do themselves know mysteries beyond God, know not how to read Paul." Irenaeus then asserts, "For if any one read the passage thus—according to Paul's custom, as I show elsewhere, and by many examples, that he uses transposition of words—"In whom God," then pointing it off, and making a slight interval, and at the same time read also the rest [of the sentence] in one [clause], "hath blinded the minds of them of this world that believe not," he shall find out the true [sense]; that it is contained in the expression, "God hath blinded the minds of the unbelievers of this world." Irenaeus then interprets what he means as he says, "And this is shown by means of the little interval [between the clause]. For Paul does not say, "the God of this world," as if recognising any other beyond Him; but he confessed God as indeed God." Irenaeus continues as he explains, "And he says, "the unbelievers of this world," because they shall not inherit the future age of incorruption." Irenaeus then asserts, "I shall show from Paul himself, how it is that God has blinded the minds of them that believe not, in the course of this work, that we may not just at present distract our mind from the

matter in hand, [by wandering] at large.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, “From many other instances also, we may discover that the apostle frequently uses a transposed order in his sentences, due to the rapidity of his discourses, and the impetus of the Spirit which is in him. An example occurs in the [Epistle] to the Galatians, where he expresses himself as follows: “Wherefore then the law of works? It was added, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator,” referring to Galatians 3:19. Irenaeus then explains what he means as he says, “For the order of the words runs thus: “Wherefore then the law of works? Ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator, it was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made,”— man thus asking the question, and the Spirit making answer.” Irenaeus then gives a second example to illustrate his meaning as he says, “And again, in the Second to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he says, “And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus Christ shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the presence of his coming; [even him] whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,” referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Irenaeus then explains, “Now in these [sentences] the order of the words is this: “And then shall be revealed that wicked, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the presence of His coming.” Irenaeus continues as he exhorts us to rightly divide the word and says, “For he does not mean that the coming of the Lord is after the working of Satan; but the coming of the wicked one, whom we also call Antichrist.” Irenaeus then teaches, “If, then, one does not attend to the [proper] reading [of the passage], and if he do not exhibit the intervals of breathing as they occur, there shall be not only incongruities, but also, when reading, he will utter blasphemy, as if the advent of the Lord could take place according to the working of Satan.” Irenaeus then asserts, “So therefore, in such passages, the *hyperbaton* must be exhibited by the reading, and the apostle’s meaning following on, preserved; and thus we do not read in that passage, “the god of this world,” but, “God,” whom we do truly call God; and we hear [it declared of] the unbelieving and the blinded of this world, that they shall not inherit the world of life which is to come.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus begins his argument here by chiding the Gnostics as he says, “As to their affirming that Paul said plainly in the Second [Epistle] to the Corinthians, “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not,” referring in context to **2 Corinthians 4 (NASB):3** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Irenaeus points out their error as he says that they are “maintaining that there is indeed one god of this world, but another who is beyond all principality, and beginning, and power.” Irenaeus points out that “we are not to blame if they, who give out that they do themselves know mysteries beyond God, know not how to read Paul.” However, Irenaeus then misinterprets the passage himself as he asserts, “For if any one read the passage thus—according to Paul’s custom, as I show elsewhere, and by many examples, that he uses transposition of words—“In whom God,” then pointing it off, and making a slight interval, and at the same time read also the rest [of the sentence] in one [clause], “hath blinded the minds of them of this world that believe not,” he shall find out the true [sense]; that it is contained in the expression, “God hath blinded the minds of the unbelievers of this world.” In his zeal to defend the faith against the Gnostic heresy, Irenaeus misinterprets what Paul is saying. Although the Gnostics did misinterpret the verse making God the god of this world, Irenaeus doesn’t place the words in the right order either. Here is the verse as it is in the Greek.

## **2 Corinthians 4 (1881 Westcott-Hort New Testament):**

4 εν οις ο θεος του αιωνος τουτου ετυφλωσεν τα νοηματα των απιστων  
In whom the God of world this has blinded the minds of the ones who don’t believe  
εις το μη ανγασαι τον φωτισμον του εναγγελιου της δοξης του χριστου  
in order that the not to shine forth the enlightenment of the Gospel of the glory of the Christ  
ος εστιν εικων του θεου.  
who is (the) image of God

Literally this verse reads, “in whom the god of this world has blinded the thoughts of those who are unbelieving so that the enlightenment of the gospel of the glory of Christ should not shine forth, who is the image of God.”

Paul speaks in this epistle of “the god of this world,” and not “them of this world that believe not,” or “the unbelievers of this world,” as Irenaeus says above. That Satan is the god of this world is inferred in the temptation of Jesus as we read in **Matthew 4 (NASB):8** Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” 11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him.

Jesus Himself calls Satan the ruler of this world in **John 12 (NASB):31** "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

And in **John 16 (NASB):11** and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

That this world is under the control of Satan is again referred to in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),...

Notice Paul says that we “walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” which included all of us at some time in our lives.

Again, the apostle John states in **1 John 5 (NASB):19** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one*.

Again in **Revelation 12 (NASB):9** And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Satan is the god of this world now, but there will be a time when the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ as we read in **Revelation 11 (NASB):14** The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly. 15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

This is why Paul encourages us to put on the full armor of God as he says in **Ephesians 6 (NASB):10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Irenaeus then continues to misinterpret the verse as he says, “And this is shown by means of the little interval [between the clause]. For Paul does not say, “the God of this world,” as if recognising any other beyond Him; but he confessed God as indeed God.” It is true that Paul did not recognize any other God as God as he says in **1 Corinthians 8 (NASB):5** For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, 6 yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.

Irenaeus continues as he explains, “And he says, “the unbelievers of this world,” because they shall not inherit the future age of incorruption.” Irenaeus then asserts, “I shall show from Paul himself, how it is that God has blinded the minds of them that believe not, in the course of this work, that we may not just at present distract our mind from the matter in hand, [by wandering] at large.” Again, this is a misinterpretation of the verse in 2 Corinthians 4:4. Jesus Himself explains how the evil one snatches the word away in **Matthew 13 (NASB):18** “Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not

understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, “From many other instances also, we may discover that the apostle frequently uses a transposed order in his sentences, due to the rapidity of his discourses, and the impetus of the Spirit which is in him. An example occurs in the [Epistle] to the Galatians, where he expresses himself as follows: “Wherefore then the law of works? It was added, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator,” referring to **Galatians 3 (NASB):19** Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

Notice that the word “work” is not present in Galatians 3:19 in the NASB. Irenaeus then interprets as he says, “For the order of the words runs thus: “Wherefore then the law of works? Ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator, it was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made,”— man thus asking the question, and the Spirit making answer.” The actual verse in the Greek reads as follows:

#### **Galatians 4 (Morphological Greek New Testament (mGNT)):**

4 τί οὖν ὁ νόμος τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη ἄχρις οὐ ἔλθῃ  
why therefore the law the transgressions by reason of it was added until would come  
τὸ σπέρμα ὃ ἐπήγγελται διαταγεὶς δι’ ἀγγέλων ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου  
the seed to whom it has been promised being ordained through angels by (the) hand of a mediator

Literally this verse reads, “Why therefore the law? It was added by reason of the transgressions until the seed would come to whom it has been promised, being ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.

Irenaeus gives the correct translation and meaning of the verse in this example, but he adds the word “works” to the verse which is not found in the Greek text. He then gives a second example to illustrate his meaning as he says, “And again, in the Second to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he says, “And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus Christ shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the presence of his coming; [even him] whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,” referring in context to **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):8** Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Irenaeus then interprets as he explains, “Now in these [sentences] the order of the words is this: “And then shall be revealed that wicked, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the presence of His coming.” Irenaeus continues as he encourages us to rightly divide the word and says, “For he does not mean that the coming of the Lord is after the working of Satan; but the coming of the wicked one, whom we also call Antichrist.” Irenaeus then teaches, “If, then, one does not attend to the [proper] reading [of the passage], and if he do not exhibit the intervals of breathing as they occur, there shall be not only incongruities, but also, when reading, he will utter blasphemy, as if the advent of the Lord could take place according to the working of Satan.” Irenaeus then asserts, “So therefore, in such passages, the *hyperbaton* must be exhibited by the reading, and the apostle’s meaning following on, preserved; and thus we do not read in that passage, “the god of this world,” but, “God,” whom we do truly call God; and we hear [it declared of] the unbelieving and the blinded of this world, that they shall not inherit the world of life which is to come.”

Wikipedia has the following for the word, hyperbaton:

**Hyperbaton** /hai' pɜrbətɒn/ is a figure of speech that consists of an alteration of the logical order of the words in a sentence, or in which normally associated words are separated. The term may also be used more generally for all different figures of speech which transpose natural word order in sentences.

So did Irenaeus rely on the scriptures here? For the most part, yes, but in part, though his intentions were honorable, he exceeded what was written. His purpose was to refute error which is good. But saying that the word order of Paul may be changed to suit our goals is not using the word of God rightly. The fact is that he switched the order of two words, “this world,” in his better rendering of the verse in 2 Corinthians 4:4, and placed them next to unbelievers when he says “the unbelievers of this world.” As you can see from the Greek above, this is taking liberty with the text that is not valid, or should I say, “unlawful.” But he is correct in his statement that Paul did not recognize any other God but the one and only God. And he interprets Galatians 3:19 and 2 Thessalonians 2:8 correctly.

## Fragment XLVI.

“The 4892 From the *Catena* on St. Paul’s Epistles to the Corinthians, edited by Dr. Cramer, and reprinted by Stieren god of the world;” 4893 2 Cor. iv. 4 that is, Satan, who was designated God to those who believe not.

**Summary:** In this fragment Irenaeus teaches us that there is a god of those who believe not, that is, Satan, the god of the world.

**Commentary:** Irenaeus is still defending the faith, and does not mean that there are two different gods, one in the Old Testament, and one in the New. But he corrects himself here from what he said previously in **Book 3: Chapter VII**, of the previous section. Irenaeus testifies here that the reference to God in 2 Corinthians 4: 4 is not the one and only true God, but the god of this world, Satan, as in **2 Corinthians 4 (NASB):3** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

He does not however reverse his previous statements that the one true God blinds those who believe not. Yet the statement in this fragment is a testimony to Irenaeus’ apparent willingness to be corrected by the Lord. This shows growth in his teaching. Bravo Irenaeus.

## Book 3: Chapter X.—Proofs of the foregoing, drawn from the Gospels of Mark and Luke.

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5. Wherefore also Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter, does thus commence his Gospel narrative: “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way.” 3424 The Greek of this passage in St. **Mark i. 2** reads, τὰς τριβούς αὐτοῦ, i.e., *His paths*, which varies from the Hebrew original, to which the text of Irenaeus seems to revert, unless indeed his copy of the Gospels contained the reading of the Codex Bezae. [See book iii. cap. xii. 3, 14, below; also, xiv. 2 and xxiii. 3. On this Codex, see Burdon, *Revision Revised*, p. 12, etc., and references.] The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make the paths straight before our God.” Plainly does the commencement of the Gospel quote the words of the holy prophets, and point out Him at once, whom they confessed as God and Lord; Him, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had also made promise to Him, that He would send His messenger before His face, who was John, crying in the wilderness, in “the spirit and power of Elias,” 3425 **Luke i. 17**. “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight paths before our God.” For the prophets did not announce one and another God, but one and the same; under various aspects, however, and many titles. For varied and rich in attribute is

the Father, as I have already shown in the book preceding 3426 See ii. 35, 3. this; and I shall show [the same truth] from the prophets themselves in the further course of this work. Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: "So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God;" 3427 **Mark xvi. 19**, confirming what had been spoken by the prophet: "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." 3428 **Ps. cx. 1.** Thus God and the Father are truly one and the same; He who was announced by the prophets, and handed down by the true Gospel; whom we Christians worship and love with the whole heart, as the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things therein.

**Summary:** In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, "Wherefore also Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter, does thus commence his Gospel narrative: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make the paths straight before our God," referring to Mark 1:1-3. Irenaeus then points out, "Plainly does the commencement of the Gospel quote the words of the holy prophets, and point out Him at once, whom they confessed as God and Lord; Him, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had also made promise to Him, that He would send His messenger before His face, who was John, crying in the wilderness, in "the spirit and power of Elias," referring to Luke 1:17, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight paths before our God," again referring to Mark 1:3. Irenaeus explains the course he has taken in his writing as he says, "For the prophets did not announce one and another God, but one and the same; under various aspects, however, and many titles. For varied and rich in attribute is the Father, as I have already shown in the book preceding this; and I shall show [the same truth] from the prophets themselves in the further course of this work." Again, Irenaeus testifies, "Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: "So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God," referring to Mark 16:19, "confirming what had been spoken by the prophet: "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool," referring to Psalm 110:1. Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, "Thus God and the Father are truly one and the same; He who was announced by the prophets, and handed down by the true Gospel; whom we Christians worship and love with the whole heart, as the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things therein."

**Commentary:** In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, "Wherefore also Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter, does thus commence his Gospel narrative: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make the paths straight before our God," referring to **Mark 1 (NASB):1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; 3 THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'"

Irenaeus clearly testifies that the Gospel of Mark is a record of the fulfillment of what was written in the prophets. Irenaeus then points out, "Plainly does the commencement of the Gospel quote the words of the holy prophets, and point out Him at once, whom they confessed as God and Lord; Him, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had also made promise to Him, that He would send His messenger before His face, who was John, crying in the wilderness, in "the spirit and power of Elias," referring to **Luke 1 (NASB):17** "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Irenaeus continues as he says, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight paths before our God," again referring to Mark 1:3. Irenaeus then explains the course he has taken in his writing in defense of the faith as he says, "For the prophets did not announce one and another God, but one and the same; under various aspects, however, and many titles. For varied and rich in attribute is the Father, as I have already shown in the book preceding this; and I shall show [the same truth] from the prophets themselves in the further course of this work." Again, Irenaeus testifies, "Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: "So then, after the

Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God,” referring to **Mark 16 (NASB):19** So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

Irenaeus continues as he points out that Mark was “confirming what had been spoken by the prophet: “The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool,” referring to **Psalm 110 (NASB):1** The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Jesus Himself confirms the same in **Matthew 22 (HCSB):41** While the Pharisees were together, Jesus questioned them, 42 “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose Son is He?” “David’s,” they told Him. 43 He asked them, “How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls Him ‘Lord’: 44 The Lord declared to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet’? 45 “If David calls Him ‘Lord,’ how then can the Messiah be his Son?” 46 No one was able to answer Him at all, and from that day no one dared to question Him anymore.

Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “Thus God and the Father are truly one and the same; He who was announced by the prophets, and handed down by the true Gospel; whom we Christians worship and love with the whole heart, as the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things therein.”

It is also worth noting that we have a very early reference, by Irenaeus, to Mark 16:19 above. Irenaeus wrote during the rule of Eleutherius who was bishop of Rome from about 177 to 190 A.D., so this is a very early testimony to the ending of Mark’s Gospel, and the verses in Mark 16:9-20.

## **Book 4: Chapter XIX.—Earthly things may be the type of heavenly, but the latter cannot be the types of others still superior and unknown; nor can we, without absolute madness, maintain that God is known to us only as the type of a still unknown and superior being.**

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3. But if man comprehends not the fulness and the greatness of His hand, how shall any one be able to understand or know in his heart so great a God? Yet, as if they had now measured and thoroughly investigated Him, and explored Him on every side, 4062 The Latin is, “et universum eum decurrerint.” Harvey imagines that this last word corresponds to κατατρέχωσι but it is difficult to fit such a meaning into the context. they feign that beyond Him there exists another Pleroma of Æons, and another Father; certainly not looking up to celestial things, but truly descending into a profound abyss (Bythus) of madness; maintaining that their Father extends only to the border of those things which are beyond the Pleroma, but that, on the other hand, the Demiurge does not reach so far as the Pleroma; and thus they represent neither of them as being perfect and comprehending all things. For the former will be defective in regard to the whole world formed outside of the Pleroma, and the latter in respect of that [ideal] world which was formed within the Pleroma; and [therefore] neither of these can be the God of all. But that no one can fully declare the goodness of God from the things made by Him, is a point evident to all. And that His greatness is not defective, but contains all things, and extends even to us, and is with us, every one will confess who entertains worthy conceptions of God.

**Summary:** In paragraph three, Irenaeus argues, “But if man comprehends not the fulness and the greatness of His hand, how shall any one be able to understand or know in his heart so great a God?” Irenaeus continues as he testifies against the Gnostics saying, “Yet, as if they had now measured and thoroughly investigated Him, and explored Him on every side, they feign that beyond Him there exists another Pleroma of Æons, and another Father; certainly not looking up to celestial things, but truly descending into a profound abyss (Bythus) of madness; maintaining that their Father extends only to the border of those things which are beyond the Pleroma, but that, on the other hand, the Demiurge does not reach so far as the Pleroma; and thus they represent neither of them as being perfect and comprehending all things.” Irenaeus then points out, “For the former will be

defective in regard to the whole world formed outside of the Pleroma, and the latter in respect of that [ideal] world which was formed within the Pleroma; and [therefore] neither of these can be the God of all.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But that no one can fully declare the goodness of God from the things made by Him, is a point evident to all. And that His greatness is not defective, but contains all things, and extends even to us, and is with us, every one will confess who entertains worthy conceptions of God.”

**Commentary:** Here in paragraph three, Irenaeus argues “But if man comprehends not the fulness and the greatness of His hand, how shall any one be able to understand or know in his heart so great a God?” Irenaeus continues as he testifies against the Gnostics saying, “Yet, as if they had now measured and thoroughly investigated Him, and explored Him on every side, they feign that beyond Him there exists another Pleroma of Aeons, and another Father; certainly not looking up to celestial things, but truly descending into a profound abyss (Bythus) of madness; maintaining that their Father extends only to the border of those things which are beyond the Pleroma, but that, on the other hand, the Demiurge does not reach so far as the Pleroma; and thus they represent neither of them as being perfect and comprehending all things.” Irenaeus is showing us what the Gnostic system looks like:

- Beyond Him, that is, God, there exists another Pleroma of Aeons, and another Father.
- They, the Gnostics are “certainly not looking up to celestial things, but truly descending into a profound abyss (Bythus) of madness.” Bythus was the Gnostic unknown god whom they believed created the Demiurge, and was the ultimate creator of all things.
- The Gnostics maintain that their Father extends “only to the border of those things which are beyond the Pleroma.”
- The Demiurge, who the Gnostics claim is God of the Old Testament, “does not reach so far as the Pleroma.”
- The Gnostics thus “represent neither of them as being perfect and comprehending all things.”

Irenaeus points out that, in such a schema, neither of these Fathers is “perfect and comprehends all things,” and therefore, “neither of these can be the God of all.” Irenaeus says that a worthy conception of God is one that considers the goodness of God as not fully known, and that “His greatness is not defective, but contains all things, and extends even to us, and is with us.”

Now Irenaeus here tells us just some of the points of Gnostic belief. Though Gnostic beliefs are very difficult to pin down to one unified teaching, there is some agreement between them about these basic tenets:

- Matter is evil and spirit is good.
- The true God, Bythus, relating to the abyss, is unknowable.
- The Demiurge, creator of the earth and whom they believe to be the God of the Old Testament and of the Jews, is inferior to Bythus.
- The Pleroma is where the aeons dwelt.
- The aeons are beings born of Bythus and a consort.

Irenaeus then affirms, “But that no one can fully declare the goodness of God from the things made by Him, is a point evident to all. And that His greatness is not defective, but contains all things, and extends even to us, and is with us, every one will confess who entertains worthy conceptions of God.”

It is true that God cannot be measured. However, He can still be known by him “who entertains worthy conceptions of God.” This section is preparatory for the understanding of the next in which we will see Irenaeus’ great love for the word of God. See **Chapter 11: The Teaching of Marcion and the Gnostics**, and **Chapter 34: Gnosticism** for more on the Gnostic belief system.

**Book 4: Chapter XX.—That one God formed all things in the world, by means of the Word and the Holy Spirit: and that although He is to us in this life invisible and incomprehensible, nevertheless He is not unknown; inasmuch as His works do declare Him, and His Word has shown that in many modes He may be seen and known.**

1. As regards His greatness, therefore, it is not possible to know God, for it is impossible that the Father can be measured; but as regards His love (for this it is which leads us to God by His Word), when we obey Him, we do always learn that there is so great a God, and that it is He who by Himself has established, and selected, and adorned, and contains all things; and among the all things, both ourselves and this our world. We also then were made, along with those things which are contained by Him. And this is He of whom the Scripture says, “And God formed man, taking clay of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life.” 4063 **Gen. ii. 7.** It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks, saying, “Let Us make man after Our image and likeness;” 4064 **Gen. i. 26.** He taking from Himself the substance of the creatures [formed], and the pattern of things made, and the type of all the adornments in the world.

2. Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, “First 4065 This quotation is taken from the *Shepherd of Hermas*, book ii. sim. 1. of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence.” He who contains all things, and is Himself contained by no one. Rightly also has Malachi said among the prophets: “Is it not one God who hath established us? Have we not all one Father?” 4066 **Mal. ii. 10.** In accordance with this, too, does the apostle say, “There is one God, the Father, who is above all, and in us all.” 4067 **Eph. iv. 6.** Likewise does the Lord also say: “All things are delivered to Me by My Father;” 4068 **Matt. xi. 27.** manifestly by Him who made all things; for He did not deliver to Him the things of another, but His own. But in *all things* [it is implied that] nothing has been kept back [from Him], and for this reason the same person is the Judge of the living and the dead; “having the key of David: He shall open, and no man shall shut: He shall shut, and no man shall open.” 4069 **Rev. iii. 7.** For no one was able, either in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, to open the book of the Father, or to behold Him, with the exception of the Lamb who was slain, and who redeemed us with His own blood, receiving power over all things from the same God who made all things by the Word, and adorned them by [His] Wisdom, when “the Word was made flesh;” that even as the Word of God had the sovereignty in the heavens, so also might He have the sovereignty in earth, inasmuch as [He was] a righteous man, “who did no sin, neither was there found guile in His mouth;” 4070 **1 Pet. ii. 23.** and that He might have the pre-eminence over those things which are under the earth, He Himself being made “the first-begotten of the dead;” 4071 **Col. i. 18.** and that all things, as I have already said, might behold their King; and that the paternal light might meet with and rest upon the flesh of our Lord, and come to us from His resplendent flesh, and that thus man might attain to immortality, having been invested with the paternal light.

3. I have also largely demonstrated, that the Word, namely the Son, was always with the Father; and that Wisdom also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him, anterior to all creation, He declares by Solomon: “God by Wisdom founded the earth, and by understanding hath He established the heaven. By His knowledge the depths burst forth, and the clouds dropped down the dew.” 4072 **Prov. iii. 19, 20.** And again: “The Lord created me the beginning of His ways in His work: He set me up from everlasting, in the beginning, before He made the earth, before He established the depths, and before the fountains of waters gushed forth; before the mountains were made strong, and

before all the hills, He brought me forth." 4073 **Prov. viii. 22–25.** [This is one of the favourite Messianic quotations of the Fathers, and is considered as the base of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel.] And again: "When He prepared the heaven, I was with Him, and when He established the fountains of the deep; when He made the foundations of the earth strong, I was with Him preparing [them]. I was He in whom He rejoiced, and throughout all time I was daily glad before His face, when He rejoiced at the completion of the world, and was delighted in the sons of men." 4074 **Prov. viii. 27–31.**

4. There is therefore one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things; but this is the Creator (Demiurge) who has granted this world to the human race, and who, as regards His greatness, is indeed unknown to all who have been made by Him (for no man has searched out His height, either among the ancients who have gone to their rest, or any of those who are now alive); but as regards His love, He is always known through Him by whose means He ordained all things. Now this is His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made a man among men, that He might join the end to the beginning, that is, man to God. Wherefore the prophets, receiving the prophetic gift from the same Word, announced His advent according to the flesh, by which the blending and communion of God and man took place according to the good pleasure of the Father, the Word of God foretelling from the beginning that God should be seen by men, and hold converse with them upon earth, should confer with them, and should be present with His own creation, saving it, and becoming capable of being perceived by it, and freeing us from the hands of all that hate us, that is, from every spirit of wickedness; and causing us to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all our days, 4075 **Luke i. 71, 75** in order that man, having embraced the Spirit of God, might pass into the glory of the Father.

5. These things did the prophets set forth in a prophetical manner; but they did not, as some allege, [proclaim] that He who was seen by the prophets was a different [God], the Father of all being invisible. Yet this is what those [heretics] declare, who are altogether ignorant of the nature of prophecy. For prophecy is a prediction of things future, that is, a setting forth beforehand of those things which shall be afterwards. The prophets, then, indicated beforehand that God should be seen by men; as the Lord also says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." 4076 **Matt. v. 8.** But in respect to His greatness, and His wonderful glory, "no man shall see God and live," 4077 **Ex. xxxiii. 20.** for the Father is incomprehensible; but in regard to His love, and kindness, and as to His infinite power, even this He grants to those who love Him, that is, to see God, which thing the prophets did also predict. "For those things that are impossible with men, are possible with God." 4078 **Luke xviii. 27.** For man does not see God by his own powers; but when He pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and when He wills, and as He wills. For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too, adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit truly preparing man in the Son 4079 **Some read "in filium" instead of "in filio," as above.** of God, and the Son leading him to the Father, while the Father, too, confers [upon him] incorruption for eternal life, which comes to every one from the fact of his seeing God. For as those who see the light are within the light, and partake of its brilliancy; even so, those who see God are in God, and receive of His splendour. But [His] splendour vivifies them; those, therefore, who see God, do receive life. And for this reason, He, [although] beyond comprehension, and boundless and invisible, rendered Himself visible, and comprehensible, and within the capacity of those who believe, that He might vivify those who receive and behold Him through faith. 4080 **A part of the original Greek text is preserved here, and has been followed, as it makes the better sense.** For as His greatness is past finding out, so also His goodness is beyond expression; by which having been seen, He bestows life upon those who see Him. It is not possible to live apart from life, and the means of life is found in fellowship with God; but fellowship with God is to know God, and to enjoy His goodness.

6. Men therefore shall see God, that they may live, being made immortal by that sight, and attaining even unto God; which, as I have already said, was declared figuratively by the prophets, that God should be seen by men who bear His Spirit [in them], and do always wait patiently for His

coming. As also Moses says in Deuteronomy, "We shall see in that day that God will talk to man, and he shall live." 4081 **Deut. v. 24.** For certain of these men used to see the prophetic Spirit and His active influences poured forth for all kinds of gifts; others, again, [beheld] the advent of the Lord, and that dispensation which obtained from the beginning, by which He accomplished the will of the Father with regard to things both celestial and terrestrial; and others [beheld] paternal glories adapted to the times, and to those who saw and who heard them then, and to all who were subsequently to hear them. Thus, therefore, was God revealed; for God the Father is shown forth through all these [operations], the Spirit indeed working, and the Son ministering, while the Father was approving, and man's salvation being accomplished. As He also declares through Hosea the prophet: "I," He says, "have multiplied visions, and have used similitudes by the ministry (*in manibus*) of the prophets."

4082 **Hos. xii. 10.** But the apostle expounded this very passage, when he said, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 4083 **1 Cor. xii. 4–7** But as He who worketh all things in all is God, [as to the points] of what nature and how great He is, [God] is invisible and indescribable to all things which have been made by Him, but He is by no means unknown: for all things learn through His Word that there is one God the Father, who contains all things, and who grants existence to all, as is written in the Gospel: "No man hath seen God at any time, except the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He has declared [Him]." 4084 **John i. 18.**

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "As regards His greatness, therefore, it is not possible to know God, for it is impossible that the Father can be measured; but as regards His love (for this it is which leads us to God by His Word), when we obey Him, we do always learn that there is so great a God, and that it is He who by Himself has established, and selected, and adorned, and contains all things; and among the all things, both ourselves and this our world." Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, "We also then were made, along with those things which are contained by Him. And this is He of whom the Scripture says, "And God formed man, taking clay of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life," referring to Genesis 2:7. Irenaeus again affirms, "It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things." Irenaeus contends for the faith as he argues, "For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks, saying, "Let Us make man after Our image and likeness," referring to Genesis 1:26. Irenaeus explains, "He taking from Himself the substance of the creatures [formed], and the pattern of things made, and the type of all the adornments in the world."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, "Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, "First of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence," referring to the *Shepherd of Hermas*, book ii. sim. 1. Irenaeus then testifies, "He who contains all things, and is Himself contained by no one. Rightly also has Malachi said among the prophets: "Is it not one God who hath established us? Have we not all one Father?" He is referring to Malachi 2:10. Irenaeus continues to testify as he says, "In accordance with this, too, does the apostle say, "There is one God, the Father, who is above all, and in us all," referring to Ephesians 4:6. Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, "Likewise does the Lord also say: "All things are delivered to Me by My Father," referring to Matthew 11:27, "manifestly by Him who made all things; for He did not deliver to Him the things of another, but His own." Irenaeus then affirms, "But in *all things* [it is implied that] nothing has been kept back [from Him], and for this reason the same person is the Judge of the living and the dead," referring to Acts 10:42, and "having the key of David: He shall open, and no man shall shut: He shall shut, and no man shall open," referring to Revelation 3:7. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "For no one was able, either in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, to open the book of the Father, or to behold Him, with the exception of the Lamb who was slain, and who redeemed us with His own blood," referring to Revelation 5:1-9, "receiving power over all

things from the same God who made all things by the Word,” referring to John 1:1-2, “and adorned them by [His] Wisdom, when “the Word was made flesh,” referring to John 1:14, “that even as the Word of God had the sovereignty in the heavens, so also might He have the sovereignty in earth, inasmuch as [He was] a righteous man, “who did no sin, neither was there found guile in His mouth,” referring to 1 Peter 2:21-22, “and that He might have the pre-eminence over those things which are under the earth, He Himself being made “the first-begotten of the dead,” referring to Colossians 1:18, ”and that all things, as I have already said, might behold their King;” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and that the paternal light might meet with and rest upon the flesh of our Lord, and come to us from His resplendent flesh, and that thus man might attain to immortality, having been invested with the paternal light,” referring most probably in context to John 1:1-14.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “I have also largely demonstrated, that the Word, namely the Son, was always with the Father,” referring to John 1:1, “and that Wisdom also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him, anterior to all creation, He declares by Solomon: “God by Wisdom founded the earth, and by understanding hath He established the heaven. By His knowledge the depths burst forth, and the clouds dropped down the dew,” referring to Proverbs 3:19-20. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And again: “The Lord created me the beginning of His ways in His work: He set me up from everlasting, in the beginning, before He made the earth, before He established the depths, and before the fountains of waters gushed forth; before the mountains were made strong, and before all the hills, He brought me forth,” referring to Proverbs 8:22-25. Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “And again: “When He prepared the heaven, I was with Him, and when He established the fountains of the deep; when He made the foundations of the earth strong, I was with Him preparing [them]. I was He in whom He rejoiced, and throughout all time I was daily glad before His face, when He rejoiced at the completion of the world, and was delighted in the sons of men,” referring to Proverbs 8:27-31.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus continues to testify that “There is therefore one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things; but this is the Creator (Demiurge) who has granted this world to the human race, and who, as regards His greatness, is indeed unknown to all who have been made by Him (for no man has searched out His height, either among the ancients who have gone to their rest, or any of those who are now alive); but as regards His love, He is always known through Him by whose means He ordained all things.” Irenaeus continues his testimony as he says, “Now this is His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made a man among men, that He might join the end to the beginning, that is, man to God,” referring to John 1:14. Irenaeus then affirms, “Wherefore the prophets, receiving the prophetic gift from the same Word, announced His advent according to the flesh, by which the blending and communion of God and man took place according to the good pleasure of the Father, the Word of God foretelling from the beginning that God should be seen by men, and hold converse with them upon earth, should confer with them, and should be present with His own creation, saving it, and becoming capable of being perceived by it, and freeing us from the hands of all that hate us, that is, from every spirit of wickedness; and causing us to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all our days,” referring to Luke 1:71,74-75, “in order that man, having embraced the Spirit of God, might pass into the glory of the Father.”

In paragraph five, Irenaeus continues as he earnestly defends the faith saying, “These things did the prophets set forth in a prophetical manner; but they did not, as some allege, [proclaim] that He who was seen by the prophets was a different [God], the Father of all being invisible.” Irenaeus then testifies against the Gnostics as he says, “Yet this is what those [heretics] declare, who are altogether ignorant of the nature of prophecy.” Irenaeus continues as he explains, “For prophecy is a prediction of things future, that is, a setting forth beforehand of those things which shall be afterwards. The prophets, then, indicated beforehand that God should be seen by men; as the Lord also says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” referring to Matthew 5:8. Irenaeus then affirms, “But in respect to His greatness, and His wonderful glory, “no man shall see God and live,” referring to Exodus 33:20, “for the Father is incomprehensible; but in regard to His love, and kindness, and as to His infinite power, even this He grants to those who love Him, that is, to see God, which thing the prophets did also predict. “For those things that are impossible with men, are possible with God,” referring to Luke 18:27. Irenaeus continues as he says, “For man does not see God by his own powers; but when He pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and when He wills, and as He wills. For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too, adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit truly preparing man

in the Son of God, and the Son leading him to the Father, while the Father, too, confers [upon him] incorruption for eternal life, which comes to every one from the fact of his seeing God.” Irenaeus continues as he reasons, “For as those who see the light are within the light, and partake of its brilliancy; even so, those who see God are in God, and receive of His splendour. But [His] splendour vivifies them; those, therefore, who see God, do receive life.” Irenaeus then explains, “And for this reason, He, [although] beyond comprehension, and boundless and invisible, rendered Himself visible, and comprehensible, and within the capacity of those who believe, that He might vivify those who receive and behold Him through faith,” referring most likely to John 6:40. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For as His greatness is past finding out, so also His goodness is beyond expression; by which having been seen, He bestows life upon those who see Him. It is not possible to live apart from life, and the means of life is found in fellowship with God; but fellowship with God is to know God, and to enjoy His goodness.”

In paragraph six, Irenaeus asserts, “Men therefore shall see God, that they may live, being made immortal by that sight, and attaining even unto God; which, as I have already said, was declared figuratively by the prophets, that God should be seen by men who bear His Spirit [in them], and do always wait patiently for His coming.” Irenaeus then affirms, “As also Moses says in Deuteronomy, “We shall see in that day that God will talk to man, and he shall live,” referring to Deuteronomy 5:24. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For certain of these men used to see the prophetic Spirit and His active influences poured forth for all kinds of gifts; others, again, [beheld] the advent of the Lord, and that dispensation which obtained from the beginning, by which He accomplished the will of the Father with regard to things both celestial and terrestrial; and others [beheld] paternal glories adapted to the times, and to those who saw and who heard them then, and to all who were subsequently to hear them. Thus, therefore, was God revealed; for God the Father is shown forth through all these [operations], the Spirit indeed working, and the Son ministering, while the Father was approving, and man’s salvation being accomplished,” reminding us of 1 Corinthians 12:4-6. And Irenaeus then explains, “As He also declares through Hosea the prophet: “I,” He says, “have multiplied visions, and have used similitudes by the ministry (*in manibus*) of the prophets,” referring to Hosea 12:10. Irenaeus then quotes from Paul as he says, “But the apostle expounded this very passage, when he said, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal,” referring to 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. Again, Irenaeus points out, “But as He who worketh all things in all is God,” referring to 1 Corinthians 12:6, “[as to the points] of what nature and how great He is, [God] is invisible and indescribable to all things which have been made by Him, but He is by no means unknown: for all things learn through His Word that there is one God the Father, who contains all things, and who grants existence to all, as is written in the Gospel: “No man hath seen God at any time, except the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He has declared [Him],” referring to John 1:18.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “As regards His greatness, therefore, it is not possible to know God, for it is impossible that the Father can be measured; but as regards His love (for this it is which leads us to God by His Word), when we obey Him, we do always learn that there is so great a God, and that it is He who by Himself has established, and selected, and adorned, and contains all things; and among the all things, both ourselves and this our world.” Irenaeus points out that it is in obeying God, that is, in submission to God that we learn of Him and know Him. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “We also then were made, along with those things which are contained by Him. And this is He of whom the Scripture says, “And God formed man, taking clay of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life,” referring to **Genesis 2 (NASB):7** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Irenaeus again affirms, “It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things.” Irenaeus contends for the faith as he argues, “For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands.” This reminds us of Paul’s preaching on Mars Hill in **Acts 17 (NKJV):22** Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I

perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood[c] every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks, saying, "Let Us make man after Our image and likeness," referring to **Genesis 1 (NASB):26** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."

Ireneus then explains, "He taking from Himself the substance of the creatures [formed], and the pattern of things made, and the type of all the adornments in the world," reminding us of **Hebrews 11 (NASB):3** By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

That is, by faith we understand that we are made in the image and likeness of God.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, "Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, "First of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence," referring to the *Shepherd of Hermas*, book ii. sim. 1. Irenaeus then testifies, "He who contains all things, and is Himself contained by no one. Rightly also has Malachi said among the prophets: "Is it not one God who hath established us? Have we not all one Father?" He is referring to **Malachi 2 (NASB):10** "Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?

Ireneus continues to testify as he says, "In accordance with this, too, does the apostle say, "There is one God, the Father, who is above all, and in us all," referring in context to **Ephesians 4 (NASB):4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, "Likewise does the Lord also say: "All things are delivered to Me by My Father," referring to **Matthew 11 (NASB):27** "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

And Irenaeus continues, "manifestly by Him who made all things; for He did not deliver to Him the things of another, but His own." Irenaeus then affirms, "But in *all things* [it is implied that] nothing has been kept back [from Him], and for this reason the same person is the Judge of the living and the dead," just as Peter testifies when he preached the Gospel at the house of Cornelius as in **Acts 10 (NASB):42** "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

And Irenaeus continues, "having the key of David: He shall open, and no man shall shut: He shall shut, and no man shall open," referring to **Revelations 3 (NASB):7** "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this...

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "For no one was able, either in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, to open the book of the Father, or to behold Him, with the exception of the Lamb who was slain, and who redeemed us with His own blood," referring in context to **Revelation 5 (NKJV):1** And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 Then I saw a

strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. 4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. 5 But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” 6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

Irenaeus then continues, “receiving power over all things from the same God who made all things by the Word,” referring to **John 1 (NASB)**:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and adorned them by [His] Wisdom, when “the Word was made flesh,” referring to **John 1 (NASB)**:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Irenaeus continues his testimony as he says, “that even as the Word of God had the sovereignty in the heavens, so also might He have the sovereignty in earth, inasmuch as [He was] a righteous man, “who did no sin, neither was there found guile in His mouth,” referring to **1 Peter 2 (NASB)**:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

Again Irenaeus continues his testimony as he says, “and that He might have the pre-eminence over those things which are under the earth, He Himself being made “the first-begotten of the dead,” referring to **Colossians 1 (NASB)**:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

And then Irenaeus concludes, ”and that all things, as I have already said, might behold their King; and that the paternal light might meet with and rest upon the flesh of our Lord, and come to us from His resplendent flesh, and that thus man might attain to immortality, having been invested with the paternal light.” Now Irenaeus also mentions “the paternal light” in **Book 3, Chapter XI, paragraph 4**, of his writings where he says “For all the heretics have decided that the Demiurge was ignorant of that Power above him, whose witness and herald John is found to be. Wherefore the Lord said that He deemed him “more than a prophet. For all the other prophets preached the advent of the paternal Light, and desired to be worthy of seeing Him whom they preached; but John did both announce [the advent] beforehand, in a like manner as did the others, and actually saw Him when He came, and pointed Him out, and persuaded many to believe on Him, so that he did himself hold the place of both prophet and apostle. For this is to be more than a prophet, because, “first apostles, secondarily prophets;” but all things from one and the same God Himself.”

The expression “paternal light” is not found in the Scriptures. However it may be inferred from John 1:1-14. Irenaeus has already referred to John 1:1,2, and verse 14. The apostles John speaks of the Light which coming into the world enlightens every man, and John plainly identifies the Light to be Jesus Christ as we read in **John 1 (NKJV)**:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And in the epistle of 1 John we read **1 John 1 (NASB):5** This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

From these passages we see that in Jesus was true life, and this life was “the light of men” which the darkness does not comprehend. John the Baptist came “to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.” Jesus was the true light which “coming into the world, enlightens every man.” The world is in darkness but all who receive Jesus, even “those who believe in His name,” will be given the “right to become children of God.” The “paternal light” is the light from the Father. Jesus being His Son, and being sent into the world by the Father, brought the light of life. This is the “glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth,” that was seen by the first disciples.

And the light of the Father has shown through Jesus to us as we read in **2 Corinthians 4 (NASB):6** For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

And if we see and acknowledge this Jesus, that is, that we acknowledge who He truly is, we have immortality, that is true or eternal life.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “I have also largely demonstrated, that the Word, namely the Son, was always with the Father,” referring to **John 1 (NASB):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And Irenaeus continues, “and that Wisdom also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him, anterior to all creation, He declares by Solomon: “God by Wisdom founded the earth, and by understanding hath He established the heaven. By His knowledge the depths burst forth, and the clouds dropped down the dew,” referring to **Proverbs 3 (NASB):19** The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, By understanding He established the heavens. 20 By His knowledge the deeps were broken up And the skies drip with dew.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And again: “The Lord created me the beginning of His ways in His work: He set me up from everlasting, in the beginning, before He made the earth, before He established the depths, and before the fountains of waters gushed forth; before the mountains were made strong, and before all the hills, He brought me forth,” referring to **Proverbs 8 (Septuagint):22** The Lord made me the beginning of his ways for his works. 23 He established me before time *was* in the beginning, before he made the earth: 24 even before he made the depths; before the fountains of water came forth: 25 before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begets me.

In Irenaeus’ quotation of the passage, note that he says, “The Lord created me...” while the Septuagint simply says in verse 22, “The Lord made...” Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “And again: “When He prepared the heaven, I was with Him, and when He established the fountains of the deep; when He made the foundations of the earth strong, I was with Him preparing [them]. I was He in whom He rejoiced, and throughout all time I was daily glad before His face, when He rejoiced at the completion of the world, and was delighted in the sons of men,” referring to Proverbs 8:27-31.

Irenaeus is arguing all of this to show that “there is therefore one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things,” as Irenaeus will state in the beginning of paragraph four. Irenaeus is trying to show us here that the one God, the Father, and the Word, His Son, and wisdom, the Spirit of God, were always present throughout the creation of the world. However, Proverbs 8:12-25, which Irenaeus says refers to the Spirit, could also be a description of Jesus as well. Here is the complete passage, including verses 12-21 which Irenaeus did not include in his quotations of Proverbs, chapter 8.

**Proverbs 8 (NKJV):12** “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge *and* discretion. 13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate. 14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom; I *am* understanding, I have strength. 15 By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, All the judges of the earth. 17 I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me. 18 Riches and honor *are* with me, Enduring riches and righteousness. 19 My fruit *is* better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver. 20 I traverse the way of

righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, 21 That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, That I may fill their treasures. 22 “The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. 23 I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth. 24 When *there were* no depths I was brought forth, When *there were* no fountains abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; 26 While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world. 27 When He prepared the heavens, I *was* there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, 28 When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, 29 When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, 30 Then I was beside Him *as* a master craftsman; And I was daily *His* delight, Rejoicing always before Him, 31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight *was* with the sons of men.

We note again in verse 22 that Irenaeus used the word “created” as he says, “And again: “The Lord created me the beginning of His ways in His work: He set me up from everlasting, in the beginning, before He made the earth, before He established the depths, and before the fountains of waters gushed forth; before the mountains were made strong, and before all the hills, He brought me forth.”

The word “created” that Irenaeus used here is a translation of the Hebrew word kawnah which means literally to erect, to set upright, hence to found or create. But it also means to acquire for oneself, to possess, as it is used in **Proverbs 4 (NASB):7** Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

There is a note in Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament which says “Note: There does not appear to be any sufficient ground for ascribing the sense of to create to this verb; in all the passages cited for that sense, to possess appears to be the true meaning.” **Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D., 1979, page 735.**

I would agree with Gesenius here, that the meaning seems to be “possessed” as it is translated in **Proverbs 8 (NASB):22** “The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old.

Nevertheless, Jesus, the Son of God, was present at creation as Paul says in **Colossians 1 (NASB):16** For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Now note 4073 by the Ante Nicene editors states that Proverbs 8:22-25 “is one of the favourite Messianic quotations of the Fathers, and is considered as the base of the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel.”

As for this passage of Scripture being “the base of the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel,” as note 4073 says, I believe that there is a better explanation for the base of the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel. When we look at Jesus in the Gospels, we see how he referred to Himself as the fulfillment of the scriptures, as in **Matthew 5:17 (NASB):17** “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”

Jesus saw Himself in the Scriptures. He saw Himself as the stone the builders rejected in **Matthew 21 (NKJV):33** “Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ 39 So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*. 40 “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” 41 They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.” 42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes?’ 43 “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”

He saw Himself as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy as we read in **Luke 4 (KJV):17** And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 18 "The Spirit of the LORD *is* upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to *the* captives And recovery of sight to *the* blind, *To* set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." 20 Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus personified the Scriptures, and held to them unwaveringly. He did this to fulfill all righteousness as when He came to be baptized by John in **Matthew 3 (NKJV):13** Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?' 15 Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.' Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'

It is Jesus who fulfilled the word of God to the letter. That is why He is called the very word of God in **John 1 (NKJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus continues to testify that "There is therefore one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things; but this is the Creator (Demiurge) who has granted this world to the human race, and who, as regards His greatness, is indeed unknown to all who have been made by Him (for no man has searched out His height, either among the ancients who have gone to their rest, or any of those who are now alive)," as we read in **Job 26 (NASB):13** "By His breath the heavens are cleared; His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent. 14 "Behold, these are the fringes of His ways; And how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand?"

Irenaeus continues as he says, "but as regards His love, He is always known through Him by whose means He ordained all things," reminding us of **John 1 (NKJV):16** And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

Irenaeus continues his testimony as he says, "Now this is His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made a man among men," referring to **John 1 (NASB):14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Irenaeus then finishes his thought as he says, "that He might join the end to the beginning, that is, man to God." Irenaeus then affirms, "Wherefore the prophets, receiving the prophetic gift from the same Word, announced His advent according to the flesh, by which the blending and communion of God and man took place according to the good pleasure of the Father, the Word of God foretelling from the beginning that God should be seen by men, and hold converse with them upon earth, should confer with them, and should be present with His own creation, saving it, and becoming capable of being perceived by it, and freeing us from the hands of all that hate us, that is, from every spirit of wickedness; and causing us to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all our days," referring in context to **Luke 1 (NASB):68** "Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, 69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant— 70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old— Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US;

And to **Luke 1 (NASB):74** To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

Irenaeus concludes, "in order that man, having embraced the Spirit of God, might pass into the glory of the Father."

In paragraph five, Irenaeus continues as he earnestly defends the faith saying, "These things did the prophets set forth in a prophetic manner; but they did not, as some allege, [proclaim] that He who was seen by the prophets was a different [God], the Father of all being invisible," possibly referring to **1 Timothy 1**

**(NASB):17** Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Or to **Colossians 1 (NASB):15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Irenaeus then testifies against the Gnostics as he says, "Yet this is what those [heretics] declare, who are altogether ignorant of the nature of prophecy." Irenaeus continues as he clearly explains, "For prophecy is a prediction of things future, that is, a setting forth beforehand of those things which shall be afterwards. The prophets, then, indicated beforehand that God should be seen by men; as the Lord also says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," referring to **Matthew 5 (NASB):8** "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

That the prophets declared that man would see God is also stated by Job in **Job 19(NASB):25** "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; 27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!"

Irenaeus then affirms, "But in respect to His greatness, and His wonderful glory, "no man shall see God and live," referring to **Exodus 33 (NASB):20** But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"

Irenaeus continues as he says, "for the Father is incomprehensible; but in regard to His love, and kindness, and as to His infinite power, even this He grants to those who love Him, that is, to see God, which thing the prophets did also predict. "For those things that are impossible with men, are possible with God," referring to **Luke 18 (NASB):27** But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

Irenaeus continues as he says, "For man does not see God by his own powers; but when He pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and when He wills, and as He wills. For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too, adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit truly preparing man in the Son of God, and the Son leading him to the Father, while the Father, too, confers [upon him] incorruption for eternal life, which comes to every one from the fact of his seeing God." Irenaeus continues as he reasons, "For as those who see the light are within the light, and partake of its brilliancy; even so, those who see God are in God, and receive of His splendour. But [His] splendour vivifies them; those, therefore, who see God, do receive life." Irenaeus then explains, "And for this reason, He, [although] beyond comprehension, and boundless and invisible, rendered Himself visible, and comprehensible, and within the capacity of those who believe, that He might vivify those who receive and behold Him through faith," referring most likely to **John 6 (NASB):40** "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "For as His greatness is past finding out, so also His goodness is beyond expression." This echoes Paul who says as much in **Romans 11 (NASB):33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? 35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "by which having been seen, He bestows life upon those who see Him. It is not possible to live apart from life, and the means of life is found in fellowship with God; but fellowship with God is to know God, and to enjoy His goodness."

In paragraph six, Irenaeus asserts, "Men therefore shall see God, that they may live, being made immortal by that sight, and attaining even unto God; which, as I have already said, was declared figuratively by the prophets, that God should be seen by men who bear His Spirit [in them], and do always wait patiently for His coming."

Now when Irenaeus says that men will be "made immortal by that sight, and attaining even unto God," I believe he means that man will live eternally with God, and not that man will be equal with God. Irenaeus then affirms, "As also Moses says in Deuteronomy, "We shall see in that day that God will talk to man, and he shall live," referring most likely to **Deuteronomy 5 (NKJV):22** These are the commandments the LORD proclaimed

in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me. 23 When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leaders of your tribes and your elders came to me. 24 And you said, ‘The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a person can live even if God speaks with them. 25 But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. 26 For what mortal has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? 27 Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey.’

However, Moses did tell the Israelites that they only heard a voice but saw no form in the assembly mentioned above as in **Deuteronomy 4 (NASB):12** Then the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form—only a voice.

As to the fact that the righteous will see God, Job mentions this as in **Job 19 (NASB):26** "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

This is also promised in the book of Revelation as we read in **Revelation 22 (NKJV):1** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For certain of these men used to see the prophetic Spirit and His active influences poured forth for all kinds of gifts; others, again, [beheld] the advent of the Lord, and that dispensation which obtained from the beginning, by which He accomplished the will of the Father with regard to things both celestial and terrestrial; and others [beheld] paternal glories adapted to the times, and to those who saw and who heard them then, and to all who were subsequently to hear them.” And Irenaeus then testifies, “Thus, therefore, was God revealed; for God the Father is shown forth through all these [operations], the Spirit indeed working, and the Son ministering, while the Father was approving, and man’s salvation being accomplished,” reminding us of 1 Corinthians 12:4-6. And Irenaeus then explains, “As He also declares through Hosea the prophet: “I,” He says, “have multiplied visions, and have used similitudes by the ministry (*in manibus*) of the prophets,” referring to **Hosea 12 (NASB):10** I have also spoken to the prophets, And I gave numerous visions, And through the prophets I gave parables.

Irenaeus here draws from Hosea to say that God has through all time revealed Himself through manifestations of the Spirit.

Irenaeus then testifies, “But the apostle expounded this very passage, when he said, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal,” referring to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Again, Irenaeus points out, “But as He who worketh all things in all is God,” referring again to 1 Corinthians 12:6, “[as to the points] of what nature and how great He is, [God] is invisible and indescribable to all things which have been made by Him, but He is by no means unknown: for all things learn through His Word that there is one God the Father, who contains all things, and who grants existence to all, as is written in the Gospel: “No man hath seen God at any time, except the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He has declared [Him],” referring to **John 1 (NASB):18** No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

In this section we see a marvelous display of the word of God in Irenaeus’ writing. Without chapter and verse, which were not added to the Bible until after 1200 A.D., Irenaeus has cogently written in defense of the

faith. Irenaeus believed in the cohesiveness and consistency of Scripture. The Scriptures were the truth to Irenaeus. Also, we note that Irenaeus perceived that it is the love of God that leads us to God by His word.

## **Book 4: Chapter XXIV.—The conversion of the Gentiles was more difficult than that of the Jews; the labours of those apostles, therefore who engaged in the former task, were greater than those who undertook the latter.**

1. Wherefore also Paul, since he was the apostle of the Gentiles, says, “I laboured more than they all.” 4137 **1 Cor. xv. 10.** For the instruction of the former, [viz., the Jews,] was an easy task, because they could allege proofs from the Scriptures, and because they, who were in the habit of hearing Moses and the prophets, did also readily receive the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the life of God, —Him who, by the spreading forth of hands, did destroy Amalek, and vivify man from the wound of the serpent, by means of faith which was [exercised] towards Him. As I have pointed out in the preceding book, the apostle did, in the first place, instruct the Gentiles to depart from the superstition of idols, and to worship one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Framer of the whole creation; and that His Son was His Word, by whom He founded all things; and that He, in the last times, was made a man among men; that He reformed the human race, but destroyed and conquered the enemy of man, and gave to His handiwork victory against the adversary. But although they who were of the circumcision still did not obey the words of God, for they were despisers, yet they were previously instructed not to commit adultery, nor fornication, nor theft, nor fraud; and that whatsoever things are done to our neighbours’ prejudice, were evil, and detested by God. Wherefore also they did readily agree to abstain from these things, because they had been thus instructed.

2. But they were bound to teach the Gentiles also this very thing, that works of such a nature were wicked, prejudicial, and useless, and destructive to those who engaged in them. Wherefore he who had received the apostolate to the Gentiles, 4138 **[A clear note of recognition on the part of our author, that St. Paul’s mission was world-wide, while St. Peter’s was limited.]** did labour more than those who preached the Son of God among them of the circumcision. For they were assisted by the Scriptures, which the Lord confirmed and fulfilled, in coming such as He had been announced; but here, [in the case of the Gentiles,] there was a certain foreign erudition, and a new doctrine [to be received, namely], that the gods of the nations not only were no gods at all, but even the idols of demons; and that there is one God, who is “above all principality, and dominion, and power, and every name which is named;” 4139 **Eph. i. 21.** and that His Word, invisible by nature, was made palpable and visible among men, and did descend “to death, even the death of the cross;” 4140 **Phil. ii. 8.** also, that they who believe in Him shall be incorruptible and not subject to suffering, and shall receive the kingdom of heaven. These things, too, were preached to the Gentiles by word, without [the aid of] the Scriptures: wherefore, also, they who preached among the Gentiles underwent greater labour. But, on the other hand, the faith of the Gentiles is proved to be of a more noble description, since they followed the word of God without the instruction [derived] from the [sacred] writings (*sine instructione literarum*).

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Wherefore also Paul, since he was the apostle of the Gentiles, says, “I laboured more than they all,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:10. Irenaeus asserts, “For the instruction of the former, [viz., the Jews,] was an easy task, because they could allege proofs from the Scriptures, and because they, who were in the habit of hearing Moses and the prophets, did also readily receive the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the life of God, —Him who, by the spreading forth of hands, did destroy Amalek,” referring to Exodus 17:11-13, “and vivify man from the wound of the serpent, by means of faith which was [exercised] towards Him,” referring to Numbers 24:4-9 and John 3:14-15. Irenaeus testifies,

"As I have pointed out in the preceding book, the apostle did, in the first place, instruct the Gentiles to depart from the superstition of idols, and to worship one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Framer of the whole creation," referring possibly to Acts 17:24,29 and 1 John 5:21, "and that His Son was His Word, by whom He founded all things; and that He, in the last times, was made a man among men; that He reformed the human race, but destroyed and conquered the enemy of man, and gave to His handiwork victory against the adversary," referring in part to Luke 10:19. Irenaeus affirms, "But although they who were of the circumcision still did not obey the words of God, for they were despisers, yet they were previously instructed not to commit adultery, nor fornication, nor theft, nor fraud; and that whatsoever things are done to our neighbours' prejudice, were evil, and detested by God," referring to Exodus 20:14-16 and Leviticus 19:18. And Irenaeus attests, "Wherefore also they did readily agree to abstain from these things, because they had been thus instructed."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "But they were bound to teach the Gentiles also this very thing, that works of such a nature were wicked, prejudicial, and useless, and destructive to those who engaged in them. Wherefore he who had received the apostolate to the Gentiles, did labour more than those who preached the Son of God among them of the circumcision," referring to Galatians 2:7-9 and 1 Corinthians 15:10. Irenaeus then testifies, "For they were assisted by the Scriptures, which the Lord confirmed and fulfilled, in coming such as He had been announced; but here, [in the case of the Gentiles,] there was a certain foreign erudition, and a new doctrine [to be received, namely], that the gods of the nations not only were no gods at all, but even the idols of demons," referring to 1 Corinthians 10:19-22, "and that there is one God, who is "above all principality, and dominion, and power, and every name which is named," referring to Ephesians 1:21, "and that His Word, invisible by nature, was made palpable and visible among men, and did descend "to death, even the death of the cross," referring to Philippians 2:8, "also, that they who believe in Him shall be incorruptible and not subject to suffering, and shall receive the kingdom of heaven." Irenaeus then testifies, "These things, too, were preached to the Gentiles by word, without [the aid of] the Scriptures: wherefore, also, they who preached among the Gentiles underwent greater labour." Irenaeus then asserts, "But, on the other hand, the faith of the Gentiles is proved to be of a more noble description, since they followed the word of God without the instruction [derived] from the [sacred] writings (*sine instructione literarum*)."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "Wherefore also Paul, since he was the apostle of the Gentiles, says, "I laboured more than they all," referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB):10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Irenaeus asserts, "For the instruction of the former, [viz., the Jews,] was an easy task, because they could allege proofs from the Scriptures, and because they, who were in the habit of hearing Moses and the prophets, did also readily receive the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the life of God, —Him who, by the spreading forth of hands, did destroy Amalek," referring to **Exodus 17 (NKJV):11** And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Irenaeus continues, "and vivify man from the wound of the serpent, by means of faith which was [exercised] towards Him," referring to **Numbers 21 (NKJV):4** Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

And to **John 3 (NASB):14** As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

Irenaeus then testifies, "As I have pointed out in the preceding book, the apostle did, in the first place, instruct the Gentiles to depart from the superstition of idols, and to worship one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Framer of the whole creation," referring possibly to Paul's words in **Acts 17 (NASB):24** "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

And in **Acts 17 (NASB):29** "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

And the result of the apostle's preaching is mentioned in **1 Thessalonians 1 (NASB):8** For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. 9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

The apostle John also warned as in **1 John 5 (NASB):21** Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "and that His Son was His Word, by whom He founded all things; and that He, in the last times, was made a man among men; that He reformed the human race, but destroyed and conquered the enemy of man, and gave to His handiwork victory against the adversary," referring in part to **Luke 10 (NASB):19** "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

I am wondering about the words "reformed the human race" which Irenaeus uses here. I think it would be more correct to say that He redeemed the human race. In any case, the word "reformed" is not used in the Scriptures as Irenaeus uses it here.

Irenaeus then affirms, "But although they who were of the circumcision still did not obey the words of God, for they were despisers, yet they were previously instructed not to commit adultery, nor fornication, nor theft, nor fraud; and that whatsoever things are done to our neighbours' prejudice, were evil, and detested by God," referring to **Exodus 20 (NASB):14** "You shall not commit adultery.15 "You shall not steal. 16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

And to **Leviticus 19 (NASB):18** 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

And Irenaeus attests, "Wherefore also they did readily agree to abstain from these things, because they had been thus instructed." That is, Irenaeus is saying that the Jews were familiar with the Old Testament writings.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "But they were bound to teach the Gentiles also this very thing, that works of such a nature were wicked, prejudicial, and useless, and destructive to those who engaged in them. Wherefore he who had received the apostolate to the Gentiles, did labour more than those who preached the Son of God among them of the circumcision," referring in context to **Galatians 2 (NASB):7** But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised 8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), 9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we *might go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

And again to **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB):10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Irenaeus then testifies, "For they were assisted by the Scriptures, which the Lord confirmed and fulfilled, in coming such as He had been announced; but here, [in the case of the Gentiles,] there was a certain foreign erudition, and a new doctrine [to be received, namely], that the gods of the nations not only were no gods at all, but even the idols of demons," referring to **1 Corinthians 10 (NASB):19** What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 *No*, but *I say* that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. 21 You

cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and that there is one God, who is “above all principality, and dominion, and power, and every name which is named,” referring to **Ephesians 1 (NASB):21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

And again Irenaeus continues and testifie, “and that His Word, invisible by nature, was made palpable and visible among men, and did descend “to death, even the death of the cross,” referring to **Philippians 2 (NASB):8** Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And Irenaeus adds, “also, that they who believe in Him shall be incorruptible and not subject to suffering, and shall receive the kingdom of heaven.” This is stated in summary in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Irenaeus then testifies, “These things, too, were preached to the Gentiles by word, without [the aid of] the Scriptures: wherefore, also, they who preached among the Gentiles underwent greater labour.” Irenaeus then asserts, “But, on the other hand, the faith of the Gentiles is proved to be of a more noble description, since they followed the word of God without the instruction [derived] from the [sacred] writings (*sine instructione literarum*).”

It is an interesting that Irenaeus takes note of the difficulty of preaching to the Gentiles. The Gentiles had only their heathen experience to draw from when they heard the Gospel, unless they knew a Jew. Irenaeus says the Jews were previously instructed not to worship idols, “not to commit adultery, nor fornication, nor theft, nor fraud,” nor to sin against their brother. Basically, the Jews had knowledge of the law of God, and therefore knew about sin. The Gentiles did not, and started their consciousness of the true God and sin from scratch. However, conversion of the Jews was no easy task either. They had become hardened in their belief that salvation was by the works of the law, and not by faith in Christ. And, as an aside, both are responsible for bringing many traditions into the Church which we are now, thankfully, able to set aside through the study of the word of God. But keeping to the point Irenaeus makes about the Gentiles who received the Gospel without the aid of the Scriptures, I believe this is why the Church went through so much darkness in the Middle Ages. The Church was now composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and both needed time to grow and study these very Scriptures. The Gentiles needed to gain the familiarity with the Scriptures in order to be completely free of their heathen worship practices. The Jews needed to understand the Scriptures in light of the truth of the Gospel. Irenaeus helped a great deal because of his own grappling with the Scriptures in his writing. But as to his point about Paul laboring more than the rest of the apostles, I think it is not that Paul labored harder, but he labored greater. Paul did more to further the Gospel than any other apostle. As proof of this, how many writings of the other apostles do we have? And how many do we have of Paul? But it is a minor point since we have no way of measuring how important a single writing of an apostle is. They are all important!

We see in this chapter that Irenaeus trusted the Scriptures, and believed that one could “allege proofs from the Scriptures” with which to preach the Gospel and earnestly contend for the faith.

## **Book 4: Chapter XXVI.—The treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ; the true exposition of the Scriptures is to be found in the Church alone.**

1. If any one, therefore, reads the Scriptures with attention, he will find in them an account of Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new calling (*vocationis*). For Christ is the treasure which was hid in the field, 4149 **Matt. xiii. 44**, that is, in this world (for “the field is the world” 4150 **Matt. xiii. 38**); but the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means of types and parables. Hence His human nature could not 4151 **Harvey cancels “non,” and reads the sentence interrogatively.** be understood, prior to the consummation of those things which had been predicted,

that is, the advent of Christ. And therefore it was said to Daniel the prophet: "Shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of consummation, until many learn, and knowledge be completed. For at that time, when the dispersion shall be accomplished, they shall know all these things."

4152 **Dan. xii. 4, 7.** But Jeremiah also says, "In the last days they shall understand these things."

4153 **Jer. xxiii. 20.** For every prophecy, before its fulfilment, is to men [full of] enigmas and ambiguities. But when the time has arrived, and the prediction has come to pass, then the prophecies have a clear and certain exposition. And for this reason, indeed, when at this present time the law is read to the Jews, it is like a fable; for they do not possess the explanation of all things pertaining to the advent of the Son of God, which took place in human nature; but when it is read by the Christians, it is a treasure, hid indeed in a field, but brought to light by the cross of Christ, and explained, both enriching the understanding of men, and showing forth the wisdom of God and declaring His dispensations with regard to man, and forming the kingdom of Christ beforehand, and preaching by anticipation the inheritance of the holy Jerusalem, and proclaiming beforehand that the man who loves God shall arrive at such excellency as even to see God, and hear His word, and from the hearing of His discourse be glorified to such an extent, that others cannot behold the glory of his countenance, as was said by Daniel: "Those who do understand, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and many of the righteous

4154 The Latin is "a multis justis," corresponding to the Greek version of the Hebrew text. If the translation be supposed as corresponding to the Hebrew

comparative, the English equivalent will be, "and above (more than) many righteous." as the stars for ever and ever." 4155 **Dan. xii. 3.** Thus, then, I have shown it to be, 4156 The text and punctuation are here in great uncertainty, and very different views of both are taken by the editors. if any one read the Scriptures. For thus it was that the Lord discoursed with the disciples after His resurrection from the dead, proving to them from the Scriptures themselves "that Christ must suffer, and enter into His glory, and that remission of sins should be preached in His name throughout all the world."

4157 **Luke xxiv. 26, 47.** [The walk to Emmaus is the fountain-head of Scriptural exposition, and the forty days (**Acts i. 3**) is the river that came forth like that which went out of Eden. **Sirach iv. 31.** And

the disciple will be perfected, and [rendered] like the householder, "who bringeth forth from his treasure things new and old." 4158 **Matt. xiii. 52.** [I must express my delight in the great principle of exposition here unfolded. The Old Scriptures are a night-bound wilderness, till Christ rises and illuminates them, glorying alike hill and dale, and, as this author supposes, every shrub and flower, also, making the smallest leaf with its dewdrops glitter like the rainbow.]

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "If any one, therefore, reads the Scriptures with attention, he will find in them an account of Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new calling (*vocationis*). For Christ is the treasure which was hid in the field," referring to Matthew 13:44, "that is, in this world (for "the field is the world)," referring to Matthew 13:38; Irenaeus continues as he interprets, "but the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means of types and parables." Irenaeus explains, "Hence His human nature could not be understood, prior to the consummation of those things which had been predicted, that is, the advent of Christ. And therefore it was said to Daniel the prophet: "Shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of consummation, until many learn, and knowledge be completed. For at that time, when the dispersion shall be accomplished, they shall know all these things," referring to Daniel 12:4,9. And Irenaeus adds, "But Jeremiah also says, "In the last days they shall understand these things," referring to Jeremiah 23:20. Irenaeus then explains further, "For every prophecy, before its fulfilment, is to men [full of] enigmas and ambiguities. But when the time has arrived, and the prediction has come to pass, then the prophecies have a clear and certain exposition." Irenaeus then testifies, "And for this reason, indeed, when at this present time the law is read to the Jews, it is like a fable," referring in part to 2 Corinthians 3:12-18, "for they do not possess the explanation of all things pertaining to the advent of the Son of God, which took place in human nature;" Irenaeus then continues, "but when it is read by the Christians, it is a treasure, hid indeed in a field, but brought to light by the cross of Christ, and explained, both enriching the understanding of men, and showing forth the wisdom of God and declaring His dispensations with regard to man, and forming the kingdom of Christ beforehand, and preaching by anticipation the inheritance of the holy Jerusalem, and proclaiming beforehand that the man who loves God

shall arrive at such excellency as even to see God, and hear His word, and from the hearing of His discourse be glorified to such an extent, that others cannot behold the glory of his countenance, as was said by Daniel: "Those who do understand, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and many of the righteous as the stars for ever and ever," referring to Daniel 12:3. Irenaeus then concludes, "Thus, then, I have shown it to be, if any one read the Scriptures. For thus it was that the Lord discoursed with the disciples after His resurrection from the dead, proving to them from the Scriptures themselves "that Christ must suffer, and enter into His glory, and that remission of sins should be preached in His name throughout all the world," referring to Luke 24:26,47. Irenaeus then testifies, "And the disciple will be perfected, and [rendered] like the householder, "who bringeth forth from his treasure things new and old," referring to Matthew 13:52-53.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "If any one, therefore, reads the Scriptures with attention, he will find in them an account of Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new calling (*vocationis*). For Christ is the treasure which was hid in the field," referring to **Matthew 13 (NASB):44** "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Irenaeus explains, "that is, in this world (for "the field is the world)," referring in context to **Matthew 13 (NASB):36** Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world; and *as for* the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil *one*; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

Irenaeus continues as he interprets, "but the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means of types and parables." Irenaeus explains, "Hence His human nature could not be understood, prior to the consummation of those things which had been predicted, that is, the advent of Christ. And therefore it was said to Daniel the prophet: "Shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of consummation, until many learn, and knowledge be completed. For at that time, when the dispersion shall be accomplished, they shall know all these things," referring to **Daniel 12 (NASB):4** But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

And to **Daniel 12 (NASB):9** He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for *these* words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.

And Irenaeus adds, "But Jeremiah also says, "In the last days they shall understand these things," referring to **Jeremiah 23 (NASB):20** The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it.

Irenaeus explains further, "For every prophecy, before its fulfilment, is to men [full of] enigmas and ambiguities. But when the time has arrived, and the prediction has come to pass, then the prophecies have a clear and certain exposition." Irenaeus then testifies, "And for this reason, indeed, when at this present time the law is read to the Jews, it is like a fable," referring in part to **2 Corinthians 3 (NASB):12** Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech, 13 and *are* not like Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. 14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. 15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; 16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Irenaeus then continues, "for they do not possess the explanation of all things pertaining to the advent of the Son of God, which took place in human nature;" This, he says, explains the current state of the Jews in unbelief, who as a people did not then, nor do they now, understand that Christ had to become a man as stated in the Scriptures, nor do they accept Him as their Messiah.

Irenaeus then argues, "but when it is read by the Christians, it is a treasure, hid indeed in a field, but brought to light by the cross of Christ, and explained, both enriching the understanding of men, and showing forth the wisdom of God and declaring His dispensations with regard to man, and forming the kingdom of

Christ beforehand, and preaching by anticipation the inheritance of the holy Jerusalem, and proclaiming beforehand that the man who loves God shall arrive at such excellency as even to see God, and hear His word, and from the hearing of His discourse be glorified to such an extent, that others cannot behold the glory of his countenance, as was said by Daniel: "Those who do understand, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and many of the righteous as the stars for ever and ever," referring to **Daniel 12 (NASB):3** Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Note that Jesus also spoke of this in **Matthew 13 (NASB):43** Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Irenaeus then concludes, "Thus, then, I have shown it to be, if any one read the Scriptures. For thus it was that the Lord discoursed with the disciples after His resurrection from the dead, proving to them from the Scriptures themselves "that Christ must suffer, and enter into His glory, and that remission of sins should be preached in His name throughout all the world," referring in context to **Luke 24 (NASB):25** And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

And to **Luke 24 (NASB):45** Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Irenaeus then testifies, "And the disciple will be perfected, and [rendered] like the householder, "who bringeth forth from his treasure things new and old," referring to **Matthew 13 (NASB):52** And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Irenaeus points out in this chapter that the Scriptures speak of Christ in both the Old and New Testaments. Thus, Irenaeus here proves the unity of the Scriptures. Irenaeus also encourages us to "read the Scriptures."

## **Book 4: Chapter XXVII—The sins of the men of old time, which incurred the displeasure of God, were, by His providence, committed to writing, that we might derive instruction thereby, and not be filled with pride. We must not, therefore, infer that there was another God than He whom Christ preached; we should rather fear, lest the one and the same God who inflicted punishment on the ancients, should bring down heavier upon us.**

1. As I have heard from a certain presbyter, 4174 Polycarp, Papias, Pothinus, and others, have been suggested as probably here referred to, but the point is involved in utter uncertainty. [Surely this testimony is a precious intimation of the apostle's meaning (**Rom. ii. 12–16**), and the whole chapter is radiant with the purity of the Gospel.] who had heard it from those who had seen the apostles, and from those who had been their disciples, the punishment [declared] in Scripture was sufficient for the ancients in regard to what they did without the Spirit's guidance. For as God is no respecter of persons, He inflicted a proper punishment on deeds displeasing to Him. As in the case of David, 4175 **1 Sam. xviii.** when he suffered persecution from Saul for righteousness' sake, and fled from King Saul, and would not avenge himself of his enemy, he both sung the advent of Christ, and instructed the nations in wisdom, and did everything after the Spirit's guidance, and pleased God. But when his lust prompted him to take Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Scripture said concerning him, "Now, the thing (sermo) which David had done appeared wicked in the eyes of the Lord;" 4176 **2 Sam. xi. 27.** and Nathan the prophet is sent to him, pointing out to him his crime, in order that he, passing sentence upon and condemning himself, might obtain mercy and forgiveness from Christ: "And [Nathan] said to him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich

man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe-lamb, which he possessed, and nourished up; and it had been with him and with his children together: it did eat of his own bread, and drank of his cup, and was to him as a daughter. And there came a guest unto the rich man; and he spared to take of the flock of his own ewe-lambs, and from the herds of his own oxen, to entertain the guest; but he took the ewe-lamb of the poor man, and set it before the man that had come unto him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die (*filius mortis est*):and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he hath done this thing, and because he had no pity for the poor man. And Nathan said unto him, Thou art the man who hast done this." 4177 2 Sam. xii. 1, etc. And then he proceeds with the rest [of the narrative], upbraiding him, and recounting God's benefits towards him, and [showing him] how much his conduct had displeased the Lord. For [he declared] that works of this nature were not pleasing to God, but that great wrath was suspended over his house. David, however, was struck with remorse on hearing this, and exclaimed, "I have sinned against the Lord;" and he sung a penitential psalm, waiting for the coming of the Lord, who washes and makes clean the man who had been fast bound with [the chain of] sin. In like manner it was with regard to Solomon, while he continued to judge uprightly, and to declare the wisdom of God, and built the temple as the type of truth, and set forth the glories of God, and announced the peace about to come upon the nations, and prefigured the kingdom of Christ, and spake three thousand parables about the Lord's advent, and five thousand songs, singing praise to God, and expounded the wisdom of God in creation, [discoursing] as to the nature of every tree, every herb, and of all fowls, quadrupeds, and fishes; and he said, "Will God whom the heavens cannot contain, really dwell with men upon the earth?" 4178 1 Kings viii. 27. And he pleased God, and was the admiration of all; and all kings of the earth sought an interview with him (*quærebant faciem ejus*) that they might hear the wisdom which God had conferred upon him. 4179 1 Kings iv. 34. The queen of the south, too, came to him from the ends of the earth, to ascertain the wisdom that was in him: 4180 1 Kings x. 1. she whom the Lord also referred to as one who should rise up in the judgment with the nations of those men who do hear His words, and do not believe in Him, and should condemn them, inasmuch as she submitted herself to the wisdom announced by the servant of God, while these men despised that wisdom which proceeded directly from the Son of God. For Solomon was a servant, but Christ is indeed the Son of God, and the Lord of Solomon. While, therefore, he served God without blame, and ministered to His dispensations, then was he glorified: but when he took wives from all nations, and permitted them to set up idols in Israel, the Scripture spake thus concerning him: "And King Solomon was a lover of women, and he took to himself foreign women; and it came to pass, when Solomon was old, his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God. And the foreign women turned away his heart after strange gods. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord: he did not walk after the Lord, as did David his father. And the Lord was angry with Solomon; for his heart was not perfect with the Lord, as was the heart of David his father." 4181 1 Kings xi. 1. The Scripture has thus sufficiently reproved him, as the presbyter remarked, in order that no flesh may glory in the sight of the Lord.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "As I have heard from a certain presbyter, who had heard it from those who had seen the apostles, and from those who had been their disciples, the punishment [declared] in Scripture was sufficient for the ancients in regard to what they did without the Spirit's guidance." Irenaeus then points out, "For as God is no respecter of persons, He inflicted a proper punishment on deeds displeasing to Him. As in the case of David, when he suffered persecution from Saul for righteousness' sake, and fled from King Saul," referring to 1 Samuel 19:9-10, "and would not avenge himself of his enemy," referring to 1 Samuel 24, "he both sung the advent of Christ, and instructed the nations in wisdom, and did everything after the Spirit's guidance, and pleased God." Irenaeus then affirms, "But when his lust prompted him to take Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Scripture said concerning him, 'Now, the thing (*sermo*) which David had done appeared wicked in the eyes of the Lord,'" referring to 2 Samuel 11:27, "and Nathan the prophet is sent to him, pointing out to him his crime, in order that he, passing sentence upon and condemning himself, might obtain mercy and forgiveness from Christ: "And [Nathan] said to him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other

poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe-lamb, which he possessed, and nourished up; and it had been with him and with his children together: it did eat of his own bread, and drank of his cup, and was to him as a daughter. And there came a guest unto the rich man; and he spared to take of the flock of his own ewe-lambs, and from the herds of his own oxen, to entertain the guest; but he took the ewe-lamb of the poor man, and set it before the man that had come unto him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die (*filius mortis est*):and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he hath done this thing, and because he had no pity for the poor man. And Nathan said unto him, Thou art the man who hast done this," referring to 2 Samuel 12:1-7. Irenaeus continues his narrative of David's life as he says, "And then he proceeds with the rest [of the narrative], upbraiding him, and recounting God's benefits towards him, and [showing him] how much his conduct had displeased the Lord. For [he declared] that works of this nature were not pleasing to God, but that great wrath was suspended over his house," referring to 2 Samuel 12:9-12. Irenaeus then continues as he records, "David, however, was struck with remorse on hearing this, and exclaimed, "I have sinned against the Lord," referring to 2 Samuel 12:13, "and he sung a penitential psalm, waiting for the coming of the Lord, who washes and makes clean the man who had been fast bound with [the chain of] sin," referring to Psalm 51. Irenaeus continues as he records more, "In like manner it was with regard to Solomon, while he continued to judge uprightly, and to declare the wisdom of God, and built the temple as the type of truth, and set forth the glories of God, and announced the peace about to come upon the nations, and prefigured the kingdom of Christ, and spake three thousand parables about the Lord's advent, and five thousand songs, singing praise to God, and expounded the wisdom of God in creation, [discoursing] as to the nature of every tree, every herb, and of all fowls, quadrupeds, and fishes; and he said, "Will God whom the heavens cannot contain, really dwell with men upon the earth?," referring to 1 Kings 8:27. Irenaeus continues as he records yet more, "And he pleased God, and was the admiration of all; and all kings of the earth sought an interview with him (*quærebant faciem ejus*) that they might hear the wisdom which God had conferred upon him," referring to 1 Kings 4:34. Irenaeus further records that, "The queen of the south, too, came to him from the ends of the earth, to ascertain the wisdom that was in him," referring to 1 Kings 10:1, "she whom the Lord also referred to as one who should rise up in the judgment with the nations of those men who do hear His words, and do not believe in Him, and should condemn them, inasmuch as she submitted herself to the wisdom announced by the servant of God, while these men despised that wisdom which proceeded directly from the Son of God," referring to Matthew 12:42. Irenaeus then testifies, "For Solomon was a servant, but Christ is indeed the Son of God, and the Lord of Solomon." And Irenaeus again records, "While, therefore, he served God without blame, and ministered to His dispensations, then was he glorified: but when he took wives from all nations, and permitted them to set up idols in Israel, the Scripture spake thus concerning him: "And King Solomon was a lover of women, and he took to himself foreign women; and it came to pass, when Solomon was old, his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God. And the foreign women turned away his heart after strange gods. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord: he did not walk after the Lord, as did David his father. And the Lord was angry with Solomon; for his heart was not perfect with the Lord, as was the heart of David his father," referring to 1 Kings 11:1-13. Irenaeus then testifies that, "The Scripture has thus sufficiently reproved him, as the presbyter remarked, in order that no flesh may glory in the sight of the Lord."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "As I have heard from a certain presbyter, who had heard it from those who had seen the apostles, and from those who had been their disciples, the punishment [declared] in Scripture was sufficient for the ancients in regard to what they did without the Spirit's guidance." Irenaeus then points out, "For as God is no respecter of persons, He inflicted a proper punishment on deeds displeasing to Him. As in the case of David, when he suffered persecution from Saul for righteousness' sake, and fled from King Saul," referring to **1 Samuel 19 (NASB):9** Now there was an evil spirit from the LORD on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing *the harp* with *his* hand. 10 Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, so that he stuck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

Irenaeus continues as he says, "and would not avenge himself of his enemy," referring to **1 Samuel 24 (HCSB):9** David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of people who say, 'Look, David intends to

harm you'? 10 You can see with your own eyes that the LORD handed you over to me today in the cave. Someone advised me to kill you, but I took pity on you and said: I won't lift my hand against my lord, since he is the LORD's anointed. 11 See, my father! Look at the corner of your robe in my hand, for I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. Look and recognize that there is no evil or rebellion in me. I haven't sinned against you even though you are hunting me down to take my life. 12 "May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD take vengeance on you for me, but my hand will never be against you. 13 As the old proverb says, 'Wickedness comes from wicked people.' My hand will never be against you. 14 Who has the king of Israel come after? What are you chasing after? A dead dog? A flea? 15 May the LORD be judge and decide between you and me. May He take notice and plead my case and deliver me from you."

And Irenaeus continues, "he both sung the advent of Christ, and instructed the nations in wisdom, and did everything after the Spirit's guidance, and pleased God." Irenaeus then affirms, "But when his lust prompted him to take Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Scripture said concerning him, "Now, the thing (*sermo*) which David had done appeared wicked in the eyes of the Lord," referring to **2 Samuel 11 (NASB):27** When the *time of mourning* was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.

Irenaeus continues further, "and Nathan the prophet is sent to him, pointing out to him his crime, in order that he, passing sentence upon and condemning himself, might obtain mercy and forgiveness from Christ: "And [Nathan] said to him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe-lamb, which he possessed, and nourished up; and it had been with him and with his children together: it did eat of his own bread, and drank of his cup, and was to him as a daughter. And there came a guest unto the rich man; and he spared to take of the flock of his own ewe-lambs, and from the herds of his own oxen, to entertain the guest; but he took the ewe-lamb of the poor man, and set it before the man that had come unto him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die (*filius mortis est*):and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he hath done this thing, and because he had no pity for the poor man. And Nathan said unto him, Thou art the man who hast done this," referring to **2 Samuel 12 (HCSB):1** So the LORD sent Nathan to David. When he arrived, he said to him: There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had a large number of sheep and cattle, 3 but the poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up, living with him and his children. It shared his meager food and drank from his cup; it slept in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. 4 Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man could not bring himself to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for his guest. 5 David was infuriated with the man and said to Nathan: "As the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! 6 Because he has done this thing and shown no pity, he must pay four lambs for that lamb." 7 Nathan replied to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more.'

Irenaeus continues his narrative of David's life as he says, "And then he proceeds with the rest [of the narrative], upbraiding him, and recounting God's benefits towards him, and [showing him] how much his conduct had displeased the Lord. For [he declared] that works of this nature were not pleasing to God, but that great wrath was suspended over his house," referring to **2 Samuel 12 (HCSB):9** Why then have you despised the command of the LORD by doing what I consider evil? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife as your own wife—you murdered him with the Ammonite's sword. 10 Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house because you despised Me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own wife.' 11 "This is what the LORD says, 'I am going to bring disaster on you from your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another before your very eyes, and he will sleep with them publicly. 12 You acted in secret, but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.'"

Irenaeus then continues as he records, "David, however, was struck with remorse on hearing this, and exclaimed, "I have sinned against the Lord," referring **2 Samuel 12 (NASB):13** Then David said to Nathan, "I

have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “and he sung a penitential psalm, waiting for the coming of the Lord, who washes and makes clean the man who had been fast bound with [the chain of] sin,” referring to **Psalm**

**51 (HCSB): FOR THE CHOIR DIRECTOR. A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN NATHAN THE PROPHET CAME TO HIM, AFTER HE HAD GONE IN TO BATHSHEBA.** 1 Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion. 2 Wash away my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against You—You alone—I have sinned and done this evil in Your sight. So You are right when You pass sentence; You are blameless when You judge. 5 Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me. 6 Surely You desire integrity in the inner self, and You teach me wisdom deep within. 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice. 9 Turn Your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt. 10 God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not banish me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to You. 14 Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing of Your righteousness. 15 Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise. 16 You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; You are not pleased with a burnt offering. 17 The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. God, You will not despise a broken and humbled heart. 18 In Your good pleasure, cause Zion to prosper; build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on Your altar.

Irenaeus continues as he then narrates, “In like manner it was with regard to Solomon, while he continued to judge uprightly, and to declare the wisdom of God, and built the temple as the type of truth, and set forth the glories of God, and announced the peace about to come upon the nations, and prefigured the kingdom of Christ, and spake three thousand parables about the Lord’s advent, and five thousand songs, singing praise to God, and expounded the wisdom of God in creation, [discoursing] as to the nature of every tree, every herb, and of all fowls, quadrupeds, and fishes; and he said, “Will God whom the heavens cannot contain, really dwell with men upon the earth?,” referring in context to **1 Kings 8 (HCSB):22** Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. 23 He said: LORD God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth below, keeping the gracious covenant with Your servants who walk before You with their whole heart. 24 You have kept what You promised to Your servant, my father David. You spoke directly to him and You fulfilled Your promise by Your power as it is today. 25 Therefore, LORD God of Israel, keep what You promised to Your servant, my father David: You will never fail to have a man to sit before Me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons guard their walk before Me as you have walked before Me. 26 Now LORD God of Israel, please confirm what You promised to Your servant, my father David. 27 But will God indeed live on earth? Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain You, much less this temple I have built. 28 Listen to Your servant’s prayer and his petition, LORD my God, so that You may hear the cry and the prayer that Your servant prays before You today, 29 so that Your eyes may watch over this temple night and day, toward the place where You said: My name will be there, and so that You may hear the prayer that Your servant prays toward this place.

And Irenaeus continues, “And he pleased God, and was the admiration of all; and all kings of the earth sought an interview with him (*quærebant faciem ejus*) that they might hear the wisdom which God had conferred upon him,” referring to **1 Kings 4 (NASB):34** Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

Irenaeus further records that, “The queen of the south, too, came to him from the ends of the earth, to ascertain the wisdom that was in him,” referring in context to **1 Kings 10 (HCSB):1** The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon’s fame connected with the name of Yahweh and came to test him with difficult questions. 2 She came to Jerusalem with a very large entourage, with camels bearing spices, gold in great abundance, and precious stones. She came to Solomon and spoke to him about everything that was on her mind. 3 So Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too difficult for the king to explain to her. 4 When the queen of Sheba observed all of Solomon’s wisdom, the palace he had built, 5 the food at his table, his servants’ residence, his

attendants' service and their attire, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he offered at the LORD's temple, it took her breath away. 6 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your words and about your wisdom is true. 7 But I didn't believe the reports until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, I was not even told half. Your wisdom and prosperity far exceed the report I heard. 8 How happy are your men. How happy are these servants of yours, who always stand in your presence hearing your wisdom. 9 May Yahweh your God be praised! He delighted in you and put you on the throne of Israel, because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel. He has made you king to carry out justice and righteousness." 10 Then she gave the king four and a half tons of gold, a great quantity of spices, and precious stones. Never again did such a quantity of spices arrive as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

And Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "she whom the Lord also referred to as one who should rise up in the judgment with the nations of those men who do hear His words, and do not believe in Him, and should condemn them, inasmuch as she submitted herself to the wisdom announced by the servant of God, while these men despised that wisdom which proceeded directly from the Son of God," referring to Jesus' testimony in **Matthew 12 (NASB):42** "*The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*

Irenaeus then testifies, "For Solomon was a servant, but Christ is indeed the Son of God, and the Lord of Solomon." And Irenaeus again records, "While, therefore, he served God without blame, and ministered to His dispensations, then was he glorified: but when he took wives from all nations, and permitted them to set up idols in Israel, the Scripture spake thus concerning him: "And King Solomon was a lover of women, and he took to himself foreign women; and it came to pass, when Solomon was old, his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God. And the foreign women turned away his heart after strange gods. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord: he did not walk after the Lord, as did David his father. And the Lord was angry with Solomon; for his heart was not perfect with the Lord, as was the heart of David his father," referring to **1 Kings 11 (HCSB):1** King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women 2 from the nations that the LORD had told the Israelites about, "Do not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn you away from Me to their gods." Solomon was deeply attached to these women and loved them. 3 He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 concubines, and they turned his heart away from the LORD. 4 When Solomon was old, his wives seduced him to follow other gods. He was not completely devoted to Yahweh his God, as his father David had been. 5 Solomon followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's sight, and unlike his father David, he did not completely follow Yahweh. 7 At that time, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the detestable idol of Moab, and for Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites, on the hill across from Jerusalem. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who were burning incense and offering sacrifices to their gods. 9 The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from Yahweh, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10 He had commanded him about this, so that he would not follow other gods, but Solomon did not do what the LORD had commanded. 11 Then the LORD said to Solomon, "Since you have done this and did not keep My covenant and My statutes, which I commanded you, I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. 12 However, I will not do it during your lifetime because of your father David; I will tear it out of your son's hand. 13 Yet I will not tear the entire kingdom away from him. I will give one tribe to your son because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem that I chose."

Irenaeus then testifies that, "The Scripture has thus sufficiently reproved him, as the presbyter remarked, in order that no flesh may glory in the sight of the Lord." This chapter tells us that Irenaeus was very familiar with the Old Testament, and that he interprets it correctly. Paul tells us that everything in the Old Testament was written for our instruction as he says in **1 Corinthians 10 (NASB):11** Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

And so Irenaeus tells us that "the punishment [declared] in Scripture was sufficient for the ancients in regard to what they did without the Spirit's guidance. For as God is no respecter of persons, He inflicted a proper punishment on deeds displeasing to Him."

In the life of David Irenaeus recalls the wonderful things he did in serving the Lord. Irenaeus uses instances from Scripture to illustrate David's goodness and how he pleased God. But he also quotes from the same Scriptures to show that David did not always do good. In the case of Bathsheba, David took another man's wife, namely Uriah the Hittite. Not only so but he had Uriah murdered through Joab, the commander of his armies. Irenaeus says that this "thing (*sermo*) which David had done appeared wicked in the eyes of the Lord." So we see that Irenaeus believed that God is pleased when we obey Him, and displeased when we do not follow "the Spirit's guidance."

Then in Solomon's life, there are many good works that the Scripture describes as his which Irenaeus mentions. Yet, the Scripture also tells of God's justice in dealing with Solomon, as Irenaeus rightly comments.

Irenaeus shows us in this chapter that God's justice is proper and right and fits the offense. God is not capricious or arbitrary when he deals with us. And so, Irenaeus says that, because He meets out punishment in this way, this does not make Him another god, as if He were only the god of the Old Testament, while another, who is loving, is the god of the New Testament. But rather, Irenaeus explains to us that God is just and does not condone wickedness on anyone be they King or pauper. He is no respecter of persons as Irenaeus notes, and Paul tells us in **Romans 2 (NASB):11** For there is no partiality with God.

God judges righteously and with wisdom. To have relationship with Him one must be holy for He is holy. Just the same, God disciplines those He loves as we read in **Hebrews 12 (NASB):7** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Irenaeus quotes the scriptures extensively here and we see his reliance and his understanding of the scriptures he is quoting, for he quotes them in the right context.

## **Book 4: Chapter XXXII.—That one God was the author of both Testaments, is confirmed by the authority of a presbyter who had been taught by the apostles.**

1. After this fashion also did a presbyter, 4242 Harvey remarks here, that this can hardly be the same presbyter mentioned before, "who was only a hearer of those who had heard the apostles. Irenaeus may here mean the venerable martyr Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna." a disciple of the apostles, reason with respect to the two testaments, proving that both were truly from one and the same God. For [he maintained] that there was no other God besides Him who made and fashioned us, and that the discourse of those men has no foundation who affirm that this world of ours was made either by angels, or by any other power whatsoever, or by another God. For if a man be once moved away from the Creator of all things, and if he grant that this creation to which we belong was formed by any other or through any other [than the one God], he must of necessity fall into much inconsistency, and many contradictions of this sort; to which he will [be able to] furnish no explanations which can be regarded as either probable or true. And, for this reason, those who introduce other doctrines conceal from us the opinion which they themselves hold respecting God, because they are aware of the untenable 4243 "Quassum et futile." The text varies much in the mss. and absurd nature of their doctrine, and are afraid lest, should they be vanquished, they should have some difficulty in making good their escape. But if any one believes in [only] one God, who also made all things by the Word, as Moses likewise says, "God said, Let there be light: and there was light;" 4244 Gen. i. 3. and as we read in the Gospel, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was nothing made;" 4245 John i. 3. and the Apostle Paul [says] in like manner, "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in us all" 4246 Eph. iv. 5, 6—this man will first of all "hold the head, from which the whole body is compacted and bound together,

and, through means of every joint according to the measure of the ministration of each several part, maketh increase of the body to the edification of itself in love.” 4247 Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19. And then shall every word also seem consistent to him, 4248 “Constatbit ei. if he for his part diligently read the Scriptures in company with those who are presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine, as I have pointed out.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “After this fashion also did a presbyter, a disciple of the apostles, reason with respect to the two testaments, proving that both were truly from one and the same God. For [he maintained] that there was no other God besides Him who made and fashioned us, and that the discourse of those men has no foundation who affirm that this world of ours was made either by angels, or by any other power whatsoever, or by another God.” Irenaeus does not here name the presbyter, but certainly his comment is according to the Scriptures. Irenaeus continues as he argues, “For if a man be once moved away from the Creator of all things, and if he grant that this creation to which we belong was formed by any other or through any other [than the one God], he must of necessity fall into much inconsistency, and many contradictions of this sort; to which he will [be able to] furnish no explanations which can be regarded as either probable or true. And, for this reason, those who introduce other doctrines conceal from us the opinion which they themselves hold respecting God, because they are aware of the untenable and absurd nature of their doctrine, and are afraid lest, should they be vanquished, they should have some difficulty in making good their escape.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But if any one believes in [only] one God, who also made all things by the Word, as Moses likewise says, “God said, Let there be light: and there was light,” referring to Genesis 1:3, “and as we read in the Gospel, “All things were made by Him; and without Him was nothing made,” referring to John 1:3, “and the Apostle Paul [says] in like manner, “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in us all,” referring to Ephesians 4:5-6, “—this man will first of all “hold the head, from which the whole body is compacted and bound together, and, through means of every joint according to the measure of the ministration of each several part, maketh increase of the body to the edification of itself in love,” referring to Colossians 2:19 and Ephesians 4:16. Irenaeus then concludes as he advises, “And then shall every word also seem consistent to him, if he for his part diligently read the Scriptures in company with those who are presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine, as I have pointed out.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “After this fashion also did a presbyter, a disciple of the apostles, reason with respect to the two testaments, proving that both were truly from one and the same God. For [he maintained] that there was no other God besides Him who made and fashioned us, and that the discourse of those men has no foundation who affirm that this world of ours was made either by angels, or by any other power whatsoever, or by another God.” Irenaeus does not here name the presbyter, but certainly his comment is in accordance with the Scriptures. Irenaeus continues as he argues, “For if a man be once moved away from the Creator of all things, and if he grant that this creation to which we belong was formed by any other or through any other [than the one God], he must of necessity fall into much inconsistency, and many contradictions of this sort; to which he will [be able to] furnish no explanations which can be regarded as either probable or true. And, for this reason, those who introduce other doctrines conceal from us the opinion which they themselves hold respecting God, because they are aware of the untenable and absurd nature of their doctrine, and are afraid lest, should they be vanquished, they should have some difficulty in making good their escape.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But if any one believes in [only] one God, who also made all things by the Word, as Moses likewise says, “God said, Let there be light: and there was light,” referring to **Genesis 1 (NASB):3** Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Irenaeus continues as he shows the unity of Scripture and says, “and as we read in the Gospel, “All things were made by Him; and without Him was nothing made,” referring to **John 1 (NASB):3** All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

And again Irenaeus points out, “and the Apostle Paul [says] in like manner, “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in us all,” referring to **Ephesians**

**4 (NASB):**4 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

Speaking of the one who believes in only one God, who made all things, Irenaeus then affirms, “—this man will first of all “hold the head, from which the whole body is compacted and bound together, and, through means of every joint according to the measure of the ministration of each several part, maketh increase of the body to the edification of itself in love,” referring in context to **Colossians 2 (NASB):18** Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

And to **Ephesians 4 (NASB):14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Irenaeus then concludes as he advises, “And then shall every word also seem consistent to him, if he for his part diligently read the Scriptures in company with those who are presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine, as I have pointed out.”

In summary, here again Irenaeus is defending the Church against Gnosticism. He says a presbyter, leaving him anonymous but probably someone who was well known at the time, and who was a disciple of the apostles, establishing his apostolic succession, did “reason with respect to the two testaments, proving that both were truly from one and the same God.” So we see that, not only this Presbyter but also Irenaeus himself, relied heavily on the Scriptures to support his faith. Irenaeus affirms that to believe that another God made us besides the true God, who is God of both Testaments, is to “fall into much inconsistency, and many contradictions” which you will not be able to resolve. He says that those who believe teachings like this, which have no foundation in the word of God, know that their teaching is untenable and are fearful of being found out. Irenaeus then, rapid fire, shows the unity of teaching in the two Testaments, quoting both the Old and New Testament Scriptures which assert that God is one who created heaven and the earth.

Irenaeus testifies that the word of God is consistent and does not contradict itself, nor does it state a position that is untenable. The apostolic doctrine to which Irenaeus refers is simply the teaching of the apostles, that there is one God who made all things. However, he also probably includes in the apostolic doctrine his statement of faith as in **Book 1: Chapter 10, paragraph 1**, in which he says “to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess” to Him.” I have quoted this statement in its entirety in **Chapter 4: Irenaeus' Statement of Faith**. Irenaeus also encourages us to avail ourselves of the teaching of our pastors, or as he says, “with those who are presbyters in the Church” who preach according to the apostolic doctrine.

Incidentally, we see that Irenaeus mentions two testaments here. This is an evidence of the canon being formed during his time, but not closed as we have seen with his mention of the passage in the Shepherd of Hermas as Scripture in **Book 4: Chapter XX, paragraph 2**, covered in this **Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures**. I believe Irenaeus did not know whether all of the apostolic writings had been collected yet. This is, I believe, what motivated him to place such emphasis on maintaining the apostolic succession of the presbyters. We will look in detail at this belief in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**.

**Book 5: Chapter VIII.—The gifts of the Holy Spirit which we receive prepare us for incorruption, render us spiritual, and separate us from carnal men. These two classes are signified by the clean and unclean animals in the legal dispensation.**

...  
4. Now the law has figuratively predicted all these, delineating man by the [various] animals:

4502 Lev. xi. 2; Deut. xiv. 3, etc. whatsoever of these, says [the Scripture], have a double hoof and ruminate, it proclaims as clean; but whatsoever of them do not possess one or other of these [properties], it sets aside by themselves as unclean. Who then are the clean? Those who make their way by faith steadily towards the Father and the Son; for this is denoted by the steadiness of those which divide the hoof; and they meditate day and night upon the words of God, 4503 Ps. i. 2, that they may be adorned with good works: for this is the meaning of the ruminants. The unclean, however, are those which do neither divide the hoof nor ruminate; that is, those persons who have neither faith in God, nor do meditate on His words: and such is the abomination of the Gentiles. But as to those animals which do indeed chew the cud, but have not the double hoof, and are themselves unclean, we have in them a figurative description of the Jews, who certainly have the words of God in their mouth, but who do not fix their rooted stedfastness in the Father and in the Son; wherefore they are an unstable generation. For those animals which have the hoof all in one piece easily slip; but those which have it divided are more sure-footed, their cleft hoofs succeeding each other as they advance, and the one hoof supporting the other. In like manner, too, those are unclean which have the double hoof but do not ruminate: this is plainly an indication of all heretics, and of those who do not meditate on the words of God, neither are adorned with works of righteousness; to whom also the Lord says, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say to you?" 4504 Luke vi. 46. For men of this stamp do indeed say that they believe in the Father and the Son, but they never meditate as they should upon the things of God, neither are they adorned with works of righteousness; but, as I have already observed, they have adopted the lives of swine and of dogs, giving themselves over to filthiness, to gluttony, and recklessness of all sorts. Justly, therefore, did the apostle call all such "carnal" and "animal," 4505 1 Cor. ii. 14, 1 Cor. iii. 1, etc.—[all those, namely], who through their own unbelief and luxury do not receive the Divine Spirit, and in their various phases cast out from themselves the life-giving Word, and walk stupidly after their own lusts: the prophets, too, spake of them as beasts of burden and wild beasts; custom likewise has viewed them in the light of cattle and irrational creatures; and the law has pronounced them unclean.

**Summary:** In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, "Now the law has figuratively predicted all these, delineating man by the [various] animals," referring in part to Leviticus 11:2 and Deuteronomy 14:3, "whatsoever of these, says [the Scripture], have a double hoof and ruminate, it proclaims as clean; but whatsoever of them do not possess one or other of these [properties], it sets aside by themselves as unclean." Irenaeus then asks, "Who then are the clean?" And Irenaeus then answers, "Those who make their way by faith steadily towards the Father and the Son; for this is denoted by the steadiness of those which divide the hoof; and they meditate day and night upon the words of God," referring to Psalm 1:2, "that they may be adorned with good works: for this is the meaning of the ruminants." Irenaeus continues as he says, "The unclean, however, are those which do neither divide the hoof nor ruminate; that is, those persons who have neither faith in God, nor do meditate on His words: and such is the abomination of the Gentiles." Irenaeus continues as he declares, "But as to those animals which do indeed chew the cud, but have not the double hoof, and are themselves unclean, we have in them a figurative description of the Jews, who certainly have the words of God in their mouth, but who do not fix their rooted stedfastness in the Father and in the Son; wherefore they are an unstable generation." Irenaeus then explains, "For those animals which have the hoof all in one piece easily slip; but those which have it divided are more sure-footed, their cleft hoofs succeeding each other as they advance, and the one hoof supporting the other. In like manner, too, those are unclean which have the double hoof but do not ruminate: this is plainly an indication of all heretics, and of those who do not meditate on the words of God, neither are adorned with works of righteousness; to whom also the Lord says, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say to you?," referring to Luke 6:46. Irenaeus then testifies, "For men of this stamp do indeed say that they believe in the Father and the Son, but they never meditate as they should upon the things of God, neither are they adorned with works of righteousness; but, as I have already observed, they have adopted the lives of swine and of dogs, giving themselves over to filthiness, to gluttony, and recklessness of all sorts. Justly, therefore, did the apostle call all such "carnal" and "animal," referring to 1 Corinthians 2:14, 3:1,—" [all those, namely], who through their own unbelief and luxury do not receive the Divine Spirit, and in their various

phases cast out from themselves the life-giving Word, and walk stupidly after their own lusts: the prophets, too, spake of them as beasts of burden and wild beasts," referring to Psalm 49:12,20, "custom likewise has viewed them in the light of cattle and irrational creatures; and the law has pronounced them unclean.

**Commentary:** In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, "Now the law has figuratively predicted all these, delineating man by the [various] animals," referring in context to **Leviticus 11 (ESV):1** And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, 2 "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth. 3 Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. 4 Nevertheless, among those that chew the cud or part the hoof, you shall not eat these: The camel, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you.

And to **Deuteronomy 14 (ESV):1** "You are the sons of the LORD your God. You shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead. 2 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 3 "You shall not eat any abomination. 4 These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, 5 the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. 6 Every animal that parts the hoof and has the hoof cloven in two and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. 7 Yet of those that chew the cud or have the hoof cloven you shall not eat these: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger, because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof, are unclean for you. 8 And the pig, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch.

Irenaeus then affirms, "whatsoever of these, says [the Scripture], have a double hoof and ruminate, it proclaims as clean; but whatsoever of them do not possess one or other of these [properties], it sets aside by themselves as unclean." Irenaeus then composes an allegory as he asks, "Who then are the clean?" And Irenaeus then answers, "Those who make their way by faith steadily towards the Father and the Son; for this is denoted by the steadiness of those which divide the hoof; and they meditate day and night upon the words of God," referring in context to **Psalm 1 (ESV)** 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Irenaeus then continues his allegory, "that they may be adorned with good works: for this is the meaning of the ruminants." Irenaeus then continues by asserting, "The unclean, however, are those which do neither divide the hoof nor ruminate; that is, those persons who have neither faith in God, nor do meditate on His words: and such is the abomination of the Gentiles." Irenaeus then declares, "But as to those animals which do indeed chew the cud, but have not the double hoof, and are themselves unclean, we have in them a figurative description of the Jews, who certainly have the words of God in their mouth, but who do not fix their rooted steadfastness in the Father and in the Son; wherefore they are an unstable generation." Irenaeus then explains, "For those animals which have the hoof all in one piece easily slip; but those which have it divided are more sure-footed, their cleft hoofs succeeding each other as they advance, and the one hoof supporting the other. In like manner, too, those are unclean which have the double hoof but do not ruminate: this is plainly an indication of all heretics, and of those who do not meditate on the words of God, neither are adorned with works of righteousness; to whom also the Lord says, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say to you?," referring to **Luke 6 (ESV):46** "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?

Irenaeus then testifies, "For men of this stamp do indeed say that they believe in the Father and the Son, but they never meditate as they should upon the things of God, neither are they adorned with works of righteousness; but, as I have already observed, they have adopted the lives of swine and of dogs, giving themselves over to filthiness, to gluttony, and recklessness of all sorts. Justly, therefore, did the apostle call all such "carnal" and "animal," referring to **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):14** But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

And to **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):1** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife

among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not *mere* men?

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “[all those, namely], who through their own unbelief and luxury do not receive the Divine Spirit, and in their various phases cast out from themselves the life-giving Word, and walk stupidly after their own lusts: the prophets, too, spake of them as beasts of burden and wild beasts,” referring to **Psalm 49 (ESV):12** Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.

And to **Psalm 49 (ESV):20** Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish.

Irenaeus then concludes, “custom likewise has viewed them in the light of cattle and irrational creatures; and the law has pronounced them unclean.

In this paragraph four, Irenaeus composes an allegory using the clean and unclean animals as his metaphors. I like his little parable but mostly because of the place he gives to the word of God in the believer’s life. He is to meditate on it, to stand firm on it, to produce good works by holding it steadfastly, and by doing the things it says. This is commendable, and is the rightful place of the word of God in the lives of all believers, and not just the presbytery. The word of God is for every believer, and every child of God as we read in **Psalm 1 (ESV):1** Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

## Chapter 6: His Teaching on The Resurrection

### Book 3: Chapter XII.—Doctrine of the rest of the apostles.

...  
2. For Peter said, "Ye men of Israel, hear my words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God among you by powers, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, by the hands of wicked men ye have slain, affixing [to the cross]: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of them. For David speaketh concerning Him, 822 Psalm 15:8 I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for He is on my right hand, lest I should be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption." 823 Acts 2:22-27 Then he proceeds to speak confidently to them concerning the patriarch David, that he was dead and buried, and that his sepulchre is with them to this day. He said, "But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his body one should sit in his throne; foreseeing this, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that He was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus," he said, "hath God raised up, of which we all are witnesses: who, being exalted by the right hand of God, receiving from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this gift 824 The word δῶπον or δώρημα is supposed by some to have existed in the earliest Greek texts, although not found in any extant now. It is thus quoted by others besides Irenaeus. which ye now see and hear. For David has not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." 825 Acts 2:29-36 And when the multitudes exclaimed, "What shall we do then?" Peter says to them, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." 826 Acts 2:37-38 Thus the apostles did not preach another God, or another Fulness; nor, that the Christ who suffered and rose again was one, while he who flew off on high was another, and remained impassible; but that there was one and the same God the Father, and Christ Jesus who rose from the dead; and they preached faith in Him, to those who did not believe on the Son of God, and exhorted them out of the prophets, that the Christ whom God promised to send, He sent in Jesus, whom they crucified and God raised up.

**Summary:** Irenaeus testifies in paragraph two, "For Peter said, "Ye men of Israel, hear my words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God among you by powers, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, by the hands of wicked men ye have slain, affixing [to the cross]: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of them," referring to Acts 2:22-24. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for He is on my right hand, lest I should be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption," referring to Acts 2:25-27. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "Then he proceeds to speak confidently to them concerning the patriarch David, that he was dead and buried, and that his sepulchre is with them to this day. He said, "But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his body one should sit in his throne; foreseeing this, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that He was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus," he said, "hath God raised up, of which we all are witnesses: who, being exalted by the right hand of God, receiving from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this gift which ye now see and hear. For David has not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus,

whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," referring to Acts 2:29-36. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "And when the multitudes exclaimed, "What shall we do then?" Peter says to them, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," referring to Acts 2:37-38. Irenaeus then rebukes the Gnostics as he testifies, "Thus the apostles did not preach another God, or another Fulness; nor, that the Christ who suffered and rose again was one, while he who flew off on high was another, and remained impassible; but that there was one and the same God the Father, and Christ Jesus who rose from the dead; and they preached faith in Him, to those who did not believe on the Son of God, and exhorted them out of the prophets, that the Christ whom God promised to send, He sent in Jesus, whom they crucified and God raised up."

**Commentary:** Irenaeus testifies in paragraph two, "For Peter said, "Ye men of Israel, hear my words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God among you by powers, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, by the hands of wicked men ye have slain, affixing [to the cross]: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of them," referring to **Acts 2 (ESV):22** "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for He is on my right hand, lest I should be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption," referring in context to **Acts 2 (ESV):25** For David says concerning him, "'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "Then he proceeds to speak confidently to them concerning the patriarch David, that he was dead and buried, and that his sepulchre is with them to this day. He said, "But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his body one should sit in his throne; foreseeing this, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that He was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus," he said, "hath God raised up, of which we all are witnesses: who, being exalted by the right hand of God, receiving from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this gift which ye now see and hear. For David has not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," referring to **Acts 2 (ESV):29** "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.'" 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "And when the multitudes exclaimed, "What shall we do then?" Peter says to them, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," referring to **Acts 2 (ESV):37** Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to

them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Irenaeus then rebukes the Gnostics as he testifies, "Thus the apostles did not preach another God, or another Fulness; nor, that the Christ who suffered and rose again was one, while he who flew off on high was another, and remained impassible; but that there was one and the same God the Father, and Christ Jesus who rose from the dead; and they preached faith in Him, to those who did not believe on the Son of God, and exhorted them out of the prophets, that the Christ whom God promised to send, He sent in Jesus, whom they crucified and God raised up."

Irenaeus here quotes the Scriptures in context, and leaves us in no doubt that he believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## **Book 5: Chapter III.—The power and glory of God shine forth in the weakness of human flesh, as He will render our body a participator of the resurrection and of immortality, although He has formed it from the dust of the earth; He will also bestow upon it the enjoyment of immortality, just as He grants it this short life in common with the soul.**

1. The Apostle Paul has, moreover, in the most lucid manner, pointed out that man has been delivered over to his own infirmity, lest, being uplifted, he might fall away from the truth. Thus he says in the second [Epistle] to the Corinthians: "And lest I should be lifted up by the sublimity of the Revelation, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. And upon this I besought the Lord three times, that it might depart from me. But he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for strength is made perfect in weakness. Gladly therefore shall I rather glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." 4468 **2 Cor. xii. 7–9.** What, therefore? (as some may exclaim:) did the Lord wish, in that case, that His apostles should thus undergo buffeting, and that he should endure such infirmity? Even so it was; the word says it. For strength is made perfect in weakness, rendering him a better man who by means of his infirmity becomes acquainted with the power of God. For how could a man have learned that he is himself an infirm being, and mortal by nature, but that God is immortal and powerful, unless he had learned by experience what is in both? For there is nothing evil in learning one's infirmities by endurance; yea, rather, it has even the beneficial effect of preventing him from forming an undue opinion of his own nature (*non aberrare in natura sua*). But the being lifted up against God, and taking His glory to one's self, rendering man ungrateful, has brought much evil upon him. [And thus, I say, man must learn both things by experience], that he may not be destitute of truth and love either towards himself or his Creator. 4469 We have adopted here the explanation of Massuet, who considers the preceding period as merely parenthetical. Both Grabe and Harvey, however, would make conjectural emendations in the text, which seem to us to be inadmissible. But the experience of both confers upon him the true knowledge as to God and man, and increases his love towards God. Now, where there exists an increase of love, there a greater glory is wrought out by the power of God for those who love Him.

2. Those men, therefore, set aside the power of God, and do not consider what the word declares, when they dwell upon the infirmity of the flesh, but do not take into consideration the power of Him who raises it up from the dead. For if He does not vivify what is mortal, and does not bring back the corruptible to incorruption, He is not a God of power. But that He is powerful in all these respects, we ought to perceive from our origin, inasmuch as God, taking dust from the earth, formed man. And surely it is much more difficult and incredible, from non-existent bones, and nerves, and veins, and the rest of man's organization, to bring it about that all this should be, and to make man an animated and rational creature, than to reintegrate again that which had been created and then afterwards decomposed into earth (for the reasons already mentioned), having thus passed into

those [elements] from which man, who had no previous existence, was formed. For He who in the beginning caused him to have being who as yet was not, just when He pleased, shall much more reinstate again those who had a former existence, when it is His will [that they should inherit] the life granted by Him. And that flesh shall also be found fit for and capable of receiving the power of God, which at the beginning received the skilful touches of God; so that one part became the eye for seeing; another, the ear for hearing; another, the hand for feeling and working; another, the sinews stretched out everywhere, and holding the limbs together; another, arteries and veins, passages for the blood and the air; 4470 The ancients erroneously supposed that the arteries were *air-vessels*, from the fact that these organs, after death, appear quite empty, from all the blood stagnating in the veins when death supervenes. another, the various internal organs; another, the blood, which is the bond of union between soul and body. But why go [on in this strain]? Numbers would fail to express the multiplicity of parts in the human frame, which was made in no other way than by the great wisdom of God. But those things which partake of the skill and wisdom of God, do also partake of His power.

3. The flesh, therefore, is not destitute [of participation] in the constructive wisdom and power of God. But if the power of Him who is the bestower of life is made perfect in weakness —that is, in the flesh—let them inform us, when they maintain the incapacity of flesh to receive the life granted by God, whether they do say these things as being living men at present, and partakers of life, or acknowledge that, having no part in life whatever, they are at the present moment dead men. And if they really are dead men, how is it that they move about, and speak, and perform those other functions which are not the actions of the dead, but of the living? But if they are now alive, and if their whole body partakes of life, how can they venture the assertion that the flesh is not qualified to be a partaker of life, when they do confess that they have life at the present moment? It is just as if anybody were to take up a sponge full of water, or a torch on fire, and to declare that the sponge could not possibly partake of the water, or the torch of the fire. In this very manner do those men, by alleging that they are alive and bear life about in their members, contradict themselves afterwards, when they represent these members as not being capable of [receiving] life. But if the present temporal life, which is of such an inferior nature to eternal life, can nevertheless effect so much as to quicken our mortal members, why should not eternal life, being much more powerful than this, vivify the flesh, which has already held converse with, and been accustomed to sustain, life? For that the flesh can really partake of life, is shown from the fact of its being alive; for it lives on, as long as it is God's purpose that it should do so. It is manifest, too, that God has the power to confer life upon it, inasmuch as He grants life to us who are in existence. And, therefore, since the Lord has power to infuse life into what He has fashioned, and since the flesh is capable of being quickened, what remains to prevent its participating in incorruption, which is a blissful and never-ending life granted by God?

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that, “The Apostle Paul has, moreover, in the most lucid manner, pointed out that man has been delivered over to his own infirmity, lest, being uplifted, he might fall away from the truth. Thus he says in the second [Epistle] to the Corinthians: “And lest I should be lifted up by the sublimity of the Revelation, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. And upon this I besought the Lord three times, that it might depart from me. But he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for strength is made perfect in weakness. Gladly therefore shall I rather glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me,” referring to 2 Corinthians 12:7-9. Irenaeus then asks, “What, therefore? (as some may exclaim:) did the Lord wish, in that case, that His apostles should thus undergo buffeting, and that he should endure such infirmity?” And Irenaeus answers, “Even so it was; the word says it. For strength is made perfect in weakness, rendering him a better man who by means of his infirmity becomes acquainted with the power of God.” Irenaeus again asks, “For how could a man have learned that he is himself an infirm being, and mortal by nature, but that God is immortal and powerful, unless he had learned by experience what is in both?” And Irenaeus points out, “For there is nothing evil in learning one's infirmities by endurance; yea, rather, it has even the beneficial effect of preventing him from forming an undue opinion of his

own nature (*non aberrare in natura sua*).” And Irenaeus then warns, “But the being lifted up against God, and taking His glory to one’s self, rendering man ungrateful, has brought much evil upon him. [And thus, I say, man must learn both things by experience], that he may not be destitute of truth and love either towards himself or his Creator.” Irenaeus concludes, “But the experience of both confers upon him the true knowledge as to God and man, and increases his love towards God. Now, where there exists an increase of love, there a greater glory is wrought out by the power of God for those who love Him.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus attests, “Those men, therefore, set aside the power of God, and do not consider what the word declares, when they dwell upon the infirmity of the flesh, but do not take into consideration the power of Him who raises it up from the dead.” Irenaeus then argues, “For if He does not vivify what is mortal, and does not bring back the corruptible to incorruption, He is not a God of power.” Again Irenaeus attests, “But that He is powerful in all these respects, we ought to perceive from our origin, inasmuch as God, taking dust from the earth, formed man,” referring to Genesis 2:7.

Irenaeus then reasons, “And surely it is much more difficult and incredible, from non-existent bones, and nerves, and veins, and the rest of man’s organization, to bring it about that all this should be, and to make man an animated and rational creature, than to reintegrate again that which had been created and then afterwards decomposed into earth (for the reasons already mentioned), having thus passed into those [elements] from which man, who had no previous existence, was formed.” Irenaeus then argues, “For He who in the beginning caused him to have being who as yet was not, just when He pleased, shall much more reinstate again those who had a former existence, when it is His will [that they should inherit] the life granted by Him.” Irenaeus continues as he says, “And that flesh shall also be found fit for and capable of receiving the power of God, which at the beginning received the skilful touches of God; so that one part became the eye for seeing; another, the ear for hearing; another, the hand for feeling and working; another, the sinews stretched out everywhere, and holding the limbs together; another, arteries and veins, passages for the blood and the air; another, the various internal organs; another, the blood, which is the bond of union between soul and body.” And Irenaeus concludes, “But why go [on in this strain]? Numbers would fail to express the multiplicity of parts in the human frame, which was made in no other way than by the great wisdom of God. But those things which partake of the skill and wisdom of God, do also partake of His power.”

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**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that, “The Apostle Paul has, moreover, in the most lucid manner, pointed out that man has been delivered over to his own infirmity, lest, being uplifted, he might

fall away from the truth. Thus he says in the second [Epistle] to the Corinthians: “And lest I should be lifted up by the sublimity of the Revelation, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. And upon this I besought the Lord three times, that it might depart from me. But he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for strength is made perfect in weakness. Gladly therefore shall I rather glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me,” referring to **2 Corinthians 12 (NASB):7** Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Irenaeus then asks, “What, therefore? (as some may exclaim:) did the Lord wish, in that case, that His apostles should thus undergo buffeting, and that he should endure such infirmity?” And Irenaeus answers, “Even so it was; the word says it. For strength is made perfect in weakness, rendering him a better man who by means of his infirmity becomes acquainted with the power of God.” Irenaeus again asks, “For how could a man have learned that he is himself an infirm being, and mortal by nature, but that God is immortal and powerful, unless he had learned by experience what is in both?” And Irenaeus points out, “For there is nothing evil in learning one’s infirmities by endurance; yea, rather, it has even the beneficial effect of preventing him from forming an undue opinion of his own nature (*non aberrare in natura sua*).” And Irenaeus then warns, “But the being lifted up against God, and taking His glory to one’s self, rendering man ungrateful, has brought much evil upon him. [And thus, I say, man must learn both things by experience], that he may not be destitute of truth and love either towards himself or his Creator.” Irenaeus concludes, “But the experience of both confers upon him the true knowledge as to God and man, and increases his love towards God. Now, where there exists an increase of love, there a greater glory is wrought out by the power of God for those who love Him.”

Irenaeus here begins to lay the foundation for his strong assertion of the truth of the resurrection. Irenaeus is writing to those who disbelieve in the resurrection of the body. His argument begins with the infirmity or weakness of our flesh. He sees in Paul’s account of his being caught up to heaven and afterwards of receiving “a thorn in the flesh” to buffet, him, that is, to keep him humble, as an elucidation for us. We must endure our own infirmity knowing that it will render us better men and women and acquaint us with God’s power. For when we realize our weakness, we realize His strength and learn that God is God, and we most certainly are not. This knowledge increases our love for God, as Irenaeus says. When we are weak, then, we should glory in our infirmity as Paul does in order that a greater glory may be “wrought out by the power of God for those who love Him.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus attests, “Those men, therefore, set aside the power of God, and do not consider what the word declares, when they dwell upon the infirmity of the flesh, but do not take into consideration the power of Him who raises it up from the dead.” Irenaeus then argues, “For if He does not vivify what is mortal, and does not bring back the corruptible to incorruption, He is not a God of power.” Again Irenaeus attests, “But that He is powerful in all these respects, we ought to perceive from our origin, inasmuch as God, taking dust from the earth, formed man,” referring to **Genesis 2 (ESV):7** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Irenaeus then reasons, “And surely it is much more difficult and incredible, from non-existent bones, and nerves, and veins, and the rest of man’s organization, to bring it about that all this should be, and to make man an animated and rational creature, than to reintegrate again that which had been created and then afterwards decomposed into earth (for the reasons already mentioned), having thus passed into those [elements] from which man, who had no previous existence, was formed.” Irenaeus then argues, “For He who in the beginning caused him to have being who as yet was not, just when He pleased, shall much more reinstate again those who had a former existence, when it is His will [that they should inherit] the life granted by Him.”

Irenaeus continues as he says, “And that flesh shall also be found fit for and capable of receiving the power of God, which at the beginning received the skilful touches of God; so that one part became the eye for seeing; another, the ear for hearing; another, the hand for feeling and working; another, the sinews stretched out everywhere, and holding the limbs together; another, arteries and veins, passages for the blood and the air; another, the various internal organs; another, the blood, which is the bond of union between soul and body.”

And Irenaeus concludes, “But why go [on in this strain]? Numbers would fail to express the multiplicity of parts in the human frame, which was made in no other way than by the great wisdom of God. But those things which partake of the skill and wisdom of God, do also partake of His power.”

But all of this is really leading up to his main point, which is that God is able to raise the dead by this same power that is present in our weakness. Those who set aside the power of God are in more awe of the infirmity of the flesh rather than the power of God. The God who calls things that are not as though they were is the same God who made us out of nothing. Such a powerful beginning makes raising the dead look easy. Irenaeus shows that such a thing as raising the dead is reasonable by our very existence. As Irenaeus marvels at the handiwork of God, so should we. That we are made “in no other way than by the great wisdom of God” is evident to all who are willing top open their hearts to believe.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus attests, “The flesh, therefore, is not destitute [of participation] in the constructive wisdom and power of God.” And he then argues, “But if the power of Him who is the bestower of life is made perfect in weakness—that is, in the flesh—let them inform us, when they maintain the incapacity of flesh to receive the life granted by God, whether they do say these things as being living men at present, and partakers of life, or acknowledge that, having no part in life whatever, they are at the present moment dead men.” Irenaeus then argues further, “And if they really are dead men, how is it that they move about, and speak, and perform those other functions which are not the actions of the dead, but of the living? But if they are now alive, and if their whole body partakes of life, how can they venture the assertion that the flesh is not qualified to be a partaker of life, when they do confess that they have life at the present moment?” Irenaeus then forms an analogy as he says, “It is just as if anybody were to take up a sponge full of water, or a torch on fire, and to declare that the sponge could not possibly partake of the water, or the torch of the fire. In this very manner do those men, by alleging that they are alive and bear life about in their members, contradict themselves afterwards, when they represent these members as not being capable of [receiving] life.” Irenaeus then asks, “But if the present temporal life, which is of such an inferior nature to eternal life, can nevertheless effect so much as to quicken our mortal members, why should not eternal life, being much more powerful than this, vivify the flesh, which has already held converse with, and been accustomed to sustain, life?” And Irenaeus then argues, “For that the flesh can really partake of life, is shown from the fact of its being alive; for it lives on, as long as it is God’s purpose that it should do so. It is manifest, too, that God has the power to confer life upon it, inasmuch as He grants life to us who are in existence. And, therefore, since the Lord has power to infuse life into what He has fashioned, and since the flesh is capable of being quickened, what remains to prevent its participating in incorruption, which is a blissful and never-ending life granted by God?”

Again, Irenaeus marvels at the unbelief of those who say that the flesh is incapable of receiving the life granted by God. He asks them to believe a very simple thing, which is that they themselves are alive and “bear life about in their members.” Irenaeus’ point is well taken. If our present life is sufficient to move us about, what would eternal life do, being much more powerful, to our flesh he asks. As God grants us life at the present, He is also able to grant us never ending life as well. Bravo Irenaeus!

## **Book 5: Chapter V.—The prolonged life of the ancients, the translation of Elijah and of Enoch in their own bodies, as well as the preservation of Jonah, of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the midst of extreme peril, are clear demonstrations that God can raise up our bodies to life eternal.**

1. [In order to learn] that bodies did continue in existence for a lengthened period, as long as it was God’s good pleasure that they should flourish, let [these heretics] read the Scriptures, and they will find that our predecessors advanced beyond seven hundred, eight hundred, and nine hundred years of age; and that their bodies kept pace with the protracted length of their days, and participated in life as long as God willed that they should live. But why do I refer to these men? For Enoch, when he pleased God, was translated in the same body in which he did please Him, thus pointing out by anticipation the translation of the just. Elijah, too, was caught up [when he was yet] in the substance of the [natural] form; thus exhibiting in prophecy the assumption of those who are spiritual, and that nothing stood in the way of their body being translated and caught up. For by means of the very same

hands through which they were moulded at the beginning, did they receive this translation and assumption. For in Adam the hands of God had become accustomed to set in order, to rule, and to sustain His own workmanship, and to bring it and place it where they pleased. Where, then, was the first man placed? In paradise certainly, as the Scripture declares "And God planted a garden [paradisum] eastward in Eden, and there He placed the man whom He had formed." 4471 Gen. ii.

8. And then afterwards when [man] proved disobedient, he was cast out thence into this world.

Wherefore also the elders who were disciples of the apostles tell us that those who were translated were transferred to that place (for paradise has been prepared for righteous men, such as have the Spirit; in which place also Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable as regards us in our present condition 4472 2 Cor. xii. 4.), and that there shall they who have been translated remain until the consummation [of all things], as a prelude to immortality.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus encourages us as he affirms, "[In order to learn] that bodies did continue in existence for a lengthened period, as long as it was God's good pleasure that they should flourish, let [these heretics] read the Scriptures, and they will find that our predecessors advanced beyond seven hundred, eight hundred, and nine hundred years of age; and that their bodies kept pace with the protracted length of their days, and participated in life as long as God willed that they should live," referring in part to Genesis 5:3-11. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "But why do I refer to these men? For Enoch, when he pleased God, was translated in the same body in which he did please Him, thus pointing out by anticipation the translation of the just," referring to Genesis 5:21-24 and Hebrews 11:5-6. Again, Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "Elijah, too, was caught up [when he was yet] in the substance of the [natural] form; thus exhibiting in prophecy the assumption of those who are spiritual, and that nothing stood in the way of their body being translated and caught up," referring to 2 Kings 2:11-14. Irenaeus then concludes, "For by means of the very same hands through which they were moulded at the beginning, did they receive this translation and assumption." Irenaeus then explains, "For in Adam the hands of God had become accustomed to set in order, to rule, and to sustain His own workmanship, and to bring it and place it where they pleased. Where, then, was the first man placed? In paradise certainly, as the Scripture declares "And God planted a garden [paradisum] eastward in Eden, and there He placed the man whom He had formed," referring to Genesis 2:8. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "And then afterwards when [man] proved disobedient, he was cast out thence into this world," referring in context to Genesis 3:21-24. Irenaeus then records, "Wherefore also the elders who were disciples of the apostles tell us that those who were translated were transferred to that place (for paradise has been prepared for righteous men, such as have the Spirit; in which place also Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable as regards us in our present condition," referring to 2 Corinthians 12:4, "and that there shall they who have been translated remain until the consummation [of all things], as a prelude to immortality."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus encourages us as he affirms, "[In order to learn] that bodies did continue in existence for a lengthened period, as long as it was God's good pleasure that they should flourish, let [these heretics] read the Scriptures, and they will find that our predecessors advanced beyond seven hundred, eight hundred, and nine hundred years of age; and that their bodies kept pace with the protracted length of their days, and participated in life as long as God willed that they should live," referring in part to **Genesis 5 (HCSB):**3 Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. 4 Adam lived 800 years after the birth of Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 5 So Adam's life lasted 930 years; then he died. 6 Seth was 105 years old when he fathered Enosh. 7 Seth lived 807 years after the birth of Enosh, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 8 So Seth's life lasted 912 years; then he died. 9 Enosh was 90 years old when he fathered Kenan. 10 Enosh lived 815 years after the birth of Kenan, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 11 So Enosh's life lasted 905 years; then he died.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "But why do I refer to these men? For Enoch, when he pleased God, was translated in the same body in which he did please Him, thus pointing out by anticipation the translation of the just," referring to **Genesis 5 (ESV):**21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. 22 Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had

*other* sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

And to **Hebrews 11 (ESV):5** By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Again, Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “Elijah, too, was caught up [when he was yet] in the substance of the [natural] form; thus exhibiting in prophecy the assumption of those who are spiritual, and that nothing stood in the way of their body being translated and caught up,” referring to **2 Kings 2 (ESV):11** As they were going along and talking, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. 12 Elisha saw *it* and cried out, “My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. 13 He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, “Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

Irenaeus then concludes, “For by means of the very same hands through which they were moulded at the beginning, did they receive this translation and assumption.” Irenaeus then explains, “For in Adam the hands of God had become accustomed to set in order, to rule, and to sustain His own workmanship, and to bring it and place it where they pleased. Where, then, was the first man placed? In paradise certainly, as the Scripture declares “And God planted a garden [*paradisum*] eastward in Eden, and there He placed the man whom He had formed,” referring to **Genesis 2 (ESV):8** The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. 9 Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.

Note that the Greek word Παραδεῖσο, pronounced *paradeiso* and meaning paradise, is not found in the Old Testament. But the Hebrew word *gan*, meaning garden and having to do with being fenced, is the word in the Hebrew that is translated “garden” in Genesis 2:8.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And then afterwards when [man] proved disobedient, he was cast out thence into this world,” referring in context to **Genesis 3 (ESV):21** The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. 22 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

However, we need to remember here that the Garden of Eden was on earth. When Irenaeus says that Adam proved disobedient and “was cast out thence into this world,” Adam was still on earth, but did not have access to the Garden of Eden.

Irenaeus then records, “Wherefore also the elders who were disciples of the apostles tell us that those who were translated were transferred to that place (for paradise has been prepared for righteous men, such as have the Spirit; in which place also Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable as regards us in our present condition,” referring in context to **2 Corinthians 12 (NASB):1** I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. 3 And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

And Irenaeus finishes as he asserts, “and that there shall they who have been translated remain until the consummation [of all things], as a prelude to immortality.”

## Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter V

In summary, Irenaeus' goal in this chapter is to show that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. Indeed, as Irenaeus points out, the prolonged lives of those mentioned in Genesis of up to nine hundred years and more are a testimony to God's power to give life as long as He wills. And as Irenaeus affirms, Enoch was truly translated bodily to the place that God had provided for the righteous dead according to the Scriptures as we read in **Genesis 5 (ESV):24** Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

And the writer of Hebrews also records this event in **Hebrews 11 (ESV):5** By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

And also Elijah was translated bodily as we read in **2 Kings 2 (ESV):11** And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

The word heaven in this verse probably means the first heaven of the clouds, for the way into heaven itself was not made known yet as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):8** The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning.

The writer of Hebrews explains that Christ entered heaven by His own blood in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

This is further explained in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. 25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.

It was not possible for man to enter heaven until Jesus entered by His own blood to obtain eternal redemption for man.

And this "assumption," or translation, was accomplished by the very same hands that moulded man at the beginning, as Irenaeus says. And God did place the man that He had formed in the garden of Eden, a paradise certainly, but not the heavenly paradise. The Greek word Παράδεισο, pronounced paradeiso and meaning paradise, is not found in the Old Testament. But the Hebrew word gan, meaning garden and having to do with being fenced, is the word used in **Genesis 2 (ESV):8** And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

We note here that the Lord "planted" this garden, and the Lord caused to "grow out of the ground" every tree that is pleasing to the sight. And a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden. So this garden had a definite location on earth. And just before this we read in **Genesis 2 (ESV):5** When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, 6 and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— 7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

So the whole setting is on earth. No shrub of the field was yet in the earth and no plant had yet sprouted. The LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth. And, there was no man to cultivate the ground. Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, on earth, and man was placed in the garden as we read in **Genesis 2 (ESV):15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Man was placed in this earthly garden to cultivate it for food. And then what happened? God saw that it was not good for man to be alone so he made woman as we read in **Genesis 2 (ESV):22** And the rib that the

LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Marriage is for those on earth, not those in heaven. And so we see that God commanded them to multiply and fill the earth as we read in **Genesis 1 (ESV):27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” 29 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Sadducees were very bold one day, and asked Jesus about marriage in the afterlife as we read in **Matthew 22 (ESV):23** The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, 24 saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.’ 25 Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. 26 So too the second and third, down to the seventh. 27 After them all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.” 29 But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 32 ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’ He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” 33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

So it is evident that the garden of Eden, a paradise, was here on earth, and not in heaven. Now the Greek word for paradise, *paradeiso*, is found three times in the New Testament. It is first used in **Luke 23 (ESV):43** And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

The word paradise used here by Jesus was the intermediate place where the righteous dead went until the time when the perfect sacrifice of Jesus’ death was offered, and they could then enter heaven itself. This intermediate place was also called Abraham’s bosom as Jesus related in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16 (ESV):19** “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

The unrighteous dead are here pictured in Hades or Hell. There was a great chasm between these two as we see in **Luke 16 (HCSB):24** ‘Father Abraham!’ he called out, ‘Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!’ 25 “‘Son,’ Abraham said, ‘remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.’ 27 “‘Father,’ he said, ‘then I beg you to send him to my father’s house— 28 because I have five brothers—to warn them, so they won’t also come to this place of torment.’ 29 “But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ 30 “‘No, father Abraham,’ he said. ‘But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ 31 “But he told him, ‘If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’”

So the instance of the word “paradise” used by Jesus in Luke 23:43 refers to the intermediate place where the righteous dead were kept until Jesus came and died on the cross, and entered heaven itself for us. After Jesus died on the cross, he went to this intermediate place and took all the righteous dead to heaven. Heaven itself is where He entered for us, being the one sacrifice that was needed to atone forever for our sins.

Having done so, the door to heaven was opened, and the righteous dead are now in heaven with the Lord. We will talk more about this later.

In the next instance where the word paradise is used, Paul talks about an experience he had as we read in **2 Corinthians 12 (ESV):1** I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. 3 And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. 5 On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— 6 though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.

In this instance of the word paradise, Paul was caught up to the third heaven, into Paradise where he heard “inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.” This also is not the Garden of Eden, the paradise spoken of in Genesis 2. This paradise is heaven itself where God dwells. The first heaven is our atmosphere. The second heaven is the stars. The third heaven is where God dwells. This agrees with **Genesis 1 (ESV):1** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Notice the word “heavens” is plural. Now in the third instance where the word paradise is used, John relates a vision he had while on the island of Patmos. He was commanded to write down what he saw in a book. In the book of Revelation, he mentions the Paradise of God as we read in **Revelation 2 (ESV):7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

The tree of life he mentions here is also mentioned in **Revelation 22 (ESV):1** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

The question is then, where is this river and tree of life in the Paradise of God? The answer is in the book of Revelation. In Revelation chapter 21, John describes the New Jerusalem in **Revelation 21 (ESV):1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

John tells us that the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them. The holy city, Jerusalem, is seen coming out of heaven from God. Not only so, but John describes a wall around the city and references the four points of the compass in relation to each side of the wall as we read in **Revelation 21 (ESV):10** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

This city was to be laid out as a square as we read in **Revelation 21 (ESV):15** And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. 18 The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third

agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

There will be precious stones in the foundation of the city, and there will be gold, sapphire, emerald, and chalcedony. All of these things, the compass points and the precious stones, are things we find on earth. So the paradise of God in this instance of the word paradise is located on the new earth.

So the whole point of the garden of Eden in Genesis was to test man. Man's fall had catastrophic results, not only on man, but on all creation. This is why all creation groans as we read in **Romans 8 (ESV):18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

The whole creation will be freed from corruption in the future when Jesus returns.

Another thing to note in this chapter is Irenaeus' use of the word "assumption" as a synonym for the word translation. He says, "For by means of the very same hands through which they were moulded at the beginning, did they receive this translation and assumption." He is speaking of the body being transferred at death to paradise. We only find two occurrences of translation, or assumption, in Scripture, and both are mentioned by Irenaeus, that is, Enoch and Elijah. Translation, or assumption, is not the norm for the righteous. Otherwise there would not be a need for a resurrection. But translation will be similar to what happens when Jesus returns. Paul says we shall not all sleep, or die, but we shall all be changed in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This same event is spoken of in **1 Thessalonians 4 (ESV):13** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

So we see that, according to the Scriptures, those who are alive on earth when the Lord comes will be changed and caught up to be with the Lord. This would correspond to the translations of Enoch and Elijah. But when the Lord comes with those "who have fallen asleep in Jesus," those who are alive on earth will be not be raised before them. "The dead in Christ will rise first," and "then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them," and "so we shall always be with the Lord." Hallelujah!

And finally, in reference to the translations of Enoch and Elijah, Irenaeus asserts that these events are an anticipation of the translation of the just. Irenaeus says, "For Enoch, when he pleased God, was translated in the same body in which he did please Him, thus pointing out by anticipation the translation of the just." This is a

valid assertion. Enoch and Elijah are a type of the saints on earth who are alive when Jesus comes, and will be caught up to be with Jesus without seeing death when He comes.

However, Irenaeus also mentions the testimony of the elders, the disciples of the apostles, who “tell us that those who were translated were transferred to that place (for paradise has been prepared for righteous men, such as have the Spirit; in which place also Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable as regards us in our present condition).”

Irenaeus believed that the righteous dead, even after Christ died, go to an intermediate place until the time of the resurrection.

It is true that Enoch and Elijah were translated bodily to the intermediate place, that is, to paradise or Abraham’s bosom. However, they did not go to an intermediate place as Irenaeus supposes the paradise that Paul was caught up to in a vision was. Rather, they went to the lower paradise in Sheol, where the righteous dead were kept until Jesus made a way for them, and us, into heaven itself by His own blood. And since the paradise that Paul was caught up to was actually heaven itself, and not an intermediate place, Irenaeus is only right in part. The righteous dead, before Jesus died and rose from the dead and entered heaven for us, went to Abraham’s bosom, which is also called paradise by Jesus when he was dying on the cross for us. The thief on the cross was with Jesus in this paradise, that is in Abraham’s bosom, on the day that Jesus died. But after three days, Jesus entered heaven for us by His own blood, and all in Abraham’s bosom, or the lower paradise, were then removed to the heavenly paradise when our Lord took captivity captive. And it was this paradise in heaven that Paul was caught up to. We will talk more about this later.

Irenaeus’ reference to the testimony of elders is an instance where he is relying solely on tradition. What the elders told the disciples at that time is impossible for us to repeat. And even if it was possible to repeat, it is still not the testimony of Scripture. It is hearsay, and it is valuable in so much as it bears witness and supports the truth of the Scriptures. It appears that Irenaeus might have misunderstood the elders in this case, for the Scriptures teach that the righteous dead go to be with Jesus in heaven itself.

The Scripture says that to die is gain for we will be with Christ as we read in **Philippians 1 (ESV):21**  
For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

This is why God will bring with Him when He returns those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, that is, those who died in Christ before His return just as 1 Thessalonians 4:14 relates. The reason He will bring them with Him is because they are already with Him in paradise, that is, in heaven itself.

To summarize again, in this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus reminds us of those saints who lived long ago, that is, “our predecessors,” who lived to an advanced age “beyond seven hundred, eight hundred, and nine hundred years of age,” and “their bodies kept pace with the protracted length of their days, and participated in life as long as God willed that they should live.” He does this to show the reasonability of the resurrection. Irenaeus also mentions the translations of Enoch and Elijah, who were taken up to heaven, or paradise as he calls it, in their bodies. This, he says, is prophetic of “the assumption of those who are spiritual.” Irenaeus recounts the fall of Adam, and his consequent banishment from the garden “into this world.” But, he says, the “disciples of the apostles tell us that those who were translated were transferred to that place (for paradise has been prepared for righteous men, such as have the Spirit; in which place also Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable as regards us in our present condition.” So Paul also, he says, was caught up to paradise, the same place from which Adam was banished. Irenaeus says also that all those “righteous men, such as have the Spirit,” will be translated and remain there until “the consummation [of all things], as a prelude to immortality.”

## **Book 5: Chapter XII.—Of the difference between life and death; of the breath of life and the vivifying Spirit: also how it is that the substance of**

## flesh revives which once was dead.

1. For as the flesh is capable of corruption, so is it also of incorruption; and as it is of death, so is it also of life. These two do mutually give way to each other; and both cannot remain in the same place, but one is driven out by the other, and the presence of the one destroys that of the other. If, then, when death takes possession of a man, it drives life away from him, and proves him to be dead, much more does life, when it has obtained power over the man, drive out death, and restore him as living unto God. For if death brings mortality, why should not life, when it comes, vivify man? Just as Esaias the prophet says, "Death devoured when it had prevailed." 4531 Isa. xxv. 8, LXX. And again, "God has wiped away every tear from every face." Thus that former life is expelled, because it was not given by the Spirit, but by the breath.

2. For the breath of life, which also rendered man an animated being, is one thing, and the vivifying Spirit another, which also caused him to become spiritual. And for this reason Isaiah said, "Thus saith the Lord, who made heaven and established it, who founded the earth and the things therein, and gave breath to the people upon it, and Spirit to those walking upon it;" 4532 Isa. xlvi. 5. thus telling us that breath is indeed given in common to all people upon earth, but that the Spirit is theirs alone who tread down earthly desires. And therefore Isaiah himself, distinguishing the things already mentioned, again exclaims, "For the Spirit shall go forth from Me, and I have made every breath." 4533 Isa. Ivii. 16. Thus does he attribute the Spirit as peculiar to God which in the last times He pours forth upon the human race by the adoption of sons; but [he shows] that breath was common throughout the creation, and points it out as something created. Now what has been made is a different thing from him who makes it. The breath, then, is temporal, but the Spirit eternal. The breath, too, increases [in strength] for a short period, and continues for a certain time; after that it takes its departure, leaving its former abode destitute of breath. But when the Spirit pervades the man within and without, inasmuch as it continues there, it never leaves him. "But that is not first which is spiritual," says the apostle, speaking this as if with reference to us human beings; "but that is first which is animal, afterwards that which is spiritual," 4534 1 Cor. xv. 46. in accordance with reason. For there had been a necessity that, in the first place, a human being should be fashioned, and that what was fashioned should receive the soul; afterwards that it should thus receive the communion of the Spirit. Wherefore also "the first Adam was made" by the Lord "a living soul, the second Adam a quickening spirit." 4535 1 Cor. xv. 45. As, then, he who was made a living soul forfeited life when he turned aside to what was evil, so, on the other hand, the same individual, when he reverts to what is good, and receives the quickening Spirit, shall find life.

3. For it is not one thing which dies and another which is quickened, as neither is it one thing which is lost and another which is found, but the Lord came seeking for that same sheep which had been lost. What was it, then, which was dead? Undoubtedly it was the substance of the flesh; the same, too, which had lost the breath of life, and had become breathless and dead. This same, therefore, was what the Lord came to quicken, that as in Adam we do all die, as being of an animal nature, in Christ we may all live, as being spiritual, not laying aside God's handiwork, but the lusts of the flesh, and receiving the Holy Spirit; as the apostle says in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." And what these are he himself explains: "Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence; and covetousness, which is idolatry." 4536 Col. iii. 5. The laying aside of these is what the apostle preaches; and he declares that those who do such things, as being merely flesh and blood, cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. For their soul, tending towards what is worse, and descending to earthly lusts, has become a partaker in the same designation which belongs to these [lusts, viz., "earthly"], which, when the apostle commands us to lay aside, he says in the same Epistle, "Cast ye off the old man with his deeds." 4537 Col. iii. 9. But when he said this, he does not remove away the ancient formation [of man]; for in that case it would be incumbent on us to rid ourselves of its company by committing suicide.

4. But the apostle himself also, being one who had been formed in a womb, and had issued

thence, wrote to us, and confessed in his Epistle to the Philippians that "to live in the flesh was the fruit of [his] work;" 4538 *Phil. i. 22* thus expressing himself. Now the final result of the work of the Spirit is the salvation of the flesh. 4539 Following Harvey's explanation of a somewhat obscure passage. For what other visible fruit is there of the invisible Spirit, than the rendering of the flesh mature and capable of incorruption? If then [he says], "To live in the flesh, this is the result of labour to me," he did not surely condemn the substance of flesh in that passage where he said, "Put ye off the old man with his works;" 4540 *Col. iii. 10*, but he points out that we should lay aside our former conversation, that which waxes old and becomes corrupt; and for this reason he goes on to say, "And put ye on the new man, that which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him who created him." In this, therefore, that he says, "which is renewed in knowledge," he demonstrates that he, the selfsame man who was in ignorance in times past, that is, in ignorance of God, is renewed by that knowledge which has respect to Him. For the knowledge of God renews man. And when he says, "after the image of the Creator," he sets forth the recapitulation of the same man, who was at the beginning made after the likeness of God.

5. And that he, the apostle, was the very same person who had been born from the womb, that is, of the ancient substance of flesh, he does himself declare in the Epistle to the Galatians: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles," 4541 *Gal. i. 15, 16* it was not, as I have already observed, one person who had been born from the womb, and another who preached the Gospel of the Son of God; but that same individual who formerly was ignorant, and used to persecute the Church, when the revelation was made to him from heaven, and the Lord conferred with him, as I have pointed out in the third book, 4542 Vol. i. pp. 306, 321. preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, his former ignorance being driven out by his subsequent knowledge: just as the blind men whom the Lord healed did certainly lose their blindness, but received the substance of their eyes perfect, and obtained the power of vision in the very same eyes with which they formerly did not see; the darkness being merely driven away by the power of vision, while the substance of the eyes was retained, in order that, by means of those eyes through which they had not seen, exercising again the visual power, they might give thanks to Him who had restored them again to sight. And thus, also, he whose withered hand was healed, and all who were healed generally, did not change those parts of their bodies which had at their birth come forth from the womb, but simply obtained these anew in a healthy condition.

6. For the Maker of all things, the Word of God, who did also from the beginning form man, when He found His handiwork impaired by wickedness, performed upon it all kinds of healing. At one time [He did so], as regards each separate member, as it is found in His own handiwork; and at another time He did once for all restore man sound and whole in all points, preparing him perfect for Himself unto the resurrection. For what was His object in healing [different] portions of the flesh, and restoring them to their original condition, if those parts which had been healed by Him were not in a position to obtain salvation? For if it was [merely] a temporary benefit which He conferred, He granted nothing of importance to those who were the subjects of His healing. Or how can they maintain that the flesh is incapable of receiving the life which flows from Him, when it received healing from Him? For life is brought about through healing, and incorruption through life. He, therefore, who confers healing, the same does also confer life; and He [who gives] life, also surrounds His own handiwork with incorruption.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus reasons, "For as the flesh is capable of corruption, so is it also of incorruption; and as it is of death, so is it also of life. These two do mutually give way to each other; and both cannot remain in the same place, but one is driven out by the other, and the presence of the one destroys that of the other." Irenaeus continues as he concludes, "If, then, when death takes possession of a man, it drives life away from him, and proves him to be dead, much more does life, when it has obtained power over the man, drive out death, and restore him as living unto God." Irenaeus then asks, "For if death brings mortality, why

should not life, when it comes, vivify man?" And Irenaeus answers as he affirms, "Just as Esaias the prophet says, "Death devoured when it had prevailed," referring to Isaiah 25:8 in the Septuagint. Irenaeus then adds, "And again, "God has wiped away every tear from every face," also referring to Isaiah 25:8 in the Septuagint. Irenaeus then concludes, "Thus that former life is expelled, because it was not given by the Spirit, but by the breath."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "For the breath of life, which also rendered man an animated being, is one thing, and the vivifying Spirit another, which also caused him to become spiritual. And for this reason Isaiah said, "Thus saith the Lord, who made heaven and established it, who founded the earth and the things therein, and gave breath to the people upon it, and Spirit to those walking upon it," referring to Isaiah 42:5. Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "thus telling us that breath is indeed given in common to all people upon earth, but that the Spirit is theirs alone who tread down earthly desires." Irenaeus then affirms, "And therefore Isaiah himself, distinguishing the things already mentioned, again exclaims, "For the Spirit shall go forth from Me, and I have made every breath," referring to Isaiah 57:16. And Irenaeus then testifies, "Thus does he attribute the Spirit as peculiar to God which in the last times He pours forth upon the human race by the adoption of sons; but [he shows] that breath was common throughout the creation, and points it out as something created." Irenaeus then reasons, "Now what has been made is a different thing from him who makes it. The breath, then, is temporal, but the Spirit eternal. The breath, too, increases [in strength] for a short period, and continues for a certain time; after that it takes its departure, leaving its former abode destitute of breath. But when the Spirit pervades the man within and without, inasmuch as it continues there, it never leaves him." Irenaeus then testifies, "But that is not first which is spiritual," says the apostle, speaking this as if with reference to us human beings; "but that is first which is animal, afterwards that which is spiritual," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:46, "in accordance with reason." Irenaeus then reasons, "For there had been a necessity that, in the first place, a human being should be fashioned, and that what was fashioned should receive the soul; afterwards that it should thus receive the communion of the Spirit." And Irenaeus concludes, "Wherefore also "the first Adam was made" by the Lord "a living soul, the second Adam a quickening spirit," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:45. Irenaeus then testifies, "As, then, he who was made a living soul forfeited life when he turned aside to what was evil, so, on the other hand, the same individual, when he reverts to what is good, and receives the quickening Spirit, shall find life."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus explains what he means as he says, "For it is not one thing which dies and another which is quickened, as neither is it one thing which is lost and another which is found, but the Lord came seeking for that same sheep which had been lost." Irenaeus then asks, "What was it, then, which was dead?" And Irenaeus answers as he asserts, "Undoubtedly it was the substance of the flesh; the same, too, which had lost the breath of life, and had become breathless and dead. This same, therefore, was what the Lord came to quicken, that as in Adam we do all die, as being of an animal nature, in Christ we may all live, as being spiritual, not laying aside God's handiwork, but the lusts of the flesh, and receiving the Holy Spirit;" Irenaeus then testifies, "as the apostle says in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth," referring to Colossians 3:5. Irenaeus then explains, "And what these are he himself explains: "Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence; and covetousness, which is idolatry," again referring to Colossians 3:5. Irenaeus testifies that, "The laying aside of these is what the apostle preaches;" Irenaeus then asserts, "and he declares that those who do such things, as being merely flesh and blood, cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven." Irenaeus then reasons, "For their soul, tending towards what is worse, and descending to earthly lusts, has become a partaker in the same designation which belongs to these [lusts, viz., "earthly"], which, when the apostle commands us to lay aside, he says in the same Epistle, "Cast ye off the old man with his deeds," referring to Colossians 3:10. Irenaeus is then candid as he says, "But when he said this, he does not remove away the ancient formation [of man]; for in that case it would be incumbent on us to rid ourselves of its company by committing suicide."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, "But the apostle himself also, being one who had been formed in a womb, and had issued thence, wrote to us, and confessed in his Epistle to the Philippians that "to live in the flesh was the fruit of [his] work," referring to Philippians 1:22, "thus expressing himself." Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "Now the final result of the work of the Spirit is the salvation of the flesh." Irenaeus then asks, "For what other visible fruit is there of the invisible Spirit, than the rendering of the flesh mature and capable of

incorruption?" Irenaeus then affirms, "If then [he says], "To live in the flesh, this is the result of labour to me," he did not surely condemn the substance of flesh in that passage where he said, "Put ye off the old man with his works," again referring to Colossians 3:9, "but he points out that we should lay aside our former conversation, that which waxes old and becomes corrupt," referring to Ephesians 4:22, "and for this reason he goes on to say, "And put ye on the new man, that which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him who created him," referring to Colossians 3:10. Irenaeus then explains, "In this, therefore, that he says, "which is renewed in knowledge," he demonstrates that he, the selfsame man who was in ignorance in times past, that is, in ignorance of God, is renewed by that knowledge which has respect to Him. For the knowledge of God renews man." Irenaeus adds, "And when he says, "after the image of the Creator," he sets forth the recapitulation of the same man, who was at the beginning made after the likeness of God."

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, "And that he, the apostle, was the very same person who had been born from the womb, that is, of the ancient substance of flesh, he does himself declare in the Epistle to the Galatians: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles," referring to Galatians 1:15-16, "it was not, as I have already observed, one person who had been born from the womb, and another who preached the Gospel of the Son of God; but that same individual who formerly was ignorant, and used to persecute the Church, when the revelation was made to him from heaven, and the Lord conferred with him, as I have pointed out in the third book, preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, his former ignorance being driven out by his subsequent knowledge." Irenaeus then adds, "just as the blind men whom the Lord healed did certainly lose their blindness, but received the substance of their eyes perfect, and obtained the power of vision in the very same eyes with which they formerly did not see; the darkness being merely driven away by the power of vision, while the substance of the eyes was retained, in order that, by means of those eyes through which they had not seen, exercising again the visual power, they might give thanks to Him who had restored them again to sight," referring possibly to Matthew 20:29-34. Again Irenaeus testifies, "And thus, also, he whose withered hand was healed," referring to Mark 3:3-5, "and all who were healed generally, did not change those parts of their bodies which had at their birth come forth from the womb, but simply obtained these anew in a healthy condition."

In paragraph six, Irenaeus testifies, "For the Maker of all things, the Word of God, who did also from the beginning form man, when He found His handiwork impaired by wickedness, performed upon it all kinds of healing. At one time [He did so], as regards each separate member, as it is found in His own handiwork; and at another time He did once for all restore man sound and whole in all points, preparing him perfect for Himself unto the resurrection." And Irenaeus points out, "For what was His object in healing [different] portions of the flesh, and restoring them to their original condition, if those parts which had been healed by Him were not in a position to obtain salvation? For if it was [merely] a temporary benefit which He conferred, He granted nothing of importance to those who were the subjects of His healing." Irenaeus concludes as he argues, "Or how can they maintain that the flesh is incapable of receiving the life which flows from Him, when it received healing from Him? For life is brought about through healing, and incorruption through life. He, therefore, who confers healing, the same does also confer life; and He [who gives] life, also surrounds His own handiwork with incorruption."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus reasons, "For as the flesh is capable of corruption, so is it also of incorruption; and as it is of death, so is it also of life. These two do mutually give way to each other; and both cannot remain in the same place, but one is driven out by the other, and the presence of the one destroys that of the other." Irenaeus continues as he concludes, "If, then, when death takes possession of a man, it drives life away from him, and proves him to be dead, much more does life, when it has obtained power over the man, drive out death, and restore him as living unto God." Irenaeus then asks, "For if death brings mortality, why should not life, when it comes, vivify man?" And Irenaeus answers as he affirms, "Just as Esaias the prophet says, "Death devoured when it had prevailed," referring to **Isaiah 25 (Septuagint):8** Death has prevailed and swallowed *men* up; but again the Lord God has taken away every tear from every face. He has taken away the reproach of *his* people from all the earth: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Irenaeus then adds, "And again, "God has wiped away every tear from every face," also referring to

Isaiah 25:8 in the Septuagint. This verse makes more sense if we read it as it is in **Isaiah 25 (NASB):8** He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

Irenaeus then concludes, “Thus that former life is expelled, because it was not given by the Spirit, but by the breath.”

Irenaeus is quite correct when he says that in the incorruptible state the “former life is expelled, because it was not given by the Spirit, but by the breath.” The new life at the resurrection will be by Spirit and not by breath. Also, we know that death does devour when it prevails, but here the Lord is saying that He will abolish death and remove the reproach of His people, the righteous. This is a little different than the Septuagint quote Irenaeus uses.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “For the breath of life, which also rendered man an animated being, is one thing, and the vivifying Spirit another, which also caused him to become spiritual. And for this reason Isaiah said, “Thus saith the Lord, who made heaven and established it, who founded the earth and the things therein, and gave breath to the people upon it, and Spirit to those walking upon it,” referring to **Isaiah 42 (ESV):5** Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “thus telling us that breath is indeed given in common to all people upon earth, but that the Spirit is theirs alone who tread down earthly desires.” Irenaeus then affirms, “And therefore Isaiah himself, distinguishing the things already mentioned, again exclaims, “For the Spirit shall go forth from Me, and I have made every breath,” referring in context to **Isaiah 57 (Septuagint):15** Thus saith the Most High, who dwells on high for ever, Holy in the holies, is his name, the Most High resting in the holies, and giving patience to the faint-hearted, and giving life to the broken-hearted: 16 I will not take vengeance on you for ever, neither will I be always angry with you: for my Spirit shall go forth from me, and I have created all breath.

But verse 16 reads differently when translated from the Hebrew as we read in **Isaiah 57 (NASB):16** “For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath *of those whom* I have made.

The words “*of those whom*” in the NASB are added by the translators, so the verse literally reads, “For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath I have made.” The Lord is equating the word, spirit, with the word, breath, which He has made.

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for spirit is rowach, pronounced roo-akh. There are two different Hebrew words used for breath. They are neshamah, pronounced nesh-aw-maw, and rowach, the same word that is used for spirit. The first word for breath, neshamah, is used in **Genesis 2 (ESV):7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Again, the Hebrew word “rowach” is used for “spirit” in **Zechariah 12 (ESV):1** The oracle of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus declares the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him:

But this same Hebrew word is translated breath in **Genesis 6 (ESV):17** For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die.

So we can tell by the context how to translate this word. This is important to remember when we consider Irenaeus’ reference in **Isaiah 42 (ESV):5** Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:

Both words are used in this verse. The word for breath is neshamah in the Hebrew, and the word for spirit is rowach in the Hebrew. That God has given both breath and spirit to every man is what this passage is saying. It is not saying that He gave the Holy Spirit to every man. Irenaeus is not saying this either, but by his interpreting the word “spirit” in this verse to be Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, he then is able to infer that “that “the Spirit is theirs alone who tread down earthly desires.” This is not correct. The Hebrew is just saying that

God gave breath and spirit to those who on this earth. Irenaeus did not allow man to have his own spirit. We will discuss his thinking in this regard more in **Chapter 8: On the Nature of Man**.

So the context of Isaiah 42:5 and Isaiah 57:16 indicates that our current version, the NASB, is more accurate, especially if you took out the additional words added by the translators. Also, our current version is translated from the Hebrew, instead of the Greek as the Septuagint is written in. This gives our current translations yet more weight. Nevertheless, it is now much more easy to understand Irenaeus' line of reasoning about the spirit here, which he interprets as the Holy Spirit, instead of the spirit of man. We note here that Irenaeus is working with the resources available to him at the time, and is honestly trying to interpret the Scriptures.

So Irenaeus continues in paragraph two as he then testifies, "Thus does he attribute the Spirit as peculiar to God which in the last times He pours forth upon the human race by the adoption of sons; but [he shows] that breath was common throughout the creation, and points it out as something created." The Spirit has indeed been poured out as Peter records in **Acts 2 (ESV):14** But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. 19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; 20 the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. 21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Irenaeus then continues as he reasons, "Now what has been made is a different thing from him who makes it. The breath, then, is temporal, but the Spirit eternal."

Indeed, the Scriptures teach that spirit is eternal. God created man with a spirit and that spirit is eternal. Man's spirit before accepting Christ is dead in trespasses and sins. Old Testament saints believed in Him who was to come and were born again in their spirit. New Testament saints believe in Him who has come and are born again in their spirit. That is, their spirits are no longer dead in sin but alive to God.

Irenaeus continues saying, "The breath, too, increases [in strength] for a short period, and continues for a certain time; after that it takes its departure, leaving its former abode destitute of breath. But when the Spirit pervades the man within and without, inasmuch as it continues there, it never leaves him." Irenaeus believed that after we had believed in the Lord Jesus, and received the Spirit of God, that we could lose the Spirit if we did not walk "in communion of the Spirit", that is, if we walked in the flesh. We will discuss this more in **Chapter 7: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven** when we looked at paragraphs 3 and 4 in **Book 5: Chapter IX** of Irenaeus' writing.

Irenaeus then testifies, "But that is not first which is spiritual," says the apostle, speaking this as if with reference to us human beings; "but that is first which is animal, afterwards that which is spiritual," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:46, "in accordance with reason." Irenaeus then reasons, "For there had been a necessity that, in the first place, a human being should be fashioned, and that what was fashioned should receive the soul; afterwards that it should thus receive the communion of the Spirit." And Irenaeus concludes, "Wherefore also "the first Adam was made" by the Lord "a living soul, the second Adam a quickening spirit," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:45. Irenaeus then explains, "As, then, he who was made a living soul forfeited life when he turned aside to what was evil, so, on the other hand, the same individual, when he reverts to what is good, and receives the quickening Spirit, shall find life."

To summarize, Irenaeus says it is "in accordance with reason" that man should first be "animal," or "natural" as in our English Bibles, and then to receive the "communion of the Spirit," that is "the quickening spirit" or life-giving spirit in our English Bibles, and so become spiritual, that is, find life. And so the Scripture says as much, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):45** Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

The word “natural,” or “animal” as Irenaeus translated it, is a translation of the Greek word ψυχικόν, (pronounced psuchikon). Vine’s says that this word means “belonging to the psuche, soul, (as the lower part of the immaterial in man), natural, physical, describes the man in Adam and what pertains to him (set in contrast to pneumatikos, spiritual).” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 102.**

This Greek word ψυχικόν (pronounced psuchikon) is the same word that is used for natural in **Romans**

**1 (ESV):26** For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

One other note about 1 Corinthians 15:45, the words “a living soul” are ψυχὴ ζωσαν (pronounced psuchen dzosan) in the Greek. The Greek word for soul is psuche and the Greek word for life is dzosan. Jesus said we would be born of the Spirit in **John 3 (ESV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

This is what Paul speaks of when he says we were made alive together with Christ in **Ephesians**

**2 (ESV):5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

And in **Colossians 2 (NASB):13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

That is, we were spiritually dead as descendants of Adam, but raised to have spiritual life again in Christ.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus explains, “For it is not one thing which dies and another which is quickened, as neither is it one thing which is lost and another which is found, but the Lord came seeking for that same sheep which had been lost.” Irenaeus then asks, “What was it, then, which was dead?” And Irenaeus answers as he asserts, “Undoubtedly it was the substance of the flesh; the same, too, which had lost the breath of life, and had become breathless and dead.” But in his epistle to the Colossians, Paul is speaking of spiritual death. Paul was speaking to real people who lived in the city of Colossae and formed the church of the Colossians, for this is how Paul addresses them in **Colossians 1 (ESV):1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

It was these same Colossians whom Paul is addressing in **Colossians 2 (ESV):13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

These same Colossians were dead spiritually in trespasses and the uncircumcision of their flesh. And these same Colossians were the ones that He made alive together with Him, having forgiven them all their trespasses.

It was not the “substance of the flesh” which was dead since the Colossians were alive physically when the Gospel was preached to them. They had not lost the breath of life, but they were dead in transgressions, that is, in sins. Irenaeus continues as he says, “This same, therefore, was what the Lord came to quicken, that as in Adam we do all die, as being of an animal nature, in Christ we may all live, as being spiritual, not laying aside God’s handiwork, but the lusts of the flesh, and receiving the Holy Spirit;”

But what Christ came to quicken was our spirits as Jesus Himself testifies in **John 3 (ESV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

The Spirit gives birth to spirit, that is, the spirit of man. What is born of the Spirit is spirit as Jesus tells us in verse 6. The one who is born again in this way is now spiritually alive with Christ as Paul says in **Colossians 2:13**. It is true that we all died in Adam as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB):22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

This death in Adam applies to the spiritual death of our spirits as well as the physical death of our bodies. The reason we need to be born again is because our spirits are dead in sin. Our bodies still have the breath of life, yet our bodies are mortal and destined to die physically. The promise of the resurrection of our bodies is the hope of all who believe in and confess as Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ.

After we are born again, we still have our fleshly nature which we inherited in Adam. Paul tells us that nothing good dwells in our flesh in **Romans 7 (ESV):18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

And again in **Romans 7 (ESV):21** So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

The inner man Paul speaks of here is our spirit which has been born again. Because we have been born of the Spirit, we have the attributes of His nature in our spirit. This is why we joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man. It is our flesh that causes all our problems, for it still has the sin nature of Adam in it. It is our flesh that will be changed at the resurrection, and then we will finally be free of the old Adamic nature.

Irenaeus then testifies, “as the apostle says in the Epistle to the Colossians: “Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth,” referring to **Colossians 3 (KJV):5** Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

The King James Version is the most literal corresponding to the Greek, so I refer to it here. Irenaeus then explains, “And what these are he himself explains: “Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence; and covetousness, which is idolatry,” again referring to Colossians 3:5. The reason we must mortify, or put these things to death, is because the sin nature of Adam is still in our flesh. We would not have to mortify anything if we did not have the sin nature of Adam after we were born again.

Irenaeus testifies that, “The laying aside of these is what the apostle preaches;” Yes, after we are born again, we are then responsible to lay aside our former conversation and put on the new man as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 4 (ESV):22** to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

The new self is the inner man which is our spirit which has been born again of the Spirit. Notice that this new self has been “created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” This is why we are called a new creation by Paul in **2 Corinthians 5 (ESV):17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Irenaeus then asserts, “and he declares that those who do such things, as being merely flesh and blood, cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven.” Irenaeus is referring to in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

However, Paul does not say here that they who do such things are all without exception merely flesh and blood. In 1 Corinthians 15:50 Paul is merely stating that the flesh whose life is in the blood, cannot progress to the kingdom of God since it is mortal and possesses the old Adamic nature. The flesh must be changed Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):51** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

Our mortal flesh must put on immortality. What Irenaeus does not understand is that believers still possess the old Adamic nature and they are responsible to put this old nature off and put on the new nature of the inner man which is in our spirit when we are born again. If we do not put off this old man, or sin nature, we are what Paul describes as carnal, or men of flesh, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):1** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

We will talk more about this thinking of Irenaeus in **Chapter 7: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Irenaeus then reasons, “For their soul, tending towards what is worse, and descending to earthly lusts,

has become a partaker in the same designation which belongs to these [lusts, viz., “earthly”], which, when the apostle commands us to lay aside, he says in the same Epistle, “Cast ye off the old man with his deeds,” referring in context to **Colossians 3 (ESV):9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices, 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Irenaeus is then candid as he says, “But when he said this, he does not remove away the ancient formation [of man]; for in that case it would be incumbent on us to rid ourselves of its company by committing suicide.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “But the apostle himself also, being one who had been formed in a womb, and had issued thence, wrote to us, and confessed in his Epistle to the Philippians that “to live in the flesh was the fruit of [his] work,” referring in context to **Philippians 1 (ESV):21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “thus expressing himself. Now the final result of the work of the Spirit is the salvation of the flesh.” Irenaeus then argues, “For what other visible fruit is there of the invisible Spirit, than the rendering of the flesh mature and capable of incorruption?” Irenaeus then affirms, “If then [he says], “To live in the flesh, this is the result of labour to me,” he did not surely contemn the substance of flesh in that passage where he said, “Put ye off the old man with his works,” again referring to **Colossians 3 (ESV):9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices.

Irenaeus continues, “but he points out that we should lay aside our former conversation, that which waxes old and becomes corrupt,” referring to **Ephesians 4 (ESV):22** to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

And Irenaeus continues, “and for this reason he goes on to say, “And put ye on the new man, that which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him who created him,” referring to **Colossians 3 (ESV):10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Irenaeus then explains, “In this, therefore, that he says, “which is renewed in knowledge,” he demonstrates that he, the selfsame man who was in ignorance in times past, that is, in ignorance of God, is renewed by that knowledge which has respect to Him. For the knowledge of God renews man.” Irenaeus then adds, “And when he says, “after the image of the Creator,” he sets forth the recapitulation of the same man, who was at the beginning made after the likeness of God.” This is a wonderful insight of Irenaeus, that the knowledge of God renews man.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “And that he, the apostle, was the very same person who had been born from the womb, that is, of the ancient substance of flesh, he does himself declare in the Epistle to the Galatians: “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,” referring to **Galatians 1 (ESV):15** But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Irenaeus then argues, “it was not, as I have already observed, one person who had been born from the womb, and another who preached the Gospel of the Son of God; but that same individual who formerly was ignorant, and used to persecute the Church, when the revelation was made to him from heaven, and the Lord conferred with him, as I have pointed out in the third book, preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, his former ignorance being driven out by his subsequent knowledge.” This reminds us of Paul’s own testimony in **1 Timothy 1 (ESV):12** I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, 13 though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Irenaeus then adds, “just as the blind men whom the Lord healed did certainly lose their blindness, but received the substance of their eyes perfect, and obtained the power of vision in the very same eyes with which they formerly did not see; the darkness being merely driven away by the power of vision, while the substance of the eyes was retained, in order that, by means of those eyes through which they had not seen, exercising again the visual power, they might give thanks to Him who had restored them again to sight,” referring possibly to **Matthew 20 (ESV):29** And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. 30 And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” 31 The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” 32 And stopping, Jesus called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” 33 They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” 34 And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.

Again Irenaeus testifies, “And thus, also, he whose withered hand was healed,” referring to **Mark 3 (ESV):3** And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” 4 And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. 5 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

And Irenaeus testifies further, “and all who were healed generally, did not change those parts of their bodies which had at their birth come forth from the womb, but simply obtained these anew in a healthy condition.”

In paragraph six, Irenaeus testifies, “For the Maker of all things, the Word of God, who did also from the beginning form man, when He found His handiwork impaired by wickedness, performed upon it all kinds of healing. At one time [He did so], as regards each separate member, as it is found in His own handiwork; and at another time He did once for all restore man sound and whole in all points, preparing him perfect for Himself unto the resurrection.” This reminds us of Matthews testimony in **Matthew 8 (ESV):16** That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”

Irenaeus then points out, “For what was His object in healing [different] portions of the flesh, and restoring them to their original condition, if those parts which had been healed by Him were not in a position to obtain salvation? For if it was [merely] a temporary benefit which He conferred, He granted nothing of importance to those who were the subjects of His healing.” Irenaeus concludes as he argues, “Or how can they maintain that the flesh is incapable of receiving the life which flows from Him, when it received healing from Him? For life is brought about through healing, and incorruption through life. He, therefore, who confers healing, the same does also confer life; and He [who gives] life, also surrounds His own handiwork with incorruption.”

It is not unreasonable then that the one who confers healing and life should also raise the dead. This is Irenaeus’ point. Again, Bravo Irenaeus!

## Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter XII

Irenaeus is trying to show the reasonability of the resurrection of our bodies. But what would have helped him greatly to interpret the Scriptures is if he would have understood that man has a spirit of his own, in addition to his soul and body. In paragraph two, Irenaeus begins as follows:

“For the breath of life, which also rendered man an animated being, is one thing, and the vivifying Spirit another, which also caused him to become spiritual. And for this reason Isaiah said, “Thus saith the Lord, who made heaven and established it, who founded the earth and the things therein, and gave breath to the people upon it, and Spirit to those walking upon it,” referring to Isaiah 42:5, “thus telling us that breath is indeed given in common to all people upon earth, but that the Spirit is theirs alone who tread down earthly desires. And therefore Isaiah himself, distinguishing the things already mentioned, again exclaims, “For the Spirit shall go

forth from Me, and I have made every breath," referring to Isaiah 57:16. Thus does he attribute the Spirit as peculiar to God which in the last times He pours forth upon the human race by the adoption of sons; but [he shows] that breath was common throughout the creation, and points it out as something created."

Just to note, if we follow Irenaeus' line of reasoning here, it is only the New Testament saints who will be resurrected since it was they who have the Spirit poured out upon them in "the last times." This is not what Irenaeus believes, but it is the logical conclusion of his statements.

In paragraph two, we see that Irenaeus is careful to distinguish between the breath of life and the vivifying Spirit. And in his writing in general he seems to say that a man is composed of just flesh and soul until he receives the Spirit. We see this most clearly when Irenaeus writes in **Book 5: Chapter XII, paragraph 3**, "For it is not one thing which dies and another which is quickened, as neither is it one thing which is lost and another which is found, but the Lord came seeking for that same sheep which had been lost. What was it, then, which was dead? Undoubtedly it was the substance of the flesh; the same, too, which had lost the breath of life, and had become breathless and dead. This same, therefore, was what the Lord came to quicken, that as in Adam we do all die, as being of an animal nature, in Christ we may all live, as being spiritual, not laying aside God's handiwork, but the lusts of the flesh, and receiving the Holy Spirit; as the apostle says in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."

In other words, man does not have a spirit of his own in Irenaeus' thinking, but just a body and a soul. Man is just of an animal nature before Christ, Irenaeus says. But what do the Scriptures say regarding the makeup of man's being?

The Scriptures indicate that man has three parts to his being, that is, spirit, soul, and body, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (ESV):23** Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

That there is a division between our spirit and our soul is stated in **Hebrews 4 (ESV):12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

That there is a difference between our spirit and the Holy Spirit is indicated in **Romans 8 (ESV):16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Then again Paul speaks of his own spirit in **2 Corinthians 2 (ESV):13** my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

And again when Jesus raised a dead girl back to life we see that her own spirit returned in **Luke 8 (ESV):52** And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." **53** And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. **54** But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." **55** And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. **56** And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

As we read the writings of Irenaeus, we find that he is attributing the term spirit in almost all cases in the Old Testament to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. It does not seem to me he allows for a spirit in man, except for the Holy Spirit. I believe the Bible teaches that God made man with spirit, soul, and body. We will discuss this more as we go. However, we should not lose sight of Irenaeus' main goal here, and that is to show that the Scriptures teach that man's body will be resurrected by God.

## **Book 5: Chapter XXXI.—The preservation of our bodies is confirmed by the resurrection and ascension of Christ: the souls of the saints during the intermediate period are in a state of expectation of that time when they shall receive their perfect and consummated glory.**

1. Since, again, some who are reckoned among the orthodox go beyond the pre-arranged plan for the exaltation of the just, and are ignorant of the methods by which they are disciplined

beforehand for incorruption, they thus entertain heretical opinions. For the heretics, despising the handiwork of God, and not admitting the salvation of their flesh, while they also treat the promise of God contemptuously, and pass beyond God altogether in the sentiments they form, affirm that immediately upon their death they shall pass above the heavens and the Demiurge, and go to the Mother (Achamoth) or to that Father whom they have feigned. Those persons, therefore, who disallow a resurrection affecting the whole man (*universam reprobant resurrectionem*), and as far as in them lies remove it from the midst [of the Christian scheme], how can they be wondered at, if again they know nothing as to the plan of the resurrection? For they do not choose to understand, that if these things are as they say, the Lord Himself, in whom they profess to believe, did not rise again upon the third day; but immediately upon His expiring on the cross, undoubtedly departed on high, leaving His body to the earth. But the case was, that for three days He dwelt in the place where the dead were, as the prophet says concerning Him: "And the Lord remembered His dead saints who slept formerly in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them, to rescue and save them."

4710 See the note, book iii. xx. 4. And the Lord Himself says, "As Jonas remained three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth." 4711 Matt. xii. 40. Then also the apostle says, "But when He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?" 4712 Eph. iv. 9. This, too, David says when prophesying of Him, "And thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell;" 4713 Ps. lxxxvi. 13. and on His rising again the third day, He said to Mary, who was the first to see and to worship Him, "Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to the disciples, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and unto your Father." 4714 John xx. 17.

2. If, then, the Lord observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and tarried until the third day "in the lower parts of the earth;" 4715 Eph. iv. 9, then afterwards rising in the flesh, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples,

4716 John xx. 20, 27. He thus ascended to the Father;—[if all these things occurred, I say], how must these men not be put to confusion, who allege that "the lower parts" refer to this world of ours, but that their inner man, leaving the body here, ascends into the super-celestial place? For as the Lord "went away in the midst of the shadow of death," 4717 Ps. xxiii. 4, where the souls of the dead were, yet afterwards arose in the body, and after the resurrection was taken up [into heaven], it is manifest that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event; then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God. "For no disciple is above the Master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." 4718 Luke vi. 40. As our Master, therefore, did not at once depart, taking flight [to heaven], but awaited the time of His resurrection prescribed by the Father, which had been also shown forth through Jonas, and rising again after three days was taken up [to heaven]; so ought we also to await the time of our resurrection prescribed by God and foretold by the prophets, and so, rising, be taken up, as many as the Lord shall account worthy of this [privilege]. 4719 The five following chapters were omitted in the earlier editions, but added by Feuardentius. Most mss., too, did not contain them. It is probable that the scribes of the middle ages rejected them on account of their inculcating millenarian notions, which had been long extinct in the Church. Quotations from these five chapters have been collected by Harvey from Syriac and Armenian mss. lately come to light.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Ireneus testifies, "Since, again, some who are reckoned among the orthodox go beyond the pre-arranged plan for the exaltation of the just, and are ignorant of the methods by which they are disciplined beforehand for incorruption, they thus entertain heretical opinions. For the heretics, despising the handiwork of God, and not admitting the salvation of their flesh, while they also treat the promise of God contemptuously, and pass beyond God altogether in the sentiments they form, affirm that immediately upon their death they shall pass above the heavens and the Demiurge, and go to the Mother (Achamoth) or to that Father whom they have feigned." Irenaeus continues his rebuke as he says, "Those persons, therefore, who

disallow a resurrection affecting the whole man (*universam reprobant resurrectionem*), and as far as in them lies remove it from the midst [of the Christian scheme], how can they be wondered at, if again they know nothing as to the plan of the resurrection? For they do not choose to understand, that if these things are as they say, the Lord Himself, in whom they profess to believe, did not rise again upon the third day; but immediately upon His expiring on the cross, undoubtedly departed on high, leaving His body to the earth.” Irenaeus then testifies, “But the case was, that for three days He dwelt in the place where the dead were, as the prophet says concerning Him: “And the Lord remembered His dead saints who slept formerly in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them, to rescue and save them.”

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And the Lord Himself says, “As Jonas remained three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth,” referring to Matthew 12:40. Irenaeus then testifies, “Then also the apostle says, “But when He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?” referring to Ephesians 4:9. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “This, too, David says when prophesying of Him, “And thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell,” referring to Psalm 86:13, “and on His rising again the third day, He said to Mary, who was the first to see and to worship Him, “Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to the disciples, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and unto your Father,” referring to John 20:16-17.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “If, then, the Lord observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and tarried until the third day “in the lower parts of the earth,” again referring to Ephesians 4:9, “then afterwards rising in the flesh, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples,” drawing from John 20:25-27, “He thus ascended to the Father;” Irenaeus continues as he argues, “[if all these things occurred, I say], how must these men not be put to confusion, who allege that “the lower parts” refer to this world of ours, but that their inner man, leaving the body here, ascends into the super-celestial place?” Irenaeus then argues, “For as the Lord “went away in the midst of the shadow of death,” referring to Psalm 23:4, “where the souls of the dead were, yet afterwards arose in the body, and after the resurrection was taken up [into heaven], it is manifest that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event; then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God.” Irenaeus then quotes Luke saying, “For no disciple is above the Master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master,” referring to Luke 6:40. Irenaeus then asserts, “As our Master, therefore, did not at once depart, taking flight [to heaven], but awaited the time of His resurrection prescribed by the Father, which had been also shown forth through Jonas, and rising again after three days was taken up [to heaven]; so ought we also to await the time of our resurrection prescribed by God and foretold by the prophets, and so, rising, be taken up, as many as the Lord shall account worthy of this [privilege].”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Ireneus testifies, “Since, again, some who are reckoned among the orthodox go beyond the pre-arranged plan for the exaltation of the just, and are ignorant of the methods by which they are disciplined beforehand for incorruption, they thus entertain heretical opinions. For the heretics, despising the handiwork of God, and not admitting the salvation of their flesh, while they also treat the promise of God contemptuously, and pass beyond God altogether in the sentiments they form, affirm that immediately upon their death they shall pass above the heavens and the Demiurge, and go to the Mother (Achamoth) or to that Father whom they have feigned.” Irenaeus is speaking to Gnostic heretics who were springing up in the churches from the disciples themselves. Ireneus is defending the “salvation of the flesh,” that is, the resurrection of the body. And he rebukes these so-called orthodox believers calling them heretics, and rightly so.

Ireneus continues his rebuke as he says, “Those persons, therefore, who disallow a resurrection affecting the whole man (*universam reprobant resurrectionem*), and as far as in them lies remove it from the midst [of the Christian scheme], how can they be wondered at, if again they know nothing as to the plan of the resurrection? For they do not choose to understand, that if these things are as they say, the Lord Himself, in whom they profess to believe, did not rise again upon the third day; but immediately upon His expiring on the cross, undoubtedly departed on high, leaving His body to the earth.” These so-called believers are shown to be

heretics by Irenaeus who testifies that they are even found to deny the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Irenaeus then testifies, “But the case was, that for three days He dwelt in the place where the dead were, as the prophet says concerning Him: “And the Lord remembered His dead saints who slept formerly in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them, to rescue and save them.” Irenaeus is quoting a prophet here, but he does not say who the prophet is. The note **4710** in paragraph one refers the reader back to Book III, chapter 20, where the same quote is used by Irenaeus. Note 4 of chapter 20 in Book III of Irenaeus’ writing thus states the following:

“Irenaeus quotes this as from Isaiah on the present occasion; but in book IV, 27, I, we find him referring the same passage to Jeremiah. It is somewhat remarkable that it is to be found in neither prophet, although Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, [chap lxxii, and notes, Dial. With Trypho, in this volume,] brings it forward as an argument against him, and directly accuses the Jews of having fraudulently removed it from the sacred text. It is, however, to be found in no ancient version or Jewish Targum, which fact may be regarded as a decisive proof of its spuriousness.”

We will refer back to this note in a moment. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And the Lord Himself says, “As Jonas remained three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth,” referring to **Matthew 12 (ESV):40** For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Irenaeus then testifies, “Then also the apostle says, “But when He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?” referring to **Ephesians 4 (ESV):9** (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “This, too, David says when prophesying of Him, “And thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell,” referring to **Psalm 86 (ESV):13** For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

And Irenaeus concludes, “and on His rising again the third day, He said to Mary, who was the first to see and to worship Him, “Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to the disciples, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and unto your Father,” referring to **John 20 (ESV):16** Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “If, then, the Lord observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and tarried until the third day “in the lower parts of the earth,” again referring to Ephesians 4:9, “then afterwards rising in the flesh, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples,” referring in context to **John 20 (ESV):24** Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” 26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”

Irenaeus finishes his sentence as he further testifies, “He thus ascended to the Father; “ The ascension is also spoken of in the Gospel of Mark as in **Mark 16 (ESV):19** So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

And in the book of Acts we read as in **Acts 1 (ESV):9** And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Irenaeus continues as he argues, “—[if all these things occurred, I say], how must these men not be put to confusion, who allege that “the lower parts” refer to this world of ours, but that their inner man, leaving the body here, ascends into the super-celestial place?” Irenaeus then argues, “For as the Lord “went away in the midst of the shadow of death,” referring to **Psalm 23 (ESV):4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Irenaeus continues, “where the souls of the dead were, yet afterwards arose in the body, and after the resurrection was taken up [into heaven], it is manifest that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event; then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God.” Irenaeus then asserts, “For no disciple is above the Master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master,” referring to **Luke 6 (ESV):40** A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

Irenaeus then asserts, “As our Master, therefore, did not at once depart, taking flight [to heaven], but awaited the time of His resurrection prescribed by the Father, which had been also shown forth through Jonas, and rising again after three days was taken up [to heaven]; so ought we also to await the time of our resurrection prescribed by God and foretold by the prophets, and so, rising, be taken up, as many as the Lord shall account worthy of this [privilege].”

That Irenaeus believed in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is clear from his writings. However, his doctrine of the resurrection seems to include his belief that the righteous “are disciplined beforehand for incorruption,” and that they “shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event.” Irenaeus calls this “the law of the dead” in paragraph one.

In this chapter Irenaeus has defended the bodily resurrection of the dead. Irenaeus is using the sword of truth, the word of God, to combat the heretics. Irenaeus has well said that the Lord died and spent three days and nights in the lower parts of the earth, just as He foretold when He spoke of the prophet Jonah. Jonah is a type of Christ in this regard. That is, he is a prophetic foreshadowing of Christ. Irenaeus has also testified that after this He rose from the dead, that He showed Himself in the flesh to Mary, that He showed His nail prints to His disciples, and that He ascended into heaven itself to be with the Father. Irenaeus has also stated well that His disciples will receive their bodies “in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose,” and “shall come thus into the presence of God.”

However, in his zeal to defend the faith, or what he perceived to be the faith in his time, Irenaeus has gone beyond what the Scriptures actually say about the resurrection. Irenaeus intimates that there is a preparation time before the resurrection and after death in which the just are “disciplined beforehand for incorruption.” In paragraph one he says, “Since, again, some who are reckoned among the orthodox go beyond the pre-arranged plan for the exaltation of the just, and are ignorant of the methods by which they are disciplined beforehand for incorruption, they thus entertain heretical opinions.” He then says in paragraph two that “the Lord “went away in the midst of the shadow of death,” where the souls of the dead were.” He is speaking of the invisible place where the righteous dead were kept until Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Also in paragraph two, Irenaeus says “that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event.” He also says that just as Jesus was three days and nights in the heart of the earth in the invisible place as he calls it, so must His disciples wait there for the disciple is not above his Master. In addition, Irenaeus quotes in the middle of paragraph one what “the prophet says concerning Him: “And the Lord remembered His dead saints who slept formerly in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them, to rescue and save them.”” This refers to a prophetic utterance, as note 4710 tells us, that is not in the Scriptures.

Irenaeus is correct in his account of our Lord’s resurrection. He is also correct in his refuting the Gnostic error that there is no resurrection of the body. And he is correct in asserting that the righteous dead, before Jesus’ death and resurrection, were not able to enter the most holy place, that is, heaven itself, but must go to an “invisible place” and wait for the Lord to make a way for them into the presence of God. However, in his

assertion that this intermediate place was still the destiny of the righteous after the death of Christ, the Scriptures indicate otherwise.

There are really two issues here. The first issue is the bodily resurrection of the saints. The second issue is where the saints now go after death.

The first issue relates to what the Scriptures call glorification, which Paul speaks of in **Romans 8 (ESV):29** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Those who have faith in Jesus Christ have become His brethren, and will be conformed to His image. This conformity will include the resurrection of the body, which will be transformed to be like the resurrected body of the Lord Jesus as Paul tells us in **Philippians 3 (ESV):20** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

The body of our humble state, that is, our lowly body, is mortal as Paul says in **Romans 8 (ESV):11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

That is, it is doomed to die. But those who have faith in Jesus Christ have been made alive in their spirit as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Those who have faith in Jesus Christ have already gone through a spiritual resurrection by the Spirit of God in their born again experience. Christ is said to now be our life as we read in **Colossians 3 (ESV):1** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

The Holy Spirit is the life of our spirit. Therefore, the life we now have in our spirit is eternal life, and our bodies will be glorified at the resurrection of the righteous as we see in **Luke 14 (ESV):13** But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

The Gnostics were denying the resurrection of the body of the righteous, and would only acknowledge the salvation of the spirit. This error was dealt with emphatically by Paul in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):12** Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Paul then explains that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. What he is saying is that flesh and blood are perishable and mortal. But at the resurrection, the dead will be raised with an imperishable body as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The

sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Irenaeus believed in the bodily resurrection of the saints, and was teaching against the Gnostic error that there was no resurrection of the body. Irenaeus has thus addressed the first issue with accuracy, and he is correct. The bodies of the righteous will be raised from the dead.

Now the second issue is where will the righteous go after death. To understand what the Scriptures say about this, we must understand what the Scriptures say about death. The Scriptures say that death is the result of sin, and is universal as we read in **Romans 5 (ESV):12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

And death exists in three forms. The first form is spiritual death. Before we come to Christ we are all, without exception, spiritually dead as we see in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

The second form of death is physical death. After the body dies it returns to the ground as Scripture states in **Genesis 3 (ESV):19** By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Now the inner spiritual man or woman is spoken of as being clothed with skin, flesh, and bones as in **Job 10 (ESV):10** Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? 11 You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews.

Our soul and spirit are within us, and are the unseen parts of us. And the Scripture says that man’s spirit within him is formed by the Lord also in **Zechariah 12 (ESV):1** The oracle of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus declares the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him:

The body is only a part of man, and we can live without it, but we are not complete without it. The body gives us consciousness of the material things of this earth through the five senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. We have contact with the physical world in this way. Our soul on the other hand is the seat of our intellect, and is composed of mind, will, conscience, and emotions. The senses of the soul are imagination, conscience, memory, reason, and affection, which all give us self-consciousness. But it is in our spirit where we have the senses of faith, hope, reverence, prayer, worship. These senses give us God-consciousness. In physical death, our soul and spirit are separated from the body as seen in the death of Rachel as in **Genesis 35 (ESV):18** And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. 19 So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).

Then also when Jesus died as in **Luke 23 (ESV):46** Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.

And again in **Acts 7 (ESV):59** And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

The third form of death mentioned in the Scriptures is the second death. This is eternal separation of the body, soul, and spirit from God. It is called the second death because the unrighteous dead will be raised to life again, and will appear before the great white throne to be judged as we read in **Revelation 20 (ESV):11** Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

And again in **Revelation 21 (ESV):8** But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Now at death, before Christ came, the righteous dead could not go into heaven itself because the way into God's presence had not been made known. The writer of Hebrews tells us that the way into the holy place, that is heaven itself, had not yet been disclosed while the first tabernacle, which was the one that Moses built, was still standing. That is, before Jesus died on the cross, the way into heaven was not made possible as we see in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):8** By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing.

But after Jesus died on the cross, He was able by His own blood to obtain entrance into the holy place, that is, heaven itself as we read in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):11** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

So when the righteous died before Christ came, they could not go up to heaven since Christ had not yet died and made atonement for sin. Instead they went down to Sheol as we read in **Genesis 42 (ESV):38** But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol."

Many English translations of the Bible translate the Hebrew word Sheol as "grave" as in **Genesis 42 (NIV):38** But Jacob said, "My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow."

However, there is another Hebrew word for grave, or sepulture, or burying place, and that is qeber (pronounced keber). This is the word used in **Genesis 50 (NASB):5** 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am about to die; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'"

The abode of the righteous dead before Christ came was called Sheol in the Old Testament. This was a place in the lower parts of the earth, that is, the underworld. The Scriptures speak of descending to this place as Jacob did when his sons lied to him that Joseph was dead as we see in **Genesis 37 (ESV):35** All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

David also spoke of this place in **Psalm 16 (ESV):10** For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

When Saul inquired of the medium, she brought up Samuel from the dead as we read in **1 Samuel 28 (ESV):11** Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" He said, "Bring up Samuel for me." 12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul." 13 The king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth." 14 He said to her, "What is his appearance?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage. 15 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do."

And also in **Psalm 30 (ESV):3** O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.

And in **Psalm 49 (ESV):15** But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. Selah.

Both the righteous dead and the unrighteous dead went down to Sheol before Christ died. The upper portion of Sheol was the abode of the righteous, and was called "paradise" by the Lord Jesus at the cross as we read in **Luke 23 (ESV):43** And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

The Lord said to the thief on the cross beside Him that today he would be with Him in paradise. This upper portion of Sheol was also called Abraham's bosom as Jesus revealed in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16 (ESV):19** "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who

desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.  
22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

The unrighteous dead also go down to Sheol, but they go to the lower portion of Sheol as in **Psalm 55 (ESV):15** Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.

They are in the lower part as in **Psalm 31 (ESV):17** O LORD, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go silently to Sheol.

The lower part of Sheol is called Hades. This is also revealed by Jesus in the story of the rich man and Lazarus as we continue in **Luke 16 (ESV):22** The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

Hades is a place of agony, and the wicked dead could in no wise cross over to where Abraham and the righteous were as we read in **Luke 16 (ESV):24** And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

It is important for us to realize that after death, there are no second chances as Jesus clearly taught in **Luke 16 (ESV):27** And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

So the Scriptures reveal that Sheol was the invisible place where the souls and spirits of both the righteous and the unrighteous dead went before Jesus rose from the dead. Hades also was the lower portion of this place, and was a prison for the unrighteous dead who are kept for the resurrection when all will give account of themselves to God. But Abraham's bosom or the lower paradise is where the righteous dead went before Jesus died on the cross.

After Jesus died on the cross, He descended first into this underworld, into the lower paradise. He did this to overcome all the power of Satan who ruled in the realm of hell, death, and the grave, as we read in **Hebrews 2 (ESV):14** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Had Irenaeus not been so focused on refuting the error of the Gnostics, he might have noticed the rest of verse 9 in Ephesians chapter 4. That is, when He ascended, Jesus led captive a host of captives. That is, He led them out of the invisible place as Irenaeus calls it, and took them with Him into heaven itself as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):8** Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." 9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

While Jesus was in the underworld, he proclaimed liberty to those captives in the lower paradise as we read in **1 Peter 3 (ESV):18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison.

Satan held the power of death and was overcome in the underworld by Christ's death "that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil" as in Hebrews 2:14 above. The word "power" suggests dominion. Satan ruled in the reign, or dominion, of death. He has now been rendered powerless. Jesus Christ returned from the underworld the complete victor over Satan, hell, death, and the grave as John testifies in **Revelation 1 (ESV):17** When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he

laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

Paul also spoke of the third heaven, “paradise,” which he was caught up to as we read in **2 Corinthians 12 (ESV):2** I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. 3 And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

That the righteous dead are there in heaven is shown by the fact that a great cloud of witnesses are watching us as we read in **Hebrews 12 (ESV):1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Where are these witnesses? They are in heaven with the Lord as we continue to read in **Hebrews 12 (ESV):22** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

The righteous dead could not enter heaven until the door to heaven was opened. The writer of Hebrews explains as we read in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):8** By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing 9 (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, 10 but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. 15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

So the way into the holiest could not be cleansed by the blood of bulls and goats. This is why Jesus had to die. But after Jesus’ death, the way into heaven was now made possible for all those who had by faith believed in Him. So, He led captivity, that is, those in the lower paradise or Abraham’s bosom, captive, and took them to heaven with Him. As to the fact that the righteous dead are now in heaven, Paul himself has said that he would rather depart and be with Christ as we read in **Philippians 1 (ESV):21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

Paul also said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord as in **2 Corinthians 5 (ESV):6** So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

As to Irenaeus’ assertion that the disciple is not above his Master, and therefore he must wait as his Master waited three days, the analogy loses substance since Jesus only waited three days, and then went into heaven. The reason He did so was to show that He was really dead. He also fulfilled a prophetic type in the Scripture regarding Jonah. This was to prove who He was, the Son of God. So Irenaeus would make the disciples wait until the resurrection to go into heaven. But, for what reason? We have no way of knowing except that he was probably following the tradition of his time as he thought this tradition to be a “gift of truth” handed down by the apostles through the presbytery ordained by apostles. We will study more about this in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession.**

Now, about Irenaeus' assertion that the righteous dead are "disciplined beforehand for incorruption," if this were true, it would mean that Jesus' death and resurrection did not pay, or atone, for all of our sin debt. But the Scriptures say that Jesus paid it all, once and for all as we read in **Hebrews 7 (ESV):23** The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. 28 For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

And again in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):12** he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

And again in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):26** for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And again in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):28** so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

And again in **Hebrews 10 (ESV):10** And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

God did not leave any doubt that there would only ever be one sacrifice for sin. The blood of bulls and goats or any act of man cannot take away or atone for sin. Neither can we add to or take away from the work of the cross that Jesus did for us. This is why the Scriptures tell us that a great cloud of witnesses are watching us and why, when we die, we will be absent from the body and be at home with the Lord. So there is no need for discipline of the righteous after death. This is why we go directly into God's presence when we die.

Irenaeus is still correct about the time of the resurrection of the righteous. That event must wait until Jesus comes again. But Irenaeus is incorrect about where the righteous dead go after death. As it is, Irenaeus is in heaven watching with all the rest of the saints.

To add one final note on this chapter, the note 4719 at the end of paragraph two speaks of the subsequent chapters in Book 5, that is chapters 32 through 36, which I have included in their entirety on **Chapter 31: Future Events**. Please refer to them there.

## Fragment L.

For 4900 This extract is introduced as follows: "For Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons, who was a contemporary of the disciple of the apostle, Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna, and martyr, and for this reason is held in just estimation, wrote to an Alexandrian to the effect that it is right, with respect to the feast of the Resurrection, that we should celebrate it upon the first day of the week." This shows us that the extract must have been taken from the work *Against Schism* addressed to Blastus then there shall in truth be a common joy consummated to all those who believe unto life, and in each individual shall be confirmed the mystery of the Resurrection, and the hope of incorruption, and the commencement of the eternal kingdom, when God shall have destroyed death and the devil. For that human nature and flesh which has risen again from the dead shall die no more; but after it had been changed to incorruption, and made like to spirit, when the heaven was opened, [our Lord] full of glory offered it (the flesh) to the Father.

**Summary:** In this Fragment L, Irenaeus affirms "For then there shall in truth be a common joy consummated to all those who believe unto life, and in each individual shall be confirmed the mystery of the Resurrection, and the hope of incorruption, and the commencement of the eternal kingdom, when God shall have destroyed death and the devil," referring to Revelation 20:10,14. Irenaeus then explains, "For that human nature and flesh which has risen again from the dead shall die no more; but after it had been changed to

incorruption, and made like to spirit,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:44, “when the heaven was opened, [our Lord] full of glory offered it (the flesh) to the Father.”

**Commentary:** Though this is but a fragment of Irenaeus’ writing, yet in it we see clearly that Irenaeus believed in the resurrection of the fleshly body as he affirms, “For then there shall in truth be a common joy consummated to all those who believe unto life, and in each individual shall be confirmed the mystery of the Resurrection, and the hope of incorruption, and the commencement of the eternal kingdom, when God shall have destroyed death and the devil,” referring to **Revelation 20 (ESV):10** and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

And to **Revelation 20 (ESV):14** Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “For that human nature and flesh which has risen again from the dead shall die no more; but after it had been changed to incorruption, and made like to spirit,” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Jesus Himself described the resurrected body as being like the angels in heaven as we read in **Matthew 22 (ESV):30** For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

The resurrected body is however still flesh and bones as Jesus testified in **Luke 24 (ESV):39** See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “when the heaven was opened, [our Lord] full of glory offered it (the flesh) to the Father.” However this statement that Jesus offered His resurrected body, that is, his flesh “made like to spirit,” to the Father has no Scriptural foundation. The Scripture says that He entered heaven in our behalf through His own blood, but not that He offered His resurrected body to the Father. Jesus offered His body as a sacrifice on the cross on earth. It was by His shed blood on the cross that He made atonement for our sins, and through His blood we are now also able to enter heaven. Jesus is not continually offering His body as a sacrifice in heaven.

Again, Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “when the heaven was opened, [our Lord] full of glory offered it (the flesh) to the Father.”

Jesus offered one sacrifice, the sacrifice of His body and blood on the cross, which was on earth. He did this once, for all time as we read in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):12** he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

And again in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):26** for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And again in **Hebrews 9 (ESV):28** so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

And again in **Hebrews 10 (ESV):10** And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins for all time. It is by faith that we receive this. It is by faith that we continue in fellowship with Him. We do not need to offer another sacrifice for sins. Jesus paid it all.

## Chapter 7: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven

### Book 5: Chapter IX.—Showing how that passage of the apostle which the heretics pervert, should be understood; viz., “Flesh and blood shall not possess the kingdom of God.”

1. Among the other [truths] proclaimed by the apostle, there is also this one, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” 4506 **1 Cor. xv. 50.** This is [the passage] which is adduced by all the heretics in support of their folly, with an attempt to annoy us, and to point out that the handiwork of God is not saved. They do not take this fact into consideration, that there are three things out of which, as I have shown, the complete man is composed —flesh, soul, and spirit. One of these does indeed preserve and fashion [the man]—this is the spirit; while as to another it is united and formed—that is the flesh; then [comes] that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts. Those then, as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal], shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves. Wherefore men of this stamp are spoken of by the Lord as “dead;” for, says He, “Let the dead bury their dead,” 4507 **Luke ix. 60.** because they have not the Spirit which quickens man.

2. On the other hand, as many as fear God and trust in His Son’s advent, and who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts,—such men as these shall be properly called both “pure,” and “spiritual,” and “those living to God,” because they possess the Spirit of the Father, who purifies man, and raises him up to the life of God. For as the Lord has testified that “the flesh is weak,” so [does He also say] that “the spirit is willing.” 4508 **Matt. xxvi. 41.** For this latter is capable of working out its own suggestions. If, therefore, any one admix the ready inclination of the Spirit to be, as it were, a stimulus to the infirmity of the flesh, it inevitably follows that what is strong will prevail over the weak, so that the weakness of the flesh will be absorbed by the strength of the Spirit; and that the man in whom this takes place cannot in that case be carnal, but spiritual, because of the fellowship of the Spirit. Thus it is, therefore, that the martyrs bear their witness, and despise death, not after the infirmity of the flesh, but because of the readiness of the Spirit. For when the infirmity of the flesh is absorbed, it exhibits the Spirit as powerful; and again, when the Spirit absorbs the weakness [of the flesh], it possesses the flesh as an inheritance in itself, and from both of these is formed a living man,—living, indeed, because he partakes of the Spirit, but man, because of the substance of flesh.

3. The flesh, therefore, when destitute of the Spirit of God, is dead, not having life, and cannot possess the kingdom of God: [it is as] irrational blood, like water poured out upon the ground. And therefore he says, “As is the earthly, such are they that are earthly.” 4509 **1 Cor. xv. 48.** But where the Spirit of the Father is, there is a living man; [there is] the rational blood preserved by God for the avenging [of those that shed it]; [there is] the flesh possessed by the Spirit, forgetful indeed of what belongs to it, and adopting the quality of the Spirit, being made conformable to the Word of God. And on this account he (the apostle) declares, “As we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven.” 4510 **1 Cor. xv. 49.** What, therefore, is the earthly? That which was fashioned. And what is the heavenly? The Spirit. As therefore he says, when we were destitute of the celestial Spirit, we walked in former times in the oldness of the flesh, not obeying God; so now let us, receiving the Spirit, walk in newness of life, obeying God. Inasmuch, therefore, as without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God, lest, having become non-participators of the Divine Spirit, we lose the kingdom of heaven; and he exclaims, that flesh in itself, and blood, cannot possess the kingdom of God.

4. If, however, we must speak strictly, [we would say that] the flesh *does not* inherit, but *is* inherited; as also the Lord declares, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth by

inheritance;" **4511 Matt. v. 5.** as if in the [future] kingdom, the earth, from whence exists the substance of our flesh, is to be possessed by inheritance. This is the reason for His wishing the temple (i.e., the flesh) to be clean, that the Spirit of God may take delight therein, as a bridegroom with a bride. As, therefore, the bride cannot [be said] to wed, but to be wedded, when the bridegroom comes and takes her, so also the flesh cannot by itself possess the kingdom of God by inheritance; but it can be taken *for* an inheritance into the kingdom of God. For a living person inherits the goods of the deceased; and it is one thing to inherit, another to be inherited. The former rules, and exercises power over, and orders the things inherited at his will; but the latter things are in a state of subjection, are under order, and are ruled over by him who has obtained the inheritance. What, therefore, is it that lives? The Spirit of God, doubtless. What, again, are the possessions of the deceased? The various parts of the man, surely, which rot in the earth. But these are inherited by the Spirit when they are translated into the kingdom of heaven. For this cause, too, did Christ die, that the Gospel covenant being manifested and known to the whole world, might in the first place set free His slaves; and then afterwards, as I have already shown, might constitute them heirs of His property, when the Spirit possesses them by inheritance. For he who lives inherits, but the flesh is inherited. In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Just as if he were to say, "Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that, "Among the other [truths] proclaimed by the apostle, there is also this one, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:50. Irenaeus then testifies that, "This is [the passage] which is adduced by all the heretics in support of their folly, with an attempt to annoy us, and to point out that the handiwork of God is not saved." Irenaeus then points out that, "They do not take this fact into consideration, that there are three things out of which, as I have shown, the complete man is composed —flesh, soul, and spirit," referring possibly to 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Irenaeus then asserts, "One of these does indeed preserve and fashion [the man]—this is the spirit;" He then affirms, "while as to another it is united and formed—that is the flesh; then [comes] that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts." Irenaeus then concludes as he asserts, "Those then, as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal], shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves." Irenaeus then testifies, "Wherefore men of this stamp are spoken of by the Lord as "dead;" for, says He, "Let the dead bury their dead," referring to Luke 9:60, "because they have not the Spirit which quickens man," referring to Romans 8:11.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "On the other hand, as many as fear God and trust in His Son's advent, and who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts,—such men as these shall be properly called both "pure," and "spiritual," and "those living to God," because they possess the Spirit of the Father, who purifies man, and raises him up to the life of God. For as the Lord has testified that "the flesh is weak," so [does He also say] that "the spirit is willing," referring to Matthew 26:41. Irenaeus then attests, "For this latter is capable of working out its own suggestions. If, therefore, any one admix the ready inclination of the Spirit to be, as it were, a stimulus to the infirmity of the flesh, it inevitably follows that what is strong will prevail over the weak, so that the weakness of the flesh will be absorbed by the strength of the Spirit; and that the man in whom this takes place cannot in that case be carnal, but spiritual, because of the fellowship of the Spirit." And Irenaeus concludes as he again attests, "Thus it is, therefore, that the martyrs bear their witness, and despise death, not after the infirmity of the flesh, but because of the readiness of the Spirit. For when the infirmity of the flesh is absorbed, it exhibits the Spirit as powerful; and again, when the Spirit absorbs the weakness [of the flesh], it possesses the flesh as an inheritance in itself, and from both of these is formed a living man,—living, indeed, because he partakes of the Spirit, but man, because of the substance of flesh."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts that, "The flesh, therefore, when destitute of the Spirit of God, is dead, not having life, and cannot possess the kingdom of God: [it is as] irrational blood, like water poured out

upon the ground. And therefore he says, "As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:48. Again, Irenaeus testifies, "But where the Spirit of the Father is, there is a living man;" And Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "[there is] the rational blood preserved by God for the avenging [of those that shed it]; [there is] the flesh possessed by the Spirit, forgetful indeed of what belongs to it, and adopting the quality of the Spirit, being made conformable to the Word of God." Irenaeus then testifies, "And on this account he (the apostle) declares, "As we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:49. And Irenaeus then affirms, "What, therefore, is the earthly? That which was fashioned. And what is the heavenly? The Spirit." Irenaeus then exhorts, "As therefore he says, when we were destitute of the celestial Spirit, we walked in former times in the oldness of the flesh, not obeying God; so now let us, receiving the Spirit, walk in newness of life, obeying God." Irenaeus then asserts, "Inasmuch, therefore, as without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God, lest, having become non-participators of the Divine Spirit, we lose the kingdom of heaven; and he exclaims, that flesh in itself, and blood, cannot possess the kingdom of God."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus then asserts, "If, however, we must speak strictly, [we would say that] the flesh *does not* inherit, but *is* inherited; as also the Lord declares, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth by inheritance," referring to Matthew 5:5, "as if in the [future] kingdom, the earth, from whence exists the substance of our flesh, is to be possessed by inheritance." Irenaeus then affirms, "This is the reason for His wishing the temple (i.e., the flesh) to be clean, that the Spirit of God may take delight therein, as a bridegroom with a bride." Irenaeus then argues, "As, therefore, the bride cannot [be said] to wed, but to be wedded, when the bridegroom comes and takes her, so also the flesh cannot by itself possess the kingdom of God by inheritance; but it can be taken *for* an inheritance into the kingdom of God. For a living person inherits the goods of the deceased; and it is one thing to inherit, another to be inherited. The former rules, and exercises power over, and orders the things inherited at his will; but the latter things are in a state of subjection, are under order, and are ruled over by him who has obtained the inheritance." Again Irenaeus affirms, "What, therefore, is it that lives? The Spirit of God, doubtless. What, again, are the possessions of the deceased? The various parts of the man, surely, which rot in the earth. But these are inherited by the Spirit when they are translated into the kingdom of heaven." Irenaeus then affirms, "For this cause, too, did Christ die, that the Gospel covenant being manifested and known to the whole world, might in the first place set free His slaves;" And Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "and then afterwards, as I have already shown, might constitute them heirs of His property, when the Spirit possesses them by inheritance." Irenaeus then asserts, "For he who lives inherits, but the flesh is inherited." And Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," again referring to 1 Corinthians 15:50. And Irenaeus concludes as he warns, "Just as if he were to say, "Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God," drawing most likely from Galatians 5:23.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that, "Among the other [truths] proclaimed by the apostle, there is also this one, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Note that Irenaeus only quotes the first part of the sentence in verse 50, but leaves out, "nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

Irenaeus then testifies that, "This is [the passage] which is adduced by all the heretics in support of their folly, with an attempt to annoy us, and to point out that the handiwork of God is not saved." The "handiwork of God" Irenaeus refers to is our fleshly body. Irenaeus is here arguing against the Gnostics, who did not believe in the resurrection of the body, and were using this verse as a proof text for their doctrine against the resurrection. And so Irenaeus uses this verse as his starting point to defend the teaching in the word of God that there will be a resurrection of the dead.

Irenaeus begins his argument against the Gnostics by pointing out that, “They do not take this fact into consideration, that there are three things out of which, as I have shown, the complete man is composed —flesh, soul, and spirit,” reminding us of Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians in **1 Thessalonians 5 (ESV):23** Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We note that Paul here refers to the spirit, soul, and body of each individual Thessalonian believer. Irenaeus then asserts, “One of these does indeed preserve and fashion [the man]—this is the spirit; while as to another it is united and formed—that is the flesh; then [comes] that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts. Those then, as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal], shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves. Wherefore men of this stamp are spoken of by the Lord as “dead;” for, says He, “Let the dead bury their dead,” referring to **Luke 9 (ESV):60** And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

And Irenaeus concludes, “because they have not the Spirit which quickens man,” referring to **Romans 8 (ESV):11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

The word “quicken” means to give life to. To summarize, Irenaeus states the following in paragraph one:

- Man is composed of three parts, which are spirit, flesh, and soul.
  - 1) That which “does indeed preserve and fashion [the man]—this is the spirit”;
  - 2) And “to another it is united and formed—that is the flesh”;
  - 3) And “then [comes] that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts.”
- “Those then, as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal], shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves. Wherefore men of this stamp are spoken of by the Lord as “dead;” for, says He, “Let the dead bury their dead, because they have not the Spirit which quickens man.”

From this summary there can be no doubt that Irenaeus believed that the part of man which is spirit is the Holy Spirit, for he says that the spirit:

- preserves and fashions the man
- raises up the man out of carnality
- saves and forms the man into life eternal

From this summary, it is also clear that Irenaeus believed that before a man has faith in Christ, he has no spirit of his own, but is just flesh and blood. In such a state, Irenaeus says he is dead, not having “the Spirit which quickens man.”

It is true that man is spiritually dead apart from Christ as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

However, the fact that man has a spirit of his own is abundantly testified in Scripture. That our spirit is different than the Holy Spirit is evident since He is spoken of as testifying with our spirit that we are the children of God as we read in **Romans 8 (ESV):16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

It is the Lord who forms man’s spirit within him as we read in **Zechariah 12 (ESV):1** The oracle of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus declares the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him:

Our spirit is the lamp or candle of the Lord as we see in **Proverbs 20 (ESV):27** The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all his innermost parts.

And Paul says as much in **1 Corinthians 2 (ESV):11** For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Therefore the unsaved have a spirit as well, but their spirit is spiritually dead in trespasses and sins as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

This is a direct result of the fall of Adam for God told Adam in the garden of Eden that he was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or he would die as in **Genesis 2 (ESV):15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

This sentence of death has carried forward to all men as Paul tells us in **Romans 5 (ESV):12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

This is the doctrine of man. Man was created with a spirit of his own according to the Scriptures, and because of Adam’s sin, he is spiritually dead until he comes to Christ. This is why Jesus said that one must be born again or he cannot enter the kingdom of God as we read in **John 3 (ESV):5** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “On the other hand, as many as fear God and trust in His Son’s advent, and who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts,—such men as these shall be properly called both “pure,” and “spiritual,” and “those living to God,” because they possess the Spirit of the Father, who purifies man, and raises him up to the life of God.”

Irenaeus is testifying to the born again experience of the man or woman who has faith in Jesus Christ. What he doesn’t understand is that it is the spirit of man that is born again. Jesus says as much in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

What Jesus is saying is that the Holy Spirit gives birth to spirit. That is, when we are born again, the Holy Spirit makes our spirit alive to God. God raises us to life in a spiritual resurrection as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

In Irenaeus’ thinking, the Holy Spirit is birthed in us to be our spiritual life. If he could have grasped that man has a spirit of his own, he could have seen that the Holy Spirit gave spiritual life to our spirits when we believed. We were thus born of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit then became the life of our spirits, and God became our spiritual Father. We are then set free from sin in our flesh by this life principle as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For as the Lord has testified that “the flesh is weak,” so [does He also say] that “the spirit is willing,” referring to **Matthew 26 (ESV):41** Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Irenaeus then asserts, “For this latter is capable of working out its own suggestions. If, therefore, any one admix the ready inclination of the Spirit to be, as it were, a stimulus to the infirmity of the flesh, it inevitably follows that what is strong will prevail over the weak, so that the weakness of the flesh will be absorbed by the strength of the Spirit; and that the man in whom this takes place cannot in that case be carnal, but spiritual, because of the fellowship of the Spirit.”

Irenaeus is asserting that the Holy Spirit is the “spirit” who is willing in Matthew 26:41, and that He is “capable of working out its own suggestions.” Irenaeus laid the ground work for this assertion already in paragraph one when he asserted that the Holy Spirit was the spiritual part of man that preserves and fashions the man, and raises up the man out of carnality, and saves and forms the man into life eternal. The Holy Spirit does

do all of these things, but not in the way Irenaeus describes. And while it is true that the Holy Spirit is willing and our flesh is weak, by spirit in Matthew 26:41, Jesus was not referring to the Holy Spirit but to the spirit of man. The apostle's spirits were willing, but their flesh was weak, is how the text reads. The fact that man has a spirit is abundantly testified in Scripture as we saw in our discussion of paragraph one.

Jesus knew what He was saying in Matthew 26:41. He knew what was in man as John tells us in **John 2 (ESV):23** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. 24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people 25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

The apostles had already confessed their faith in Jesus as Peter tells us in **Matthew 16 (ESV):15** He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Our faith in Jesus Christ is what causes us to be born again as John tells us in **John 3 (ESV):16** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The eternal life Jesus speaks of is given to us when we are born of the Spirit of God. And Jesus then tells us that this spiritual birth happens when we believe His word in **John 5 (ESV):24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

When Jesus told the apostles to keep watching and praying so that they would not enter into temptation in Matthew 26:41, He knew that the apostles had been born again because of their faith in Him. That is, Jesus knew they had been born of the Spirit. He knew that their spirits were now willing because of this new birth, but He also knew that their flesh was weak. Jesus knew that the apostles were still members of the human race and as such, they were descendants of Adam. When Adam sinned, he caused the whole human race to fall into sin as we saw in **Romans 5 (ESV):12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

All die in Adam as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

It is not just physical death that Paul is speaking of in his letter to the Ephesians, but spiritual death. Paul tells us that before accepting Christ, we were spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, and were by nature children of wrath as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

In Adam, as his descendants, we sin because it is our nature to sin. This is why our flesh is weak, and eventually will die. This is why we need to be born again. Nicodemus asked Jesus how a man could be born when he is old as we read in **John 3 (ESV):4** Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and being then born of the Spirit, our spirit is made new, and we are said to be a new creation as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (ESV):17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

It is in our spirit that we have the life of the Spirit since we are born of Him. Jesus refers to this in **John 6 (ESV):63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

The life of the Spirit is eternal, and thus we have eternal life as the apostle John tells us in **1 John 5 (ESV)**:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

When we are born again we are made alive in Christ as stated by Paul in **Ephesians 2 (ESV)**:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

When we accept Christ, we experience a rebirth spiritually. Being born of the Spirit and made alive in Christ, we also are given a new nature as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 1 (ESV)**:4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

This is why Paul describes our inner being as a new man or self as in **Ephesians 4 (NASB)**:24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

The word translated “self” in the Greek is ἄνθρωπος (pronounced anthrōpos). It literally means “man.” This new man or self, who is created in righteousness and true holiness as a result of the new birth, delights to do the will of God as Paul tells us in **Romans 7 (ESV)**:22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being.

Paul also explains that we still have the sin nature in our flesh as we read in **Romans 7 (ESV)**:23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Our bodies are mortal. That is why Paul calls his body “the body of this death” in verse 24 above. After we accept Christ, our bodies are still mortal as we learn in **Romans 6 (ESV)**:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

Paul explains that sin still dwells in our mortal bodies in **Romans 7 (ESV)**:14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

However, later Paul explains that we have been set free from this nature to sin by the law of the Spirit of life which is now the law of our inner being in **Romans 8 (ESV)**:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

So after I am born again, my spirit has the life of the Holy Spirit which sets me free from sin. But walking in this freedom is a choice we must make. This is why we must put off the old man or self as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 4 (ESV)**:22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

The word translated “self” in the Greek is the same word ἄνθρωπος (pronounced anthrōpos) which occurs in verse 24 as we read again in **Ephesians 4 (ESV)**:24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

So after we are born again, we still have a sinful nature in our flesh, but in our spirit we have a new nature, and eternal life as well since we are born of the Spirit. Jesus understood this as is evident from His conversation with Peter when He was washing the disciples’ feet. Jesus explains to Peter that if He does not wash us, we have no part with Him as we read in **John 13 (ESV)**:5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” 7 Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” 8 Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” 9 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 10 Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.” 11 For he knew

who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

The washing Jesus is talking about here is the cleansing from sin that happens when we are born again. We are washed when we are born again as Paul tells us in **Titus 3 (ESV):5** he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The word regeneration in this verse is the Greek word παλιγγένεσία (pronounced paliggenesia). It comes from two Greek words, πάλιν (pronounced paleen) meaning again, and γένεσις (pronounced genesis), meaning genesis, birth. Vine's says that the Greek word παλιγγένεσία (pronounced paliggenesia) means “new birth (palin, again, geneis, birth), is used of spiritual regeneration, Tit. 3:5, involving the communication of a new life, the two operating powers to produce which are “the word of truth,” Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23, and the Holy Spirit, John 3:5,6;” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 267.**

Regeneration or the new birth happens when we believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and we confess Him as our Lord and Savior as we read in **Romans 10 (ESV):8** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

This is what Paul is referring to as a past event in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Jesus is telling us here in John 13:10-11 that all the disciples but one were washed. That is, they had all been cleansed of their sin, or taken a bath, and been born again except for one. This is why Jesus said that he that has bathed needs only to wash his feet and is completely clean. When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, it is as if we receive a bath, and our sins are washed away. We do not need to have a bath all over again for sin, but only to wash our feet and we are completely clean. We become His children when we are born again, but we stay in fellowship with our Father as we wash our feet.

So in Matthew 26:36-46 when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane praying, and he told the three apostles when He found them sleeping to watch and pray, He was saying in effect, “I know your spirit is willing because you are mine and you have been born again, and the new spirit in you bears my nature and is created in righteousness and true holiness and delights to do the will of God. But I also know that your flesh is weak because it is descended from Adam, and still has sin and is destined to die. Therefore I warn you to keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation.”

Therefore, Irenaeus' assertion in paragraph two that, “If, therefore, any one admix the ready inclination of the Spirit to be, as it were, a stimulus to the infirmity of the flesh, it inevitably follows that what is strong will prevail over the weak, so that the weakness of the flesh will be absorbed by the strength of the Spirit; and that the man in whom this takes place cannot in that case be carnal, but spiritual, because of the fellowship of the Spirit,” is based on the false assumption that Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit when He said to the disciples, “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,” in Matthew 26:41.

Not only so, but the English word, “admix”, means “to mix in.” Nothing is said in Scripture about admixing “the ready inclination of the Spirit to be, as it were, a stimulus to the infirmity of the flesh.” Rather, we are told by Paul that nothing good dwells in our flesh as in **Romans 7 (ESV):18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

The “willing” is in our spirit that has been born again. The flesh is irreformable and even opposed to the Spirit as Paul tells us in **Galatians 5 (ESV):16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Again, the willing is in our spirit because that is the part of us that has been made a partaker of the divine nature, being born of God of incorruptible seed as Peter says in **1 Peter 1 (ESV):23** since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

The flesh wars against the Spirit and sets its desire against the Spirit. Therefore the flesh will not be

stimulated by the Spirit. Rather, the two are at enmity.

Now we can see that Irenaeus did not understand this principle of new life in the believer. Neither did he understand the sin nature which is still in the flesh of the one who has faith in Jesus. Irenaeus thought of man as merely flesh and blood which could be mixed with the “ready inclination of the Spirit” to absorb the weakness of the flesh, and thus become spiritual. Irenaeus did not understand that the weakness of the flesh was its tendency to sin, and that the Spirit becomes the life of man’s spirit to empower man to put this sinful nature off and to put on the new man created in righteousness and true holiness.

The way we become spiritual is revealed in **Colossians 3 (NASB):1** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Christ is our life if we have believed in Him and been born again. We have been set free from sin by this life as we read again in **Romans 8 (ESV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

We are wretched men and women without Christ as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (ESV):24** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

So in the inner man, our spirit, we are serving the law of God with our mind, but with our flesh the law of sin. This is why we must discipline our flesh as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 9 (ESV):26** So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Irenaeus concludes paragraph two as he again attests, “Thus it is, therefore, that the martyrs bear their witness, and despise death, not after the infirmity of the flesh, but because of the readiness of the Spirit. For when the infirmity of the flesh is absorbed, it exhibits the Spirit as powerful; and again, when the Spirit absorbs the weakness [of the flesh], it possesses the flesh as an inheritance in itself, and from both of these is formed a living man,—living, indeed, because he partakes of the Spirit, but man, because of the substance of flesh.”

Jesus did encourage us to yield to the Spirit as we read in **Matthew 10 (ESV):17** Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Jesus also tells us that the Spirit empowers us to witness as in **Acts 1 (ESV):6** So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

And when man partakes of the Spirit, he is indeed alive unto God, and no longer dead in trespasses and sins. Man who partakes of the Spirit is born of the Spirit, that is, he is born again. But man apart from the Spirit is still said to be a living being though he is not born of the Spirit as we read in **Genesis 2 (ESV):7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts that, “The flesh, therefore, when destitute of the Spirit of God, is dead, not having life, and cannot possess the kingdom of God: [it is as] irrational blood, like water poured out upon the ground. And therefore he says, “As is the earthly, such are they that are earthly,” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):48** As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

Again we note that Irenaeus did not quote the second half of the verse above, which reads, “and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “But where the Spirit of the Father is, there is a living man;” And Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “[there is] the rational blood preserved by God for the avenging [of those that shed it]; [there is] the flesh possessed by the Spirit, forgetful indeed of what belongs to it, and adopting the quality of the

Spirit, being made conformable to the Word of God.”

We can see here that Irenaeus would only allow irrational blood to those without the Spirit of the Father, that is, the unsaved.

Irenaeus then testifies, “And on this account he (the apostle) declares, “As we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven,” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):49** Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

And Irenaeus then asks rhetorically, “What, therefore, is the earthly? That which was fashioned. And what is the heavenly? The Spirit.” However, in this verse, Paul is talking about earthly bodies and heavenly bodies as we shall see shortly.

Irenaeus then exhorts, “As therefore he says, when we were destitute of the celestial Spirit, we walked in former times in the oldness of the flesh, not obeying God; so now let us, receiving the Spirit, walk in newness of life, obeying God.” Irenaeus may be referring in part to **Romans 6 (ESV):4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Irenaeus then asserts, “Inasmuch, therefore, as without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God, lest, having become non-participants of the Divine Spirit, we lose the kingdom of heaven; and he exclaims, that flesh in itself, and blood, cannot possess the kingdom of God.” Regarding becoming non-participants of the Divine Spirit, Irenaeus is probably drawing from David’s prayer in **Psalm 51 (ESV):11** Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

And to Saul as we read in **1 Samuel 16 (ESV):14** Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.

And also **Romans 8 (ESV):9** You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

We will have more to say about this in the summary in this chapter.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus then asserts, “If, however, we must speak strictly, [we would say that] the flesh *does not* inherit, but *is* inherited; as also the Lord declares, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth by inheritance,” referring to **Matthew 5 (ESV):5** “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “as if in the [future] kingdom, the earth, from whence exists the substance of our flesh, is to be possessed by inheritance.” Irenaeus then affirms, “This is the reason for His wishing the temple (i.e., the flesh) to be clean, that the Spirit of God may take delight therein, as a bridegroom with a bride.” Irenaeus refers to the temple of our body as Paul also mentions in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

And Irenaeus then argues, “As, therefore, the bride cannot [be said] to wed, but to be wedded, when the bridegroom comes and takes her, so also the flesh cannot by itself possess the kingdom of God by inheritance; but it can be taken *for* an inheritance into the kingdom of God. For a living person inherits the goods of the deceased; and it is one thing to inherit, another to be inherited. The former rules, and exercises power over, and orders the things inherited at his will; but the latter things are in a state of subjection, are under order, and are ruled over by him who has obtained the inheritance.”

This is indeed very logical, but his assertion is based on his assumption that man has no spirit of his own. If man has no spirit of his own, then when he dies, he will just be flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Again, this is logical and agrees as far as it goes with what Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

However, when we put what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:50 in context with the rest of what he says in chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians, we will see that Irenaeus is taking Paul out of context. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, Paul is talking about what kind of body will inherit the kingdom of God, and not who will enter the kingdom of God. The body of flesh and blood is earthly, and perishable, and will die. To inherit the kingdom of God, our

bodies must be changed to be imperishable like Jesus' glorious body as Paul tells us in **Philippians 3 (ESV):20** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

This change is a future event for all believers. Again Irenaeus affirms, "What, therefore, is it that lives? The Spirit of God, doubtless. What, again, are the possessions of the deceased? The various parts of the man, surely, which rot in the earth. But these are inherited by the Spirit when they are translated into the kingdom of heaven."

Irenaeus makes the Holy Spirit to be the spirit that lives in us, and then, based on this assumption, says that the Spirit of God who lives in our bodies will eventually inherit our bodies since He is ever living and will never die. He is arguing for the resurrection of our bodies, but in so doing, he has introduced a philosophical argument that obscures the simple truth of the Scriptures. The simple truth is that the man who has faith in Christ will inherit the earth, and he will have a resurrected body.

Irenaeus' argument that the Holy Spirit inherits our bodies also seems to fly in the face of his own belief that the believers go to an intermediate place when they die in order to wait for the resurrection. Irenaeus believed in the soul of man, so he must mean that the soul of man goes to the intermediate place. But if so, what is the necessity for the Holy Spirit to inherit our bodies? Why would not our souls inherit our bodies. But since Irenaeus believes that the Holy Spirit is our spiritual life, and that man has no spirit of his own, he is forced into this nonsensical argument that the Holy Spirit inherits our flesh at the resurrection so that man can have eternal life. His argument leaves out what the life of our souls is when we go to the intermediate place.

Irenaeus then affirms, "For this cause, too, did Christ die, that the Gospel covenant being manifested and known to the whole world, might in the first place set free His slaves;" This reminds us of Jesus' words in **Luke 4 (ESV):18** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

And Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "and then afterwards, as I have already shown, might constitute them heirs of His property, when the Spirit possesses them by inheritance." Again, this is a nonsensical argument as Irenaeus seems to argue that the Holy Spirit inherits our dead fleshly bodies, gives them life, and then makes them heirs of their own bodies.

Irenaeus then asserts, "For he who lives inherits, but the flesh is inherited." So in his thinking, the flesh is inherited by the Holy Spirit, and then we inherit His property.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," again referring to 1 Corinthians 15:50. Irenaeus asserts that a warning of losing "lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us" is implicit in Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:50. We will discuss the possibility of losing the Spirit shortly.

And Irenaeus concludes as he warns, "Just as if he were to say, "Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God," drawing most likely from **Galatians 5 (NASB):21** Envirings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

## Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter IX

To summarize Irenaeus' thinking in **Book 5: Chapter IX** of his writing, he is defending the resurrection of the body. He testifies that the heretics point to a single verse of Paul, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:50, and adduce from this that "the handiwork of God is not

saved.” He then argues against the heretics that “do not take this fact into consideration, that there are three things out of which, as I have shown, the complete man is composed —flesh, soul, and spirit.” His thinking is that since man before faith in Christ is dead spiritually, he possesses only flesh and blood. He seems to say that when any have faith in Christ, “and who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts,” the Holy Spirit enters the one who believes and gives him or her spiritual life. But if the one who initially has faith does not maintain “communion of the Spirit,” but walks “frivolously and carelessly” as if he “were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood,” he could “lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses” him or her. His main point is that it is the Spirit of God that raises us from the dead. Therefore he says that “as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal],” that is the Holy Spirit, they “shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves.”

The heretics were the first however to take 1 Corinthians 15:50 out of context, saying that there would be no resurrection of the body. Irenaeus has done well to defend the resurrection of the dead. However his defense is weak in that he has taken Scripture out of context. Irenaeus would have done much better if he would have put verse 50 in context with the rest of chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians.

Paul begins his defense of the resurrection by stating that it is of first importance in the very Gospel he is preaching in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):1** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Paul here grounds his defense of the resurrection by testifying that there is eyewitness testimony of Jesus resurrection, and that he himself is an eyewitness. And Paul affirms that it is the belief in this truth that saves us. Paul then continues his defense of the resurrection by testifying that there were some in the Corinthian church who misunderstood the Gospel, and were saying there was no resurrection of the dead. Paul makes it absolutely clear what he is preaching as he continues in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):12** Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Paul affirms that if Christ has not been raised from the dead, we are still in our sins. In other words, there is no Gospel if there is no resurrection of the dead. Our faith is thus worthless. Paul continues his defense of the resurrection as he says that death is an enemy, and it shall be totally abolished in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Paul continues as he explains that our suffering on account of the Gospel message is worthless if the dead are not raised as in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):29** Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? 30 Why are we in danger every hour? 31 I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! 32 What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” 33 Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” 34 Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

Paul then explains how the dead are raised and with what kind of body it will be as continue in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):35** But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” 36 You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

Paul explains that there are earthly bodies and there are heavenly bodies, and that the resurrection of the dead is like the seed that is sown in the ground as dead, but comes to life with a body of its own. It is just like this in the resurrection of the dead he says as he continues in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):42** So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Irenaeus actually begins his argument from chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians here in verse 48, as he says in paragraph three, “The flesh, therefore, when destitute of the Spirit of God, is dead, not having life, and cannot possess the kingdom of God: [it is as] irrational blood, like water poured out upon the ground. And therefore he says, “As is the earthly, such are they that are earthly,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:48. Again, Irenaeus testifies, “But where the Spirit of the Father is, there is a living man;”

However, we see that Irenaeus takes verse 48 out of context for Paul is not talking about who will go into heaven, but about what kind of body they will have when they get there. The “earthy” refers to what is of the earth. Our bodies, being made of dust, are of the earth and therefore are earthly. But the resurrection shall make them heavenly. That is, the life of the body will no longer be in the blood but of the Spirit which is eternal. Paul then explains that our earthly body, which is perishable, will be changed to be a heavenly and imperishable body when it is raised from the dead as he continues in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Irenaeus defends the resurrection of the dead, but he does not correct the error of the heretics who took the verse in 1 Corinthians 15:50 out of context, and said there was no resurrection of the dead. Again the verse

read as in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Just reading the rest of the sentence in verse 50 proves the fact that Paul is not talking about who will inherit the kingdom of God, but about what kind of body will inherit the kingdom of God. Irenaeus' defense has introduced a method of interpretation that does not rightly divide the word of God. He is confusing **1 Corinthians 15:50** with Paul's words in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):8** But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers! 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

In this verse, Paul is talking about who will inherit the kingdom of God, not what kind of body they will have when they get there. The unrighteous, Paul simply says, will not inherit the kingdom of God. We must be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God to become righteous, or we will not inherit the kingdom of God. This all happened for the Corinthians when they believed that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and they confessed Him as Lord of their lives.

There are five main points of concern in this chapter of Irenaeus' writing:

- 1) His method of interpretation of Scripture.
- 2) His teaching on the composition of man.
- 3) His teaching on the inheritance of the Holy Spirit.
- 4) His teaching on losing the Spirit.
- 5) His teaching on losing life by losing the Spirit.

In regards to point 1, his method of interpretation of Scripture, we saw in our discussion above that Irenaeus did not correct the error of the heretics by showing that their error was taking the verse out of context with the rest of chapter 15. Instead, he began his argument with the false assumption that verse 50 of **1 Corinthians**, chapter 15, was talking about who will go in the resurrection, and not about what kind of body will be raised in the resurrection. And so he proceeded to form his argument around his assumption that man was composed of only flesh and blood, and that only when man had the Holy Spirit did he have life, and would thus be resurrected. While it is true that we need the Holy Spirit to give us spiritual life, Irenaeus is vague as to where this life is in the one who has faith in Christ. The Scriptures plainly teach that man has a spirit of his own, and that we are made alive to God in our spirit when we are regenerated, or born again. It is when we are born again, or regenerated, that the Holy Spirit gives us life, and becomes the life of our spirit. This makes us new creations on the inside, that is, the inner person. This brings us to point 2 above.

In regards to point 2, Irenaeus' teaching on the composition of man, the Scriptures clearly teach that man is composed of three parts, body, soul, and spirit. The Scriptures do not teach that man is composed of just flesh and blood before he has faith, and after he believes, that he has body, soul, and Holy Spirit, as Irenaeus intimates. To clarify what the Scriptures teach about man's composition, we restate what Paul has said in **1 Thessalonians 5 (NASB):23** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That man has a spirit of his own is clear from **Romans 8 (NASB):16** The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.

The spirit of man before he comes to faith in Christ is dead in trespasses and sins, and this is the reason we must be born again. The new birth takes place in our spirit as we are born of the Spirit. We are thus given new life, and the life of the Spirit is in our spirit as stated in **Proverbs 20 (NASB):27** The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the innermost parts of his being.

A man or woman becomes a light of the Lord when they have faith in Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of God gives them new life in their spirit.

Now Irenaeus has described the soul of man as “that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts.”

The soul does indeed come in between the spirit of man and the flesh or body of man. The Scriptures teach that the soul of man is composed of four parts. We see this in the following Scriptures:

The mind:

**Psalm 139 (NASB):14** I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

**Proverbs 19 (NASB):2** Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, And he who hurries his footsteps errs.

The word translated person in this verse is the Hebrew word nephesh (pronounced neh'-fesh), and is the same word translated as soul in Psalm 139:14.

The emotions:

**Matthew 26 (NASB):38** Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

**Psalm 19 (NASB):8** The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

**Psalm 44 (NASB):21** Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.

The heart is the center of our emotions. The Hebrew word is leb (pronounced lāv), and means inner part, midst.

The will:

**Job 6 (NASB):7** "My soul refuses to touch *them*; They are like loathsome food to me.

**Job 7 (NASB):15** So that my soul would choose suffocation, Death rather than my pains.

**1 Chronicles 22 (NASB):19** "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise, therefore, and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD."

The conscience:

**Titus 1 (ESV):15** To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled.

It seems that Irenaeus' thinking would only allow a soul in the man who had the Spirit of God, and that he was just of an animal nature without the Spirit of God. Man in this state was just “earthy,” and “irrational blood, like water poured out upon the ground.” However, when God breathed into man the breath of life, man became a living soul as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB):45** So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.”

The word for soul Paul uses is the Greek ψυχή (pronounced psuche), which means soul. Paul is referring to **Genesis 2 (ESV):7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

The Hebrew word for “being” in this verse is נֶפֶשׁ (pronounced nephesh). Gesenius says that this word means “breath,” or ”soul.” **Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D., page 558-559.**

Before Christ, we are living souls, with life in our blood, and our bodies are mortal because of the Adamic sin nature we inherited from Adam. After we believe in Jesus, our spirit is regenerated, or born again, and we have new life in our spirit. We still have the Adamic sin nature in our flesh, and our souls are not regenerated. This is the part of us that must be progressively sanctified. When we are born again, we are justified by God, that is, declared righteous, and sanctified, that is, set apart to God as His holy ones. However, in our soul there may still be much that is not pleasing to God. This is why we must put off and put on. We must

choose to abstain from immorality as Paul encourages in **1 Thessalonians 4 (ESV):3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

This putting off and putting on is a progressive work of sanctification which the Holy Spirit works in us as we see in **2 Thessalonians 2 (ESV):13** But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

And in **1 Peter 1 (ESV):1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

When we are born again, our spirit is renewed and is given a new nature, being born of the Holy Spirit. But it is God's will that we be sanctified in our character as well as in our spirit as Paul says in **1 Thessalonians 5 (ESV):23** Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

It is in our soul that we are progressively sanctified once we have faith in Christ as Savior. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit. He cleanses us through the word of God as Jesus tells us in **John 17 (ESV):17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

Our minds, our wills, and our heart and emotions, and our consciences are cleansed as we read and hear the word of God. This is a progressive work of the Holy Spirit as we grow in grace and knowledge as Peter encourages in **2 Peter 3 (ESV):18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Now in regards to point 3, Irenaeus' teaching on the inheritance of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is never said to inherit our bodies in the Scriptures, or to inherit anything else for that matter. Irenaeus bases his assertion that this is so on the false assumption that the Holy Spirit composes the spirit part of man. However, when we receive Christ, the Holy Spirit gives birth to our spirit so that we are born of God as we read in **John 1 (ESV):12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

We can now claim that we are children of God as John says in **1 John 3 (ESV):2** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

And if we are children, we are then heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ as Paul tells us in **Romans 8 (ESV):16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

When Paul spoke his farewell to the Ephesian elders, he spoke of an inheritance which they would receive through the word of God as we read in **Acts 20 (ESV):32** And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Again, Peter mentions our inheritance reserved in heaven for us in **1 Peter 1 (ESV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Paul also tells us that the Holy Spirit is given as a pledge of our inheritance in **Ephesians 1 (ESV):9** making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in

him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

We are God's own possession and are being redeemed by Him. And to inherit means to become partaker of, to obtain. It is true that as God, the Holy Spirit possesses us. But the Scripture says that God has reserved an inheritance in heaven for us. The Holy Spirit will survive our death, but so will we in our spirit which has been born again of imperishable seed as Peter tells us in **1 Peter 1 (ESV):23** since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Man is alive apart from Christ though he is dead spiritually. We are made alive to God when we are born of the Spirit. Being born of the Spirit makes us partakers of the Spirit. We are thus spiritually alive. So we partake of His Spirit as Irenaeus says. However, this makes us the ones who inherit. We inherit eternal life because He is our life, the life of our spirit.

We next address point 4, Irenaeus' teaching on losing the Spirit. Irenaeus states at the end of paragraph three, "Inasmuch, therefore, as without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God, lest, having become non-participators of the Divine Spirit, we lose the kingdom of heaven; and he exclaims, that flesh in itself, and blood, cannot possess the kingdom of God."

Irenaeus may be basing his assertion on **1 Samuel 16 (ESV):14** Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.

And on **2 Samuel 7 (ESV):15** but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

And drawing from David's prayer in **Psalm 51 (ESV):11** Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

In the Old Testament, it is evident that the Holy Spirit would depart from someone if they committed the sin unto death which the apostle John speaks of in **1 John 5 (ESV):16** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

It is clear that this was Saul's sin in **1 Chronicles 10 (NASB):13** So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it, 14 and did not inquire of the LORD. Therefore He killed him and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.

Committing the sin unto death does not mean we lose our salvation, for when Saul was making inquiry through the medium, Samuel spoke as in **1 Samuel 28 (ESV):15** Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do." 16 And Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy? 17 The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me, for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. 19 Moreover, the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. The LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines."

Note that Samuel was allowed by God to come up from the grave and speak to Saul, and Samuel told Saul in verse 19 that he and his sons would tomorrow be with him in the lower Paradise part of Sheol where the righteous were kept before Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead and entered heaven by His own blood to make a way for us.

As background, we note that Saul had been born again. This is recorded in **1 Samuel 10 (ESV):5** After that you shall come to Gibeah-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine,

flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. 6 Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. 7 Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. 8 Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do."

And continuing in **1 Samuel 10 (ESV):**9 When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. 10 When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" 12 And a man of the place answered, "And who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" 13 When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

It is evident that Saul was born again, but was disciplined of the Lord and was taken home earlier than he might have had he been obedient to the Lord. And in the New Testament, we note that this same discipline occurred in Corinth to those who ate the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (ESV):**27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

This discipline also occurred in the lives of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts, chapter 5, as well as we read in **Acts 5 (HCSB):**1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property. 2 However, he kept back part of the proceeds with his wife's knowledge, and brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds from the field? 4 Wasn't it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn't it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God!" 5 When he heard these words, Ananias dropped dead, and a great fear came on all who heard. 6 The young men got up, wrapped his body, carried him out, and buried him.

And continuing in **Acts 5 (ESV):**7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." 9 But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

However, under the New Covenant we see that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit and He would abide with us forever as we read in **John 14 (ESV):**16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost when the 120 in the upper room were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues in **Acts 2 (ESV):**1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Peter explains to those who overheard, and were questioning what this means as we read in **Acts 2 (ESV):**14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons

and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

The promise of the Holy Spirit is for all believers as Peter tells us in **Acts 2 (ESV):38** And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

And last, in point 5, concerning Irenaeus’ teaching on losing life by losing the Spirit, Irenaeus says at the end of paragraph four, “In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” referring again to 1 Corinthians 15:50. And “Just as if he were to say, “Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” drawing most likely from Galatians 5:23.

In Irenaeus’ thinking, he seems to have believed that the born again experience was a birth of the Holy Spirit in the believer. The presence of the Holy Spirit gave the one who had faith life. He does not see the born again experience as a change in the person themselves. The Holy Spirit merely takes up residence in the hearts of those who have believed, and resides there as long as the believer does not live “frivolously and carelessly.” His thinking is based on his assumption that man does not have a spirit of his own. Since man has no spirit of his own and is merely flesh and blood without the Holy Spirit, he is only spiritually alive when the Holy Spirit is present in him, according to Irenaeus.

However, the new birth is simply not described by the Scriptures in this way. That man has a spirit is plainly stated by the Scriptures. That this new birth takes place in man’s spirit is made plain by the fact that man is described as being dead in sin before the new birth, and that he is made alive by being born again. Saying that the new birth is the Holy Spirit taking up residence in our hearts is not describing the new birth as Jesus described it in John, chapter 3. Jesus says that that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit as we read in **John 3 (ESV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

This new birth then takes place in our spirit. It is our spirit that is born again, or regenerated. Being thus reborn, we delight to do the will of God in our inner man, or spirit. Being thus reborn, we are a new creation, created in righteousness and true holiness, and made partakers of the divine nature. The law of the Spirit of life is the law of our inner self, our spirit. Our spirit now has eternal life. Being thus born again, we are children of God. This is the doctrine of Regeneration. Now as we yield ourselves a living sacrifice, the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts.

And we are His sons and daughters being redeemed by His blood. As such, we are not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Irenaeus’ argument in this chapter is for the resurrection and that is good. However, in his argument he twists the Scriptures with logical arguments. The Scriptures do nowhere state that the Spirit of God inherits anything. The Lord says that the whole world is His as in **Psalm 50 (ESV):12** “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.

God doesn’t inherit things. Everything is already His. The Scriptures do not teach that flesh and blood will inherit or be inherited, but that it will be changed to be fit for eternity. Also, Irenaeus clearly misunderstands the Scriptures in regards to man’s makeup. The Scriptures clearly teach that man is composed of body, soul, and a spirit of his own. Man’s spirit is spiritually dead in sin before he comes to Christ. When a man or woman repents and believes in Jesus Christ, he or she is born again and receives new life in his or her spirit. Christ is then said to dwell in the believer by faith. The believing one is saved at this point and in possession of eternal life. The life of their spirit is the Holy Spirit, and so the believer is said to have the Holy Spirit as a pledge at this point as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that

holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

As far as the resurrection of our bodies is concerned, our earthly body will not be changed until the resurrection. The resurrection will not occur until Jesus returns. When our bodies are resurrected, they will at that point bear the image of the heavenly. Until then we bear the image of the earthly on the outside in our flesh, but we are already changed on the inside where we have this new life in our spirit. So we who have believed in Jesus will not bear the image of the heavenly until we are raised from the dead at the resurrection. We bear the image of the earthly now, but when we are face to face with Jesus we shall be like Him, a heavenly man or woman.

And so Irenaeus confuses the time when the believer is resurrected with the time when he believes and receives the Holy Spirit as a pledge. What is the pledge for except eternal life? In this life on earth, when we believe we receive the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our future home with the Lord and He will never leave us. He is the seal of the purchased possession guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession, to the praise of his glory.

## **Book 5: Chapter X.—By a comparison drawn from the wild olive-tree, whose quality but not whose nature is changed by grafting, he proves more important things; he points out also that man without the Spirit is not capable of bringing forth fruit, or of inheriting the kingdom of God.**

1. This truth, therefore, [he declares], in order that we may not reject the engrafting of the Spirit while pampering the flesh. "But thou, being a wild olive-tree," he says, "hast been grafted into the good olive-tree, and been made a partaker of the fatness of the olive-tree." 4512 Rom. xi. 17. As, therefore, when the wild olive has been engrafted, if it remain in its former condition, viz., a wild olive, it is "cut off, and cast into the fire;" 4513 Matt. vii. 19. but if it takes kindly to the graft, and is changed into the good olive-tree, it becomes a fruit-bearing olive, planted, as it were, in a king's park (*paradiso*): so likewise men, if they do truly progress by faith towards better things, and receive the Spirit of God, and bring forth the fruit thereof, shall be spiritual, as being planted in the paradise of God. But if they cast out the Spirit, and remain in their former condition, desirous of being of the flesh rather than of the Spirit, then it is very justly said with regard to men of this stamp, "That flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" 4514 1 Cor. xv. 50. just as if any one were to say that the wild olive is not received into the paradise of God. Admirably therefore does the apostle exhibit our nature, and God's universal appointment, in his discourse about flesh and blood and the wild olive. For as the good olive, if neglected for a certain time, if left to grow wild and to run to wood, does itself become a wild olive; or again, if the wild olive be carefully tended and grafted, it naturally reverts to its former fruit-bearing condition: so men also, when they become careless, and bring forth for fruit the lusts of the flesh like woody produce, are rendered, by their own fault, unfruitful in righteousness. For when men sleep, the enemy sows the material of tares; 4515 Matt. xiii. 25. and for this cause did the Lord command His disciples to be on the watch. 4516 Matt. xxiv. 42, Matt. xxv. 13; Mark xiii. 33. And again, those persons who are not bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and are, as it were, covered over and lost among brambles, if they use diligence, and receive the word of God as a graft, 4517 Jas. i. 21. arrive at the pristine nature of man—that which was created after the image and likeness of God.

2. But as the engrafted wild olive does not certainly lose the substance of its wood, but changes the quality of its fruit, and receives another name, being now not a wild olive, but a fruit-bearing olive, and is called so; so also, when man is grafted in by faith and receives the Spirit of God, he certainly does not lose the substance of flesh, but changes the quality of the fruit [brought forth, i.e.,] of his works, and receives another name, 4518 Rev. ii. 17. showing that he has become changed for the better, being now not [mere] flesh and blood, but a spiritual man, and is called such. Then, again, as the wild olive, if it be not grafted in, remains useless to its lord because of its woody quality, and is cut down as a tree bearing no fruit, and cast into the fire; so also man, if he does not receive through faith

the engrafting of the Spirit, remains in his old condition, and being [mere] flesh and blood, he cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Rightly therefore does the apostle declare, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" 4519 1 Cor. xv. 50. and, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God;" 4520 Rom. viii. 8. not repudiating [by these words] the substance of flesh, but showing that into it the Spirit must be infused. 4521 The Latin has, "sed infusionem Spiritus attrahens." And for this reason, he says, "This mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption." 4522 1 Cor. xv. 53. And again he declares, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." 4523 Rom. viii. 9. He sets this forth still more plainly, where he says, "The body indeed is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit dwelling in you." 4524 Rom. viii. 10, etc. And again he says, in the Epistle to the Romans, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." 4525 Rom. viii. 13. [Now by these words] he does not prohibit them from living their lives in the flesh, for he was himself in the flesh when he wrote to them; but he cuts away the lusts of the flesh, those which bring death upon a man. And for this reason he says in continuation, "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the works of the flesh, ye shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus begins by stating, "This truth, therefore, [he declares], in order that we may not reject the engrafting of the Spirit while pampering the flesh." He then testifies, "But thou, being a wild olive-tree," he says, "hast been grafted into the good olive-tree, and been made a partaker of the fatness of the olive-tree," referring to Romans 11:17. Irenaeus then affirms, "As, therefore, when the wild olive has been engrafted, if it remain in its former condition, viz., a wild olive, it is "cut off, and cast into the fire, but if it takes kindly to the graft, and is changed into the good olive-tree, it becomes a fruit-bearing olive, planted, as it were, in a king's park (*paradiso*)," drawing from Romans 11:13-22 and Matthew 7:19. Irenaeus then affirms, "so likewise men, if they do truly progress by faith towards better things, and receive the Spirit of God, and bring forth the fruit thereof, shall be spiritual, as being planted in the paradise of God. But if they cast out the Spirit, and remain in their former condition, desirous of being of the flesh rather than of the Spirit, then it is very justly said with regard to men of this stamp, "That flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God," referring again to 1 Corinthians 15:50, "just as if any one were to say that the wild olive is not received into the paradise of God." Irenaeus then concludes, "Admirably therefore does the apostle exhibit our nature, and God's universal appointment, in his discourse about flesh and blood and the wild olive. For as the good olive, if neglected for a certain time, if left to grow wild and to run to wood, does itself become a wild olive; or again, if the wild olive be carefully tended and grafted, it naturally reverts to its former fruit-bearing condition: so men also, when they become careless, and bring forth for fruit the lusts of the flesh like woody produce, are rendered, by their own fault, unfruitful in righteousness." Irenaeus then testifies, "For when men sleep, the enemy sows the material of tares," referring to Matthew 13:25, "and for this cause did the Lord command His disciples to be on the watch," referring to Matthew 24:42. Irenaeus then testifies, "And again, those persons who are not bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and are, as it were, covered over and lost among brambles, if they use diligence, and receive the word of God as a graft," drawing from James 1:21, "arrive at the pristine nature of man—that which was created after the image and likeness of God."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus explains, "But as the engrafted wild olive does not certainly lose the substance of its wood, but changes the quality of its fruit, and receives another name," drawing from Revelations 2:17, "being now not a wild olive, but a fruit-bearing olive, and is called so; so also, when man is grafted in by faith and receives the Spirit of God, he certainly does not lose the substance of flesh, but changes the quality of the fruit [brought forth, i.e.,] of his works, and receives another name, showing that he has become changed for the better, being now not [mere] flesh and blood, but a spiritual man, and is called such." Irenaeus then testifies, "Then, again, as the wild olive, if it be not grafted in, remains useless to its lord because of its woody quality, and is cut down as a tree bearing no fruit, and cast into the fire; so also man, if he does not receive through faith the engrafting of the Spirit, remains in his old condition, and being [mere] flesh and blood,

he cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Rightly therefore does the apostle declare, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” referring again to 1 Corinthians 15:50, and, “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God,” referring to Romans 8:8, “not repudiating [by these words] the substance of flesh, but showing that into it the Spirit must be infused.” Irenaeus then asserts, “And for this reason, he says, “This mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:53. And Irenaeus then testifies, “And again he declares, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you,” referring in part to Romans 8:9. Irenaeus continues, “He sets this forth still more plainly, where he says, “The body indeed is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit dwelling in you,” referring to Romans 8:10-11. Irenaeus testifies, “And again he says, in the Epistle to the Romans, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die,” referring in part to Romans 8:13. Irenaeus then explains, “[Now by these words] he does not prohibit them from living their lives in the flesh, for he was himself in the flesh when he wrote to them; but he cuts away the lusts of the flesh, those which bring death upon a man. And for this reason he says in continuation, “But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the works of the flesh, ye shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God,” referring to Romans 8:13-14.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, when Irenaeus begins with the words, “This truth, therefore, [he declares]...” He is referring to the previous section, **Book 5: Chapter IX**, paragraph one where he begins by saying, “Among the other [truths] proclaimed by the apostle, there is also this one, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”” Irenaeus here in **Book 5: Chapter X**, paragraph one, is therefore continuing his arguments from the previous chapter against the heretics, the Gnostics, who did not believe in the resurrection, yet called themselves Christians. He is continuing on the basis of what he concluded before in the previous chapter, that is, the apostolic warning that Irenaeus says is implicit in Paul’s words, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Irenaeus concludes in **Book 5: Chapter IX**, paragraph four by saying, “In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Just as if he were to say, “Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

And so here in **Book 5: Chapter X**, Irenaeus continues where he left off in the previous chapter as he says, “This truth, therefore, [he declares], in order that we may not reject the engrafting of the Spirit while pampering the flesh.” By his words, “reject the engrafting of the Spirit while pampering the flesh,” he means just what he said in the previous chapter that we must not live frivolously and carelessly as if we were only mere flesh and blood so that we don’t in this way lose the Holy Spirit.

Irenaeus then continues his argument as he testifies referring to Paul, “But thou, being a wild olive-tree,” he says, “hast been grafted into the good olive-tree, and been made a partaker of the fatness of the olive-tree,” referring in part to **Romans 11 (ESV):17** But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, The Mirriam Webster online dictionary says that the word “engraft” means to join or fasten as if by grafting. A synonym would be to “implant.”

Irenaeus then affirms, “As, therefore, when the wild olive has been engrafted, if it remain in its former condition, viz., a wild olive, it is “cut off, and cast into the fire,” drawing from **Romans 11 (ESV):19** Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”

And to **Matthew 7 (ESV):19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “but if it takes kindly to the graft, and is changed into the good olive-tree, it becomes a fruit-bearing olive, planted, as it were, in a king’s park (paradiso),” drawing from **Romans 11 (ESV):13** Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry 14 in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. 15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? 16 If

the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” 20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. 22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

Irenaeus is drawing an analogy from this passage in order to further explain how one might lose the Holy Spirit and thus lose life.

Irenaeus then affirms, “so likewise men, if they do truly progress by faith towards better things, and receive the Spirit of God, and bring forth the fruit thereof, shall be spiritual, as being planted in the paradise of God.” This reminds us of Jesus words in the parable of the sower in **Matthew 13 (ESV):8** Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Irenaeus then continues, “But if they cast out the Spirit, and remain in their former condition, desirous of being of the flesh rather than of the Spirit, then it is very justly said with regard to men of this stamp, “That flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” referring again in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Irenaeus’ words again remind us of Jesus’ words in **Matthew 13 (ESV):3** And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, 6 but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.

Irenaeus then adds, “just as if any one were to say that the wild olive is not received into the paradise of God.” Irenaeus then concludes, “Admirably therefore does the apostle exhibit our nature, and God’s universal appointment, in his discourse about flesh and blood and the wild olive. For as the good olive, if neglected for a certain time, if left to grow wild and to run to wood, does itself become a wild olive; or again, if the wild olive be carefully tended and grafted, it naturally reverts to its former fruit-bearing condition: so men also, when they become careless, and bring forth for fruit the lusts of the flesh like woody produce, are rendered, by their own fault, unfruitful in righteousness.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For when men sleep, the enemy sows the material of tares,” referring to **Matthew 13 (ESV):25** but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

Irenaeus continues, “and for this cause did the Lord command His disciples to be on the watch,” referring to **Matthew 24 (ESV):42** Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Irenaeus then testifies, “And again, those persons who are not bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and are, as it were, covered over and lost among brambles, if they use diligence, and receive the word of God as a graft,” drawing from **James 1 (ESV):21** Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Irenaeus concludes that these, “arrive at the pristine nature of man—that which was created after the image and likeness of God.”

Irenaeus sees in Romans 11:13-22, which speaks of the wild olive and the good olive trees, an analogy of our walk by faith as he says in paragraph one, “so likewise men, if they do truly progress by faith towards better things, and receive the Spirit of God, and bring forth the fruit thereof, shall be spiritual, as being planted in the paradise of God.” We note however that the phrase, “paradise of God,” is not referred to by Paul in Romans, chapter 11, but in **Revelation 2 (ESV):7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Irenaeus goes a little beyond the Scripture here when he pictures the one who walks by faith and becomes spiritual as being “planted, as it were, in a king’s park,” and “in the paradise of God.” He gets a little ahead of himself. The Scriptures say that after the resurrection there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and the paradise of God. This phrase, “paradise of God,” relates to the new heaven and the new earth where the tree of life is again pictured as we read in **Revelation 21 (ESV):1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

The tree of life is mentioned in this context in **Revelation 22 (ESV):1** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

This is a promised future event, and not attainable in this life. The phrase, “paradise of God,” is used in Scripture to refer to a specific place, and it relates to the new heaven and earth that are future. Though it fits his analogy, Irenaeus is taking the phrase out of context with the Scriptures. Irenaeus is exhibiting what might be called “free-style” interpretation of the Scriptures.

Also, Irenaeus again refers to Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 15:50 that “flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God” as if it referred to men who “remain in their former condition” desiring to be “of the flesh rather than of the Spirit,” and are what Paul refers to as “in the flesh” and they that “have not the Spirit.” The word flesh in 1 Corinthians 15:50 relates to our physical body. It is our physical body that will be resurrected and changed to be like His glorious body. The phrase “flesh and blood” in 1 Corinthians 15:50 relates to the type of body that will be resurrected, and not the works or fruit of the body, or the flesh. Irenaeus is here connecting a phrase in 1 Corinthians 15:50 with a passage in Romans, chapter 11. These passages have absolutely nothing to do with each other contextually as we shall see in a moment, though Irenaeus has some words of encouragement in his argument. He is fighting for the resurrection of the dead, and he is fighting for holiness in the Church. These are good things. But his method of interpretation is setting precedents that will have unwanted consequences in the Church following his lifetime.

Irenaeus does seem to be following the analogy of Paul in Romans, chapter 11, when he says that, once the branches are cut off, God is able to graft them in again as we read in **Romans 11 (ESV):23** And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.

Now as we move on to paragraph two, Irenaeus says that, “But as the engrafted wild olive does not certainly lose the substance of its wood, but changes the quality of its fruit, and receives another name,” drawing from **Revelations 2 (ESV):17** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’ Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “being now not a wild olive, but a fruit-bearing olive, and is called so; so also, when man is grafted in by faith and receives the Spirit of God, he certainly does not lose the substance of flesh, but changes the quality of the fruit [brought forth, i.e.,] of his works, and receives another name, showing that he has become changed for the better, being now not [mere] flesh and blood, but a spiritual man, and is called such.” Irenaeus here recognizes the difference between the fleshly body of man and the works that the body of flesh produces. The one who is “grafted in by faith and receives the Spirit of God” will now be able to produce righteous fruit since he will have been born again by the Spirit of God. However, the one who is just born again is not yet called spiritual, but a babe in Christ as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):1** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not *mere* men?

To grow we must be nurtured by the pure milk of the word as we read in **1 Peter 2 (ESV):1** So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.

We do not become spiritual over night as Irenaeus seems to suggest. We do have the Spirit in us but the fruit of the Spirit is called fruit because it grows in us. As we hear the word and become doers of the word, the

fruit will grow as we read in **Galatians 5 (ESV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

But to Irenaeus' point, we could say that the one who has faith in Christ, and has received the Spirit, is a new man and a new creature producing a new kind of fruit. In that sense he is spiritual. But the Scriptures speak of the one who is spiritual as one who has matured by the discipline of his flesh.

Irenaeus continues as he says, "Then, again, as the wild olive, if it be not grafted in, remains useless to its lord because of its woody quality, and is cut down as a tree bearing no fruit, and cast into the fire; so also man, if he does not receive through faith the engrafting of the Spirit, remains in his old condition, and being [mere] flesh and blood, he cannot inherit the kingdom of God." All that Irenaeus says here is true. And it is true that the man who does not receive the Spirit of God will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Irenaeus then concludes that "Rightly therefore does the apostle declare, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," referring again to **1 Corinthians 15:50**, and, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God," referring to **Romans 8 (NASB):8** and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Irenaeus then adds, "not repudiating [by these words] the substance of flesh, but showing that into it the Spirit must be infused." It is true that we must have the Spirit to be saved, but again, that is not why the apostle said that "flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Again Irenaeus adds, "And for this reason, he says, "This mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption," referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):53** For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

Again, this statement by Paul in **1 Corinthians 15: 53** is not referring to our receiving the Spirit of God here on earth when we are born again, but to our future resurrection body which will be changed to be immortal and incorruptible if we have faith in Jesus Christ in our lifetime, having truly been born again.

Irenaeus then testifies, "And again he declares, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," referring in part to **Romans 8 (NASB):9** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Irenaeus continues, "He sets this forth still more plainly, where he says, "The body indeed is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit dwelling in you," referring to **Romans 8:10-11**. Irenaeus testifies, "And again he says, in the Epistle to the Romans, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," referring in part to **Romans 8:13**.

Irenaeus is quoting from Romans, chapter 8 as we see in **Romans 8 (ESV):9** You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Irenaeus quotes Romans correctly but leaves out parts of verse 9, 10, 11, and 13, and he does not quote from verse 12. This is important, especially when we consider the parts he left out. Paul explains here what he means by the phrases, "in the flesh" and "in the Spirit." To be "in the flesh" is to be living without the Spirit of God in us. In this state, we follow after whatever our flesh wants. We are without God, and we are not submitted to Him, and we have not been born again. To be "in the Spirit" on the other hand is to have received the Spirit of God by faith in Jesus Christ, having been born again. The Spirit of God now dwells in us which is to have Christ is in us, as Paul says in verse 10. This is a very important point. After we are born again and receive the Spirit of God, Christ is said to be in us. What has happened is we have gone through a spiritual resurrection as we read in **Colossians 2 (ESV):12** having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

This spiritual resurrection was needed because we were spiritually dead in sins as we read in **Colossians 2 (ESV):13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

And this spiritual resurrection occurred in our spirit as we were raised up with Him and made alive as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Christ is said to be in us because we have been born of the Spirit of God, and His nature is in our spirit. This is why Paul speaks of our inner man as joyfully concurring with the law of God in **Romans 7 (ESV):22** For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Paul also tells us not to let the flesh rule our lives, but to put on this new inner self as we read in **Ephesians 4 (ESV):24** and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

This new self has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth when we were born again, for to be born of the Spirit is to possess His attributes of righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Now Irenaeus does seem to understand the difference between living our lives in the flesh and the works of the flesh as he says, “[Now by these words] he does not prohibit them from living their lives in the flesh, for he was himself in the flesh when he wrote to them; but he cuts away the lusts of the flesh, those which bring death upon a man. And for this reason he says in continuation, “But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the works of the flesh, ye shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God,” referring to **Romans 8 (ESV):13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Now Irenaeus says that Paul in these verses “cuts away the lusts of the flesh.” Paul does not actually use these words, but rather he says in reference to our former manner of life to lay aside the old self and put on the new as we read in **Ephesians 4 (ESV):17** Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

When we accept Christ as Lord and Savior, we are born again, and our spirit is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. We are new creations with new life on the inside. But in our flesh dwells no good thing as we read in **Romans 7 (ESV):18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

Our willing to do good relates to the new inner self that God raised to life when we accepted Jesus as Savior. But we who have been born again still have sin dwelling in us as Paul says in **Romans 7 (ESV):19** For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

Because we are descendants of Adam, we have a sin nature in our flesh. So when we are born again, we have a new spirit that wants to do the will of God, and we also have sin dwelling in us by the old Adamic nature in our flesh. We must be vigilant to put to death the deeds of this nature. It is God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ over the sin in our members as we read in **Romans 7 (ESV):22** For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

It is the deeds of the body that are of the woody quality. We must give diligence to lay aside these deeds and put on the new self in order that we may bear the fruit of the Spirit.

## Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter X

Irenaeus here in this chapter is continuing his argument for the resurrection of the body, but he is now encouraging us to live a holy life and not give in to the lusts of the flesh. He reiterates his main point in the middle of paragraph one as he says, “Admirably therefore does the apostle exhibit our nature, and God’s universal appointment, in his discourse about flesh and blood and the wild olive.” In this statement we see that Irenaeus is joining two main passages of Scripture in his discourse. The first passage states that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” as in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

And the second is the passage of the olive tree analogy as in **Romans 11 (ESV):13** Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry 14 in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. 15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? 16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” 20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. 22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

Irenaeus' concern in the previous chapter, **Book 5: Chapter IX**, is that we “may not lose life by losing the Spirit which possesses us.” That is, that if we “shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood,” we “cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

Irenaeus' concern in the current **Book 5: Chapter X** is that we “progress by faith towards better things, and receive the Spirit of God, and bring forth the fruit thereof,” so that we “shall be spiritual, as being planted in the paradise of God.” He again touches on the possibility of losing the Spirit as he says, “But if they cast out the Spirit, and remain in their former condition, desirous of being of the flesh rather than of the Spirit, then it is very justly said with regard to men of this stamp, “That flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God; just as if any one were to say that the wild olive is not received into the paradise of God.”

Irenaeus' intent is to encourage us to live a holy life. This is good. But in his effort to argue his points from the Scriptures, he joins together two disparate themes.

The Scripture in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, relates to the resurrection of our body, and not to the works of the flesh. When Paul refers to “flesh and blood” here he is talking about what type of body will inherit the kingdom of God, and the fact that by itself, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Paul’s whole point in 1 Corinthians 15:12-58 is the resurrection. The Holy Spirit is not even mentioned in this passage except possibly in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):45** Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in other passages in regards to the resurrection as in **Romans 1 (NASB):4** who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Also in **Romans 8 (ESV):11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Paul gives us hope and he explains in this verse that if the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, we can be assured that He will raise us up also when the time comes. However, the term “flesh and blood” in 1 Corinthians 15:50 relates to the type of body that will inherit eternity, and does not relate to our works. The type of body that will inherit eternity will not be flesh and blood, that is a perishable body, but it will be a heavenly or imperishable body that will remain for eternity having its life principle as the Holy Spirit. It will thus be a spiritual body as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Now the Scripture in Romans, chapter 11 is Paul's analogy of the olive tree, and this analogy relates to the current status of Israel. The theme of Romans, chapter 11 relates only indirectly to the works of the flesh. Paul explains in chapter 11 of Romans that Israel is currently in a state of apostasy. He uses the analogy of the olive tree to explain the state of Israel in the Church age. Israel is like a good olive tree that has become uncultivated. The trunk is still good but the branches have become like the wild olive and are not able to bear their valuable fruit. For this reason they have been cut off from the good olive tree so that other branches might be grafted in to produce the precious fruit of the olive, that is, the oil.

Now in order to understand what Paul is talking about in Romans, chapter 11, we must understand the symbolism he uses. The olive tree was well known to Jews in Paul's time. **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** (ISBE) says on pages 2184 through 2185 that the olive tree is indigenous in the land of Palestine. The cultivation of the olive goes back to the earliest times in Canaan. When Israel entered the land they acquired olive trees which they did not plant as in **Deuteronomy 6 (ESV):10** "And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, 12 then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Also in **Joshua 24 (ESV):13** I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.'

"When the young trees are three years old they are grafted from a choice stock and after another three or four years they may commence to bear fruit, but they take quite a decade or more before reaching full fruition," the ISBE says on page 2184. The analogy that Paul makes about the olive tree would be immediately understood by a Jewish believer. And Paul was encouraging Gentile believers to not give up on Jews who had not accepted Christ yet. Paul himself was a Jew so he knew there would be some who would accept Christ still. And Paul says at the present time there is a remnant as we read in **Romans 11 (ESV):5** So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

Paul does not mention the Holy Spirit as engrafting anything in chapter 11 of his epistle to the Romans, or anywhere else in Scripture. In fact, the Holy Spirit is not mentioned at all in this chapter of Romans. Paul does say that God broke off the branches which are symbolic of Israel in unbelief. If they abide not still in unbelief God is able to graft them in again as we see in **Romans 11 (ESV):23** And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.

As for the wild olive that is grafted in, it stands for the Gentile believer who is now a member of the people of God. This believer stands by his faith, for it is by grace through faith that we are saved as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

It is through this same grace and faith that the Jewish believer is saved as we see in **Romans 11 (ESV):4** But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

Also, Paul does not mention the word "flesh" or the word "fruit" in the whole chapter 11 of Romans. He is simply telling us that God's plan for Israel isn't finished yet, and when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, all Israel will then be saved when the deliverer comes to Zion as we read in **Romans 11 (NASB):25** Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; 27 "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." 28 As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

With this in mind, in paragraph one we see that Irenaeus is encouraging us not to be wild olives and remain in our “former condition.” If we do so, he warns, we will be “cut off, and cast into the fire.” Rather, he exhorts us to become “a fruit-bearing olive, planted as it were in a king’s park.” We are not to reject “the engrafting of the Spirit while pampering the flesh.” We are encouraged to “progress by faith towards better things, and receive the Spirit of God, and bring forth the fruit thereof.” In short, we are to become spiritual. Irenaeus sees us “planted in the paradise of God” in this state of being spiritual.

However, his next statement in paragraph one is “But if they cast out the Spirit of God and remain in their former condition, desirous of being of the flesh rather than of the Spirit,” then the justice of God will not allow them to inherit the Kingdom of God.” This reminds me again of his statement in **Book 5: Chapter IX**, paragraph four, where he speaks of losing life by “losing that Spirit which possesses us.” However, once we are born again and have life, we have the Spirit of God. We cannot lose the Spirit of God or cast Him out for He possesses us. We are His possession, and we are not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

It is true that we can grieve the Holy Spirit as the children of Israel did in **Isaiah 63 (ESV):10** But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.

Also when we as children of God, having the Holy Spirit and the power to put to death the lusts of the flesh and yet we do not put them to death, we grieve the Holy Spirit as seen in **Ephesians 4 (ESV):30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

But we cannot change our nature as if we were changing back and forth from a wild olive to a good olive and then when we sin, be turn back into a wild olive again. When we become a child of God, we receive a new nature in our spirit as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And so God deals with us as sons and daughters. He then disciplines every child He whom receives as we read in **Hebrews 12 (ESV):4** In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

When we sin as His sons and daughters, we have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (ESV):1** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

And when we say we have fellowship with Him who is light, and yet we walk in darkness we are not practicing the truth as we read in **1 John 1 (ESV):5** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

As we walk in the light of God’s word and confess our sins as we become aware of them, we are cleansed from all sin by His blood as we read in **1 John 1 (ESV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

This is why reading and studying the Word of God is so important. As we become aware of more truth, we are then responsible to walk in the light of that truth. This is how we grow up in Him and become spiritual. In one sense we are spiritual, that is in the Spirit and not in the flesh, when we are born again because we have the Holy Spirit from that point on as Irenaeus himself quotes Paul in **Romans 8 (ESV):9** You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

And we belong to Him when we have faith in Jesus Christ, that He is God's Son, that He came in the flesh and died on the cross for our sins, and that He rose again from the dead.

But in another sense we become spiritual when we have learned to put off the old man, and the works of the flesh, and have received the pure milk of the word, and have brought forth the fruit of the Spirit. As we discipline ourselves to continue in prayer and in the word of God, this growth will happen. If we don't discipline ourselves God, being a good Father, He will discipline us. His discipline even includes sickness and death as with those who ate the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner in Corinth as in **1 Corinthians 11 (ESV):26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. **27** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. **28** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. **30** That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

Paul says that we are disciplined by the Lord so that we are not condemned with the world as see in **1 Corinthians 11 (ESV):31** But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. **32** But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. **33** So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—**34** if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

So we are not to "become careless, and bring forth for fruit the lusts of the flesh like woody produce," as Irenaeus says. If we do so, we will be disciplined by the Lord, but we will not be cast out or lose our salvation. God deals with us as His sons and daughters from the moment we have faith in Him.

Now in paragraph two Irenaeus shows us that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God," as we read in context in **Romans 8 (ESV):8** Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. **9** You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. **10** But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. **12** So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **14** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Irenaeus says we are not by the Scripture prohibited from living our lives in the flesh, but it is the lusts of the flesh we must put off for they "bring death upon a man."

Now also in paragraph two, where Irenaeus says "And again, those persons who are not bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and are, as it were, covered over and lost among brambles, if they use diligence, and receive the word of God as a graft, arrive at the pristine nature of man—that which was created after the image and likeness of God.,," he seems to be referring to those who at first believed but then fell into sin and the former conversation again. He allows for their repentance I can see. But I do not see that he understands the responsibility which we have as children of God of putting on the new man and putting off the old man. It is not a matter of changing our nature again or being born again, again. We have a new man, and therefore a new nature, when we are born again. But we still have the old man in our flesh, and therefore a sinful nature, as well. Our responsibility in this new life is to put on the new man, and to put off the old.

Now the analogy of the olive tree is just a method Paul uses to explain the truth about the current state of Israel. It is only an analogy. When we get to heaven we will not all line up in the shape of an olive tree. The olive tree is just a way to illustrate the truth about Israel and the Church. No one is really engrafted into an olive tree. It is just figurative language of the relationship of the believer in the Church to the believer who is of

Israel. And so there is no engrafting of the Spirit into an olive tree. It is just an analogy. And so we cannot “lose the Holy Spirit which possesses us,” as if we held on to Him by our works. It is He who possesses us. And yet if we wish to find our lives, we must lose them for His sake. In this way we will live the abundant life that Jesus promises to all who believe in Him.

## **Book 5: Chapter XI.—Treats upon the actions of carnal and of spiritual persons; also, that the spiritual cleansing is not to be referred to the substance of our bodies, but to the manner of our former life.**

1. [The apostle], foreseeing the wicked speeches of unbelievers, has particularized the works which he terms carnal; and he explains himself, lest any room for doubt be left to those who do dishonestly pervert his meaning, thus saying in the Epistle to the Galatians: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are adulteries, fornications, uncleanness, luxuriosness, idolatries, witchcrafts, **4526** Or, “poisonings.” hatreds, contentions jealousies, wraths, emulations, animosities, irritable speeches, dissensions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, carousings, and such like; of which I warn you, as also I have warned you, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” **4527** Gal. v. 19, etc. Thus does he point out to his hearers in a more explicit manner what it is [he means when he declares], “Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” For they who do these things, since they do indeed walk after the flesh, have not the power of living unto God. And then, again, he proceeds to tell us the spiritual actions which vivify a man, that is, the engrafting of the Spirit; thus saying, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, benignity, faith, meekness, continence, chastity: against these there is no law.” **4528** Gal. v. 22. As, therefore, he who has gone forward to the better things, and has brought forth the fruit of the Spirit, is saved altogether because of the communion of the Spirit; so also he who has continued in the aforesaid works of the flesh, being truly reckoned as carnal, because he did not receive the Spirit of God, shall not have power to inherit the kingdom of heaven. As, again, the same apostle testifies, saying to the Corinthians, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not err,” he says: “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor revilers, nor rapacious persons, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And these ye indeed have been; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.” **4529** **1** Cor. vi. 9–11. He shows in the clearest manner through what things it is that man goes to destruction, if he has continued to live after the flesh; and then, on the other hand, [he points out] through what things he is saved. Now he says that the things which save are the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God.

2. Since, therefore, in that passage he recounts those works of the flesh which are without the Spirit, which bring death [upon their doers], he exclaimed at the end of his Epistle, in accordance with what he had already declared, “And as we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven. For this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” **4530** **1** Cor. xv. 49, etc. Now this which he says, “as we have borne the image of him who is of the earth,” is analogous to what has been declared, “And such indeed ye were; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.” When, therefore, did we bear the image of him who is of the earth? Doubtless it was when those actions spoken of as “works of the flesh” used to be wrought in us. And then, again, when [do we bear] the image of the heavenly? Doubtless when he says, “Ye have been washed,” believing in the name of the Lord, and receiving His Spirit. Now we have washed away, not the substance of our body, nor the image of our [primary] formation, but the former vain conversation. In these members, therefore, in which we were going to destruction by working the works of corruption, in these very members are we made alive by working the works of the Spirit.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “[The apostle], foreseeing the wicked speeches of unbelievers, has particularized the works which he terms carnal; and he explains himself, lest any room for doubt be left to those who do dishonestly pervert his meaning, thus saying in the Epistle to the Galatians: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are adulteries, fornications, uncleanness, luxuriousness, idolatries, witchcrafts, hatreds, contentions jealousies, wraths, emulations, animosities, irritable speeches, dissensions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, carousings, and such like; of which I warn you, as also I have warned you, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” referring to Galatians 5:19-21. Irenaeus then asserts, “Thus does he point out to his hearers in a more explicit manner what it is [he means when he declares], “Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” For they who do these things, since they do indeed walk after the flesh, have not the power of living unto God.” Irenaeus then testifies, “And then, again, he proceeds to tell us the spiritual actions which vivify a man, that is, the engrafting of the Spirit; thus saying, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, benignity, faith, meekness, continence, chastity: against these there is no law,” referring to Galatians 5:22-23. Irenaeus then affirms, “As, therefore, he who has gone forward to the better things, and has brought forth the fruit of the Spirit, is saved altogether because of the communion of the Spirit; so also he who has continued in the aforesaid works of the flesh, being truly reckoned as carnal, because he did not receive the Spirit of God, shall not have power to inherit the kingdom of heaven.” Irenaeus then again testifies, “As, again, the same apostle testifies, saying to the Corinthians, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not err,” he says: “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor revilers, nor rapacious persons, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And these ye indeed have been; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God,” referring to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Irenaeus then affirms, “He shows in the clearest manner through what things it is that man goes to destruction, if he has continued to live after the flesh; and then, on the other hand, [he points out] through what things he is saved. Now he says that the things which save are the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God,” referring again to 1 Corinthians 6:11.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then affirms, “Since, therefore, in that passage he recounts those works of the flesh which are without the Spirit, which bring death [upon their doers], he exclaimed at the end of his Epistle, in accordance with what he had already declared, “And as we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven. For this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” referring in part to 1 Corinthians 15:49-50. Irenaeus then asserts, “Now this which he says, “as we have borne the image of him who is of the earth,” is analogous to what has been declared, “And such indeed ye were; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God,” referring again to 1 Corinthians 6:11. Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “When, therefore, did we bear the image of him who is of the earth? Doubtless it was when those actions spoken of as “works of the flesh” used to be wrought in us. And then, again, when [do we bear] the image of the heavenly? Doubtless when he says, “Ye have been washed,” believing in the name of the Lord, and receiving His Spirit.” Irenaeus then affirms, “Now we have washed away, not the substance of our body, nor the image of our [primary] formation, but the former vain conversation.” And Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “In these members, therefore, in which we were going to destruction by working the works of corruption, in these very members are we made alive by working the works of the Spirit.”

**Commentary:** Irenaeus now continues in this third chapter in a row with his defense of the truth about the resurrection which he began in **Book 5: Chapter IX**. As he began to talk about the works of the flesh in the previous chapter, so now he continues that discussion, and enumerates them in this chapter. He also enumerates the fruits of the Spirit which he will call “spiritual actions which vivify a man, that is, the engrafting of the Spirit.”

Let us pick up Irenaeus’ argument in paragraph one, as he testifies that, “[The apostle], foreseeing the wicked speeches of unbelievers, has particularized the works which he terms carnal; and he explains himself, lest any room for doubt be left to those who do dishonestly pervert his meaning, thus saying in the Epistle to the Galatians: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are adulteries, fornications, uncleanness,

luxuriousness, idolatries, witchcrafts, hatreds, contentions jealousies, wraths, emulations, animosities, irritable speeches, dissensions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, carousings, and such like; of which I warn you, as also I have warned you, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," referring to **Galatians 5 (ESV):19** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul does say that "they who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" in verse 21 above, showing us the character of those who will inherit the kingdom of God. In Galatians, chapter 5, Paul is describing what type of person will be in the kingdom of God relating to their character. He is not referring to what type of body they shall have when they inherit the kingdom of God, as he describes in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15.

Yet Irenaeus then asserts, "Thus does he point out to his hearers in a more explicit manner what it is [he means when he declares], "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God." For they who do these things, since they do indeed walk after the flesh, have not the power of living unto God."

We have already dealt with the fact that Paul is speaking of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, and that he is not there speaking of the works of the flesh. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, Paul speaks of what type of body will enter the kingdom of God. A body of flesh and blood will not enter the kingdom of God because its life principle is in the blood. The body of flesh and blood must be changed so that its life principle is the Spirit of God in order to enter the kingdom of God. In other words, our body of flesh and blood will have to be changed to be made like His glorious body as Paul says in **Philippians 3 (NASB):21** who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Our body will then be imperishable and immortal.

Irenaeus then testifies, "And then, again, he proceeds to tell us the spiritual actions which vivify a man, that is, the engraving of the Spirit; thus saying, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, benignity, faith, meekness, continence, chastity: against these there is no law," referring to **Galatians 5 (ESV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

However, the word fruit in verse 22 speaks of something that comes from life. A tree that is alive bears fruit. A tree that is dead bears no fruit. A tree is known by the type of fruit it produces. Jesus warned his disciples about false prophets as we read in **Matthew 7 (ESV):15** "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Jesus speaks of the outward appearance of the false prophets as sheep, yet inwardly He says they are as ravenous wolves. The fruit does not give life to the tree, but the tree grows the fruit as a result of the life inside it.

Therefore, the fruit of the Spirit is something that comes about in our lives as a result of the life of the Spirit in us. The life of the Spirit is given to us when we are born of the Spirit. We are born of the Spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ, and we receive His life in our spirit when we are born again in this way. In his argument, Irenaeus tries to make the Spirit engrraft the fruit of the Spirit into our lives. He equates this engraving of the Spirit with "the spiritual actions which vivify a man," or gives life to a man, as if we are only becoming alive spiritually. He then equates these spiritual actions with the "going forward to the better things," and bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit. And in paragraph two, Irenaeus will even equate the fruit of the Spirit with the works of the Spirit as he will say "In these members, therefore, in which we were going to destruction by working the works of corruption, in these very members are we made alive by working the works of the Spirit." However, the works of the flesh are something we do as a result of the old Adamic nature in our flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is something that grows in us as we yield to the Spirit who is the life of our spirit within us. The fruits of the Spirit are not "spiritual actions," and they are not works, or something we do that gives us

life. They are evidence of the life that is in us as a result of our faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “As, therefore, he who has gone forward to the better things, and has brought forth the fruit of the Spirit, is saved altogether because of the communion of the Spirit; so also he who has continued in the aforesaid works of the flesh, being truly reckoned as carnal, because he did not receive the Spirit of God, shall not have power to inherit the kingdom of heaven.” Now it is true that the one who is born again has passed from death to life as Jesus spoke in **John 5 (ESV):24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

It is also true that the one who does not receive the Spirit of God is guilty of an eternal sin. When the scribes said that Jesus was possessed by Beelzebul, Jesus asked them how Satan could cast out Satan. But they still did not receive Him, and so He spoke as in **Mark 3 (ESV):28** “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— 30 for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

But God is a righteous judge and no one who has truly believed in His Son, Jesus Christ, will be lost. Now, again, Irenaeus uses the word carnal here as he says, “he who has continued in the aforesaid works of the flesh, being truly reckoned as carnal, because he did not receive the Spirit of God, shall not have power to inherit the kingdom of heaven.” The word carnal means “of the flesh.”

Irenaeus then again testifies, “As, again, the same apostle testifies, saying to the Corinthians, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not err,” he says: “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor revilers, nor rapacious persons, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And these ye indeed have been; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God,” referring to **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Irenaeus then affirms, “He shows in the clearest manner through what things it is that man goes to destruction, if he has continued to live after the flesh; and then, on the other hand, [he points out] through what things he is saved. Now he says that the things which save are the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God.”

It is evident that Irenaeus believed that one is saved by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God. But, in the context of his writing, he also believed that one must do the “works of the Spirit,” and he or she must not do the works of the flesh or he or she will lose the Spirit of God and not be able to inherit the Kingdom of God.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then affirms, “Since, therefore, in that passage he recounts those works of the flesh which are without the Spirit, which bring death [upon their doers], he exclaimed at the end of his Epistle, in accordance with what he had already declared, “And as we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven. For this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” referring in part to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):49** Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Irenaeus then asserts, “Now this which he says, “as we have borne the image of him who is of the earth,” is analogous to what has been declared, “And such indeed ye were; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God,” referring again to **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Irenaeus continues as he then asserts, “When, therefore, did we bear the image of him who is of the earth? Doubtless it was when those actions spoken of as “works of the flesh” used to be wrought in us. And then, again, when [do we bear] the image of the heavenly? Doubtless when he says, “Ye have been washed,” believing in the name of the Lord, and receiving His Spirit.”

We see here that Irenaeus clearly believed that we bore “the image of him who is of the earth” when “those actions spoken of as “works of the flesh” used to be wrought in us.” And the moment we were “washed, believing in the name of the Lord, and receiving His Spirit,” we bear the image of the heavenly. However, his interpretation takes these verses completely out of context. Paul says that, “Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will also bear the image of the heavenly,” in verse 49 of 1 Corinthians 15. Paul includes himself when he says “we.” And he placed this event as future to himself when he said “we will also bear.” And as we have already discussed previously, his expression “flesh and blood” in verse 50 of 1 Corinthians 15 relates to the perishable which he says will not inherit the imperishable. Our flesh and blood will become imperishable when our bodies are resurrected, and made like His glorious body. It is then that we shall bear the image of the heavenly, just as Paul says.

The expectation of Irenaeus seems to be that when we believed, the “works of the flesh” would no more be wrought in us, and that we would be bearing “the image of the heavenly” as we live our lives on earth, waiting for Jesus to return. But that is not what Paul is saying. This must have been a heavy load indeed on the church which followed him.

Irenaeus then affirms, “Now we have washed away, not the substance of our body, nor the image of our [primary] formation, but the former vain conversation.” Actually, Irenaeus’ wording here conflicts somewhat with the Scriptures. Yes, it is true that we have not washed away “the substance of our body, nor the image of our [primary] formation,” but the Scriptures say that we have washed away our sins as Ananias told Paul in **Acts 22 (ESV):16** And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

And our former vain conversation is something that we must now lay aside as Paul exhorts in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):22** that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

This is also translated as in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):22** That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

So our former conversation, or manner of life, is not what is washed away, but our sins are washed away.

And Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “In these members, therefore, in which we were going to destruction by working the works of corruption, in these very members are we made alive by working the works of the Spirit.” Again, the Scriptures are in conflict with Irenaeus’ statement. We are not made alive by any works of the Spirit, but when we believe in Him as Jesus said in **John 5 (ESV):24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

It was when we were dead in sin that He made us alive as we read in **Colossians 2 (ESV):13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

We do not make ourselves alive by doing anything. It is simple faith in Him that makes us alive. It is simple faith in Him that saves us. It is not by works of righteousness as Paul says in **Titus 3 (NASB):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The washing of regeneration speaks of the cleansing from our sins that happens when we are born again. This is what Paul is speaking of when he says, **1 Corinthains 6 (KJV):11** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

It is at the new birth that we were washed, sanctified, and justified. And it is not in our members that we are made alive, but in our spirits that we are made alive to God when we are born again. And it is not a gradual thing as if we were gradually being born again after accumulating enough “works of the Spirit.” It is after we have believed that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit as Paul says in **Ephesians 1 (ESV):13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the

promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

After this sealing, we are then to present our bodies as a living sacrifice as Paul exhorts in **Romans 12 (ESV)**:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

And we are to present the members of our body to God as instruments of righteousness, and not let sin reign in them as Paul exhorts in **Romans 5 (ESV)**:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— 13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.

And after we have believed, we were baptized into one body as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 12 (ESV)**:13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Having been made to drink of one Spirit, we are now to bear the fruit of the Spirit. We do this by walking by the Spirit as we read in **Galatians 5 (ESV)**:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

This is a choice we must make. It does not happen automatically when we are born again. We must choose to walk by the Spirit.

Again, those in Corinth after having believed, we were washed, sanctified, and justified, as we read again in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV)**:11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

In this same state of being washed, sanctified, and justified, Paul addresses those in the church at Ephesus as saints, and calling God “our Father” as we read in **Ephesians 1 (ESV)**:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The words “saints” and “sanctified” both come from the same Greek root, ἅγιος (pronounced hageos), meaning separate from common, holy. It was to the saints in Ephesus, those who had received the Spirit of God, who Paul commanded to no longer walk as they used to walk in their former manner of life before they were cleansed from their sins. Paul told them that they had a responsibility not to bear “the image of the heavenly,” but to lay aside the old self. This was something they had to do even after being sanctified as we read in **Ephesians 4 (ESV)**:17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Paul says that we have the responsibility to lay aside falsehood and speak truth to each other as in **Ephesians 4 (ESV)**:25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Again, Paul says in Galatians, chapter 5, that we have the responsibility to walk by the Spirit as he says in **Galatians 5 (ESV)**:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For

the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Paul was speaking to the saints at Corinth, Ephesus, and Galatia, that is, to believers in Jesus Christ. In this life on earth we still have the flesh, that is, our body of flesh and blood. The flesh Paul is talking about in Galatians 5:17 is not our body of flesh and blood, but the sinful nature of the flesh. Paul says in verse seventeen, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." The flesh has no desire of its own. Paul is speaking of the sinful nature of the flesh. It is because of the sinful nature in our flesh that we cannot do the things that we please. Not that our flesh is bad, but it is because of sin that dwells in our flesh that we stumble. Paul explains this as he tells us in **Romans 7 (ESV)**:18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Before Christ, it was our nature to sin as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2 (ESV)**:3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Sin dwells in our flesh. But when we believe in Jesus Christ, our spirit is made alive and we are born again. The life of the Spirit is in our spirit. We know that we are the children of God by the Spirit He has given us as Paul tells us in **Romans 8 (ESV)**:16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

The apostle John also says the same as we read in **1 John 3 (ESV)**:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

Now as children of God, we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us. However, our sinful nature has not yet been eradicated. This will happen at the resurrection when our bodies are made like His glorious body, that is, imperishable. Sin is still with us in our bodies. This is why our bodies now are destined to die. And this is why Paul says that we cannot do the things that we please. As saints, we now have two natures inside of us that war against each other. God has empowered us by His Spirit to overcome our fleshly nature, and walk by the Spirit. It is up to us to lay aside our former conversation and our fleshly ways, and walk by the Spirit and put on the new man who possesses the new nature of the Spirit of God, which is ours because we have been born of the Spirit.

The Spirit is not progressively giving life to our mortal bodies, as if every time we sinned we died, and when we repented, He brought us back to life. When we repent and believe in Jesus Christ, we become His children. He now treats us as such. He is a good Father and disciplines us as a good Father would as we see in **Hebrews 12 (ESV)**:9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

The way we deal with sin as children of God, as Christians, is to confess it and He is then faithful to cleanse us from all unrighteousness as we read in **1 John 1 (ESV)**:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Again, after we have repented and been born again, we still have a sinful nature in our flesh. It is our responsibility not to yield to this sinful nature, but to put on the new man which we are empowered to do by the Spirit of God. If we fall, we do not die and have to be born again all over again, but God disciplines us until we confess. Our fellowship, that is, our feeling of God's presence in our lives, is dependent on our agreement with Him. As we walk in the light of His word, He points out the things we need to confess. When we then confess, He cleanses us. This is the gradual process of a progressive sanctification of our souls which will go on until Jesus comes when we will be like Him as read in **1 John 3 (ESV)**:2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and

what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

As believers, we have a standing as sons and daughters in Him as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

When we are washed, we don't have to take a bath all over again. We just need to wash our feet, and we are completely clean again.

## Commentary Conclusions: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven

Irenaeus has here again joined disparate passages of Scripture together which are totally unrelated except for the word "inherited" and the word "flesh." The first passage in 1 Corinthians 15:49-50 speaks of the resurrection of our body of flesh and blood, and what type of body that will be after the resurrection. The second passage in Galatians 5:19-21 speaks of the works of the flesh because of sin that is in our members, that is, our flesh. The third passage in Galatians 5:22-23, mentions the fruit of the Spirit. The fourth passage in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 uses the word "inherit," but concerns the character of the people who will be in the Kingdom of God. It does not refer to the works of the flesh, but the characteristics of the unrighteous as we read again in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

That is, sin and sinners will not be in the Kingdom of God. But those who have been washed, sanctified, and justified because of their faith in Jesus Christ will be in the Kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit wants to transform us Christians into men and women of God who bear the qualities of character spoken of as the fruits of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and so on. We start this transformation by accepting Christ as Lord, and then, having been born again and having His life in us, we feed on the pure milk of the word of God and grow up in Him, putting off and putting on as Paul says. And as we grow in the Lord, the fruit of the Spirit will grow in us as well. And as we do the works of the Spirit, that is, preaching the Gospel to the poor, proclaiming liberty to the captives, healing the broken hearted, and praying for the sick, we ourselves will bear fruit unto eternal life as Jesus said we would in **John 4 (ESV):36** Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.

Now in these Chapters IX, X, and XI in Book 5 of Irenaeus' writing, he is to be commended for defending the Church against the heresy that there is no resurrection of the body. Let us not forget that he has encouraged us to walk in the Spirit, and not give in to carnal lusts. He has encouraged us to communion with the Holy Spirit, and not to be a wild olive. He has encouraged us to "walk in newness of life, obeying God" in **Book 5: Chapter IX, paragraph three.** Let us obey God and strive to walk in all the truth that God will guide us into by His Spirit.

## Chapter 8: On the Nature of Man

### Book 3: Chapter XXIII.—Arguments in opposition to Tatian, showing that it was consonant to divine justice and mercy that the first Adam should first partake in that salvation offered to all by Christ.

1. It was necessary, therefore, that the Lord, coming to the lost sheep, and making recapitulation of so comprehensive a dispensation, and seeking after His own handiwork, should save that very man who had been created after His image and likeness, that is, Adam, filling up the times of His condemnation, which had been incurred through disobedience,—[times] “which the Father had placed in His own power.”<sup>1108</sup> Acts i. 7. [This was necessary,] too, inasmuch as the whole economy of salvation regarding man came to pass according to the good pleasure of the Father, in order that God might not be conquered, nor His wisdom lessened, [in the estimation of His creatures.] For if man, who had been created by God that he might live, after losing life, through being injured by the serpent that had corrupted him, should not any more return to life, but should be utterly [and for ever] abandoned to death, God would [in that case] have been conquered, and the wickedness of the serpent would have prevailed over the will of God. But inasmuch as God is invincible and long-suffering, He did indeed show Himself to be long-suffering in the matter of the correction of man and the probation of all, as I have already observed; and by means of the second man did He bind the strong man, and spoiled his goods,<sup>1109</sup> Matt. xii. 29. and abolished death, vivifying that man who had been in a state of death. For as the first Adam became a vessel in his (Satan's) possession, whom he did also hold under his power, that is, by bringing sin on him iniquitously, and under colour of immortality entailing death upon him. For, while promising that they should be as gods, which was in no way possible for him to be, he wrought death in them: wherefore he who had led man captive, was justly captured in his turn by God; but man, who had been led captive, was loosed from the bonds of condemnation.

2. But this is Adam, if the truth should be told, the first formed man, of whom the Scripture says that the Lord spake, “Let Us make man after Our own image and likeness;”<sup>1110</sup> Gen. i. 26. and we are all from him: and as we are from him, therefore have we all inherited his title. But inasmuch as man is saved, it is fitting that he who was created the original man should be saved. For it is too absurd to maintain, that he who was so deeply injured by the enemy, and was the first to suffer captivity, was not rescued by Him who conquered the enemy, but that his children were,—those whom he had begotten in the same captivity. Neither would the enemy appear to be as yet conquered, if the old spoils remained with him. To give an illustration: If a hostile force had overcome certain [enemies], had bound them, and led them away captive, and held them for a long time in servitude, so that they begat children among them; and somebody, compassionating those who had been made slaves, should overcome this same hostile force; he certainly would not act equitably, were he to liberate the children of those who had been led captive, from the sway of those who had enslaved their fathers, but should leave these latter, who had suffered the act of capture, subject to their enemies,—those, too, on whose very account he had proceeded to this retaliation,—the children succeeding to liberty through the avenging of their fathers' cause, but not<sup>1111</sup> The old Latin translation is: “Sed non relictis ipsis patribus.” Grabe would cancel *non*, while Massuet pleads for retaining it. Harvey conjectures that the translator perhaps mistook οὐκ ἀνειλημμένων for οὐκ ἀναλειμμένων. We have followed Massuet, though we should prefer deleting *non*, were it not found in all the mss. so that their fathers, who suffered the act of capture itself, should be left [in bondage]. For God is neither devoid of power nor of justice, who has afforded help to man, and restored him to His own liberty.

3. It was for this reason, too, that immediately after Adam had transgressed, as the Scripture relates, He pronounced no curse against Adam personally, but against the ground, in reference to his works, as a certain person among the ancients has observed: “God did indeed transfer the curse to the earth, that it might not remain in man.”<sup>1112</sup> Gen. iii. 17, etc.

But man received, as the punishment of his transgression, the toilsome task of tilling the earth, and to eat bread in the sweat of his face, and to return to the dust from whence he was taken. Similarly also did the woman [receive] toil, and labour, and groans, and the pangs of parturition, and a state of subjection, that is, that she should serve her husband; so that they should neither perish altogether when cursed by God, nor, by remaining unreprimanded, should be led to despise God. But the curse in all its fulness fell upon the serpent, which had beguiled them. "And God," it is declared, "said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above all the beasts of the earth." 1113 Gen. iii. 14. This reading of Irenæus agrees with that of the Codex Bezæ, at Cambridge. And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels;" 1114 Matt. xxv. 41. indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him; which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.

4. [These act] 1115 Gen. iv. 7, after LXX. version. as Cain [did, who], when he was counselled by God to keep quiet, because he had not made an equitable division of that share to which his brother was entitled, but with envy and malice thought that he could domineer over him, not only did not acquiesce, but even added sin to sin, indicating his state of mind by his action. For what he had planned, that did he also put in practice: he tyrannized over and slew him; God subjecting the just to the unjust, that the former might be proved as the just one by the things which he suffered, and the latter detected as the unjust by those which he perpetrated. And he was not softened even by this, nor did he stop short with that evil deed; but being asked where his brother was, he said, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" extending and aggravating [his] wickedness by his answer. For if it is wicked to slay a brother, much worse is it thus insolently and irreverently to reply to the omniscient God as if he could battle Him. And for this he did himself bear a curse about with him, because he gratuitously brought an offering of sin, having had no reverence for God, nor being put to confusion by the act of fratricide. 1116 The old Latin reads "parricidio." The crime of parricide was alone known to the Roman law; but it was a generic term, including the murder of all near relations. All the editors have supposed that the original word was ἀδελφοκτονία, which has here been adopted.

5. The case of Adam, however, had no analogy with this, but was altogether different. For, having been beguiled by another under the pretext of immortality, he is immediately seized with terror, and hides himself; not as if he were able to escape from God; but, in a state of confusion at having transgressed His command, he feels unworthy to appear before and to hold converse with God. Now, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" 1117 Prov. i. 7, Prov. ix. 10. the sense of sin leads to repentance, and God bestows His compassion upon those who are penitent. For [Adam] showed his repentance by his conduct, through means of the girdle [which he used], covering himself with fig-leaves, while there were many other leaves, which would have irritated his body in a less degree. He, however, adopted a dress conformable to his disobedience, being awed by the fear of God; and resisting the erring, the lustful propensity of his flesh (since he had lost his natural disposition and child-like mind, and had come to the knowledge of evil things), he girded a bridle of continence upon himself and his wife, fearing God, and waiting for His coming, and indicating, as it were, some such thing [as follows]: Inasmuch as, he says, I have by disobedience lost that robe of sanctity which I had from the Spirit, I do now also acknowledge that I am deserving of a covering of this nature, which affords no gratification, but which gnaws and frets the body. And he would no doubt have retained this clothing for ever, thus humbling himself, if God, who is merciful, had not clothed them with tunics of skins instead of fig-leaves. For this purpose, too, He interrogates them, that the blame might light upon the woman; and again, He interrogates her, that she might convey the blame to the serpent. For she related what had occurred. "The serpent," says she, "beguiled me, and I did eat." 1118 Gen. iii. 13. But He put no question to the serpent; for He knew that he had been the prime mover in the guilty deed; but He pronounced the curse upon him in the first instance, that it

might fall upon man with a mitigated rebuke. For God detested him who had led man astray, but by degrees, and little by little, He showed compassion to him who had been beguiled.

6. Wherefore also He drove him out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life, not because He envied him the tree of life, as some venture to assert, but because He pitied him, [and did not desire] that he should continue a sinner for ever, nor that the sin which surrounded him should be immortal, and evil interminable and irremediable. But He set a bound to his [state of] sin, by interposing death, and thus causing sin to cease, [1119 Rom. vi. 7](#), putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh, which should take place in the earth, so that man, ceasing at length to live to sin, and dying to it, might begin to live to God.

7. For this end did He put enmity between the serpent and the woman and her seed, they keeping it up mutually: He, the sole of whose foot should be bitten, having power also to tread upon the enemy's head; but the other biting, killing, and impeding the steps of man, until the seed did come appointed to tread down his head,—which was born of Mary, of whom the prophet speaks: "Thou shalt tread upon the asp and the basilisk; thou shalt trample down the lion and the dragon;" [1120 Ps. xci. 13](#).—indicating that sin, which was set up and spread out against man, and which rendered him subject to death, should be deprived of its power, along with death, which rules [over men]; and that the lion, that is, antichrist, rampant against mankind in the latter days, should be trampled down by Him; and that He should bind "the dragon, that old serpent" [1121 Rev. xx. 2](#), and subject him to the power of man, who had been conquered [1122 Luke x. 19](#), so that all his might should be trodden down. Now Adam had been conquered, all life having been taken away from him: wherefore, when the foe was conquered in his turn, Adam received new life; and the last enemy, death, is destroyed, [1123 1 Cor. xv. 26](#), which at the first had taken possession of man. Therefore, when man has been liberated, "what is written shall come to pass, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting?" [1124 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55](#). This could not be said with justice, if that man, over whom death did first obtain dominion, were not set free. For his salvation is death's destruction. When therefore the Lord vivifies man, that is, Adam, death is at the same time destroyed.

8. All therefore speak falsely who disallow his (Adam's) salvation, shutting themselves out from life for ever, in that they do not believe that the sheep which had perished has been found. [1125 Luke xv. 4](#). For if it has not been found, the whole human race is still held in a state of perdition. False, therefore, is that man who first started this idea, or rather, this ignorance and blindness—Tatian. [1126 An account of Tatian will be given in a future volume with his only extant work](#). As I have already indicated, this man entangled himself with all the heretics. [1127 His heresy](#) being just a mixture of the opinions of the various Gnostic sects. This dogma, however, has been invented by himself, in order that, by introducing something new, independently of the rest, and by speaking vanity, he might acquire for himself hearers void of faith, affecting to be esteemed a teacher, and endeavouring from time to time to employ sayings of this kind often [made use of] by Paul: "In Adam we all die;" [1128 1 Cor. xv. 22](#), ignorant, however, that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." [1129 Rom. v. 20](#). Since this, then, has been clearly shown, let all his disciples be put to shame, and let them wrangle [1130 Though unnoticed by the editors, there seems a difficulty in the different moods of the two verbs, erubescant and concertant](#). about Adam, as if some great gain were to accrue to them if he be not saved; when they profit nothing more [by that], even as the serpent also did not profit when persuading man [to sin], except to this effect, that he proved him a transgressor, obtaining man as the first-fruits of his own apostasy. [1131 "Initium et materiam apostasiæ suæ habens hominem:"](#) the meaning is very obscure, and the editors throw no light upon it. But he did not know God's power. [1132 Literally, "but he did not see God."](#) The translator is supposed to have read οἶδεν, knew, for εἶδεν, saw. Thus also do those who disallow Adam's salvation gain nothing, except this, that they render themselves heretics and apostates from the truth, and show themselves patrons of the serpent and of death.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “It was necessary, therefore, that the Lord, coming to the lost sheep, and making recapitulation of so comprehensive a dispensation, and seeking after His own handiwork, should save that very man who had been created after His image and likeness, that is, Adam, filling up the times of His condemnation, which had been incurred through disobedience,—[times] “which the Father had placed in His own power,” referring to Acts 1:7, but certainly drawing from Matthew 1:1-17, and Luke 3:23-38. Irenaeus then reasons, “[This was necessary,] too, inasmuch as the whole economy of salvation regarding man came to pass according to the good pleasure of the Father, in order that God might not be conquered, nor His wisdom lessened, [in the estimation of His creatures.]” Irenaeus thus concludes, “For if man, who had been created by God that he might live, after losing life, through being injured by the serpent that had corrupted him, should not any more return to life, but should be utterly [and for ever] abandoned to death, God would [in that case] have been conquered, and the wickedness of the serpent would have prevailed over the will of God.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But inasmuch as God is invincible and long-suffering, He did indeed show Himself to be long-suffering in the matter of the correction of man and the probation of all, as I have already observed; and by means of the second man did He bind the strong man, and spoiled his goods,” referring to Matthew 12:29, “and abolished death, vivifying that man who had been in a state of death.” Irenaeus then explains, “For as the first Adam became a vessel in his (Satan’s) possession, whom he did also hold under his power, that is, by bringing sin on him iniquitously, and under colour of immortality entailing death upon him. For, while promising that they should be as gods, which was in no way possible for him to be, he wrought death in them: wherefore he who had led man captive, was justly captured in his turn by God; but man, who had been led captive, was loosed from the bonds of condemnation.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “But this is Adam, if the truth should be told, the first formed man, of whom the Scripture says that the Lord spake, “Let Us make man after Our own image and likeness,” referring to Genesis 1:26, “and we are all from him: and as we are from him, therefore have we all inherited his title.” Irenaeus then reasons, “But inasmuch as man is saved, it is fitting that he who was created the original man should be saved. For it is too absurd to maintain, that he who was so deeply injured by the enemy, and was the first to suffer captivity, was not rescued by Him who conquered the enemy, but that his children were,—those whom he had begotten in the same captivity.” And Irenaeus adds, “Neither would the enemy appear to be as yet conquered, if the old spoils remained with him.” Irenaeus then explains, “To give an illustration: If a hostile force had overcome certain [enemies], had bound them, and led them away captive, and held them for a long time in servitude, so that they begat children among them; and somebody, compassionating those who had been made slaves, should overcome this same hostile force; he certainly would not act equitably, were he to liberate the children of those who had been led captive, from the sway of those who had enslaved their fathers, but should leave these latter, who had suffered the act of capture, subject to their enemies,—those, too, on whose very account he had proceeded to this retaliation,—the children succeeding to liberty through the avenging of their fathers’ cause, but not so that their fathers, who suffered the act of capture itself, should be left [in bondage].” Irenaeus then affirms, “For God is neither devoid of power nor of justice, who has afforded help to man, and restored him to His own liberty.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, “It was for this reason, too, that immediately after Adam had transgressed, as the Scripture relates, He pronounced no curse against Adam personally, but against the ground, in reference to his works, as a certain person among the ancients has observed: “God did indeed transfer the curse to the earth, that it might not remain in man,” referring to Genesis 3:17-18. Irenaeus then affirms. “But man received, as the punishment of his transgression, the toilsome task of tilling the earth, and to eat bread in the sweat of his face, and to return to the dust from whence he was taken,” referring to Genesis 3:19. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “Similarly also did the woman [receive] toil, and labour, and groans, and the pangs of parturition, and a state of subjection, that is, that she should serve her husband; so that they should neither perish altogether when cursed by God, nor, by remaining unreprimanded, should be led to despise God,” referring to Genesis 3:16. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “But the curse in all its fulness fell upon the serpent, which had beguiled them. “And God,” it is declared, “said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above all the beasts of the earth,” referring to Genesis 3:14-15. Irenaeus then testifies, “And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels,”

referring to Matthew 25:41, “indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him; which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, “[These act] as Cain [did, who], when he was counselled by God to keep quiet, because he had not made an equitable division of that share to which his brother was entitled, but with envy and malice thought that he could domineer over him, not only did not acquiesce, but even added sin to sin, indicating his state of mind by his action,” referring to Genesis 4:7. Irenaeus continues as he affirms again, “For what he had planned, that did he also put in practice: he tyrannized over and slew him,” referring to Genesis 4:8. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “God subjecting the just to the unjust, that the former might be proved as the just one by the things which he suffered, and the latter detected as the unjust by those which he perpetrated. And he was not softened even by this, nor did he stop short with that evil deed; but being asked where his brother was, he said, “I know not; am I my brother’s keeper?” extending and aggravating [his] wickedness by his answer,” referring to Genesis 4:9. Irenaeus continues as he reasons, “For if it is wicked to slay a brother, much worse is it thus insolently and irreverently to reply to the omniscient God as if he could battle Him.” Irenaeus then affirms, “And for this he did himself bear a curse about with him, because he gratuitously brought an offering of sin, having had no reverence for God, nor being put to confusion by the act of fratricide,” referring to Genesis 4:10-24.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus affirms, “The case of Adam, however, had no analogy with this, but was altogether different. For, having been beguiled by another under the pretext of immortality, he is immediately seized with terror, and hides himself; not as if he were able to escape from God; but, in a state of confusion at having transgressed His command, he feels unworthy to appear before and to hold converse with God,” referring to Genesis 3:8. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “Now, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” referring to Proverbs 1:7, and Proverbs 9:10; Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “the sense of sin leads to repentance, and God bestows His compassion upon those who are penitent. For [Adam] showed his repentance by his conduct, through means of the girdle [which he used], covering himself with fig-leaves, while there were many other leaves, which would have irritated his body in a less degree. He, however, adopted a dress conformable to his disobedience, being awed by the fear of God; and resisting the erring, the lustful propensity of his flesh (since he had lost his natural disposition and child-like mind, and had come to the knowledge of evil things), he girded a bridle of continence upon himself and his wife, fearing God, and waiting for His coming, and indicating, as it were, some such thing [as follows]: Inasmuch as, he says, I have by disobedience lost that robe of sanctity which I had from the Spirit, I do now also acknowledge that I am deserving of a covering of this nature, which affords no gratification, but which gnaws and frets the body,” referring to Genesis 3:7. Irenaeus then affirms, “And he would no doubt have retained this clothing for ever, thus humbling himself, if God, who is merciful, had not clothed them with tunics of skins instead of fig-leaves,” referring to Genesis 3:21. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “For this purpose, too, He interrogates them, that the blame might light upon the woman; and again, He interrogates her, that she might convey the blame to the serpent. For she related what had occurred. “The serpent,” says she, “beguiled me, and I did eat,” referring to Genesis 3:9-13. And Irenaeus again affirms, “But He put no question to the serpent; for He knew that he had been the prime mover in the guilty deed; but He pronounced the curse upon him in the first instance, that it might fall upon man with a mitigated rebuke. For God detested him who had led man astray, but by degrees, and little by little, He showed compassion to him who had been beguiled,” referring to Genesis 3:14-15.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus affirms, “Wherefore also He drove him out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life, not because He envied him the tree of life, as some venture to assert, but because He pitied him, [and did not desire] that he should continue a sinner for ever, nor that the sin which surrounded him should be immortal, and evil interminable and irremediable,” referring to Genesis 3:22-24. Irenaeus then testifies, “But He set a bound to his [state of] sin, by interposing death, and thus causing sin to cease,” referring to Romans 6:7, “putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh, which should take place in the earth, so that man, ceasing at length to live to sin, and dying to it, might begin to live to God,” referring to Romans 6:11, and Galatians 2:19.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, “For this end did He put enmity between the serpent and the woman and her seed,” referring to Genesis 3:15, “they keeping it up mutually: He, the sole of whose foot should be bitten, having power also to tread upon the enemy’s head; but the other biting, killing, and impeding the steps of man, until the seed did come appointed to tread down his head,—which was born of Mary, of whom the prophet speaks: “Thou shalt tread upon the asp and the basilisk; thou shalt trample down the lion and the dragon,” referring to Psalm 91:13, “—indicating that sin, which was set up and spread out against man, and which rendered him subject to death, should be deprived of its power, along with death, which rules [over men]; and that the lion, that is, antichrist, rampant against mankind in the latter days, should be trampled down by Him; and that He should bind “the dragon, that old serpent,” referring to Revelation 20:2, “and subject him to the power of man, who had been conquered so that all his might should be trodden down,” referring to Luke 10:19. Irenaeus then affirms, “Now Adam had been conquered, all life having been taken away from him: wherefore, when the foe was conquered in his turn, Adam received new life; and the last enemy, death, is destroyed,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:26, “which at the first had taken possession of man.” Irenaeus then testifies, “Therefore, when man has been liberated, “what is written shall come to pass, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting?” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. Irenaeus thus concludes as he affirms, “This could not be said with justice, if that man, over whom death did first obtain dominion, were not set free. For his salvation is death’s destruction. When therefore the Lord vivifies man, that is, Adam, death is at the same time destroyed.”

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus testifies, “All therefore speak falsely who disallow his (Adam’s) salvation, shutting themselves out from life for ever, in that they do not believe that the sheep which had perished has been found,” referring to Luke 15:3-7. Irenaeus thus reasons, “For if it has not been found, the whole human race is still held in a state of perdition.” Irenaeus then issues a rebuke as he says, “False, therefore, is that man who first started this idea, or rather, this ignorance and blindness—Tatian. As I have already indicated, this man entangled himself with all the heretics. This dogma, however, has been invented by himself, in order that, by introducing something new, independently of the rest, and by speaking vanity, he might acquire for himself hearers void of faith, affecting to be esteemed a teacher, and endeavouring from time to time to employ sayings of this kind often [made use of] by Paul: “In Adam we all die,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:22, “ignorant, however, that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,” referring to Romans 5:20. Irenaeus continues his rebuke saying, “Since this, then, has been clearly shown, let all his disciples be put to shame, and let them wrangle about Adam, as if some great gain were to accrue to them if he be not saved; when they profit nothing more [by that], even as the serpent also did not profit when persuading man [to sin], except to this effect, that he proved him a transgressor, obtaining man as the first-fruits of his own apostasy. But he did not know God’s power. Thus also do those who disallow Adam’s salvation gain nothing, except this, that they render themselves heretics and apostates from the truth, and show themselves patrons of the serpent and of death.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “It was necessary, therefore, that the Lord, coming to the lost sheep, and making recapitulation of so comprehensive a dispensation, and seeking after His own handiwork, should save that very man who had been created after His image and likeness, that is, Adam, filling up the times of His condemnation, which had been incurred through disobedience,—[times] “which the Father had placed in His own power,” referring to **Acts 1 (ESV):7** He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

Irenaeus is arguing in this paragraph that Adam was saved from his sin and inherited eternal life. He is certainly drawing from **Matthew 1 (ESV):1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.

The Gospel of Matthew lists the genealogy of Jesus Christ back to Abraham. But he could easily have gone to Luke to prove his point, for in Luke he specifically states that Adam is a son of God as we see in **Luke 3 (ESV):23** Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli.

And in **Luke 3 (ESV):34** the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the

son of Nahor.

And finally in **Luke 3 (ESV)**:38 the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Irenaeus then reasons, “[This was necessary,] too, inasmuch as the whole economy of salvation regarding man came to pass according to the good pleasure of the Father, in order that God might not be conquered, nor His wisdom lessened, [in the estimation of His creatures.]” Irenaeus thus concludes, “For if man, who had been created by God that he might live, after losing life, through being injured by the serpent that had corrupted him, should not any more return to life, but should be utterly [and for ever] abandoned to death, God would [in that case] have been conquered, and the wickedness of the serpent would have prevailed over the will of God.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But inasmuch as God is invincible and long-suffering, He did indeed show Himself to be long-suffering in the matter of the correction of man and the probation of all, as I have already observed; and by means of the second man did He bind the strong man, and spoiled his goods,” referring to **Matthew 12 (ESV)**:29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

Irenaeus is very reasonable and logical in making his case for Adam's salvation, but this is already revealed in Luke 3:38 above. And no matter how persuasive his argument, we must always remember that God's ways are not our ways as we read in **Isaiah 55 (ESV)**:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Irenaeus then finishes his thought as he says, “and abolished death, vivifying that man who had been in a state of death.” Irenaeus' statement reminds us of **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV)**:45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.

And of **2 Timothy 1 (ESV)**:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

When Irenaeus says that man “had been in a state of death,” he acknowledges the judgment of God upon man because of sin. Scripture describes three forms of death.

1) Physical death: **Genesis 3 (NASB)**:19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”

2) Spiritual death: **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

**Colossians 2 (KJV)**:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

3) The Second death: **Revelation 2 (NASB)**:11 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

**Revelation 20 (NASB)**:6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

**Revelation 20 (NASB)**:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

Irenaeus then explains, “For as the first Adam became a vessel in his (Satan's) possession, whom he did also hold under his power, that is, by bringing sin on him iniquitously, and under colour of immortality entailing death upon him. For, while promising that they should be as gods, which was in no way possible for him to be, he wrought death in them: wherefore he who had led man captive, was justly captured in his turn by God; but man, who had been led captive, was loosed from the bonds of condemnation.” Irenaeus is referring to the serpent's lie in **Genesis 3 (Septuagint)**:5 And the serpent said to the woman, Ye shall not surely die.<sup>6</sup> For God

knew that in whatever day ye should eat of it your eyes would be opened, and ye would be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And again we read the same verses as in **Genesis 3 (ESV)**:4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

However, the Scriptures also support his statement that man was held under Satan’s power in **Ephesians 2 (ESV)**:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

The reason Satan had the power was because the whole human race was under sin as we read in **Romans 3 (ESV)**:9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one;

And in **Galatians 3 (ESV)**:22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

The Scriptures also support man’s liberation from this tyrant as we read in **Hebrews 2 (ESV)**:14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

And the Scriptures also say that man has been loosed from the bonds of condemnation in **Romans 8 (ESV)**:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “But this is Adam, if the truth should be told, the first formed man, of whom the Scripture says that the Lord spake, “Let Us make man after Our own image and likeness,” referring to **Genesis 1 (ESV)**:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

And Irenaeus continues as he says, “and we are all from him: and as we are from him, therefore have we all inherited his title.” Irenaeus then reasons, “But inasmuch as man is saved, it is fitting that he who was created the original man should be saved.” For it is too absurd to maintain, that he who was so deeply injured by the enemy, and was the first to suffer captivity, was not rescued by Him who conquered the enemy, but that his children were,—those whom he had begotten in the same captivity.” And Irenaeus adds, “Neither would the enemy appear to be as yet conquered, if the old spoils remained with him.” Irenaeus then explains, “To give an illustration: If a hostile force had overcome certain [enemies], had bound them, and led them away captive, and held them for a long time in servitude, so that they begat children among them; and somebody, compassionating those who had been made slaves, should overcome this same hostile force; he certainly would not act equitably, were he to liberate the children of those who had been led captive, from the sway of those who had enslaved their fathers, but should leave these latter, who had suffered the act of capture, subject to their enemies,—those, too, on whose very account he had proceeded to this retaliation,—the children succeeding to liberty through the avenging of their fathers’ cause, but not so that their fathers, who suffered the act of capture itself, should be left [in bondage].” Irenaeus then affirms, “For God is neither devoid of power nor of justice, who has afforded help to man, and restored him to His own liberty.” Irenaeus is arguing from his own reasoning here. There is just no comment in the Scripture why God saved Adam. We only know that he did from **Luke 3 (ESV)**:38 the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

By pursuing such a long argument from his own reasoning, Irenaeus is setting a precedent for future Church leaders, who will follow this line of defense more and more, and with less and less appeal to the authority of the Scriptures.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, “It was for this reason, too, that immediately after Adam had transgressed, as the Scripture relates, He pronounced no curse against Adam personally, but against the ground, in reference to his works, as a certain person among the ancients has observed: “God did indeed transfer the curse to the earth, that it might not remain in man,” referring to **Genesis 3 (ESV)**:17 And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

Irenaeus then affirms. “But man received, as the punishment of his transgression, the toilsome task of tilling the earth, and to eat bread in the sweat of his face, and to return to the dust from whence he was taken,” referring to **Genesis 3 (ESV):19** By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Irenaeus apparently does not see that, although the Lord did not mention it in Genesis, chapter 3, yet man also suffered the curse of sin in his flesh. In Romans, Paul explains that man was sold into bondage to sin when Adam fell, and that sin now dwells in us, that is, in our flesh, as we read in **Romans 7 (ESV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

If this is the case for one who was saved, much more would this be the case of the unsaved. They are totally under the control of their fleshly sin nature.

Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “Similarly also did the woman [receive] toil, and labour, and groans, and the pangs of parturition, and a state of subjection, that is, that she should serve her husband; so that they should neither perish altogether when cursed by God, nor, by remaining unreprimanded, should be led to despise God,” referring to **Genesis 3 (ESV):16** To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “But the curse in all its fulness fell upon the serpent, which had beguiled them. “And God,” it is declared, “said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above all the beasts of the earth,” referring in context to **Genesis 3 (ESV):14** The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Irenaeus correctly interprets the curse upon the serpent, who represents Satan. Irenaeus then testifies, “And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels,’ referring to **Matthew 25 (ESV):41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Irenaeus then explains as he continues, “indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him; which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.” The Scriptures also agree with Irenaeus that without repentance, there is no salvation as we read in **Luke 13 (ESV):2** And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, “[These act] as Cain [did, who], when he was counselled by God to keep quiet, because he had not made an equitable division of that share to which his brother was entitled, but with envy and malice thought that he could domineer over him, not only did not acquiesce, but even added sin to sin, indicating his state of mind by his action,” referring in context to **Genesis 4 (Septuagint):1** And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and brought forth Cain and said, I have gained a man through God. 2 And she again bore his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3

And it was so after some time that Cain brought of the fruits of the earth a sacrifice to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought of the first born of his sheep and of his fatlings, and God looked upon Abel and his gifts, 5 but Cain and his sacrifices he regarded not, and Cain was exceedingly sorrowful and his countenance fell. 6 And the Lord God said to Cain, Why art thou become very sorrowful and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 Hast thou not sinned if thou hast brought it rightly, but not rightly divided it? be still, to thee shall be his submission, and thou shalt rule over him.

And again we read verse seven as in **Genesis 4 (ESV)**:7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

Irenaeus continues as he affirms again, “For what he had planned, that did he also put in practice: he tyrannized over and slew him,” referring to **Genesis 4 (Septuagint)**:8 And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go out into the plain; and it came to pass that when they were in the plain Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “God subjecting the just to the unjust, that the former might be proved as the just one by the things which he suffered, and the latter detected as the unjust by those which he perpetrated. And he was not softened even by this, nor did he stop short with that evil deed; but being asked where his brother was, he said, “I know not; am I my brother’s keeper?” extending and aggravating [his] wickedness by his answer,” referring to **Genesis 4 (Septuagint)**:9 And the Lord God said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? and he said, I know not, am I my brother’s keeper?

Irenaeus continues as he reasons, “For if it is wicked to slay a brother, much worse is it thus insolently and irreverently to reply to the omniscient God as if he could battle Him.” Irenaeus then affirms, “And for this he did himself bear a curse about with him, because he gratuitously brought an offering of sin, having had no reverence for God, nor being put to confusion by the act of fratricide,” referring in context to **Genesis 4 (Septuagint)**:10 And the Lord said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood cries to me out of the ground. 11 And now thou *art* cursed from the earth which has opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand. 12 When thou tillest the earth, then it shall not continue to give its strength to thee: thou shalt be groaning and trembling on the earth. 13 And Cain said to the Lord God, My crime *is* too great for me to be forgiven. 14 If thou castest me out this day from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from thy presence, and I shall be groaning and trembling upon the earth, then it will be that any one that finds me shall slay me. 15 And the Lord God said to him, Not so, any one that slays Cain shall suffer seven-fold vengeance; and the Lord God set a mark upon Cain that no one that found him might slay him. 16 So Cain went forth from the presence of God and dwelt in the land of Nod over against Edem.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus affirms, “The case of Adam, however, had no analogy with this, but was altogether different. For, having been beguiled by another under the pretext of immortality, he is immediately seized with terror, and hides himself; not as if he were able to escape from God; but, in a state of confusion at having transgressed His command, he feels unworthy to appear before and to hold converse with God,” referring in context to **Genesis 3 (ESV)**:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Now, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” referring to **Proverbs 1 (ESV)**:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

And to **Proverbs 9 (NASB)**:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

This insight by Irenaeus is very astute. Cain had no such fear as we saw in his response to the Lord. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “the sense of sin leads to repentance, and God bestows His compassion upon those who are penitent.” The word “penitent” means “feeling or showing sorrow and regret because you have done something wrong,” according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

Irenaeus continues as he notes, “For [Adam] showed his repentance by his conduct, through means of the girdle [which he used], covering himself with fig-leaves, while there were many other leaves, which would have irritated his body in a less degree. He, however, adopted a dress conformable to his disobedience, being awed by the fear of God; and resisting the erring, the lustful propensity of his flesh (since he had lost his natural disposition and child-like mind, and had come to the knowledge of evil things), he girded a bridle of continence

upon himself and his wife, fearing God, and waiting for His coming, and indicating, as it were, some such thing [as follows]: Inasmuch as, he says, I have by disobedience lost that robe of sanctity which I had from the Spirit, I do now also acknowledge that I am deserving of a covering of this nature, which affords no gratification, but which gnaws and frets the body," referring to **Genesis 3 (ESV):7** Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

We may assume that Adam was repentant since the Scripture says he was saved in Luke 3:38. However, it is only evident from the Scripture here in Genesis 3:7 that Adam and Eve felt shame for the first time. It is more reasonable to assume that this feeling of shame was what prompted them to cover themselves with fig-leaves, than to assume they chose the fig leaves to irritate their bodies. For all we know, they chose the fig-leaves because they were the largest leaves they could find ready at hand. The Scriptures simply do not comment on this. The Scriptures also mention nothing about Adam's adopting "a dress conformable to his disobedience," or "being awed by the fear of God," nor "resisting the erring, the lustful propensity of his flesh." We know that Adam did lose "his natural disposition and child-like mind, and had come to the knowledge of evil things," for this is implied by the Scripture in **Genesis 3 (ESV):7** Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Irenaeus then affirms, "And he would no doubt have retained this clothing for ever, thus humbling himself, if God, who is merciful, had not clothed them with tunics of skins instead of fig-leaves," referring in context to **Genesis 3 (ESV):20** The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. **21** And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Again, there is no mention in the Scripture that Adam was humbling himself. The Scripture seems to imply that Adam and Eve felt shame for being uncovered, as any of us would today. Irenaeus is reading into the Scripture more than is actually there. His task of defending the faith against Gnostic heresy is noble, but he is setting precedents in interpretation that the leaders in the early Church will mistake for exegesis when in fact it is eisegesis. Instead of interpreting just what the Scripture says, Irenaeus is at times making the Scripture support his assertions by reading into the text what is not there.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "For this purpose, too, He interrogates them, that the blame might light upon the woman; and again, He interrogates her, that she might convey the blame to the serpent. For she related what had occurred. "The serpent," says she, "beguiled me, and I did eat," referring to **Genesis 3 (ESV):9** But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" **10** And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." **11** He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" **12** The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." **13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

But God did not interrogate Adam and Eve that the "blame might light upon the woman." The reason the whole human race is held by death is because of Adam's sin, for in Adam we all die as Irenaeus himself will tell us shortly.

And Irenaeus again affirms, "But He put no question to the serpent; for He knew that he had been the prime mover in the guilty deed; but He pronounced the curse upon him in the first instance, that it might fall upon man with a mitigated rebuke. For God detested him who had led man astray, but by degrees, and little by little, He showed compassion to him who had been beguiled," referring again to Genesis 3:14-15.

We know that God did provide a way for man to be saved from his sin. Why God did not provide a way for Satan to be saved from his sin, we are not told.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus affirms, "Wherefore also He drove him out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life, not because He envied him the tree of life, as some venture to assert, but because He pitied him, [and did not desire] that he should continue a sinner for ever, nor that the sin which surrounded him should be immortal, and evil interminable and irremediable," referring to **Genesis 3 (ESV):22** Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" **23** therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. **24** He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Irenaeus then testifies, “But He set a bound to his [state of] sin, by interposing death, and thus causing sin to cease,” referring to **Romans 6 (ESV):7** For one who has died has been set free from sin.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh, which should take place in the earth, so that man, ceasing at length to live to sin, and dying to it, might begin to live to God,” referring to **Romans 6 (ESV):11** So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

And to **Galatians 2 (ESV):19** For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, “For this end did He put enmity between the serpent and the woman and her seed,” referring in context to **Genesis 3 (ESV):15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Irenaeus then continues as he says, “they keeping it up mutually: He, the sole of whose foot should be bitten, having power also to tread upon the enemy’s head; but the other biting, killing, and impeding the steps of man, until the seed did come appointed to tread down his head,—which was born of Mary, of whom the prophet speaks: “Thou shalt tread upon the asp and the basilisk; thou shalt trample down the lion and the dragon,” referring to **Psalm 91 (Septuagint):13** Thou shalt tread on the asp and basilisk: and thou shalt trample on the lion and dragon.

And also as in **Psalm 91 (NASB):13** You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.

Irenaeus’ words, “but the other biting, killing, and impeding the steps of man, until the seed did come appointed to tread down his head,” reminds us of Jesus’ words in **John 10 (ESV):10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

And to Peter’s words in **1 Peter 5 (ESV):8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

And Irenaeus continues as he says, “—indicating that sin, which was set up and spread out against man, and which rendered him subject to death, should be deprived of its power, along with death, which rules [over men]; and that the lion, that is, antichrist, rampant against mankind in the latter days, should be trampled down by Him; and that He should bind “the dragon, that old serpent,” referring to **Revelation 20 (ESV):2** And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

Irenaeus again continues saying, “and subject him to the power of man, who had been conquered so that all his might should be trodden down,” referring to **Luke 10 (ESV):19** Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.

Irenaeus then affirms, “Now Adam had been conquered, all life having been taken away from him: wherefore, when the foe was conquered in his turn, Adam received new life; and the last enemy, death, is destroyed,” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

And Irenaeus finishes his thought saying, “which at the first had taken possession of man.” Irenaeus then testifies, “Therefore, when man has been liberated, “what is written shall come to pass, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting?” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):54** When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

Irenaeus thus concludes as he affirms, “This could not be said with justice, if that man, over whom death did first obtain dominion, were not set free. For his salvation is death’s destruction. When therefore the Lord vivifies man, that is, Adam, death is at the same time destroyed.”

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus testifies, “All therefore speak falsely who disallow his (Adam’s) salvation, shutting themselves out from life for ever, in that they do not believe that the sheep which had perished has been found,” referring to **Luke 15 (ESV):3** So he told them this parable: 4 “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Irenaeus thus reasons, “For if it has not been found, the whole human race is still held in a state of perdition.” Irenaeus then issues a rebuke as he says, “False, therefore, is that man who first started this idea, or rather, this ignorance and blindness—Tatian. As I have already indicated, this man entangled himself with all the heretics. This dogma, however, has been invented by himself, in order that, by introducing something new, independently of the rest, and by speaking vanity, he might acquire for himself hearers void of faith, affecting to be esteemed a teacher, and endeavouring from time to time to employ sayings of this kind often [made use of] by Paul: “In Adam we all die,” referring in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Irenaeus finishes saying, “ignorant, however, that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,” referring to **Romans 5 (ESV):20** Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

Irenaeus continues his rebuke saying, “Since this, then, has been clearly shown, let all his disciples be put to shame, and let them wrangle about Adam, as if some great gain were to accrue to them if he be not saved; when they profit nothing more [by that], even as the serpent also did not profit when persuading man [to sin], except to this effect, that he proved him a transgressor, obtaining man as the first-fruits of his own apostasy. But he did not know God’s power. Thus also do those who disallow Adam’s salvation gain nothing, except this, that they render themselves heretics and apostates from the truth, and show themselves patrons of the serpent and of death.”

Irenaeus is a little harsh here, disallowing salvation to someone who did not think Adam was saved. Whether we think Adam was saved or not is not important to our own salvation. What is important is that we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as our Lord. If we do this we will be saved as Paul says in **Romans 10 (ESV):8** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

## **Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII.—Why man was not made perfect from the beginning.**

1. If, however, any one say, “What then? Could not God have exhibited man as perfect from beginning?” let him know that, inasmuch as God is indeed always the same and unbegotten as respects Himself, all things are possible to Him. But created things must be inferior to Him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated. But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect. Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline. For as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant, [but she does not do so], as the child is not yet able to receive more substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God Himself to have made man perfect from the first, but man could not receive this [perfection], being as yet an infant. And for this cause our Lord in these last times, when He had summed up all things into Himself, came to us, not as He might have come, but as we were capable of beholding Him. He might easily have come to us in His immortal glory, but in that case we could never have endured the greatness of the glory; and therefore it was that He, who was the perfect bread of the Father, offered Himself to us as milk, [because we were] as infants. He did this when He appeared as a man, that we, being nourished, as it were, from the breast of His flesh, and having, by such a course of milk nourishment, become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God, may be able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father.

2. And on this account does Paul declare to the Corinthians, “I have fed you with milk, not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.” **4417 1 Cor. iii. 2.** That is, ye have indeed learned the advent of our Lord as a man; nevertheless, because of your infirmity, the Spirit of the Father has not as yet rested upon you. “For when envying and strife,” he says, “and dissensions are among you, are

ye not carnal, and walk as men?" **4418 1 Cor. iii. 3.** That is, that the Spirit of the Father was not yet with them, on account of their imperfection and shortcomings of their walk in life. As, therefore, the apostle had the power to give them strong meat—for those upon whom the apostles laid hands received the Holy Spirit, who is the food of life [eternal] —but they were not capable of receiving it, because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God; so, in like manner, God had power at the beginning to grant perfection to man; but as the latter was only recently created, he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it. It was for this reason that the Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it thus not for His own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of man's existence, in order that man might be able to receive Him. There was nothing, therefore, impossible to and deficient in God, [implied in the fact] that man was not an uncreated being; but this merely applied to him who was lately created, [namely] man.

3. With God there are simultaneously exhibited power, wisdom, and goodness. His power and goodness [appear] in this, that of His own will He called into being and fashioned things having no previous existence; His wisdom [is shown] in His having made created things parts of one harmonious and consistent whole; and those things which, through His super-eminent kindness, receive growth and a long period of existence, do reflect the glory of the uncreated One, of that God who bestows what is good ungrudgingly. For from the very fact of these things having been created, [it follows] that they are not uncreated; but by their continuing in being throughout a long course of ages, they shall receive a faculty of the Uncreated, through the gratuitous bestowal of eternal existence upon them by God. And thus in all things God has the pre-eminence, who alone is uncreated, the first of all things, and the primary cause of the existence of all, while all other things remain under God's subjection. But being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality, and immortality is the glory of the uncreated One. By this arrangement, therefore, and these harmonies, and a sequence of this nature, man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated God,—the Father planning everything well and giving His commands, the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creating, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing [what is made], but man making progress day by day, and ascending towards the perfect, that is, approximating to the uncreated One. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is, God. Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover [from the disease of sin]; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord. For God is He who is yet to be seen, and the beholding of God is productive of immortality, but immortality renders one nigh unto God.

4. Irrational, therefore, in every respect, are they who await not the time of increase, but ascribe to God the infirmity of their nature. Such persons know neither God nor themselves, being insatiable and ungrateful, unwilling to be at the outset what they have also been created—men subject to passions; but go beyond the law of the human race, and before that they become men, they wish to be even now like God their Creator, and they who are more destitute of reason than dumb animals [insist] that there is no distinction between the uncreated God and man, a creature of to-day. For these, [the dumb animals], bring no charge against God for not having made them men; but each one, just as he has been created, gives thanks that he has been created. For we cast blame upon Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods; although God has adopted this course out of His pure benevolence, that no one may impute to Him invidiousness or grudgingness. He declares, "I have said, Ye are gods; and ye are all sons of the Highest. But since we could not sustain the power of divinity, He adds, "But ye shall die like men," setting forth both truths—the kindness of His free gift, and our weakness, and also that we were possessed of power over ourselves. For after His great kindness He graciously conferred good [upon us], and made men like to Himself, [that is] in their own power; while at the same time by His prescience He knew the infirmity of human beings, and the consequences which would flow from it;

but through [His] love and [His] power, He shall overcome the substance of created nature. For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asks “If, however, any one say, “What then? Could not God have exhibited man as perfect from beginning?” let him know that, inasmuch as God is indeed always the same and unbegotten as respects Himself, all things are possible to Him.” Irenaeus then argues point by point:

- “But created things must be inferior to Him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin;
- for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated.
- But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect.
- Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline.
- For as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant, [but she does not do so], as the child is not yet able to receive more substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God Himself to have made man perfect from the first, but man could not receive this [perfection], being as yet an infant.
- And for this cause our Lord in these last times, when He had summed up all things into Himself, came to us, not as He might have come, but as we were capable of beholding Him.
- He might easily have come to us in His immortal glory, but in that case we could never have endured the greatness of the glory;
- and therefore it was that He, who was the perfect bread of the Father, offered Himself to us as milk, [because we were] as infants.
- He did this when He appeared as a man, that we, being nourished, as it were, from the breast of His flesh, and having, by such a course of milk nourishment, become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God, may be able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “And on this account does Paul declare to the Corinthians, “I have fed you with milk, not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it,” referring to 1 Corinthians 3:2.

Irenaeus then explains what he means as he says, “That is, ye have indeed learned the advent of our Lord as a man; nevertheless, because of your infirmity, the Spirit of the Father has not as yet rested upon you. “For when envying and strife,” he says, “and dissensions are among you, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” referring to 1 Corinthians 3:3. Again, Irenaeus asserts, “That is, that the Spirit of the Father was not yet with them, on account of their imperfection and shortcomings of their walk in life.” Irenaeus then asserts, “As, therefore, the apostle had the power to give them strong meat—for those upon whom the apostles laid hands received the Holy Spirit, who is the food of life [eternal]—but they were not capable of receiving it, because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God; so, in like manner, God had power at the beginning to grant perfection to man; but as the latter was only recently created, he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it.” Irenaeus again asserts that, “It was for this reason that the Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it thus not for His own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of man’s existence, in order that man might be able to receive Him.” Irenaeus then affirms, “There was nothing, therefore, impossible to and deficient in God, [implied in the fact] that man was not an uncreated being; but this merely applied to him who was lately created, [namely] man.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, “With God there are simultaneously exhibited power, wisdom, and

goodness.” Irenaeus then reasons, “His power and goodness [appear] in this, that of His own will He called into being and fashioned things having no previous existence; His wisdom [is shown] in His having made created things parts of one harmonious and consistent whole; and those things which, through His super-eminent kindness, receive growth and a long period of existence, do reflect the glory of the uncreated One, of that God who bestows what is good ungrudgingly.” Irenaeus then argues, “For from the very fact of these things having been created, [it follows] that they are not uncreated; but by their continuing in being throughout a long course of ages, they shall receive a faculty of the Uncreated, through the gratuitous bestowal of eternal existence upon them by God.” Irenaeus then affirms, “And thus in all things God has the pre-eminence, who alone is uncreated, the first of all things, and the primary cause of the existence of all, while all other things remain under God’s subjection.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality, and immortality is the glory of the uncreated One. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is, God.” Irenaeus continues as he then reasons, “Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover [from the disease of sin]; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord. For God is He who is yet to be seen, and the beholding of God is productive of immortality, but immortality renders one nigh unto God.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus chides the Gnostics as he says, “Irrational, therefore, in every respect, are they who await not the time of increase, but ascribe to God the infirmity of their nature.” Irenaeus then testifies, “Such persons know neither God nor themselves, being insatiable and ungrateful, unwilling to be at the outset what they have also been created—men subject to passions; but go beyond the law of the human race, and before that they become men, they wish to be even now like God their Creator, and they who are more destitute of reason than dumb animals [insist] that there is no distinction between the uncreated God and man, a creature of to-day.” Irenaeus then explains, “For these, [the dumb animals], bring no charge against God for not having made them men; but each one, just as he has been created, gives thanks that he has been created. For we cast blame upon Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods; although God has adopted this course out of His pure benevolence, that no one may impute to Him invidiousness or grudgingness.” Irenaeus then affirms, “He declares, ‘I have said, Ye are gods; and ye are all sons of the Highest,’ referring to Psalm 82:6. Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “But since we could not sustain the power of divinity, He adds, ‘But ye shall die like men,’ setting forth both truths—the kindness of His free gift, and our weakness, and also that we were possessed of power over ourselves, referring to Psalm 82:6. Irenaeus continues as he then affirms, “For after His great kindness He graciously conferred good [upon us], and made men like to Himself, [that is] in their own power; while at the same time by His prescience He knew the infirmity of human beings, and the consequences which would flow from it; but through [His] love and [His] power, He shall overcome the substance of created nature.” Irenaeus then reasons, “For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil.”

**Commentary:** Before we comment on this section, we should understand that Irenaeus is continuing his explanation of why God gave man free will from the previous chapter, that is, **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**. We will look at free will and chapter, **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**, later in **Chapter 30: Free Will**. However, to understand this chapter, **Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII**, of Irenaeus’ writing, I will summarize the previous chapter, **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**, as it relates here.

Irenaeus states in paragraph five of the previous chapter, **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**, that man has free will as he says, “And not merely in works, but also in faith, has God preserved the will of man free and under his own control, saying, ‘According to thy faith be it unto thee;’ thus showing that there is a faith specially belonging to man, since he has an opinion specially his own.” In this section however, we are focusing on the nature of man. Certainly the will is part of this nature.

Again, in paragraph six of the previous **Chapter XXXVII**, in **Book 4**, Irenaeus provides us with the foundation for this chapter, **Chapter XXXVIII**, as he says, “Those, again, who maintain the opposite to these [conclusions], do themselves present the Lord as destitute of power, as if, forsooth, He were unable to

accomplish what He willed; or, on the other hand, as being ignorant that they were by nature “material,” as these men express it, and such as cannot receive His immortality. “But He should not,” say they, “have created angels of such a nature that they were capable of transgression, nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (*inflexibles et sine judicio*), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created.””

We will see that Irenaeus continues his argument for free will here in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII** by giving us some explanation of man’s state, or his nature.

In paragraph one then of this chapter, **Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII**, Irenaeus begins by defending the Church against the heresy of the Gnostics who were asking why God just didn’t create man perfect from the beginning. Irenaeus thus begins by asking, “If, however, any one say, “What then? Could not God have exhibited man as perfect from beginning?” let him know that, inasmuch as God is indeed always the same and unbegotten as respects Himself, all things are possible to Him.” Irenaeus then argues point by point.

Irenaeus first asserts, “But created things must be inferior to Him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin;” He then argues, “for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated.” Of course, if God could create, He could uncreate. With Him all things are possible, as Irenaeus says. But to Irenaeus’ point, created things cannot uncreate themselves.

Irenaeus pursues his point as he argues, “But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect.” The reason is, he asserts, “Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline.” Irenaeus then reasons, “For as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant, [but she does not do so], as the child is not yet able to receive more substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God Himself to have made man perfect from the first, but man could not receive this [perfection], being as yet an infant.”

Irenaeus then asserts, “And for this cause our Lord in these last times, when He had summed up all things into Himself, came to us, not as He might have come, but as we were capable of beholding Him.” Again Irenaeus argues, “He might easily have come to us in His immortal glory, but in that case we could never have endured the greatness of the glory;” And again Irenaeus reasons, “and therefore it was that He, who was the perfect bread of the Father, offered Himself to us as milk, [because we were] as infants.” Irenaeus then explains that, “He did this when He appeared as a man, that we, being nourished, as it were, from the breast of His flesh, and having, by such a course of milk nourishment, become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God, may be able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father.”

However, the Scriptures say that the reason Jesus had to come to us as a man was because He had to be a kinsmen to redeem us as we read in **Leviticus 25 (NASB):47** ‘Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger’s family, 48 then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him, 49 or his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or if he prospers, he may redeem himself.

Also, Christ had to be made like His brethren in order to be a merciful and faithful high priest for us as stated in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Nothing is said in the Scriptures about man needing to be “nourished, as it were, from the breast of His flesh, and having, by such a course of milk nourishment, become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God, may be able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father.” This is

evidently an invention of Irenaeus to combat the Gnostic heresy. However, Jesus said it is the truth that sets us free.

To summarize, Irenaeus here in his argument in paragraph one is asserting that the Lord “came to us, not as He might have come, but as we were capable of beholding Him.” That is, the Lord came as a man, in the flesh. For if the Lord came in “His immortal glory,” we “could never have endured the greatness of the glory,” Irenaeus argues. And so coming in the flesh, Irenaeus argues that Jesus “offered Himself to us as milk.” Though Jesus was “the perfect bread of the Father,” He nourished us “from the breast of His flesh” so that “by such a course of milk nourishment” we might “become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God,” Irenaeus explains. And all of this was just so that we “may be able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father.” And Irenaeus thus concludes, “for this cause our Lord in these last times, when He had summed up all things into Himself, came to us,” that He might prepare us for the strong meat, that is, the Spirit of the Father.”

However, the Spirit of the Father is not referred to in the Scriptures as “the Bread of immortality” or “strong meat,” and Jesus’ flesh is never spoken of as milk in the Scriptures. Rather, Jesus’ flesh is spoken of as the life of the world, the Bread of God. Let us look at what the apostle John actually recorded Jesus as saying as we begin reading in **John 6 (KJV):33** For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Jesus continues and He tells us He is the bread of life as we read in **John 6 (KJV):35** And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Again, Jesus explains as we read in **John 6 (KJV):48** I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world

The Spirit is spoken of as living water as we read in **John 7 (NASB):38** "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Irenaeus is mixing up his metaphors. At this point we might wonder what Irenaeus thought the Old Testament saints did to “become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God,” since they did not have Jesus in the flesh to empower them in this. Yet they wrote all forty-nine books of the Old Testament!

Now all that Irenaeus has said in paragraph one is preparation for what he will conclude in paragraph two.

In paragraph two, he says, “And on this account does Paul declare to the Corinthians, “I have fed you with milk, not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it,” referring to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

Irenaeus then explains to us what he means by milk as he says, “That is, ye have indeed learned the advent of our Lord as a man;” In other words, as Irenaeus explained in paragraph one, the Corinthians had been “nourished, as it were, from the breast of His flesh, and having, by such a course of milk nourishment, become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God.”

Irenaeus then continues in paragraph asserting, “nevertheless, because of your infirmity, the Spirit of the Father has not as yet rested upon you. “For when envying and strife,” he says, “and dissensions are among you, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?,” referring to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

So according to Irenaeus, the Corinthians did not have the strong meat of the Spirit yet because they were yet carnal. Irenaeus is asserting here that because Paul in this verse called the Corinthians carnal, or still fleshly, that they did not have the Spirit of God resting on them. Irenaeus then continues by explaining, “That is, that the Spirit of the Father was not yet with them, on account of their imperfection and shortcomings of their walk in life.” And Irenaeus then asserts, “As, therefore, the apostle had the power to give them strong meat—for those upon whom the apostles laid hands received the Holy Spirit, who is the food of life [eternal] —but they were not capable of receiving it, because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God; so, in like manner, God had power at the beginning to grant

perfection to man; but as the latter was only recently created, he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it."

Irenaeus is arguing that the Corinthians were not capable of receiving the Spirit "because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God," and also that this was because man was but recently created, and "he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it."

But do the Scriptures tell us that the Corinthians had not received the Spirit of God? Do the Scriptures tell us that we have to be perfect with no "imperfection and shortcomings" of our "walk in life" in order to receive the Holy Spirit? Do the "sentient faculties" of our soul really have to be disciplined "in the practice of things pertaining to God" in order to receive the Holy Spirit, or having received Him, do we have to be perfect to contain Him and retain Him? We will answer these questions shortly.

Irenaeus then concludes paragraph two by asserting, "It was for this reason that the Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it thus not for His own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of man's existence, in order that man might be able to receive Him. There was nothing, therefore, impossible to and deficient in God, [implied in the fact] that man was not an uncreated being; but this merely applied to him who was lately created, [namely] man."

So Irenaeus is saying that God became a man in order that man might be able to receive Him. Irenaeus is really arguing against the Gnostics who claimed that God was defective or deficient because He created man who is imperfect. They also claimed that Christ did not really come in the flesh, but only appeared to be a man. So Irenaeus then admits in his argument that man was deficient, but argues that there was nothing "impossible to and deficient in God," because of this. Yet, in his arguing, Irenaeus seems to expect some perfection in man in order for him to receive the Holy Spirit. Again, we will deal with this shortly.

Now in paragraph three, Irenaeus calls out God's great power saying, "With God there are simultaneously exhibited power, wisdom, and goodness. His power and goodness [appear] in this, that of His own will He called into being and fashioned things having no previous existence; His wisdom [is shown] in His having made created things parts of one harmonious and consistent whole;" All this is true of God without question. Irenaeus continues as he adds, "and those things which, through His super-eminent kindness, receive growth and a long period of existence, do reflect the glory of the uncreated One, of that God who bestows what is good ungrudgingly." It is hard to argue with this statement as well, except that Irenaeus does not apply any condition to its fulfillment. He simply states it as a truth. He continues as he says, "For from the very fact of these things having been created, [it follows] that they are not uncreated; but by their continuing in being throughout a long course of ages, they shall receive a faculty of the Uncreated, through the gratuitous bestowal of eternal existence upon them by God." Again, Irenaeus offers no condition for this to be so. He just makes a general statement of truth as he sees it. Irenaeus then affirms, "And thus in all things God has the pre-eminence, who alone is uncreated, the first of all things, and the primary cause of the existence of all, while all other things remain under God's subjection." It is true that God has preeminence in all things, and He alone is uncreated, and He is the first of all things, and "the primary cause of the existence of all, while all other things remain under God's subjection." All things do "remain under God's subjection" of course, and Irenaeus does well to point this out. God is in control.

Irenaeus then affirms, "But being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality, and immortality is the glory of the uncreated One. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is, God." The Scripture does say that everything exists by the permissive will of God, and God upholds all things by the word of His power in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):** 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

But Irenaeus does not refer to this. He only states a general truth as he sees it that "being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality, and immortality is the glory of the uncreated One." Irenaeus does not tell us here how we must be subject to God. Nevertheless, Irenaeus pursues his point, as he says in context, "By this

arrangement, therefore, and these harmonies, and a sequence of this nature, man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated God,—the Father planning everything well and giving His commands, the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creating, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing [what is made], but man making progress day by day, and ascending towards the perfect, that is, approximating to the uncreated One. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is, God.”

However, man is not “rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated God” by just “continuing in being throughout a long course of ages.” Neither is he “in subjection to God” unless he by faith accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Neither is man “making progress day by day, and ascending towards the perfect, that is, approximating to the uncreated One,” unless he has made this commitment to Jesus Christ as the Lord of his life. We must repent, as Irenaeus well knew, and believe in His Son Jesus Christ as Jesus Himself taught in **Mark 1 (KJV):14** Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, **15** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

This is the good news of the Gospel, and the starting point. Once we come to Christ by faith, we begin a walk with God as His sons and daughters, and He progressively sanctifies us in our soul, that is, our mind, our will, our emotions, and our conscience. And we are changed from glory to glory. This is a work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life.

Yet Irenaeus continues as he says, “Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover [from the disease of sin]; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord.” However, Irenaeus again does not qualify his statements. This leaves the door open for a legalistic interpretation. Did Irenaeus mean by “recover” that man would somehow through obedience to God’s commands, become sinless and perfect and therefore merit eternal life? The Scriptures do not say that man recovers from his sin by receiving growth, and then being strengthened, abound, and “having abounded,” he recovers “[from the disease of sin], and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord.” This is an invention of Irenaeus to combat the Gnostic heresy that God had to be deficient because He created man imperfect. There is only one way to recover from our sin, and that is through faith in Jesus Christ. For Irenaeus to leave this condition out shows us that the Church in his time had fallen into legalism. We will see more evidence of this when we look at free will in Chapter 30.

Irenaeus continues by saying, ”For God is He who is yet to be seen, and the beholding of God is productive of immortality, but immortality renders one nigh unto God.” It is true that God is yet to be seen by us who have believed and are still on earth, and John tells us that when we see Him we will be like Him in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

But immortality, or eternal life, is not something that we receive by growing and advancing to such a state of perfection that we see God, and are then rendered immortal. Eternal life is given to all who believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus said that the one who believed in Him had passed out of death and into life as in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The one who has not believed in Him has been judged already as John tells us in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Believing in Jesus Christ is our only hope.

Continuing in paragraph four, we see that Irenaeus rightly rebukes those who pretend to be God or godlike as he says, “Irrational, therefore, in every respect, are they who await not the time of increase, but ascribe to God the infirmity of their nature.” In other words, the Gnostics said that God was defective. Irenaeus continues as he says, “Such persons know neither God nor themselves, being insatiable and ungrateful, unwilling to be at the outset what they have also been created—men subject to passions; but go beyond the law of the human race, and before that they become men, they wish to be even now like God their Creator, and they who are more destitute of reason than dumb animals [insist] that there is no distinction between the uncreated

God and man, a creature of to-day." Irenaeus then explains, "For these, [the dumb animals], bring no charge against God for not having made them men; but each one, just as he has been created, gives thanks that he has been created. For we cast blame upon Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods; although God has adopted this course out of His pure benevolence, that no one may impute to Him invidiousness or grudgingness." Irenaeus then affirms, "He declares, "I have said, Ye are gods; and ye are all sons of the Highest," referring to **Psalm 82 (KJV)**:6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. 7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Irenaeus then adds, "But since we could not sustain the power of divinity, He adds, "But ye shall die like men," setting forth both truths—the kindness of His free gift, and our weakness, and also that we were possessed of power over ourselves." Irenaeus then explains that God knew what He was doing all along as he says, "For after His great kindness He graciously conferred good [upon us], and made men like to Himself, [that is] in their own power; while at the same time by His prescience He knew the infirmity of human beings, and the consequences which would flow from it; but through [His] love and [His] power, He shall overcome the substance of created nature." God's purpose was salvation all along as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Irenaeus concludes paragraph four as he reasons, "For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil." However, the Scriptures do not say that it was "necessary" that nature should be exhibited first, and then that "mortality should be swallowed up by immortality." But Irenaeus is referring in part to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV)**:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII

To summarize, in this chapter Irenaeus is defending the Church against the Gnostics who believed God to be deficient because man was created imperfect. Irenaeus has invented an argument to combat this heresy. His argument states that man is infantile because he is a created being. Man could not receive perfection at the first because he was infantile. Man also has power over himself since he is made in the image of God. Thus man is in his own power. In the course of his argument, he sees that Paul gave the Corinthians milk to drink which he interprets to be Paul's teaching about the "advent of our Lord as a man." According to Irenaeus, although Jesus was the "perfect Bread of the Father," He "offered Himself to us as milk, [because we were] as infants." By receiving "such a course of milk nourishment," we "become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God," and are then "able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father."

Now Irenaeus sees the Spirit as "strong meat," that is, "the food of life eternal," which he does not believe the Corinthians have received as yet because they were carnal, and therefore not "capable of receiving it, because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God." The reason he believes this to be so is because he sees that "in like manner, God had power at the beginning to grant perfection to man; but as the latter was only recently created, he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it." This is important to understand in Irenaeus' thinking because he then says that, "It was for this reason that the Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it thus not for His own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of man's existence, in order that man might be able to receive Him."

Irenaeus is a worthy workmen in his defense of the faith. However, in his zeal to defend the faith, he has exceeded the bounds of the Scriptures. We will now address the following issues:

- Was man created infantile?
- Had the Corinthians received the Spirit of God?
- Do we have to be perfect with no “imperfection and shortcomings” of our “walk in life” in order to receive the Holy Spirit?
- Do the “sentient faculties” of our soul really have to be disciplined “in the practice of things pertaining to God” in order to receive the Holy Spirit?
- Having received Him, can we retain Him or is it possible to lose Him?

First of all we see that Irenaeus is very logical in his thought process, and it is admirable that he wishes to defend the faith against the Gnostic heresy that believed that God was deficient when he created man because man is imperfect. They even posited another god who they say created God. However, Irenaeus would have been more effective in his defense if he would have rightly divided the Scriptures. The Scripture says that when God finished making man, He said all that He had created was very good as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):31** And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Man was created good, and He was able to converse with God in the garden. Man gave names to all the creatures that God brought before him. We see that man was an intelligent being and not infantile in **Genesis 2 (KJV):15** And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. 18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Now before man fell in disobedience to God’s command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was in a state of innocence, but he was put on probation because sin was already in the universe. Dr. Albert Grimes talks about why man was put on probation in his book, *Doctrines of Salvation, in The Doctrine of Man*. He says the following:

“This is understandable because sin was already in the universe. A being whom God had created before Adam, who was exalted to a high position in heaven, had fallen. This being called Lucifer is referred to in Ezekiel 28:15, “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”

The iniquity spoken of was rebellion against God. He with other angels led a revolt against God. This is spoken of in Isaiah 14:12-15, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning...For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”

The time of this sin is spoken of as in the beginning. 1 John 3:8, “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning...”

Man would no doubt sooner or later come under the influence of Satan and have to make his own choice. He must then be tested in regards to his obedience to God.” **Doctrines of Salvation, The Doctrine of Man, pg. 2, by Dr. Albert Grimes.**

Man was in a state of innocence until he fell in the Garden of Eden. The imperfection in man came when man sinned. The result of sin was death to all men and women as Paul tells us in in **Romans**

**5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Not only so, but man inherited a sin nature. Paul explains that man without the Spirit of God cannot please Him in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Paul tells us that the mind set on the flesh is not even able to subject itself to the law of God. And Paul explains the conflict of the two natures in the Christian in **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Sin dwells in us, that is, in our flesh. It is this sin in our flesh that makes us not able to please God. We need a change in our nature in order to please Him. This happens in our spirit at the new birth.

It is sin that has corrupted man's nature and rendered man as fruit that is spoiled rotten as we see in **Romans 3 (KJV):12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

The Greek word for “unprofitable” is ἡχρεώθησαν (pronounced echreothesan) which is in the third person plural, aorist 1, indicative passive case of ἀχρειόω (pronounced achreao) meaning to be rendered useless, unprofitable, to be rendered worthless. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition by Moulton, page 63.** Paul is quoting from **Psalm 14 (KJV):1** The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. 2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

The Hebrew word for “filthy” is נָאֵלָחֹו (pronounced naelachoo) from נָאֵלָחַ (pronounced alach), and is in the niphil form, and means “to be corrupted, to become sour, as milk.” **Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D., page 50.**

In order to become pleasing to God again, man must have a new nature which is able to please Him. This new nature is given man when he is regenerated, or born again. This word “regeneration” is found in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The Greek word is παλιγγένεσία (pronounced paliggenesia) and means “new birth (palin, again, genesis, birth), is used of spiritual regeneration, Tit. 3:5, involving the communication of a new life, the two operating powers to produce which are “the word of truth,” Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23, and the Holy Spirit, John 3:5,6.”

**Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 267.**

When we are born of the Spirit, we are given new life in our spirit for whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit as Jesus said in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Our spirit is the new inner self that joyfully concurs with the law of God as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

And in **Colossians 3 (KJV):9** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created

him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

The old self is the old Adamic nature that is still in the members of our flesh as Paul tells us in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

It is our responsibility as believers to put aside this old nature in our flesh, and put on the new nature of the Spirit of God in our spirit. It is by this new nature that we have escaped the corruption in the world as Peter says in **2 Peter 1 (KJV)**:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Irenaeus does not seem to realize that man will not be perfect in this life, even when he receives the Spirit of God. Man still has a sinful nature in his flesh. This sinful nature will not be eradicated in the believer until the resurrection. It is now our responsibility as regenerated believers to put aside this old nature, and put on the new nature. This however does not make the Spirit of God imperfect or sinful. The Spirit of God is a gift, and is given to us by the grace of God. We do not have to attain a certain level of perfection or maturity to receive Him. He is given freely to those who ask as Jesus said in **Luke 11 (KJV)**:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

There is no waiting time or self-improvement that must be done in order to receive the Holy Spirit as God demonstrates when He baptized the believers in the house of Cornelius, the Roman centurion while Peter was still preaching the Gospel to them in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

The reason there is no waiting time or self-improvement necessary in order to receive the Holy Spirit is because when we believe, we enter God's courtroom as it were, and as soon as God sees our faith, He justifies us as Paul tells us in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The word justified in the Greek in this verse is Δικαιωθέντες (pronounce dikaiothentes) from δικαιόω (pronounced dikaiōō), and it is in the nominative, plural, masculine, participle, aorist 1, passive voice. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition by Moulton, page 100**. It means “primarily to deem to be right, signifies, in the N.T., (a) to show to be right or righteous; in the Passive Voice, to be justified, Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35; Rom. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:16; (bn) to declare to be righteous, to pronounce righteous.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 285**.

The word peace in Romans 5:1 in the Greek is εἰρήνη (pronounced eirēnē). This word comes from the verb eiro which means “to bind together that which has been separated.” **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume 1, Romans in the Greek New Testament, pg.77**.

In other words, in Romans 5:1, Paul is saying that we have been set at one with God, and are at peace with Him after He has justified us, that is, after He has declared us righteous. And Paul tells us that our justification was part of God's plan from the beginning in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

And speaking of Abraham, Paul tells us that righteousness was imputed or credited, that is, put down to his account in **Romans 4 (KJV)**:22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

And this is why Paul tells us that nothing in the whole universe can separate the believer from the love of God because it is God who justifies as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If we have faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, all these things are true of us, and nothing can separate us from His love. Now we must understand that the Corinthians had been washed, sanctified, and justified as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

It was because the Corinthians had believed in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead that they had been justified. And this is the reason that, though there were divisions among them and disputes, Paul still addresses them as brethren in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

The Corinthians may have been acting like infants in their behavior, but they were infants in Christ, and Paul addressed them as such as he began his epistle in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):1** Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: 3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul addresses the Corinthians as the church of God in Corinth who had been sanctified in Christ Jesus, who were saints by calling, and he includes them with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours. Paul thanks God for the grace of God that was given them in Christ Jesus, because they were enriched in Him, and the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them. They also were not lacking in any gift as he says in verse seven above. The word for gift in the Greek is *χάρισμα* (pronounced charisma) and it is the same word that is used in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

Vine's says that the word charisma means "a gift of grace, a gift involving grace" (*charis*) on the part of God as the donor." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 147.** In other words we could say that a charisma is a free gift from God.

Now as to the fact that the Corinthians were in Christ, Paul also concludes in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB):30** But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

Not only so but he calls them saints in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):1** Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Paul includes himself with the Corinthians when he says, “we will judge angels.” Being a saint does not mean you are perfect in this life, as the Corinthians proved when they were going to law before the unrighteous, and taking each other to court. This is what Paul was correcting them for. Being a saint simply means one who has been justified, that is, one who has been declared righteous. And again, Paul says that the Corinthians were at one time unrighteous, but now they have been washed, sanctified, and justified in **1 Corinthians**

**6 (NASB):9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The word “washed” in verse 11 speaks of a bath, and this is what Jesus spoke of in **John 13 (NIV):10** Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”

The Corinthians had already had a bath, just as the apostles, when they believed in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They now just needed to wash their feet. So without doubt, the Corinthians were in Christ. Being in Christ is where God places us when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord of our lives. When we believe in Jesus Christ and repent of our sins, and confess Jesus as Lord of our lives, God sovereignly makes us members of the body of Christ by baptizing us into His body as Paul tells the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):13**

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

The baptism spoken of here is not water baptism for this baptism is done by the Spirit. The Spirit places us into the body of Christ when we believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. We do not become members by joining a specific church or group of believers, but by believing in Jesus Christ which begins such an intimate relationship with Him that it is described as being in His body. And so this baptism into the body of Christ is not a gradual thing, but it is a sovereign work of God as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):18** But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

The Scripture says that God places us in the body just as He desired. We don’t earn our place in the body. It is a sovereign act of God after we believe in Jesus Christ. And Paul tells the Corinthians that they are the body of Christ as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):27** Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.

How is it that Irenaeus did not see that Paul was speaking to those who were in Christ as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, [even] as unto babes in Christ.

And also as in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):1** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

The Corinthians may have been infants but they were infants “in Christ.” That is, they were infants in the body of Christ. There can be no doubt that the Corinthians were saved men and women. When we are born again, we start off as new born babes as Peter reveals in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):1** Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

And Peter encourages us to grow as we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

And Paul also encourages us in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

What is not stated by Irenaeus in this chapter is that man does not have power on his own to receive anything from God. In this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus is really continuing his philosophical argument for free will which he began in the previous chapter. This has bearing on the nature of man. His argument there states that God has given man the ability to choose the good and reject the bad as he states in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**, “But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good.” Again, I will discuss free will further in **Chapter 30: Free Will**. However we just note here that in the context of his writing in this chapter that Irenaeus is arguing for free will, and his arguing has led him to assert that the Corinthians were in an infant state, and had received the milk of the word of God, but not the Spirit of God.

Irenaeus seems to expect man to better himself a little with the free will that he has been given, and thus prove himself a little worthy of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. However, the unalterable consequence of Irenaeus’ assertion that the Corinthians “were not capable of receiving it,” that is, the “strong meat” of the Holy Spirit, “because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God,” is that the Corinthians were as yet unsaved and not Christ’s. Paul says we are none of His if we do not have the Spirit of Christ as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 3:3 that they are still fleshly, or carnal, in the way they are behaving. Paul describes their behavior, but again calls them brethren in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):10** Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul tells the Corinthians that when they act this way, they walk like they were mere men without the Spirit of God in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Irenaeus does not understand that when we come to Christ, we are born again not as mature spiritual men and women, but as babes in Christ. Being a babe is to be a newborn. A newborn has just as much life as a mature spiritual man or woman. But the newborn will grow up to be a spiritual man or woman first by receiving milk of the word, and then the solid food.

Now Peter writes in his first epistle encouraging believers to be holy as we read in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):14** As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Those Peter was writing to were born again as we continue in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):20** Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all

the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Peter didn't expect perfection in these believers. Rather, he encourages them to grow in respect to salvation as we read again in **1 Peter 2 (NASB):1** Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

What Peter is saying is that we must walk in the light of what we have already received. In this way God cleanses us from all sin, and adds more light by His word.

The apostle John also talks about this growth process in **1 John 2 (KJV):12** I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

The apostle John was not writing to little boys and girls in age, but to believers who were children in their Christian experience. When we first hear the Gospel and repent of our sins and believe in Jesus Christ, it is as if all heaven has been poured into us because of the new life of Christ in our spirit. We experience great joy in our relationship with God who is now our Father by a spiritual rebirth. We thus rejoice that our sins have been forgiven for His name's sake. As we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God, we grow to know our authority in Christ over the evil one. We may even cast out spirits in Jesus name. This is why John says he is writing to those who are as young men in their Christian experience by the fact that they have overcome the evil one. John also writes to the fathers in their Christian experience. These are those who have grown up in Him in all things. They are not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

So the milk we must have to grow spiritually is the word of God. It has nothing to do with Jesus' flesh. As new converts, that is, those who have just believed in Jesus Christ and have been born again, we are babes in Christ. And babes need milk. The Corinthians still had much that was fleshly in their behavior, but this did not make them unrighteous or unbelievers. Paul tells us that there was immorality of the grossest sort, that is incest, as we see in 1 Corinthians, chapter 5, and brother was taking brother to court in 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, and they were also eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner in 1 Corinthians, chapter 11. There were divisions among them, and envy and strife in 1 Corinthians, chapter 3. This is why Paul called them carnal. But they were still washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. They were still saved, and had received the Holy Spirit, but in their behavior they were acting as babes, that is, new converts.

So Paul was not telling the Corinthians that they did not have the Holy Spirit when he called them carnal, or still fleshly. And this assertion by Ireneus that the Corinthians did not yet have the Spirit flies in the face of what Paul specifically states in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Paul was not asking them if the Holy Spirit was in them. He was telling them that He was in fact in them, and that they should know it. The reason that they had the Holy Spirit in them was because they were in Christ.

Now the Scriptures also explains what is meant by strong meat, or solid food as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):11** Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

We must have our senses trained to discern good and evil. We do this by walking in the light of the word of God which we have received. God does not expect us to know everything in His word right away when we first come to Him. In just reading His word, we are depositing in our spirits the milk of the word of God. And God Himself begins to teach us by His Spirit as John tells us in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

This is why the Spirit of God is called our helper by Jesus in **John 14 (NASB):16** I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; **17** *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

And again in **John 14 (NASB):26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

It is the Spirit of God who revealed truth to the apostles, and who illuminates our minds so that we might know the truth as well, as John reveals in **John 16 (NIV):13** But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Now the milk of the word of God, that is, the elementary principles, are revealed in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):1** Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, **2** of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. **3** And this we will do, if God permits.

The Spirit is not the strong meat. The strong meat is the deeper teachings of the word of God. The truths such as our justification by faith, our election and calling, and the second coming of Christ, are some examples of strong meat in the word of God. The strong meat is only obtained by study of the word of God, and is what makes it possible for us to stand against the strong winds of false doctrine that blow against the Church such as they were doing in Irenaeus' day. Without the Spirit's help and guidance, we would never be able to grow to understand these truths. Irenaeus has it the other way around. We don't make ready our lives so that we can receive the Spirit. We receive the Holy Spirit so that we can grow in the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit. Being led by the Spirit, we grow in grace knowledge as Peter says in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):17** Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. **18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works that we should walk in them. The Holy Spirit is our Helper and our guide into all truth. We can do nothing spiritually without Him.

## **Book 4: Chapter XXXIX.—Man is endowed with the faculty of distinguishing good and evil; so that, without compulsion, he has the power, by his own will and choice, to perform God's commandments, by doing which he avoids the evils prepared for the rebellious.**

1. Man has received the knowledge of good and evil. It is good to obey God, and to believe in Him, and to keep His commandment, and this is the life of man; as not to obey God is evil, and this is his death. Since God, therefore, gave [to man] such mental power (magnanimitatem) man knew both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, that the eye of the mind, receiving experience of both, may with judgment make choice of the better things; and that he may never become indolent or neglectful of God's command; and learning by experience that it is an evil thing which deprives him of life, that is, disobedience to God, may never attempt it at all, but that, knowing that what preserves his life, namely, obedience to God, is good, he may diligently keep it with all earnestness. Wherefore he has also had a twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds, that with discipline he may make choice of the better things. But how, if he had no knowledge of the contrary, could he have had instruction in that which is good? For there is thus a surer and an undoubted comprehension of

matters submitted to us than the mere surmise arising from an opinion regarding them. For just as the tongue receives experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognises the distinctions of sounds by hearing; so also does the mind, receiving through the experience of both the knowledge of what is good, become more tenacious of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God: in the first place, casting away, by means of repentance, disobedience, as being something disagreeable and nauseous; and afterwards coming to understand what it really is, that it is contrary to goodness and sweetness, so that the mind may never even attempt to taste disobedience to God. But if any one do shun the knowledge of both these kinds of things, and the twofold perception of knowledge, he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being.

2. How, then, shall he be a God, who has not as yet been made a man? Or how can he be perfect who was but lately created? How, again, can he be immortal, who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker? For it must be that thou, at the outset, shouldest hold the rank of a man, and then afterwards partake of the glory of God. For thou dost not make God, but God thee. If, then, thou art God's workmanship, await the hand of thy Maker which creates everything in due time; in due time as far as thou art concerned, whose creation is being carried out. Offer to Him thy heart in a soft and tractable state, and preserve the form in which the Creator has fashioned thee, having moisture in thyself, lest, by becoming hardened, thou lose the impressions of His fingers. But by preserving the framework thou shalt ascend to that which is perfect, for the moist clay which is in thee is hidden [there] by the workmanship of God. His hand fashioned thy substance; He will cover thee over [too] within and without with pure gold and silver, and He will adorn thee to such a degree, that even "the King Himself shall have pleasure in thy beauty." But if thou, being obstinately hardened, dost reject the operation of His skill, and show thyself ungrateful towards Him, because thou wert created a [mere] man, by becoming thus ungrateful to God, thou hast at once lost both His workmanship and life. For creation is an attribute of the goodness of God but to be created is that of human nature. If then, thou shalt deliver up to Him what is thine, that is, faith towards Him and subjection, thou shalt receive His handiwork, and shall be a perfect work of God.

3. If, however, thou wilt not believe in Him, and wilt flee from His hands, the cause of imperfection shall be in thee who didst not obey, but not in Him who called [thee]. For He commissioned [messengers] to call people to the marriage, but they who did not obey Him deprived themselves of the royal supper. The skill of God, therefore, is not defective, for He has power of the stones to raise up children to Abraham; but the man who does not obtain it is the cause to himself of his own imperfection. Nor, [in like manner], does the light fail because of those who have blinded themselves; but while it remains the same as ever, those who are [thus] blinded are involved in darkness through their own fault. The light does never enslave any one by necessity; nor, again, does God exercise compulsion upon any one unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill. Those persons, therefore, who have apostatized from the light given by the Father, and transgressed the law of liberty, have done so through their own fault, since they have been created free agents, and possessed of power over themselves.

4. But God, foreknowing all things, prepared fit habitations for both, kindly conferring that light which they desire on those who seek after the light of incorruption, and resort to it; but for the despisers and mockers who avoid and turn themselves away from this light, and who do, as it were, blind themselves, He has prepared darkness suitable to persons who oppose the light, and He has inflicted an appropriate punishment upon those who try to avoid being subject to Him. Submission to God is eternal rest, so that they who shun the light have a place worthy of their flight; and those who fly from eternal rest, have a habitation in accordance with their fleeing. Now, since all good things are with God, they who by their own determination fly from God, do defraud themselves of all good things; and having been [thus] defrauded of all good things with respect to God, they shall consequently fall under the just judgment of God. For those persons who shun rest shall justly incur punishment, and those who avoid the light shall justly dwell in darkness. For as in the case of this temporal light, those who shun it do deliver themselves over to darkness, so that they do themselves

become the cause to themselves that they are destitute of light, and do inhabit darkness; and, as I have already observed, the light is not the cause of such an [unhappy] condition of existence to them; so those who fly from the eternal light of God, which contains in itself all good things, are themselves the cause to themselves of their inhabiting eternal darkness, destitute of all good things, having become to themselves the cause of [their consignment to] an abode of that nature.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that “Man has received the knowledge of good and evil,” referring to Genesis 3:22. Irenaeus also affirms that, “It is good to obey God, and to believe in Him, and to keep His commandment, and this is the life of man as not to obey God is evil, and this is his death.” Irenaeus then argues that, “Since God, therefore, gave [to man] such mental power (magnanimitatem) man knew both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, that the eye of the mind, receiving experience of both, may with judgment make choice of the better things; and that he may never become indolent or neglectful of God’s command; and learning by experience that it is an evil thing which deprives him of life, that is, disobedience to God, may never attempt it at all, but that, knowing that what preserves his life, namely, obedience to God, is good, he may diligently keep it with all earnestness.” Irenaeus then asserts, “Wherefore he has also had a twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds, that with discipline he may make choice of the better things.” Irenaeus then reasons, “But how, if he had no knowledge of the contrary, could he have had instruction in that which is good? For there is thus a surer and an undoubted comprehension of matters submitted to us than the mere surmise arising from an opinion regarding them. For just as the tongue receives experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognises the distinctions of sounds by hearing; so also does the mind, receiving through the experience of both the knowledge of what is good, become more tenacious of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God:” Irenaeus then concludes, “in the first place, casting away, by means of repentance, disobedience, as being something disagreeable and nauseous; and afterwards coming to understand what it really is, that it is contrary to goodness and sweetness, so that the mind may never even attempt to taste disobedience to God.” And Irenaeus summarizes, “But if any one do shun the knowledge of both these kinds of things, and the twofold perception of knowledge, he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asks, “How, then, shall he be a God, who has not as yet been made a man? Or how can he be perfect who was but lately created? How, again, can he be immortal, who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker?” And Irenaeus admonishes, “For it must be that thou, at the outset, shouldest hold the rank of a man, and then afterwards partake of the glory of God. For thou dost not make God, but God thee.” And Irenaeus then advises, “If, then, thou art God’s workmanship, await the hand of thy Maker which creates everything in due time; in due time as far as thou art concerned, whose creation is being carried out. Offer to Him thy heart in a soft and tractable state, and preserve the form in which the Creator has fashioned thee, having moisture in thyself, lest, by becoming hardened, thou lose the impressions of His fingers.” Irenaeus then asserts, “But by preserving the framework thou shalt ascend to that which is perfect, for the moist clay which is in thee is hidden [there] by the workmanship of God. His hand fashioned thy substance; He will cover thee over [too] within and without with pure gold and silver, and He will adorn thee to such a degree, that even “the King Himself shall have pleasure in thy beauty,” referring to Psalm 45:11.

Irenaeus then asserts, “But if thou, being obstinately hardened, dost reject the operation of His skill, and show thyself ungrateful towards Him, because thou wert created a [mere] man, by becoming thus ungrateful to God, thou hast at once lost both His workmanship and life.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For creation is an attribute of the goodness of God but to be created is that of human nature. If then, thou shalt deliver up to Him what is thine, that is, faith towards Him and subjection, thou shalt receive His handiwork, and shall be a perfect work of God.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus then affirms, “If, however, thou wilt not believe in Him, and wilt flee from His hands, the cause of imperfection shall be in thee who didst not obey, but not in Him who called [thee]. For He commissioned [messengers] to call people to the marriage, but they who did not obey Him deprived themselves of the royal supper,” referring to Matthew 22:1-14. Irenaeus then affirms, “The skill of God, therefore, is not defective, for He has power of the stones to raise up children to Abraham,” referring to Matthew 3:9. Irenaeus then affirms, “but the man who does not obtain it is the cause to himself of his own

imperfection. Nor, [in like manner], does the light fail because of those who have blinded themselves; but while it remains the same as ever, those who are [thus] blinded are involved in darkness through their own fault. The light does never enslave any one by necessity; nor, again, does God exercise compulsion upon any one unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill." Irenaeus then concludes, "Those persons, therefore, who have apostatized from the light given by the Father, and transgressed the law of liberty, have done so through their own fault, since they have been created free agents, and possessed of power over themselves."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, "But God, foreknowing all things, prepared fit habitations for both, kindly conferring that light which they desire on those who seek after the light of incorruption, and resort to it; but for the despisers and mockers who avoid and turn themselves away from this light, and who do, as it were, blind themselves, He has prepared darkness suitable to persons who oppose the light, and He has inflicted an appropriate punishment upon those who try to avoid being subject to Him." Irenaeus continues and again affirms, "Submission to God is eternal rest, so that they who shun the light have a place worthy of their flight; and those who fly from eternal rest, have a habitation in accordance with their fleeing." Irenaeus then concludes, "Now, since all good things are with God, they who by their own determination fly from God, do defraud themselves of all good things; and having been [thus] defrauded of all good things with respect to God, they shall consequently fall under the just judgment of God. For those persons who shun rest shall justly incur punishment, and those who avoid the light shall justly dwell in darkness. For as in the case of this temporal light, those who shun it do deliver themselves over to darkness, so that they do themselves become the cause to themselves that they are destitute of light, and do inhabit darkness; and, as I have already observed, the light is not the cause of such an [unhappy] condition of existence to them; so those who fly from the eternal light of God, which contains in itself all good things, are themselves the cause to themselves of their inhabiting eternal darkness, destitute of all good things, having become to themselves the cause of [their consignment to] an abode of that nature."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that "Man has received the knowledge of good and evil," referring in context to **Genesis 3 (KJV):22** And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

We notice in these verses that man has the knowledge of good and evil, but he does not have access to the tree of life which would give him eternal life. Irenaeus continues and affirms that, "It is "good to obey God, and to believe in Him, and to keep His commandment, and this is the life of man; as not to obey God is evil, and this is his death." Irenaeus points out that this is the lesson that man should learn from Adam's sin.

Irenaeus then argues that, "Since God, therefore, gave [to man] such mental power (magnanimitatem) man knew both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, that the eye of the mind, receiving experience of both, may with judgment make choice of the better things; and that he may never become indolent or neglectful of God's command; and learning by experience that it is an evil thing which deprives him of life, that is, disobedience to God, may never attempt it at all, but that, knowing that what preserves his life, namely, obedience to God, is good, he may diligently keep it with all earnestness."

However, the effects of the fall were greater than Irenaeus acknowledges here. He seems to confine his thinking to the Genesis account, but even there we see that spiritual death is in view when the Lord drove the man out of the Garden of Eden in order to guard the way to the tree of life. Since man is dead in trespasses and sins, it is spiritual death that must be overcome by man before he can obey God's commands as Paul indicates in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

Irenaeus then asserts, "Wherefore he has also had a twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds, that with discipline he may make choice of the better things." Irenaeus fails to see here that man needs a change in his nature and not just to exercise discipline in order to please God as Paul says in **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Man in his unregenerate state is totally in the flesh and cannot please God.

Irenaeus then reasons, "But how, if he had no knowledge of the contrary, could he have had instruction

in that which is good? For there is thus a surer and an undoubted comprehension of matters submitted to us than the mere surmise arising from an opinion regarding them. For just as the tongue receives experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognises the distinctions of sounds by hearing; so also does the mind, receiving through the experience of both the knowledge of what is good, become more tenacious of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God:"

Is Irenaeus making light of sin here? When Irenaeus asks, "But how, if he had no knowledge of the contrary, could he have had instruction in that which is good?" is he trying to justify man's sin? Was sin something necessary in Irenaeus' thinking so that man could have knowledge of the contrary and thereby have instruction in that which is good?

Irenaeus then concludes, "in the first place, casting away, by means of repentance, disobedience, as being something disagreeable and nauseous; and afterwards coming to understand what it really is, that it is contrary to goodness and sweetness, so that the mind may never even attempt to taste disobedience to God."

While man must repent, Irenaeus has given us an unrealistic expectation of man. Man inherits a sinful nature from Adam. Sin is in our flesh as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul says that sin dwells in me, that is, in my flesh, even after I am born again. There is a willingness to do good, but I still seem to do the very thing I hate. There is a war going on between my sinful flesh and my born again spirit. Paul describes this as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

In repentance I understand that sin is "disobedience" and "something disagreeable and nauseous," and afterwards I come to "understand what it really is, that it is contrary to goodness and sweetness." But to expect that "the mind may never even attempt to taste disobedience to God," is setting the bar impossibly high. That Irenaeus would expect us to never sin again does not take into account that we have a sin nature in our flesh from which we will not be completely free until we our bodies are resurrected, and we are with Christ. When we see Him we will be like Him as John says in **1 John 3 (KJV)**:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Until the resurrection, we will have to discipline ourselves by putting off the old and putting on the new. When I am born again, my spirit is renewed to life by the Holy Spirit, and I undergo a spiritual resurrection as Paul tells us in **Colossians 2 (KJV)**:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

The word "quickened" means "made alive." We also see this in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Our life is now hidden with Christ in God as Paul reveals in **Colossians 3 (KJV)**:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Christ is now our life after we believe in Him, and this life is hidden with Christ in God, Paul says. When we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord, we are agreeing with God that sin is utterly sinful as Irenaeus also says. Without Christ we are wretched men and women indeed, but our new birth gives us power

over sin in our flesh as Paul tells us in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The Holy Spirit is now the life of my spirit, and the law of the Spirit of life in me sets me free from sin in my flesh. I no longer have to fulfill my fleshly desires. My inner man delights to do the will of God, and it is to my inner man's desires that I must now yield in cooperation with the Holy Spirit who also indwells me. I may have to wash my feet at times, but Jesus understood this as He taught us to do this in **John 13 (NASB):10** Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all *of you*."

The washing, Jesus is speaking of confession as the apostle John states in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We can go directly to the Father and be forgiven because we have an advocate with Him as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

If we sin after we are saved, we don't have to be born again all over again. God has provided us with an Advocate. If we then confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Irenaeus then concludes, "But if any one do shun the knowledge of both these kinds of things, and the twofold perception of knowledge, he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being." To deny that one has the knowledge of good and evil is a symptom of sin in our world. Man has the knowledge of good and evil, but he does not have the right standards by which to judge by because his conscience is defiled as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asks, "How, then, shall he be a God, who has not as yet been made a man? Or how can he be perfect who was but lately created? How, again, can he be immortal, who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker?" And Irenaeus admonishes, "For it must be that thou, at the outset, shouldest hold the rank of a man, and then afterwards partake of the glory of God. For thou dost not make God, but God thee." Irenaeus is speaking to the Gnostics.

And Irenaeus then advises, "If, then, thou art God's workmanship, await the hand of thy Maker which creates everything in due time; in due time as far as thou art concerned, whose creation is being carried out. Offer to Him thy heart in a soft and tractable state, and preserve the form in which the Creator has fashioned thee, having moisture in thyself, lest, by becoming hardened, thou lose the impressions of His fingers."

It is good to have a heart that is open and willing to believe and obey God's word. However, Irenaeus makes no mention of God's word here.

Irenaeus then asserts, "But by preserving the framework thou shalt ascend to that which is perfect, for the moist clay which is in thee is hidden [there] by the workmanship of God. His hand fashioned thy substance; He will cover thee over [too] within and without with pure gold and silver, and He will adorn thee to such a degree, that even "the King Himself shall have pleasure in thy beauty," referring to **Psalm 45 (KJV):11** So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

It is true that when we surrender our hearts to Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord of our lives that He, the King, delights in us. But Irenaeus wants us to believe that there is some good in us, and that we just need to preserve it in order to "ascend to that which is perfect." The Scriptures tell us that there is none good as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

It is the realization of our wretchedness, and that we are under sin, that brings us to a place of repentance. It is not by preserving anything in us that we are saved. It is the surrendering of our hearts to the one who can save us from our sinful state that is acceptable to Him. It is our faith that saves us and even that is

given to us as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “But if thou, being obstinately hardened, dost reject the operation of His skill, and show thyself ungrateful towards Him, because thou wert created a [mere] man, by becoming thus ungrateful to God, thou hast at once lost both His workmanship and life.”

However, Irenaeus does not understand that man is already lost, and dead in trespasses and sins. We have nothing to lose, and everything to gain by accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior. We are not His workmanship until we have His life, and we do not have His life until we repent and accept Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Irenaeus then affirms, “For creation is an attribute of the goodness of God but to be created is that of human nature. If then, thou shalt deliver up to Him what is thine, that is, faith towards Him and subjection, thou shalt receive His handiwork, and shall be a perfect work of God.”

Irenaeus seems to here grasp the truth that it is by faith that we submit to God, but he does not seem to know that man under sin has no faith or power of his own to submit to God as Paul reveals in **Romans 5 (KJV):6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

It is in our surrender to His voice that we receive power to believe. The entrance of His words give us light as we read in **Psalm 119 (KJV):130** The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

It is by His word that we receive faith as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus then affirms, “If, however, thou wilt not believe in Him, and wilt flee from His hands, the cause of imperfection shall be in thee who didst not obey, but not in Him who called [thee]. For He commissioned [messengers] to call people to the marriage, but they who did not obey Him deprived themselves of the royal supper,” referring to **Matthew 22 (NIV):1** Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. 4 “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ 5 “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless. 13 “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Irenaeus then affirms, “The skill of God, therefore, is not defective, for He has power of the stones to raise up children to Abraham,” referring to **Matthew 3 (NIV):9** And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

Irenaeus then affirms, “but the man who does not obtain it is the cause to himself of his own imperfection. Nor, [in like manner], does the light fail because of those who have blinded themselves; but while it remains the same as ever, those who are [thus] blinded are involved in darkness through their own fault. The light does never enslave any one by necessity; nor, again, does God exercise compulsion upon any one unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill.” Irenaeus then concludes, “Those persons, therefore, who have apostatized from the light given by the Father, and transgressed the law of liberty, have done so through their own fault, since they have been created free agents, and possessed of power over themselves.”

In Irenaeus’ thinking, there was no impact to man’s will or ability to discern good and evil as a result of the fall of Adam. Irenaeus sees only that the ground was cursed, and the serpent was cursed and his head will be

crushed, and the woman will have pain during child birth. And in Irenaeus' thinking, man is still a free agent, and possessed of power over himself so that he is both able to choose the good and reject the evil, and he is able to actually do the good he has chosen.

However, in talking with the Jews, Jesus said that whoever commits sin is the slave of sin as we read in **John 8 (NIV):31** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" 34 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Jesus came to set the captives free as He said in **Luke 4 (NIV):16** He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Paul tells us that even with Christ, there is a war being waged inside of us in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

If this is the case with the Christian, then before accepting Christ we are prisoners of sin, and we are absolutely unable to do good as Paul says in **Romans 3 (KJV):12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

As Jesus said, those who commit sin are slaves of sin. We cannot do good because everything we do is tainted by the sin which we carry as a descendant of Adam. This is why we need to be saved. We were slaves of sin, but Jesus Christ has come to set those who believe in Him free from sin. We were prisoners of sin, but now we have the victory over our sinful flesh. Being born again by faith in Jesus Christ, the law of the Spirit of life sets us free from sin as Paul tells us in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Man was a free agent and had power over himself before he sinned. After man sinned, he became a sinner with a nature to sin. Man became a prisoner of sin in his members, and could not do good in the eyes of God because everything he did was tainted with sin. This is why man needs a savior. Without Christ, man is hopelessly lost and a slave to sin. It is the realization of this lost condition that brings a man or woman to the realization that they need to repent, and receive Jesus.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, "But God, foreknowing all things, prepared fit habitations for both, kindly conferring that light which they desire on those who seek after the light of incorruption, and resort to it; but for the despisers and mockers who avoid and turn themselves away from this light, and who do, as it were, blind themselves, He has prepared darkness suitable to persons who oppose the light, and He has inflicted an appropriate punishment upon those who try to avoid being subject to Him." Irenaeus is again referring to the parable of the wedding feast. The one who does not believe in Jesus, and who turns away from the light, is like one who goes to a wedding without proper attire as in **Matthew 22 (NIV):11** "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless. 13 "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Jesus said that He is the light of the world as we read in **John 8 (NIV):12** When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

To reject Jesus is to walk in darkness. Irenaeus then continues and again affirms, "Submission to God is eternal rest, so that they who shun the light have a place worthy of their flight; and those who fly from eternal

rest, have a habitation in accordance with their fleeing.” Irenaeus agrees with Jesus who said as much in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Irenaeus then concludes, “Now, since all good things are with God, they who by their own determination fly from God, do defraud themselves of all good things; and having been [thus] defrauded of all good things with respect to God, they shall consequently fall under the just judgment of God. For those persons who shun rest shall justly incur punishment, and those who avoid the light shall justly dwell in darkness. For as in the case of this temporal light, those who shun it do deliver themselves over to darkness, so that they do themselves become the cause to themselves that they are destitute of light, and do inhabit darkness; and, as I have already observed, the light is not the cause of such an [unhappy] condition of existence to them; so those who fly from the eternal light of God, which contains in itself all good things, are themselves the cause to themselves of their inhabiting eternal darkness, destitute of all good things, having become to themselves the cause of [their consignment to] an abode of that nature.”

And in that place of eternal darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth as Jesus said.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIX

To summarize again, Irenaeus points out that man has received the knowledge of good and evil. Although he acknowledges that death was the result of Adam’s sin, he seems to feel that man is not good or bad but does need discipline. Man learned in the garden that disobeying God is an evil thing and causes death. Man now has a “surer and an undoubted comprehension” of “matters submitted to him.” He has the mental power to know both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. Now he knows that obedience to God preserves life. Man has a “twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds,” that “with discipline he may make choice of the better things.” Man must choose the good to preserve his life or suffer death for disobedience to God. God is creating in man His workmanship. Man must not “become hardened and lose the impression of His fingers.” And “by preserving the framework” man shall “ascend to that which is perfect.” If however man is ungrateful to God, he loses “at once” both “His workmanship and life.” “To be created is that of human nature,” Irenaeus says. Man must deliver up what is his, that is, “his faith towards Him and subjection,” in order to “receive His handiwork and be a perfect work of God.” God does not “exercise compulsion upon anyone unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill.” If man perishes, it is through his own fault because he rejects the “exercise of His skill,” and has “apostatized from the light given by the Father.” Those who submit to God find “eternal rest.” Those who shun the light “justly incur punishment, and cause themselves to inhabit eternal darkness, destitute of all good things.”

First of all, to see how great was the effect of the fall of man, we start at the beginning. We know that the knowledge of good and evil is first mentioned in **Genesis 2 (NIV):9** The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And we know that the LORD God commanded Adam not to eat of this tree as in **Genesis 2 (NIV):15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

The only other time the words knowledge, good, and evil are mentioned together in the Scriptures is in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):39** Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Therefore, children under the age of accountability have no knowledge of good or evil. However, man above the age of accountability has this knowledge, but this awareness of good and evil alone cannot save him.

And God did create man innocent. Yet, when Adam and Eve sinned, they became sinners and fell short of the glory of God as stated by Paul in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Paul explains that through Adam, all men became helpless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God in **Romans 5 (KJV):6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Paul explains that all of this came about by one man's sin in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Our innocence was lost when Adam sinned. Not only so, but as sinners, we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins, and have a sin nature, and are by this nature children of wrath as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

We walked according to the course of this world, and according to the prince of the power of the air. And the death Paul refers to here is not only spiritual death, but physical death was a result of Adam's sin as well as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Man without Christ is dead in trespasses and sins, and his body is mortal and death doomed. Not only so, but man in this condition is said to suppress or hold down the truth about God in unrighteousness as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Being in this condition as an unbelieving sinner, man's mind and conscience are said to be defiled as we see in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

The problem for man is that his conscience is defiled as a result of sin, and he does not have the right standards by which to judge by, having gone his own way in disbelief. This is true of all men and women without exception. Not only so, but man's heart is said to be deceitful above all things by the prophet Jeremiah as we read in **Jeremiah 17 (NASB):9** "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

The heart is the center of man's emotions. It is from the heart of man that God wants our worship to come from as we read in **Isaiah 29 (ESV):13** Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote.

And in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):10** I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

It is what comes out of our heart that defiles us as we read in **Matthew 15 (KJV):18** But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart

proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

When we have not repented and come to Christ, our heart remains in sin. When we are in this condition, we are said to be without excuse before God, having rejected the knowledge of God as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV)**:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Man knows the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, yet still chooses to do evil. As a result of man's rejection of the knowledge of God, he is alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance in him as Paul says in **Ephesians 4 (NASB)**:17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Man shows that the work of the law of God is written in his heart when his conscience is seen to be judging right and wrong as see in **Romans 2 (KJV)**:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

All men and women without exception are said to be under sin and unrighteous as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV)**:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

I believe Irenaeus' whole argument in this section is summed up here when he says in paragraph one, speaking of man, "Wherefore he has also had a twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds, that with discipline he may make choice of the better things."

Irenaeus believed that God created man as a free agent, and in possession of power over himself to make good choices and bad choices. According to Irenaeus, man is not good or bad but he has the power to become good or bad by the choices he makes. Man is the workmanship of God, and if he is obedient to God, and preserves His workmanship or framework or the imprint of His fingers which is within him as moist clay, he will become perfect. According to Irenaeus, if man disciplines himself to choose the good, and be obedient to God, giving God his faith and subjection, man will become immortal. But is this what the Scriptures teach us?

Does man preserve his life by obedience to God, or forfeit his life by disobedience to God? That is, does man live or die by the choices he makes? We have already shown that man is sinful, and a sinner with a sinful nature. Free will is an issue here as well as man's nature. However, we will deal with free will in **Chapter 30: Free Will**, and deal with man's nature here.

Now if man is neither good or bad, and has power over the choices he makes, then it would be reasonable to conclude, as Irenaeus says, that man could achieve perfection by submitting himself to God and obeying His commandments. Ultimately then man would deserve immortality based upon his good choices. But is the nature of man fully described by what Irenaeus says here? Or is there more that the Scriptures have to say about the nature of man?

When Irenaeus says that man must deliver up what is his, that is, "his faith towards Him and subjection," in order to "receive His handiwork and be a perfect work of God," does man have faith of his own to give God? Certainly another man's faith would not suffice for us, and we do need a faith of our own. But the Scriptures tell us that the faith that saves us is a gift of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should

boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Paul tells us plainly that the faith that saves us is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. Again Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing the word preached as we read in **Romans 10 (NASB):17** So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Again, Paul says that we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. We have to first be in Christ Jesus in order to do the good works He created us for. It is at the time when we accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior that we are in Christ Jesus, that is, we are placed into the body of Christ as we read again in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

It is God who places the members in the body as it pleases Him as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

It is at the time when we repent and believe in Jesus Christ that we are made alive together with Christ Jesus as Paul says in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

God made us alive when we obeyed Him, and believed in His Son. Being thus born of the Spirit we are created anew in our spirit in righteousness and true holiness as Paul says in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This creative act of God in our spirit resulted in a new nature of holiness and truth in our spirit. It is a finished work, and it is not something that is happening gradually as we make good choices. The "moist clay," or framework of His workmanship, or impression of His fingers is in our Spirit the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. It is in our soul that we are changed from glory to glory. Our soul is made up of our mind, will, emotions, and conscience. This is where our obedience to God's word comes in to play. It through His word that we are progressively sanctified in our mind, our will, our emotions, and in our conscience as Jesus prayed in **John 17 (NIV):17** Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

And in **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

As we are obedient to the word of God, we are progressively sanctified in our souls. This is where our good choices have effect. As we put off the former conversation, the old self, and put on the new self, and walk in the light of the word of God, we are cleansed in our soul, and our character is changed to be more like Jesus as we read in **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):18** But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

As we trust in God's word, our conscience is cleansed and we begin to have right standards by which to judge by. And our mind, will, and emotions are also cleansed as we hear and do the word of God. When we accept Christ, it is as though we took a bath as Jesus explained to Peter in **John 13 (NIV):5** After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

Once we have bathed by accepting Jesus Christ by faith, and we have believed that He died on the cross for our sins and rose again, and we confess Him as Lord, we are clean. To put it another way, Paul says we are saved as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

We do not need to take a bath all over again to be clean, or to be saved. We are saved and cleansed of all our sins the moment we accept Christ. From then on we will just need to wash our feet and we are completely

clean.

There is still more to Irenaeus' thinking on the nature of man.

## Book 4: Chapter XL.—One and the same God the Father inflicts punishment on the reprobate, and bestows rewards on the elect.

1. It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord 1777 Matt. xv. 41. has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand. And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, "I am a jealous God, making peace, and creating evil things;" 1778 Isa. xlvi. 7. thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.

2. If, however, it were truly one Father who confers rest, and another God who has prepared the fire, their sons would have been equally different [one from the other]; one, indeed, sending [men] into the Father's kingdom, but the other into eternal fire. But inasmuch as one and the same Lord has pointed out that the whole human race shall be divided at the judgment, "as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats," 1779 Matt. xv. 32. and that to some He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you," 1780 Matt. xv. 34. but to others, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which My Father has prepared for the devil and his angels," 1781 Matt. xv. 41. one and the same Father is manifestly declared [in this passage], "making peace and creating evil things," preparing fit things for both; as also there is one Judge sending both into a fit place, as the Lord sets forth in the parable of the tares and the wheat, where He says, "As therefore the tares are gathered together, and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather from His kingdom everything that offendeth, and those who work iniquity, and shall send them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." 1782 Matt. xiii. 40–43. The Father, therefore, who has prepared the kingdom for the righteous, into which the Son has received those worthy of it, is He who has also prepared the furnace of fire, into which these angels commissioned by the Son of man shall send those persons who deserve it, according to God's command.

3. The Lord, indeed, sowed good seed in His own field; 1783 Matt. xiii. 34. [Applicable to the origin of heresies.] and He says, "The field is the world." But while men slept, the enemy came, and "sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, and went his way." 1784 Matt. xiii. 28. Hence we learn that this was the apostate angel and the enemy, because he was envious of God's workmanship, and took in hand to render this [workmanship] an enmity with God. For this cause also God has banished from His presence him who did of his own accord stealthily sow the tares, that is, him who brought about the transgression; 1785 The old Latin translator varies from this (the Greek of which was recovered by Grabe from two ancient Catenæ Patrum), making the clause run thus, *that is, the transgression which he had himself introduced*, making the explanatory words to refer to the *tares*, and not, as in the Greek, to the *sower of the tares*, but He took compassion upon man, who, through want of care no doubt, but still wickedly [on the part of another], became involved in disobedience; and He turned the enmity by which [the devil] had designed to make [man] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent. As also the Scripture tells us that God said to the serpent, "And I will place enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He 1786 Following the reading of the LXX. αὐτός σου τροήσει κεφαλήν. shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel." 1787 Gen. iii. 15. And the Lord summed up in Himself this enmity, when He was made man

from a woman, and trod upon his [the serpent's] head, as I have pointed out in the preceding book.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand,” referring to Matthew 25:41. Irenaeus then affirms, “And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, “I am a jealous God, making peace, and creating evil things,” referring to Exodus 20:5,6 and Isaiah 45:7, “thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness,” referring in part to Matthew 25:30, “which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “If, however, it were truly one Father who confers rest, and another God who has prepared the fire, their sons would have been equally different [one from the other]; one, indeed, sending [men] into the Father’s kingdom, but the other into eternal fire. But inasmuch as one and the same Lord has pointed out that the whole human race shall be divided at the judgment, “as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats,” referring to Matthew 25:32, “and that to some He will say, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you,” referring to Matthew 25:34, “but to others, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which My Father has prepared for the devil and his angels,” referring to Matthew 25:41, “one and the same Father is manifestly declared [in this passage], “making peace and creating evil things,” preparing fit things for both;” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “as also there is one Judge sending both into a fit place, as the Lord sets forth in the parable of the tares and the wheat, where He says, “As therefore the tares are gathered together, and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather from His kingdom everything that offendeth, and those who work iniquity, and shall send them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” referring to Matthew 13:40-43. Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “The Father, therefore, who has prepared the kingdom for the righteous, into which the Son has received those worthy of it, is He who has also prepared the furnace of fire, into which these angels commissioned by the Son of man shall send those persons who deserve it, according to God’s command.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues as he says, “The Lord, indeed, sowed good seed in His own field.” Irenaeus then testifies, “and He says, “The field is the world,” referring to Matthew 13:38. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But while men slept, the enemy came, and “sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, and went his way,” referring to Matthew 13:25. Irenaeus then explains, “Hence we learn that this was the apostate angel and the enemy, because he was envious of God’s workmanship, and took in hand to render this [workmanship] an enmity with God. For this cause also God has banished from His presence him who did of his own accord stealthily sow the tares, that is, him who brought about the transgression;” And Irenaeus then affirms, “but He took compassion upon man, who, through want of care no doubt, but still wickedly [on the part of another], became involved in disobedience; and He turned the enmity by which [the devil] had designed to make [man] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent. As also the Scripture tells us that God said to the serpent, “And I will place enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel,” referring to Genesis 3:15. Irenaeus then concludes, “And the Lord summed up in Himself this enmity, when He was made man from a woman, and trod upon his [the serpent’s] head, as I have pointed out in the preceding book.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand,” referring to **Matthew 25 (NIV):41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

By his words “on His left hand,” Jesus is referring to the nations as we read in **Matthew 25 (NIV):31** “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Jesus prophesies here of a time when He will come in His glory, and all the nations will be gathered before Him. The sheep nations will be on His right and the goat nations on His left. Based on their treatment of His brethren, the Jews, during the great tribulation period, the sheep nations on His right will be blessed and enter the kingdom as we read in **Matthew 25 (NIV):34** “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ 37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ 40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

Those nations which did not give shelter to His brethren, the Jews, during the great tribulation will be cursed and cast into eternal punishment as seen in **Matthew 25 (NIV):41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ 44 “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ 45 “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ 46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Irenaeus speaks more generally of those who do not repent, but the Scripture is speaking of the judgment of the nations, and which ones will enter the Kingdom when Jesus comes in His glory at the first resurrection. Jesus is not speaking of personal judgment here.

Irenaeus then affirms, “And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, “I am a jealous God, making peace, and creating evil things,” referring in context to **Exodus 20 (NIV):5** You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

And to **Isaiah 45 (Septuagint):7** I am he that prepared light, and formed darkness; who make peace, and create evil; I am the Lord God, that does all these things.

And also as in **Isaiah 45 (NASB):7** I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

And Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness,” referring in part to **Matthew 25 (NIV):29** For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues as he argues against the Gnostics, “If, however, it were truly one Father who confers rest, and another God who has prepared the fire, their sons would have been equally different [one from the other]; one, indeed, sending [men] into the Father’s kingdom, but the other into eternal fire. But inasmuch as one and the same Lord has pointed out that the whole human race shall be divided at the judgment, “as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats,” referring again to Matthew 25:32 above, “and that to some He will say, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you,” referring again to Matthew 25:34, “but to others, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which My

Father has prepared for the devil and his angels," referring again to Matthew 25:41, "one and the same Father is manifestly declared [in this passage], "making peace and creating evil things," preparing fit things for both."

Irenaeus' argument against the Gnostics is reasonable. If there were two gods, one who "confers rest," while the other "has prepared the fire," then "their sons would have been equally different [one from the other];" However, while it is true that the righteous will inherit the kingdom and the unrighteous will be cast into everlasting fire, the sheep and goats spoken of are all the nations, and not individual men and women as we read in **Matthew 25 (NIV):31** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

The time of this judgment is at the second coming of Christ, right before the commencement of the Kingdom age of a thousand years as is stated in **Matthew 25 (NIV):31** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

Christ will sit on His glorious throne at this time, and the sheep nations on His right will be blessed and enter the kingdom as we read again in **Matthew 25 (NIV):34** "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'

This is the commencement of the Kingdom age which will last for a thousand years as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

As Christ's first coming was over a period of 33 ½ years, so Christ's second coming will take place over a period of seven years. First, the Church will be raptured and resurrected, and then the great tribulation will begin and last for seven years. At the end of this great tribulation, the Antichrist will be destroyed with his armies, and the Kingdom age will be inaugurated. This is the time of the first resurrection, and those who are in this resurrection will reign with Christ for the thousand years as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The time of Christ's second coming and the judgment of the nations is not the same as the time of the white throne judgment when heaven and earth have fled away as mentioned in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

The time of this white throne judgment is after the Kingdom age is over and the wicked dead are then judged as we continue in **Revelation 20 (KJV):12** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

In Matthew, chapter 25, the nations are judged, and the judgment is before the throne of His glory. This is not the same as the white throne judgment mentioned in Revelation, chapter 20.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “as also there is one Judge sending both into a fit place, as the Lord sets forth in the parable of the tares and the wheat, where He says, “As therefore the tares are gathered together, and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather from His kingdom everything that offendeth, and those who work iniquity, and shall send them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” referring to **Matthew 13 (NIV):40** “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Irenaeus correctly interprets these verses. However, the time when the tares will be gathered up and burned is at the “end of the age,” and right before the new heaven and the new earth as we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “The Father, therefore, who has prepared the kingdom for the righteous, into which the Son has received those worthy of it, is He who has also prepared the furnace of fire, into which these angels commissioned by the Son of man shall send those persons who deserve it, according to God’s command.”

Irenaeus continues in paragraph three saying, “The Lord, indeed, sowed good seed in His own field; and He says, “The field is the world.” Irenaeus is interpreting the parable of the tares and the wheat. Note that the Lord did not say that the field was “His own” in the parable in **Matthew 13 (NIV):24** Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 27 “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ 28 “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ 29 “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

This parable is also then explained by Jesus in **Matthew 13 (NIV):36** Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” 37 He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. 40 “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But while men slept, the enemy came, and “sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, and went his way,” referring to **Matthew 13 (NIV):25** But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.

Irenaeus then explains, “Hence we learn that this was the apostate angel and the enemy, because he was envious of God’s workmanship, and took in hand to render this [workmanship] an enmity with God.” Irenaeus is referring to **Matthew 13 (NIV):38** The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

Irenaeus then asserts, “For this cause also God has banished from His presence him who did of his own accord stealthily sow the tares, that is, him who brought about the transgression; but He took compassion upon man, who, through want of care no doubt, but still wickedly [on the part of another], became involved in

disobedience; and He turned the enmity by which [the devil] had designed to make [man] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent. As also the Scripture tells us that God said to the serpent, “And I will place enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel,” referring to **Genesis 3 (NIV):15** And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

There will be no second chance for the devil, who is Satan, and his angels. The devil was the tempter in the garden, and the one who “brought about the transgression.” And so it does seem that God “took compassion on man” who “became involved in disobedience.” And it is evident that it was God’s plan all along to redeem mankind, as God promises the redeemer will bruise the head of the serpent through the seed of the woman. God also made a way for man to be out from under his anger, but His anger is not removed from man until he has faith in the redeemer, Jesus Christ as John says in **John 3 (NIV):36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.

Irenaeus does not make this clear here.

Irenaeus then concludes, “And the Lord summed up in Himself this enmity, when He was made man from a woman, and trod upon his [the serpent’s] head, as I have pointed out in the preceding book.” This last statement reminds us of Paul’s words in **Ephesians 2 (NIV):14** For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

The reconciliation Paul speaks of is between God and man, and between Jew and Gentile. Therefore the enmity that was put to death is between God and man. This enmity was not put to death until Jesus died on the cross. Irenaeus does not make this clear.

Now we see that Irenaeus in this chapter of his writing correctly identifies our mortal enemy, the apostate angel, Satan, and the devil, as the serpent in Genesis. And Irenaeus correctly connects the “seed” of the woman to be the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, and he identifies the serpent’s head as the head that the Lord Jesus Christ bruised when He died for our sins on the cross.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XL

Irenaeus does not say a lot here about the nature of man, but he is preparing us for his statements in the very next chapter. It is important to note here that Irenaeus states that God “took compassion upon man, who, through want of care no doubt, but still wickedly [on the part of another], became involved in disobedience;” Irenaeus seems to say here that man was merely “involved in disobedience,” and was not directly responsible. Irenaeus then also asserts that God “turned the enmity by which [the devil] had designed to make [man] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent.” To substantiate his assertion, Irenaeus quotes from Genesis, chapter three, as we read in **Genesis 3 (NIV):15** And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

By asserting that God “turned the enmity by which [the devil] had designed to make [man] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent,” Irenaeus is trying to answer the question why God could forgive man’s disobedience but not Satan’s. Irenaeus seems to assert that since Satan was the one who tried to make man the enemy of God, man’s disobedience was less than that of Satan’s disobedience. I believe there is some truth in that assertion. I would also suggest that it could also be that Satan disobeyed God of his own volition, and was the instigator of the other one third of the angelic disobedience as is stated in **Revelation 12 (KJV):4** And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

And in **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

In other words, Satan was not tempted by an outside source as man was. However, when Irenaeus says that God removed “His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent,” he does not qualify his statement with the rest of what God says in Genesis, chapter three. As we look in Genesis, chapter three, we note that God judged Adam and Eve as well, and not just the serpent. In other words, God did not leave Adam and Eve unpunished for their sin.

The first thing we note after Adam sinned is that they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. In other words, they felt shame as we read in **Genesis 3 (NIV):8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” 11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” 12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

The Lord then gave judgment on the serpent as we read in **Genesis 3 (NIV):13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” 14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

The serpent’s identity is revealed in **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The promised seed that would bruise the head of the serpent, the devil, refers to Christ, our redeemer. Possibly because man was not the instigator of his sin in the garden, but the devil was the tempter, God provided a redeemer for man whereas God held the devil responsible and irredeemable. The heel of Christ was bruised as it were on the cross, but the devil’s head was bruised by Christ on that same cross. So Genesis 3:15 is a prophetic announcement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, which Irenaeus correctly identifies.

In Genesis, chapter three we see that the Lord also turned to the woman and spoke as in **Genesis 3 (KJV):16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And the Lord also then turned to Adam and spoke as in **Genesis 3 (KJV):17** And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Death came about because of Adam’s sin as God promised in **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Not only was physical death a result of Adam’s sin, but spiritual death was a result as well. The necessity of a redeemer is seen in the promise itself of Genesis 3:15. God had to send His only Son to die a horrible death to save us. All who have faith in Jesus will be saved. But until we have faith, we are already judged and destined for hell to be with the devil and his angels as John tells us in **John 3 (NIV):18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

So the parable of the tares does not really illustrate anything about the fall of man, because man is already a “tare” until he comes to Christ. The tares in the parable are actually symbolic of the self-righteous religious ones in our churches who from all outward appearances look like the wheat, but inwardly there has been no change. It is not clear that Irenaeus understood this entirely.

Irenaeus then says “And the Lord summed up in Himself this enmity, when He was made man from a

woman, and trod upon his [the serpent's] head, as I have pointed out in the preceding book."

Irenaeus also uses the phrase, "summed up," in **Book 4: XXXVIII, paragraph one**, when he says, "And for this cause our Lord in these last times, when He had summed up all things into Himself, came to us, not as He might have come, but as we were capable of beholding Him." Without doubt, Irenaeus is speaking of our Lord's advent in the flesh, promised in Genesis 3:15. And by making reference to Genesis 3:15, Irenaeus shows some understanding of the fall of man. Again, we will summarize Irenaeus' thoughts on the nature of man at the end of this section.

## **Book 4: Chapter XLI.—Those persons who do not believe in God, but who are disobedient, are angels and sons of the devil, not indeed by nature, but by imitation. Close of this book, and scope of the succeeding one.**

1. Inasmuch as the Lord has said that there are certain angels, [viz. those] of the devil, for whom eternal fire is prepared; and as, again, He declares with regard to the tares, "The tares are the children of the wicked one," 4436 **Matt. xiii. 38**, it must be affirmed that He has ascribed all who are of the apostasy to him who is the ringleader of this transgression. But He made neither angels nor men so by nature. For we do not find that the devil created anything whatsoever, since indeed he is himself a creature of God, like the other angels. For God made all things, as also David says with regard to all things of the kind: "For He spake the word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created." 4437 **Ps. cxlix. 5.**

2. Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the devil has become the cause of apostasy to himself and others, justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of apostasy "sons of the devil" and "angels of the wicked one" (*maligni*). For [the word] "son," as one before me has observed, has a twofold meaning: one [is a son] in the order of nature, because he was born a son; the other, in that he was made so, is reputed a son, although there be a difference between being born so and being made so. For the first is indeed born from the person referred to; but the second is made so by him, whether as respects his creation or by the teaching of his doctrine. For when any person has been taught from the mouth of another, he is termed the son of him who instructs him, and the latter [is called] his father. According to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak—we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God. But with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: those only are so who believe in Him and do His will. And those who do not believe, and do not obey His will, are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil. And that such is the case He has declared in Isaiah: "I have begotten and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me." 4438 **Isa. i. 2** And again, where He says that these children are aliens: "Strange children have lied unto Me." 4439 **Ps. xviii. 45.** According to nature, then, they are [His] children, because they have been so created; but with regard to their works, they are not His children.

3. For as, among men, those sons who disobey their fathers, being disinherited, are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited, for they do not become the heirs of their natural parents; so in the same way is it with God,—those who do not obey Him being disinherited by Him, have ceased to be His sons. Wherefore they cannot receive His inheritance: as David says, "Sinners are alienated from the womb; their anger is after the likeness of a serpent." 4440 **Ps. Iviii. 3, 4.**

And therefore did the Lord term those whom He knew to be the offspring of men "a generation of vipers;" 4441 **Matt. xxiii. 33.** because after the manner of these animals they go about in subtlety, and injure others. For He said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

4442 **Matt. xvi. 6** Speaking of Herod, too, He says, "Go ye and tell that fox," 4443 **Luke xiii. 32.** aiming at his wicked cunning and deceit. Wherefore the prophet David says, "Man, being placed in honour, is made like unto cattle." 4444 **Ps. xl ix. 21.** And again Jeremiah says, "They are become like horses, furious about females; each one neighed after his neighbour's wife." 4445 **Jer. v. 8.** And

Isaiah, when preaching in Judea, and reasoning with Israel, termed them “rulers of Sodom” and “people of Gomorrah;” 4446 Isa. i. 10. intimating that they were like the Sodomites in wickedness, and that the same description of sins was rife among them, calling them by the same name, because of the similarity of their conduct. And inasmuch as they were not by nature so created by God, but had power also to act rightly, the same person said to them, giving them good counsel, “Wash ye, make you clean; take away iniquity from your souls before mine eyes; cease from your iniquities.”

4447 Isa. i. 16. Thus, no doubt, since they had transgressed and sinned in the same manner, so did they receive the same reproof as did the Sodomites. But when they should be converted and come to repentance, and cease from evil, they should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him. For this reason, therefore, He has termed those “angels of the devil,” and “children of the wicked one,” 4448 Matt. xxv. 41, Matt. xiii. 38. who give heed to the devil, and do his works. But these are, at the same time, all created by the one and the same God. When, however, they believe and are subject to God, and go on and keep His doctrine, they are the sons of God; but when they have apostatized and fallen into transgression, they are ascribed to their chief, the devil—to him who first became the cause of apostasy to himself, and afterwards to others.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Inasmuch as the Lord has said that there are certain angels, [viz. those] of the devil, for whom eternal fire is prepared,” referring to Matthew 25:41, “and as, again, He declares with regard to the tares, “The tares are the children of the wicked one,” referring to Matthew 13:38, “it must be affirmed that He has ascribed all who are of the apostasy to him who is the ringleader of this transgression.” Irenaeus then asserts, “But He made neither angels nor men so by nature. For we do not find that the devil created anything whatsoever, since indeed he is himself a creature of God, like the other angels. For God made all things, as also David says with regard to all things of the kind: “For He spake the word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created,” referring to Psalm 148:5.

Then in paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the devil has become the cause of apostasy to himself and others, justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of apostasy “sons of the devil” and “angels of the wicked one” (*maligni*).” Irenaeus then argues, “For [the word] “son,” as one before me has observed, has a twofold meaning: one [is a son] in the order of nature, because he was born a son; the other, in that he was made so, is reputed a son, although there be a difference between being born so and being made so. For the first is indeed born from the person referred to; but the second is made so by him, whether as respects his creation or by the teaching of his doctrine.” Irenaeus explains, “For when any person has been taught from the mouth of another, he is termed the son of him who instructs him, and the latter [is called] his father.” Irenaeus then affirms, “According to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak—we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God.” And Irenaeus affirms further, “But with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: those only are so who believe in Him and do His will. And those who do not believe, and do not obey His will, are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil. And that such is the case He has declared in Isaiah: “I have begotten and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me,” referring to Isaiah 1:2. Irenaeus continues as he says, “And again, where He says that these children are aliens: “Strange children have lied unto Me,” referring in context to Psalm 18:43-45. Irenaeus then concludes, “According to nature, then, they are [His] children, because they have been so created; but with regard to their works, they are not His children.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus argues, “For as, among men, those sons who disobey their fathers, being disinherited, are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited, for they do not become the heirs of their natural parents; so in the same way is it with God,—those who do not obey Him being disinherited by Him, have ceased to be His sons. Wherefore they cannot receive His inheritance: as David says, “Sinners are alienated from the womb; their anger is after the likeness of a serpent,” referring to Psalm 58:3-4. Irenaeus then testifies, “And therefore did the Lord term those whom He knew to be the offspring of men “a generation of vipers,” referring to Matthew 23:33, “because after the manner of these animals they go about in subtlety, and injure others.” Again Irenaeus testifies, “For He said, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees,” referring to Matthew 16:6. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Speaking of Herod, too, He says,

“Go ye and tell that fox,” referring to Luke 13:32, “aiming at his wicked cunning and deceit.” And Irenaeus adds, “Wherefore the prophet David says, “Man, being placed in honour, is made like unto cattle,” referring to Psalm 148:20. And Irenaeus then affirms, “And again Jeremiah says, “They are become like horses, furious about females; each one neighed after his neighbour’s wife,” referring to Jeremiah 5:8. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And Isaiah, when preaching in Judea, and reasoning with Israel, termed them “rulers of Sodom” and “people of Gomorrah,” referring to Isaiah 1:10, ”intimating that they were like the Sodomites in wickedness, and that the same description of sins was rife among them, calling them by the same name, because of the similarity of their conduct.” Irenaeus then asserts, “And inasmuch as they were not by nature so created by God, but had power also to act rightly, the same person said to them, giving them good counsel, “Wash ye, make you clean; take away iniquity from your souls before mine eyes; cease from your iniquities,” referring to Isaiah 1:16. Irenaeus then affirms, “Thus, no doubt, since they had transgressed and sinned in the same manner, so did they receive the same reproof as did the Sodomites. But when they should be converted and come to repentance, and cease from evil, they should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him.” Irenaeus again testifies, “For this reason, therefore, He has termed those “angels of the devil,” and “children of the wicked one,” referring again to Matthew 25:41 and Matthew 13:38, “who give heed to the devil, and do his works.” Irenaeus thus concludes, “But these are, at the same time, all created by the one and the same God. When, however, they believe and are subject to God, and go on and keep His doctrine, they are the sons of God; but when they have apostatized and fallen into transgression, they are ascribed to their chief, the devil—to him who first became the cause of apostasy to himself, and afterwards to others.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Inasmuch as the Lord has said that there are certain angels, [viz. those] of the devil, for whom eternal fire is prepared,” referring to **Matthew 25 (NIV):41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “and as, again, He declares with regard to the tares, “The tares are the children of the wicked one,” referring to **Matthew 13 (NIV):38** The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one.

And Irenaeus then concludes, “it must be affirmed that He has ascribed all who are of the apostasy to him who is the ringleader of this transgression.”

We do not have much understanding yet about what Irenaeus actually means by “the apostasy,” but we will discuss it thoroughly shortly at the end of this chapter on the nature of man. Irenaeus then asserts, “But He made neither angels nor men so by nature. For we do not find that the devil created anything whatsoever, since indeed he is himself a creature of God, like the other angels. For God made all things, as also David says with regard to all things of the kind: “For He spake the word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created,” referring to **Psalm 148 (NIV):5** Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created.

Also to **Psalm 33 (NIV):9** For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

Then in paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the devil has become the cause of apostasy to himself and others, justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of apostasy “sons of the devil” and “angels of the wicked one” (*maligni*).”

Irenaeus is saying that “those who remain in a state of apostasy” are justly termed “sons of the devil” and “angels of the wicked one.”

Irenaeus then argues, “For [the word] “son,” as one before me has observed, has a twofold meaning: one [is a son] in the order of nature, because he was born a son; the other, in that he was made so, is reputed a son, although there be a difference between being born so and being made so. For the first is indeed born from the person referred to; but the second is made so by him, whether as respects his creation or by the teaching of his doctrine.” Irenaeus explains, “For when any person has been taught from the mouth of another, he is termed the son of him who instructs him, and the latter [is called] his father.”

Irenaeus is saying that the word son has a twofold meaning. First, a son is a son because he was born a son. Second, a son is a son who is instructed by another.

Irenaeus then affirms, “According to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak—we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God.” And Irenaeus affirms further, “But with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: those only are so who believe in Him and do His will. And those who do not believe, and do not obey His will, are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil.

Irenaeus is saying that, “according to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak—we are all sons of God because we have all been created by God.” But on the other hand, “with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God.” Only those “who believe in Him and do His will” are truly sons of God. “Those who do not believe, and do not obey His will, are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil,” he says.

Irenaeus then affirms, “And that such is the case He has declared in Isaiah: “I have begotten and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me,” referring to **Isaiah 1 (NIV):2** Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.

Irenaeus then adds, “And again, where He says that these children are aliens: “Strange children have lied unto Me,” referring in context to **Psalm 18 (Septuagint):43** Deliver me from the gain sayings of the people: thou shalt make me head of the Gentiles: a people whom I knew not served me, 44 at the hearing of the ear they obeyed me: the strange children lied to me. 45 The strange children waxed old, and fell away from their paths through lameness.

The same verses are again translated in the New International Version in **Psalm 18 (NIV):43** You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations. People I did not know now serve me, 44 foreigners cower before me; as soon as they hear of me, they obey me. 45 They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.

Irenaeus then concludes, “According to nature, then, they are [His] children, because they have been so created; but with regard to their works, they are not His children.”

Before commenting on this, we will go on to paragraph three.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus argues, “For as, among men, those sons who disobey their fathers, being disinherited, are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited, for they do not become the heirs of their natural parents; so in the same way is it with God,—those who do not obey Him being disinherited by Him, have ceased to be His sons. Wherefore they cannot receive His inheritance: as David says, “Sinners are alienated from the womb; their anger is after the likeness of a serpent,” referring to **Psalm 58 (NIV):3** Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies. 4 Their venom is like the venom of a snake, like that of a cobra that has stopped its ears.

Irenaeus then testifies, “And therefore did the Lord term those whom He knew to be the offspring of men “a generation of vipers,” referring to **Matthew 23 (KJV):33** Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Irenaeus continues his thought as he reasons, “because after the manner of these animals they go about in subtlety, and injure others.” Again Irenaeus testifies, “For He said, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees,” referring to **Matthew 16 (KJV):6** Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Speaking of Herod, too, He says, “Go ye and tell that fox,” referring to **Luke 13 (NIV):32** He replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’

Again Irenaeus finishes his thought as he explains, ”aiming at his wicked cunning and deceit.” And Irenaeus adds, “Wherefore the prophet David says, “Man, being placed in honour, is made like unto cattle,” referring to **Psalm 49 (KJV):20** Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.

And Irenaeus affirms, “And again Jeremiah says, “They are become like horses, furious about females; each one neighed after his neighbour’s wife,” referring to **Jeremiah 5 (NIV):8** They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man’s wife.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And Isaiah, when preaching in Judea, and reasoning with Israel, termed them “rulers of Sodom” and “people of Gomorrah,” referring to **Isaiah 1 (NIV):10** Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

Again, Irenaeus finishes his thought as he says that Isaiah is "intimating that they were like the Sodomites in wickedness, and that the same description of sins was rife among them, calling them by the same name, because of the similarity of their conduct." Irenaeus then asserts, "And inasmuch as they were not by nature so created by God, but had power also to act rightly, the same person said to them, giving them good counsel, "Wash ye, make you clean; take away iniquity from your souls before mine eyes; cease from your iniquities," referring to **Isaiah 1 (NIV):16** Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong.

Irenaeus then affirms, "Thus, no doubt, since they had transgressed and sinned in the same manner, so did they receive the same reproof as did the Sodomites. But when they should be converted and come to repentance, and cease from evil, they should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him."

Irenaeus again testifies, "For this reason, therefore, He has termed those "angels of the devil," and "children of the wicked one," referring again to Matthew 25:41 and Matthew 13:38, "who give heed to the devil, and do his works," reminding us of Jesus words to those who did not believe Him in **John 8 (NIV):44** You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Irenaeus thus concludes, "But these are, at the same time, all created by the one and the same God. When, however, they believe and are subject to God, and go on and keep His doctrine, they are the sons of God; but when they have apostatized and fallen into transgression, they are ascribed to their chief, the devil—to him who first became the cause of apostasy to himself, and afterwards to others."

Irenaeus' thinking here reminds us of Jesus' conversation with the Jews in **John 8 (NIV):31** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" 34 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. 38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father." 39 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do what Abraham did. 40 As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41 You are doing the works of your own father." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. 43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! 46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

The Jews claimed to have God as their father, and were not born of fornication, being actual descendants of Abraham. However, Jesus points out to them that if God were really their Father, they would love Him, for He proceeded forth and came from God. Jesus saw them as they truly were, as still in their sin, and without faith. They had not yet been born again. They may have been Abraham's descendants, but they did not have the faith that Abraham had, and so they were not doing the deeds of Abraham.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XLI

Now the gist of Irenaeus' argument in **Book 4: Chapter L** and **Book 4: Chapter LI** is to show that man is not a tare or a child of the wicked one by nature. He argues first that we were all created by God and that, "According to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak—we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God." And again, speaking of those who then disobey God, he says, "According to nature, then, they are [His] children, because they have been so created; but with regard to their works, they are not His children." And Irenaeus says that there are two kinds of sons. One is "born so" and another is "made so." The first kind "is indeed born from the person referred to," while the second "is made so by Him, whether as respects His creation or by the teaching of His doctrine." So Irenaeus argues that those "who believe in Him and do His will" are sons of God, and those "who do not believe, and do not obey His will are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil." And in paragraph three, Irenaeus argues that those who disobey their fathers among men "are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited." It is the same with God, he says. And Irenaeus argues that even those who be as sinful as the Sodomites, if they "should be converted and come to repentance, and cease from evil, they should have the power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him."

The crux of Irenaeus thinking about the nature of man is that man was not made wicked by nature, and that man is by nature a son of God, having been created by God. Man then has the power to believe and obey God. Man has the "power also to act rightly," Irenaeus says. It is then a matter for man to "be converted, and come to repentance, and cease from evil," in order that they "should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him." What he means is that we are all sons of God of the first kind of sons, having been created by God, but in order to be a son of God of the second kind of sons, and so "receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him," we must believe and obey, that is, believe and do the works of obedience to "the teaching of His doctrine." Again, only those "who believe in Him and do His will" are truly sons of God in the second sense according to Irenaeus.

However, I would suggest that there is a third kind of son. But before we talk about that, let us see what the Scriptures say about man's nature.

Now to Irenaeus' argument about the two kinds of sons, the Scriptures teach us plainly that God created all things, and they were all good when He created them as in **Genesis 1 (NIV):31** God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

However, when the devil sinned, God judged him and he became Satan, the "evil one." That is, after God's judgment, his nature was changed to evil because of his sin. Jesus tells us that the devil is a liar by nature and the father of lies in **John 8 (NIV):44** You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The word "nature" is not used in this verse, but it is implied by the context. The devil speaks from his own. That is, it is his inherent in his character to lie. There is no truth in him. Though Satan was created by God, in no sense can we claim that he is a son of God.

Now God also gave man a command in the garden not to eat of the tree of good and evil in **Genesis 2 (NIV):16** And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

God's command, if disobeyed, would result in death on the very day of the disobedience. So on the very day that man disobeyed God, death came upon the human race as the Scripture says in **Genesis 3 (NIV):19** By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Not only physical death, but spiritual death also came upon the human race. Man also died spiritually as we see in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sin.

And in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Man was not just "involved in disobedience," but came under the judgment of God, just as the devil came under judgment when he sinned. Being spiritually dead, man became a sinner by nature when he fell as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):2** in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world,

according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Paul includes himself when he says, “we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh” and “were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” Being a child of wrath by nature excludes us also from being a child of God, even though we were created by God. Although we were created by God, when Adam sinned, he and all his descendants died spiritually and became children of wrath. This is why Adam had to be born again to have fellowship with God once more. And we also must be born again or we will in no wise enter the kingdom of God.

Now to Irenaeus point about the second kind of son, we see this in Paul’s relationship to Timothy in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):2** Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

What Paul is saying is that he became the spiritual father of Timothy when Timothy believed the gospel message that Paul preached. Paul also explains to the Corinthians that they had this same relationship in **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):15** For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. 17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

Now I have suggested that there is another kind of son which Irenaeus did not consider. Irenaeus seems to believe that man does not have a spirit of his own. In his thinking, the new birth happens when one repents and believes and the Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence in him or her. By doing good, one kept the Holy Spirit. By doing bad, one could lose the Holy Spirit and join the apostasy. Irenaeus did allow for repentance again from the apostasy. However, the Scriptures describe a totally different experience in man. When one receives Christ, the apostle John says they are born of God in **John 1 (NIV):12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

John describes a time when Nicodemus met with Jesus and talked about the new birth in **John 3 (NIV):3** Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” 4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” 5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

Jesus said that which was born of the Spirit was spirit. Being born of God in this way speaks of a spiritual birth. This happens in our spirit. When we receive Christ, and this new birth happens, we receive eternal life as John explains to us in **1 John 5 (KJV):1** Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

And in **1 John 5 (KJV):10** He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Having eternal life is the result of being born again. Being born of the Spirit of God, we receive a new nature. To get a clear understanding of what this means, we will look at the word for “nature” in the Greek which is φύσις (pronounced physis). **Strong’s Concordance** says that this word means growth (by germination or expansion). i.e. (by impl.) natural production (lineal descent); by extens. A genus or sort; fig. native disposition, constitution or usage: ([man-]) kind, nature ([-al]). **Strong’s Concordance** also says that the Greek word φύσις (pronounced physis) comes from φύω (pronounced phuo) which means to “puff” or blow, i.e. to swell up; but only used in the impl. sense, to germinate or grow (sprout, produce), lit. or fig.; spring (up).

Also, Vine’s tells us that φύσις (pronounced physis) means “to bring forth, produce, signifies (a) the nature (i.e. the natural powers or constitution of a person or thing, Eph. 2:3, James 3:7 (“kind”); 2 Pet. 1:4; (b)

origin, birth, Rom 2:27, one who by birth is a Gentile, uncircumcised, in contrast to one who, though circumcised, has become spiritually uncircumcised by his iniquity; Gal. 2:15; (c) the regular law or order of nature, Rom. 1:26, against nature (para, against);” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 103.**

The following verses use the Greek word φύσις (pronounced phusis), which is translated as nature. The wild olive tree differs from the cultivated olive tree in that its innate properties make it different as we see in **Romans 11 (NIV):24** After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

In this next verse, nature is the sum of the forces in the universe. It is the way things are in the physical realm as in **1 Corinthians 11 (NASB):14** Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,

In this next verse, nature is a kind of class that is distinguished by fundamental and essential characteristics as in **Galatians 2 (KJV):15** We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.

In this next verse we see that it was we ourselves who, before we accepted Christ, indulged the desires of our flesh and of our mind as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):3** Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

We were children of wrath by nature. That is, we were under His wrath by our very nature as Jesus states in **John 3 (NIV):36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.

We were all without exception under sin as Paul tells us in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

And in **Galatians 3 (KJV):22** But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

As such we were helpless to save ourselves from this condition as Paul says in **Romans 5 (KJV):6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

It was God reaching out to man, and not man reaching out to God as Paul says in **Romans 5 (KJV):8** But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

As sinners, Paul says we were enemies of God in **Romans 5 (KJV):10** For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

It is not that we were created this way by God, but that we became sinners by nature when Adam sinned. This was a direct result of the judgment of God as Jesus says in **John 3 (NIV):18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

Paul tells us that before Christ we are spiritually dead in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

This death by sin before we accepted Christ was because of the judgment of God. This is the reason that in Adam, we all died as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Paul emphatically states that all men and women are sinful by nature and fall short of the glory of God in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

This is why we need a change in our nature in order to please God. This happens at the new birth. When I accept my condition as a helpless sinner before God, and receive His Son, Jesus Christ, believing in His resurrection from the dead, I am born again of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God gives birth to my spirit and produces a change in my nature. Peter describes this change in our nature, or basic constitution, when we believe. We become sharers of the divine nature he says in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Now we are commanded to put on the new man as Paul says in **Ephesians 4 NASB**:24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

And we are commanded to put off the old man, the sinful Adamic nature in our flesh which we still have until the resurrection, and put on the new in **Colossians 3 (KJV)**:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

While it is true that all that God created us good, yet when Adam sinned, he polluted the human race at its source, and death passed to all men as a result of his sin as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Irenaeus believes that men and women were not created bad or good, but given the power of choice to become one or the other. By choosing the good and doing it we become good. The good we must choose is to repent and submit to God and be obedient to Him. By rejecting these things, we are choosing the bad and doing the bad, and we join the apostasy and become bad. And we can switch back and forth if we repent. Irenaeus most certainly does not believe we are bad by nature. However, the Scriptures are clear that all men and women without exception are under sin before they come by faith and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Paul tells us that man is in possession of a nature that is on the downgrade and from which it is impossible to free himself apart from Christ in **Romans 3 (KJV)**:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Because of this sin nature that we have inherited from Adam, we do not have power to act rightly as Jeremiah says in **Jeremiah 13 (NIV)**:23 Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

This is why we need a Savior, Christ Jesus. It is only after we come to Christ that we have power to act rightly and do His will. And this is why Jesus said we needed to be born again for He knew that we needed a change in our nature so that we would be able to do good as we read in **John 3 (NIV)**:5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.

When we are born again, our spirit is renewed and our nature is changed by the Spirit of God. This is why we can now be called truly children of God. We cannot trust in our works to make us born again, as if we could be good enough to attain the righteousness of God. God's righteousness reaches to the heavens as the Psalmist says in **Psalm 71 (NIV)**:19 Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things. Who is like you, God?

Because God is perfect in righteousness, man, being a sinner, can never attain His righteousness without God's grace, no matter how obedient he is. Neither can man boast of having kept the law, for he is already a sinner in Adam. Man must accept the free gift of God's justification by faith in order to have fellowship with God, for God has demolished all boasting by man as Paul tells us in **Romans 3 (KJV)**:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the

Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

The righteousness which comes by faith in Jesus Christ that Paul is speaking of is the “righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe” in verse 22. In other words, it is God’s righteousness that is imputed to the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. The word impute means to put down to one’s account. The one God justifies has a standing before Him as a righteous one, with a righteousness not based on his or her own merit. The one God justifies has the righteousness of God given by the declaration of God for the one who has faith in Jesus Christ.

## **Book 5: Chapter I.—Christ alone is able to teach divine things, and to redeem us: He, the same, took flesh of the Virgin Mary, not merely in appearance, but actually, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, in order to renovate us. Strictures on the conceits of Valentinus and Ebion.**

... 3. Vain also are the Ebionites, who do not receive by faith into their soul the union of God and man, but who remain in the old leaven of [the natural] birth, and who do not choose to understand that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Most High did overshadow her:

4453 Luke i. 35. wherefore also what was generated is a holy thing, and the Son of the Most High God the Father of all, who effected the incarnation of this being, and showed forth a new [kind of] generation; that as by the former generation we inherited death, so by this new generation we might inherit life. Therefore do these men reject the commixture of the heavenly wine, 4454 In allusion to the mixture of water in the eucharistic cup, as practised in these primitive times. The Ebionites and others used to consecrate the element of water alone. and wish it to be water of the world only, not receiving God so as to have union with Him, but they remain in that Adam who had been conquered and was expelled from Paradise: not considering that as, at the beginning of our formation in Adam, that breath of life which proceeded from God, having been united to what had been fashioned, animated the man, and manifested him as a being endowed with reason; so also, in [the times of] the end, the Word of the Father and the Spirit of God, having become united with the ancient substance of Adam’s formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the natural [Adam] we all were dead, so in the spiritual we may all be made alive. 4455 1 Cor. xv. 22. For never at any time did Adam escape the hands 4456 Viz., the Son and the Spirit. of God, to whom the Father speaking, said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” And for this reason in the last times (*fine*), not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but by the good pleasure of the Father, 4457 John i. 13. His hands formed a living man, in order that Adam might be created [again] after the image and likeness of God.

**Summary:** In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “Vain also are the Ebionites, who do not receive by faith into their soul the union of God and man, but who remain in the old leaven of [the natural] birth, and who do not choose to understand that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Most High did overshadow her,” referring to Luke 1:35, “wherefore also what was generated is a holy thing, and the Son of the Most High God the Father of all, who effected the incarnation of this being, and showed forth a new [kind of] generation; that as by the former generation we inherited death, so by this new generation we might inherit life.” Irenaeus then affirms, “Therefore do these men reject the commixture of the heavenly wine, and wish it to be water of the world only, not receiving God so as to have union with Him, but they remain in that Adam who had been conquered and was expelled from Paradise:” referring to Genesis 3:22-24, “not considering that as, at the beginning of our formation in Adam, that breath of life which proceeded from God, having been united to what had been fashioned, animated the man, and manifested him as a being endowed with reason; so also, in [the times of] the end, the Word of the Father and the Spirit of God, having become united with the ancient

substance of Adam's formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the natural [Adam] we all were dead, so in the spiritual we may all be made alive," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:22. Irenaeus then affirms, "For never at any time did Adam escape the *hands* of God, to whom the Father speaking, said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness," referring to Genesis 1:26. Irenaeus then concludes, "And for this reason in the last times (*fine*), not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but by the good pleasure of the Father," referring to John 1:13, "His hands formed a living man, in order that Adam might be created [again] after the image and likeness of God."

**Commentary:** Here in paragraph three, we know from **Book 1: Chapter XXVI** in Irenaeus' writings that Irenaeus is speaking of the Ebionites, a Jewish Christian sect which accepted only the gospel of Matthew and rejected the writings of Paul, who they thought was an apostate from the law.

Irenaeus here testifies, "Vain also are the Ebionites, who do not receive by faith into their soul the union of God and man, but who remain in the old leaven of [the natural] birth, and who do not choose to understand that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Most High did overshadow her," referring to **Luke 1 (NIV):35** The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

The Ebionites evidently denied the virgin birth of Christ. Irenaeus continues his thought as he echoes the Scripture, "wherefore also what was generated is a holy thing, and the Son of the Most High God the Father of all, who effected the incarnation of this being, and showed forth a new [kind of] generation; that as by the former generation we inherited death, so by this new generation we might inherit life," reminding us of **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

And to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):45** And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

And to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):47** The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven.

Irenaeus then affirms, "Therefore do these men reject the commixture of the heavenly wine, and wish it to be water of the world only, not receiving God so as to have union with Him, but they remain in that Adam who had been conquered and was expelled from Paradise," referring to **Genesis 3 (NIV):22** And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

In regards to the "commixture of the heavenly wine" being "water of the world only," Irenaeus refers to the Communion meal and his belief that the bread and wine became the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. Irenaeus asserts this in part in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph five**, when he says, "For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity." Irenaeus says more about the Eucharist, but we will discuss this more thoroughly in **Chapter 22: Communion**.

Irenaeus continues his thought saying, "not considering that as, at the beginning of our formation in Adam, that breath of life which proceeded from God, having been united to what had been fashioned, animated the man, and manifested him as a being endowed with reason; so also, in [the times of] the end, the Word of the Father and the Spirit of God, having become united with the ancient substance of Adam's formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the natural [Adam] we all were dead, so in the spiritual we may all be made alive," referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

However, Paul did not say, "in the spiritual we may all be made alive," but "in Christ all will be made alive." Irenaeus is saying that "as in the natural Adam we all were dead, so in the spiritual Adam, that is Christ, "we may all be made alive." But to change the verse in this way makes it very ambiguous. Man is made alive in his spirit. Irenaeus is very free with his interpretations.

And when Irenaeus says that “the Word of the Father and the Spirit of God, having become united with the ancient substance of Adam’s formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father,” he does not qualify his statement with Scripture. It was the death of Christ on the cross that made a way for man to have fellowship with the Father, and it is by His blood that we are cleansed. When Jesus came down from heaven and became a man, He did not render man living, or perfect, or “receptive of the perfect Father” by doing so. It was His blood that was shed on the cross that made it possible for us to be clean in the Father’s eyes. When we receive Him by faith, we are justified by God and we receive a standing before Him as righteous. But our soul, that is our mind, will, emotions, and conscience, may have much that needs to be cleansed. This He does by His word. As we read His word, and receive teaching in His word, we are cleansed in our soul. Our minds are renewed, and our conscience now has the right standards by which to judge by. We are progressively sanctified in this way. We are not rendered perfect in our souls or in our bodies until we are resurrected. Now Irenaeus also implies by this that man must be perfect to receive the Father, but His words exceed the Scripturals.

Irenaeus then affirms, “For never at any time did Adam escape the *hands* of God, to whom the Father speaking, said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,” referring in context to **Genesis 1 (NIV):26** Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Irenaeus then concludes, “And for this reason in the last times (*fine*), not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but by the good pleasure of the Father, His hands formed a living man, in order that Adam might be created [again] after the image and likeness of God.”

Irenaeus is referring in part to **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):45** And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

However, the Scripture in John 1:12 is talking about those who believe in His name, and not Christ Jesus. And Irenaeus seems to conveniently leave out the fact that it was these very believers who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Instead, he says that man is created again after the image and likeness of God. There is no such reference in the New Testament. Also, the Scripture in 1 Corinthians 15:45 does not say that God formed a living man, but a life-giving spirit. Jesus gives life to us when we believe. It is in this way that He is a life-giving spirit.

Now we know that Irenaeus in part understood that God created man in His image, and that man’s body still possesses the image of God as he explains in **Book 5: Chapter VI**, “But if the Spirit be wanting to the soul, he who is such is indeed of an animal nature, and being left carnal, shall be an imperfect being, possessing indeed the image [of God] in his formation (*in plasmate*), but not receiving the similitude through the Spirit; and thus is this being imperfect.”

What Irenaeus means here is that man without the Spirit of God is imperfect. Thus, Irenaeus means to say that when man receives the Spirit of God, he then “might be created [again] after the image and likeness of God.”

To summarize, Irenaeus says that the Ebionites did not believe in the union of God and man, nor in the incarnation of deity through Mary by the Holy Spirit. Irenaeus makes a point to say that the Most High God the Father of all “effected the incarnation of this being,” who was a “holy thing” as Irenaeus says. Irenaeus says that Jesus has inaugurated a new generation so that “we might inherit life.” He seems to believe that in the celebration of communion, that God is received in the “commixture of the heavenly wine” so as “to have union with Him.” Not doing so means we “remain in that Adam who had been conquered and was expelled from Paradise.” He acknowledges our death in Adam as he says that “by the former generation we inherited death,” He also quotes Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians as he says, “in the natural [Adam] we all were dead, so in the spiritual we may all be made alive.”

Irenaeus seems to know something of a spiritual birth as he says that “in the spiritual we may all be made alive.” With these words Irenaeus comes closest to the teaching in the word of God about the new birth. This is undoubtedly what he is talking about for he quotes the Gospel of John in **John 1 (NASB):12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

## Commentary Summary: On the Nature of Man

We saw in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII, paragraph four**, that Irenaeus believed that “we were possessed of power over ourselves,” and in **Book 4: Chapter XXXIX, paragraph three**, that Irenaeus believed that man has been created “free agents, and possessed of power over themselves.” In **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**, which we will discuss in **Chapter 30: Free Will**, Irenaeus says in paragraph one, “This expression [of our Lord], “How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not,” set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God.”

And also in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII, paragraph two**, Irenaeus says, “But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good.”

And again in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII, paragraph seven**, Irenaeus says, “for God has displayed long-suffering in the case of man’s apostasy; while man has been instructed by means of it, as also the prophet says, “Thine own apostasy shall heal thee;”

We will discuss these paragraphs of **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII in Chapter 30: Free Will**. However, they help us here to understand more fully Irenaeus’ thinking on the nature of man. Irenaeus saw man as infantile and imperfect, but not bad or good. Man is a free agent and under his own power and able to choose good and to do it. Irenaeus points out that man has received the knowledge of good and evil. Although he acknowledges that death was the result of Adam’s sin, he seems to feel that man is not good or bad but does need to discipline himself. Man learned in the garden that disobeying God is an evil thing and causes death. Man now has a “surer and an undoubted comprehension” of “matters submitted to him.” He has the mental power to know both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. Now he knows that obedience to God preserves life. Man has a “twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds,” that “with discipline he may make choice of the better things.” Man must choose the good to preserve his life or suffer death for disobedience to God. God is creating in man His workmanship. Man must not “become hardened and lose the impression of His fingers.” And “by preserving the framework” man shall “ascend to that which is perfect.” If however man is ungrateful to God, he loses “at once” both “His workmanship and life.” “To be created is that of human nature,” Irenaeus says. Man must deliver up what is his, that is, “his faith towards Him and subjection,” in order to “receive His handiwork and be a perfect work of God.” God does not “exercise compulsion upon anyone unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill.” If man perishes, it is through his own fault because he rejects the “exercise of His skill” and has “apostatized from the light given by the Father.” Those who submit to God find “eternal rest.” Those who shun the light “justly incur punishment, and cause themselves to inhabit eternal darkness, destitute of all good things.”

Irenaeus seems to feel that God gave man the mental power to know good and evil apparently in the Garden of Eden. Man seems to have suffered no ill effects from the fall, in Irenaeus’ mind, other than physical death. Man simply gained knowledge and experience of disobedience in the Garden of Eden so that going forward he would have the ability to “know both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience.” Man must now “with judgment make choice of better things.” Now man knows that obedience to God preserves his

life. Man also now knows by experience that disobedience “deprives him of life.” Man now must cast away “by means of repentance, disobedience, as being something disagreeable and nauseous.” If he does not but shuns the knowledge of good and evil, “he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being.”

Irenaeus mentions “the apostasy” of which the devil is the ringleader. He seems to believe that the devil began his apostasy when he tempted man in the garden of Eden, and that man was the first-fruits of his own apostasy as he says in **Book 3: Chapter XXIII, paragraph eight**, that “the serpent also did not profit when persuading man [to sin], except to this effect, that he proved him a transgressor, obtaining man as the first-fruits of his own apostasy.” Again Irenaeus says in **Book 1: Chapter XXVII, paragraph four**, speaking of the Gnostic heretics, he states that Satan is the author of the apostasy as he says, “Although they do not confess the name of their master, in order all the more to seduce others, yet they do teach his doctrines. They set forth, indeed, the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure, but in various ways they introduce the impieties of Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes, wickedly disseminating their own doctrines by the use of a good name, and, through means of its sweetness and beauty, extending to their hearers the bitter and malignant poison of the serpent, the great author of apostasy.”

Again Irenaeus says in **Book 5: Chapter XXIV, paragraph four**, that man exposed the apostasy of Satan as he says, “Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man’s territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery; so likewise also the devil, being one among those angels who are placed over the spirit of the air, as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians, becoming envious of man, was rendered an apostate from the divine law: for envy is a thing foreign to God. And as his apostasy was exposed by man, and man became the [means of] searching out his thoughts (*et examination sententiae ejus, homo factus est*), he has set himself to this with greater and greater determination, in opposition to man, envying his life, and wishing to involve him in his own apostate power. The Word of God, however, the Maker of all things, conquering him by means of human nature, and showing him to be an apostate, has, on the contrary, put him under the power of man. For He says, “Behold, I confer upon you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy,” in order that, as he obtained dominion over man by apostasy, so again his apostasy might be deprived of power by means of man turning back again to God.

Irenaeus did not believe that man is born into “the apostasy” but that man can join it even from birth as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph three**, “For as, among men, those sons who disobey their fathers, being disinherited, are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited, for they do not become the heirs of their natural parents; so in the same way is it with God,—those who do not obey Him being disinherited by Him, have ceased to be His sons. Wherefore they cannot receive His inheritance: as David says, “Sinners are alienated from the womb; their anger is after the likeness of a serpent.”

Again Irenaeus felt that sinners are sinners through their own fault as they set themselves apart on the left hand as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XL, paragraph one**, “It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand.”

But Irenaeus did not think that God made angels or men apostate by nature as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph one**, “Inasmuch as the Lord has said that there are certain angels, [viz. those] of the devil, for whom eternal fire is prepared; and as, again, He declares with regard to the tares, “The tares are the children of the wicked one,” it must be affirmed that He has ascribed all who are of the apostasy to him who is the ringleader of this transgression. But He made neither angels nor men so by nature.”

In Irenaeus’ thinking, those who remain in a state of apostasy are sons of the devil as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph two**, “Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the devil has become the cause of apostasy to himself and others, justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of apostasy “sons of the devil” and “angels of the wicked one” (*maligni*).”

Again Irenaeus says in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph four**, “When, however, they believe and are subject to God, and go on and keep His doctrine, they are the sons of God; but when they have apostatized and fallen into transgression, they are ascribed to their chief, the devil—to him who first became the cause of

apostasy to himself, and afterwards to others.”

Now Irenaeus did see that man was under the power of sin as he says in **Book 3: Chapter XVIII, paragraph two**, “For as it was not possible that the man who had once for all been conquered, and who had been destroyed through disobedience, could reform himself, and obtain the prize of victory; and as it was also impossible that he could attain to salvation who had fallen under the power of sin,—the Son effected both these things, being the Word of God, descending from the Father, becoming incarnate, stooping low, even to death, and consummating the arranged plan of our salvation, upon whom [Paul], exhorting us unhesitatingly to believe, again says, “Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring down Christ; or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to liberate Christ again from the dead.””

Irenaeus also says that man had sin in himself in **Book 3: Chapter XVIII, paragraph seven**, “But the law coming, which was given by Moses, and testifying of sin that it is a sinner, did truly take away his (death’s) kingdom, showing that he was no king, but a robber; and it revealed him as a murderer. It laid, however, a weighty burden upon man, who had sin in himself, showing that he was liable to death. For as the law was spiritual, it merely made sin to stand out in relief, but did not destroy it. For sin had no dominion over the spirit, but over man. For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death.”

While Irenaeus did see that man had “sin in himself,” he did not see that man had a sin nature. This is important for us to note for the Scriptures clearly state that man was sinful by nature.

Although Irenaeus did not think man was apostate by nature, he does see that man needs to be redeemed from his sin, and from captivity, and from the power of death, and from being tyrannized unjustly by the apostasy as he says in **Book 5: Chapter I, paragraph one**, “We—who were but lately created by the only best and good Being, by Him also who has the gift of immortality, having been formed after His likeness (predestinated, according to the prescience of the Father, that we, who had as yet no existence, might come into being), and made the first-fruits of have received, in the times known beforehand, [the blessings of salvation] according to the ministration of the Word, who is perfect in all things, as the mighty Word, and very man, who, redeeming us by His own blood in a manner consonant to reason, gave Himself as a redemption for those who had been led into captivity. And since the apostasy tyrannized over us unjustly, and, though we were by nature the property of the omnipotent God, alienated us contrary to nature, rendering us its own disciples, the Word of God, powerful in all things, and not defective with regard to His own justice, did righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it His own property, not by violent means, as the [apostasy] had obtained dominion over us at the beginning, when it insatiably snatched away what was not its own, but by means of persuasion, as became a God of counsel, who does not use violent means to obtain what He desires; so that neither should justice be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork of God go to destruction. Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God,—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin.”

The Scriptures specifically state that all men and women are, according to Ephesians 2:1-3, “dead in trespasses and sins,” “walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air,” are “children of disobedience,” and are “by nature children of wrath.”

Irenaeus is to be commended for what he did see. And he did see that all men and women have sinned and are under sin as Paul tells us **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Man apart from Christ is not only under sin, but dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, living in the lusts of his flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, is by nature a child of wrath, helpless, ungodly, a sinner, an enemy of God, having no hope and without God in the world, walking in the futility of his mind, darkened in his understanding, excluded from the life of God because of his ignorance and hardness of heart, callous, and given over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. His mind and conscience are also defiled. Though he has the knowledge of good and evil, he has no power over his fleshly nature not to sin. In his flesh, he cannot do good or please God and is held captive by sin. Irenaeus understood some of the effects of sin upon man, but he did not understand that man has sin as a nature. It is important for us to understand this today.

## Chapter 9: The Name Chreistos

### Book 1: Chapter 15. —Sige relates to Marcus the generation of the twenty-four elements and of Jesus. Exposure of these absurdities.

1. ...

Moreover, that name of the Saviour which may be pronounced, viz., Jesus [Ἰησοῦς], consists of six letters, but His unutterable name comprises four-and-twenty letters. The name *Christ the Son*

2855 The text is here altogether uncertain, and the meaning obscure. (*υἱὸς Χρειστός*) comprises twelve letters, but that which is unpronounceable in Christ contains thirty letters. And for this reason he declares that He is *Alpha* and *Omega*, that he may indicate the dove, inasmuch as that bird has this number [in its name].

**Summary:** Here in an ellipsis of paragraph one, Irenaeus states that the name of the Saviour is Jesus, Christ the Son, and Alpha and Omega.

**Commentary:** I point out here that the historian, Tacitus (c. A.D. 55 - c. A.D. 117), quotes this name in Annals, book XV:

Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.

As you can see, the name Christus, in Latin, is very close to the Greek *υἱὸς Χρειστός* (pronounced huios Chreistos) used by Irenaeus, and meaning “Christ *the son*”. The New Testament Greek form is *χριστός*, or Christos. There can be no doubt they all refer to Jesus Christ.

## Chapter 10: Baptismal Regeneration

### Book 1: Chapter XXI.—The views of redemption entertained by these heretics.

1. It happens that their tradition respecting *redemption* 2921 Comp. chap. xiii. 6. is invisible and incomprehensible, as being the mother of things which are incomprehensible and invisible; and on this account, since it is fluctuating, it is impossible simply and all at once to make known its nature, for every one of them hands it down just as his own inclination prompts. Thus there are as many schemes of “redemption” as there are teachers of these mystical opinions. And when we come to refute them, we shall show in its fitting-place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus speaks of the Gnostic tradition of redemption and testifies that, “It happens that their tradition respecting *redemption* is invisible and incomprehensible, as being the mother of things which are incomprehensible and invisible; and on this account, since it is fluctuating, it is impossible simply and all at once to make known its nature, for every one of them hands it down just as his own inclination prompts. Thus there are as many schemes of “redemption” as there are teachers of these mystical opinions.” Irenaeus then records, “And when we come to refute them, we shall show in its fitting-place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith.”

Irenaeus defines baptism as “regeneration to God.” To get this wrong, he says, is to renounce “the whole [Christian] faith.” And he says that the Gnostics deny this baptism.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus speaks of the Gnostic tradition of redemption and testifies that, “It happens that their tradition respecting *redemption* is invisible and incomprehensible, as being the mother of things which are incomprehensible and invisible; and on this account, since it is fluctuating, it is impossible simply and all at once to make known its nature, for every one of them hands it down just as his own inclination prompts. Thus there are as many schemes of “redemption” as there are teachers of these mystical opinions.”

Irenaeus testifies that there is no agreement among the Gnostics about redemption, and that their traditions vary as their “own inclination prompts.”

Irenaeus then records, “And when we come to refute them, we shall show in its fitting-place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith.”

While Irenaeus is correct in his discernment that the Gnostic doctrine is a doctrine of demons, having “been instigated by Satan,” it is not clear just by the context here if Irenaeus is talking about water baptism. However, as we will see from other segments in his writing that it is certain that he means water baptism here as well. In the history of the early church, this came to be a common belief after the time of the apostles. Here is a quote from Philip P. Schaff, the noted historian.

“This ordinance [Baptism] was regarded in the ancient church as the sacrament of the new birth or regeneration, and as the solemn rite of initiation into the Christian Church, admitting to all her benefits and committing to all her obligations....Its effect consists in the forgiveness of sins and the communication of the Holy Spirit. Justin [Martyr] calls baptism ‘the water-bath for the forgiveness of sins and regeneration,’ and ‘the bath of conversion and the knowledge of God.’ “It is often called also illumination, spiritual circumcision, anointing, sealing, gift of grace, symbol of redemption, death of sins, etc. Tertullian describes its effect thus:

'When the soul comes to faith, and becomes transformed through regeneration by water and power from above, it discovers, after the veil of the old corruption is taken away, its whole light. It is received into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; and the soul, which unites itself to the Holy Spirit, is followed by the body.'" **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, volume 2, page 253.**

Schaff also says, "From John 3:5 and Mark 16:16, Tertullian and other fathers argued the necessity of baptism to salvation." **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, volume 2, page 253-4.**

In addition, Schaff also says that the effect of baptism "was thought to extend only to sins committed before receiving it. Hence the frequent postponement of the sacrament [Procrastinatio baptismi], which Tertullian very earnestly recommends, though he censures it when accompanied with moral levity and presumption." **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, volume 2, page 254.**

Schaff speaks of the ancient church's belief that baptism was the "sacrament of the new birth or regeneration." There is no doubt that this belief started very early on in the Church, as we note that the writing of Justin Martyr (c. 100 – 165 A.D.) preceded Irenaeus slightly. We will talk more about what the Scripture has to say about water baptism in the following sections.

## **Book 3: Chapter XVII.—The apostles teach that it was neither Christ nor the Saviour, but the Holy Spirit, who did descend upon Jesus. The reason for this descent.**

1. It certainly was in the power of the apostles to declare that Christ descended upon Jesus, or that the so-called superior Saviour [came down] upon the dispensational one, or he who is from the invisible places upon him from the Demiurge; but they neither knew nor said anything of the kind: for, had they known it, they would have also certainly stated it. But what really was the case, that did they record, [namely,] that the Spirit of God as a dove descended upon Him; this Spirit, of whom it was declared by Isaiah, "And the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him," 3614 Isa. xi. 2. as I have already said. And again: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me." 3615 Isa. Ixi. 1. That is the Spirit of whom the Lord declares, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." 3616 Matt. x. 20. And again, giving to the disciples the power of regeneration into God, 3617 Harvey remarks on this: "The sacrament of baptism is therefore ἡ δύμανις τῆς ἀναγεννήσεως εἰς Θεόν." [Comp. book i. cap. xxi.] He said to them, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

3618 Matt. xxviii. 19. For [God] promised, that in the last times He would pour Him [the Spirit] upon [His] servants and handmaids, that they might prophesy; wherefore He did also descend upon the Son of God, made the Son of man, becoming accustomed in fellowship with Him to dwell in the human race, to rest with human beings, and to dwell in the workmanship of God, working the will of the Father in them, and renewing them from their old habits into the newness of Christ.

2. This Spirit did David ask for the human race, saying, "And stablish me with Thine all-governing Spirit;" 3619 Ps. li. 12. who also, as Luke says, descended at the day of Pentecost upon the disciples after the Lord's ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life, and to the opening of the new covenant; from whence also, with one accord in all languages, they uttered praise to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity, and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all nations. Wherefore also the Lord promised to send the Comforter, 3620 John xvi. 7. who should join us to God. For as a compacted lump of dough cannot be formed of dry wheat without fluid matter, nor can a loaf possess unity, so, in like manner, neither could we, being many, be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. And as dry earth does not bring forth unless it receive moisture, in like manner we also, being originally a dry tree, could never have brought forth fruit unto life without the voluntary rain from above. For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of that laver which leads to incorruption; but our souls, by means of the Spirit. Wherefore both are necessary, since both contribute towards the life of God, our Lord compassionating that erring

**Samaritan woman** 3621 Irenæus refers to this woman as a type of the heathen world: for, among the Jews, Samaritan and Idolater were convertible terms.—who did not remain with one husband, but committed fornication by [contracting] many marriages—by pointing out, and promising to her living water, so that she should thirst no more, nor occupy herself in acquiring the refreshing water obtained by labour, having in herself water springing up to eternal life. The Lord, receiving this as a gift from His Father, does Himself also confer it upon those who are partakers of Himself, sending the Holy Spirit upon all the earth.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues against the Gnostics saying, “It certainly was in the power of the apostles to declare that Christ descended upon Jesus, or that the so-called superior Saviour [came down] upon the dispensational one, or he who is from the invisible places upon him from the Demiurge; but they neither knew nor said anything of the kind: for, had they known it, they would have also certainly stated it. But what really was the case, that did they record, [namely,] that the Spirit of God as a dove descended upon Him;” referring to Luke 3:22, “this Spirit, of whom it was declared by Isaiah, “And the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him,” referring to Isaiah 11:2, “as I have already said.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And again: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me,” referring to Isaiah 61:1. Irenaeus then explains as he testifies, “That is the Spirit of whom the Lord declares, “For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you,” referring to Matthew 10:20. Irenaeus then continues, “And again, giving to the disciples the power of regeneration into God, He said to them, “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” referring to Matthew 28:19. Irenaeus then affirms, “For [God] promised, that in the last times He would pour Him [the Spirit] upon [His] servants and handmaids, that they might prophesy;” referring to Joel 2:28-29. And Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “wherefore He did also descend upon the Son of God, made the Son of man, becoming accustomed in fellowship with Him to dwell in the human race, to rest with human beings, and to dwell in the workmanship of God, working the will of the Father in them, and renewing them from their old habits into the newness of Christ,” referring in part to Luke 3:21-22.

Irenaeus continues in paragraph two, testifying, “This Spirit did David ask for the human race, saying, “And establish me with Thine all-governing Spirit,” referring to Psalm 51:12. Irenaeus then testifies, “who also, as Luke says, descended at the day of Pentecost upon the disciples after the Lord’s ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life, and to the opening of the new covenant; from whence also, with one accord in all languages, they uttered praise to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity, and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all nations,” referring to Acts 1 and 2. Irenaeus then testifies, “Wherefore also the Lord promised to send the Comforter,” referring to John 16:7, “who should join us to God.” Irenaeus then explains, “For as a compacted lump of dough cannot be formed of dry wheat without fluid matter, nor can a loaf possess unity, so, in like manner, neither could we, being many, be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. And as dry earth does not bring forth unless it receive moisture, in like manner we also, being originally a dry tree, could never have brought forth fruit unto life without the voluntary rain from above.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of that laver which leads to incorruption; but our souls, by means of the Spirit. Wherefore both are necessary, since both contribute towards the life of God, our Lord compassionating that erring Samaritan woman who did not remain with one husband, but committed fornication by [contracting] many marriages—by pointing out, and promising to her living water, so that she should thirst no more, nor occupy herself in acquiring the refreshing water obtained by labour, having in herself water springing up to eternal life,” referring to John 4: Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “The Lord, receiving this as a gift from His Father, does Himself also confer it upon those who are partakers of Himself, sending the Holy Spirit upon all the earth,” referring to Acts 2:38.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues against the Gnostic doctrine saying, “It certainly was in the power of the apostles to declare that Christ descended upon Jesus, or that the so-called superior Saviour [came down] upon the dispensational one, or he who is from the invisible places upon him from the Demiurge; but they neither knew nor said anything of the kind: for, had they known it, they would have also certainly stated it. But what really was the case, that did they record, [namely,] that the Spirit of God as a dove descended

upon Him," referring to to **Luke 3 (KJV):22** And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "this Spirit, of whom it was declared by Isaiah, "And the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him," referring to **Isaiah 11 (KJV):2** And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Irenaeus continues and affirms, "as I have already said. And again: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me," referring to **Isaiah 61 (NIV):1** The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.

Irenaeus then explains as he testifies, "That is the Spirit of whom the Lord declares, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," referring to **Matthew 10 (NIV):20** for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Irenaeus then continues, "And again, giving to the disciples the power of regeneration into God, He said to them, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," referring in context to **Matthew 28 (NIV):18** Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Irenaeus then affirms, "For [God] promised, that in the last times He would pour Him [the Spirit] upon [His] servants and handmaids, that they might prophesy;" referring to **Joel 2 (NIV):28** "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

And Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "wherefore He did also descend upon the Son of God, made the Son of man, becoming accustomed in fellowship with Him to dwell in the human race, to rest with human beings, and to dwell in the workmanship of God, working the will of the Father in them, and renewing them from their old habits into the newness of Christ," referring in part to **Luke 3 (NIV):21** When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Irenaeus continues in paragraph two, testifying that, "This Spirit did David ask for the human race, saying, "And establish me with Thine all-governing Spirit," referring to **Psalm 51 (Septuagint):11** Cast me not away from thy presence; and remove not thy holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation: establish me with thy directing Spirit.

And also as in **Psalm 51 (NIV):11** Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Irenaeus then testifies, "who also, as Luke says, descended at the day of Pentecost upon the disciples after the Lord's ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life, and to the opening of the new covenant; from whence also, with one accord in all languages, they uttered praise to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity, and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all nations referring in part to **Acts 1 (KJV):9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And to **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to

another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Irenaeus then testifies, “Wherefore also the Lord promised to send the Comforter,” referring to **John 16 (KJV):7** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And Irenaeus finishes, “who should join us to God.” Irenaeus then explains, “For as a compacted lump of dough cannot be formed of dry wheat without fluid matter, nor can a loaf possess unity, so, in like manner, neither could we, being many, be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. And as dry earth does not bring forth unless it receive moisture, in like manner we also, being originally a dry tree, could never have brought forth fruit unto life without the voluntary rain from above.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of that laver which leads to incorruption; but our souls, by means of the Spirit.” By “laver which leads to incorruption,” Irenaeus undoubtedly is referring to water baptism.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “Wherefore both are necessary, since both contribute towards the life of God, our Lord compassionating that erring Samaritan woman who did not remain with one husband, but committed fornication by [contracting] many marriages—by pointing out, and promising to her living water, so that she should thirst no more, nor occupy herself in acquiring the refreshing water obtained by labour, having in herself water springing up to eternal life,” referring to **John 4 (KJV):4** And he must needs go through Samaria. 5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) 9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. 15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. 27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? 28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

Jesus points out to the woman at the well that the one who drinks of the water of the well would be thirsty again. The water in the well only sustains the fleshly body of ours, and does not contribute anything to the life of God as Irenaeus suggests. The water that Jesus is speaking of is the Spirit of God as He tells us in

**John 7 (NIV):37** On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

It is the Spirit who gives life as Jesus also said in **John 6 (NIV):63** The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.

Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “The Lord, receiving this as a gift from His Father, does Himself also confer it upon those who are partakers of Himself, sending the Holy Spirit upon all the earth,” referring to Acts **Acts 2 (NASB):38** Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 “For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”

## Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter XVII

When Irenaeus says in paragraph one, “And again, giving to the disciples the power of regeneration into God He said to them, “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” he is indicating that he believed in baptismal regeneration which is the belief that we are born again when we are baptized with water. This belief is based on **Mark 16 (NIV):15** He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

However this Scripture must be taken in context with the rest of Scripture. It is true that baptism is commanded by the Lord, and we, as believers, should obey that command. But we are also commanded to love one another as we read in **John 13 (NIV):34** “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Fulfilling the commandment to love one another does not save us, just as fulfilling the command to be baptized does not save us. Baptism itself has no saving power, just as loving one another has no saving power. Love is a fruit of the Spirit, and when we love one another, it is evidence that the Spirit is in us, and that we have been born again. Likewise, baptism itself is only an outward sign of the inward work of the Spirit raising us up to life again by the new birth of the Spirit of God. We only get baptized after we believe. We are born again when we believe the word of God, the Gospel. That is, when we believe that Jesus came in the flesh, and died for our sins, and rose again, and we confess Him as our Lord, we are saved just as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

As we noted before, Paul then reveals to us where this belief, that is, this saving faith, comes from when in **Romans 10 (KJV):14** How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Hearing comes by the word of Christ, and our faith comes from hearing that word. Paul himself did not claim any saving power in baptism. He even said that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the Gospel. He would never have said this if there were any saving power in baptism as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):11** For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say

that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

James tells us that it was by God's will that we were brought forth by the word of the truth of the Gospel as we read in **James 1 (NASB):18** In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

And Peter tells us that the new birth was by the eternal word of God in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):22** Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

So it was the word of God that inspired faith in us and gave us eternal life. This faith that saves us was not of ourselves or the result of works we do, but the gift of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

This word of God ministered to us by the Holy Spirit inspired faith by which our hearts were opened and we believed as we read in **Acts 16 (NIV):14** One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

The word "respond" in verse 14 above is the Greek word προσέχειν (pronounced prosechein). It means literally to hold the mind towards, to take heed. Lydia gave her heart to Jesus and was saved. It was only after her heart was opened that she responded to the Gospel message that Paul preached. And it was only after she had believed Paul's message that she was baptized. We must understand that there is no good work that we could do before or after we are saved that can atone for our sin. It is our faith in Jesus that saves us. This is because the only work that can atone for sin is the work of Christ on the cross, and this work has been finished as Jesus said in **John 4 (NIV):34** "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

And then in **John 17 (NIV):4** I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

And again in **John 19 (NIV):30** When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

What was Jesus' work that He was sent by the Father to accomplish? His work was the redemption of mankind by the perfect sinless sacrifice of the cross. We cannot add to or take away from the work of the cross. For this reason He is able to save us forever as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):25** Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

A work is something that we do, or an action that we take. There is nothing that we can do, nor any action that we can take, including being baptized, that can make us any more born again than we already are after we believe. Being baptized is a step of obedience that we take after we believe, just like loving one another as Jesus also commanded us to do.

Peter also explains that it is not the physical washing of baptism that saves us, but the answer of a good conscience before God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ as we read in **1 Peter 3 (KJV):15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. 18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few,

that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

What Peter is saying here is that we have a good conscience because of Christ's suffering for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." After Christ died, "being put to death in the flesh," Peter tells us that "He went to preach to the spirits in prison." The prison he is referring to is where the righteous dead went after they died. They could not enter heaven yet, since the way into heaven had not yet been made possible by Jesus' death on the cross. This prison is called Abraham's bosom, which we have fully explained in **Chapter 6: His Teaching on The Resurrection**, under the heading **Book 5: Chapter V** of Irenaeus' writing.

Abraham's bosom is where the righteous dead went before Jesus accomplished our salvation by dying on the cross for us. This is mentioned in a parable Jesus told us in Luke 16:19-31. To summarize, when the righteous died, they went to Abraham's bosom, also called paradise by Jesus in Luke 23:39-43. Jesus describes a great chasm fixed there which could not be crossed, and which separated the unrighteous from the righteous.

So after Christ died, He went to preach to the spirits in prison, that is, to those in Abraham's bosom or Paradise where the righteous dead were kept until the way into the holiest was made known. Noah and his family are the eight souls that were saved by water, as it were, in the days of Noah and the ark. What Jesus did was to proclaim freedom to those righteous dead who had died in faith before Jesus died on the cross. He then lead the captivity in this prison, called Abraham's bosom, captive into heaven itself as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Now the writer of Hebrews also explains that the first tabernacle was a figure to those under the first covenant signifying that the way into the holiest, that is heaven itself, was not yet made known or manifest while the first tabernacle, made with hands was still standing as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):1** Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing. 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

However, Christ has come as a high priest of a more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, speaking of heaven itself, which He has now entered by His own blood once having obtained eternal redemption for us as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):11** But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

It is the blood of Christ that cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Now back

to Peter's epistle in chapter three, the phrase, "the like figure" in the Greek is αντίτυπον (pronounced antitupon), as in **1 Peter 3 (Textus Receptus):**21 ὁ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ρύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The most literal rendering of this verse if found in **1 Peter 3 (KJV):**21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The word αντίτυπον (pronounced antitupon) in the Greek is translated "like figure" in this verse. Here is what Wuest's **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament** has to say about this verse.

### Verse twenty-one

"The words "the like figure" are in the Greek *ho antitupon*. The question as to whether the word "figure" refers back to the word "ark" or the word "water," is easily settled by the Greek grammar involved in this expression, for the relative pronoun *ho* is neuter, the word "ark" is feminine, and the word "water" neuter. The relative pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender. Therefore the word "figure" which is neuter and construed grammatically with the pronoun *ho* goes back to the word "water." The word "figure" is the translation of *antitupon* which means "the counterpart of reality." The Greek word "baptism" is in apposition with the word "figure." Our translation so far reads, "Which (water) also (as a ) counterpart now saves you, (namely) baptism." Water baptism is clearly in the apostle's mind, not the baptism by the Holy Spirit, for he speaks of the waters of the flood as saving the inmates of the ark, and in this verse, of baptism saving believers. But he says that it saves them only as a counterpart. That is water baptism is the counterpart of the reality, salvation. It can only save as a counterpart, not actually. The Old Testament sacrifices were counterparts of the reality, the Lord Jesus. They did not actually save the believer, only in type. It is not argued here that these sacrifices are analogous to Christian water baptism. The author is merely using them as an illustration of the use of the word "counterpart." So water baptism only saves the believer in type. The Old Testament Jew was saved before he brought the offering. That offering was only his outward testimony that he was placing his faith in the Lamb of God of whom these sacrifices were a type. The moment he conceived in his heart that he would bring his offering to the Tabernacle, his faith leaped the centuries to the time when God would offer the Sacrifice that would pay for his sin. Our Lord said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56). The act of bringing the sacrifice was his outward expression and testimony of his inward faith. Water baptism is the outward testimony of the believer's inward faith. The person is saved the moment he places his faith in the Lord Jesus. Water baptism is his visible testimony to his faith and the salvation he was given in answer to that faith.

Peter is careful to inform his readers that he is not teaching baptismal regeneration, namely, that a person who submits to baptism is thereby regenerated, for he says, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." Baptism, Peter explains, does not wash away the filth of the flesh, either in a literal sense as a bath for the body, nor in a metaphorical sense as a cleansing for the soul. No ceremonies really affect the conscience. But he defines what he means by salvation, in the words "the answer of a good conscience toward God," and he explains how this is accomplished, namely "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" in that the believing sinner is identified with Him in that resurrection." **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume II, First Peter in the Greek New Testament, page 108-109.**

So it is the "answer," or more literally, "appeal" (Greek ἐπερώτημα pronounced eperotema), to God for a good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ that saves us as we read in **1 Peter 3 (KJV):**21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

### Fragment XXXIV.

"And 4854 This and the next fragment first appeared in the Benedictine edition reprinted at Venice, 1734. They were taken from a ms. *Catena* on the book of Kings in the Coislin Collection.

dipped himself," says [the Scripture], "seven times in Jordan." 4855 2 Kings v. 14. It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [it served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: "Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." 4856 John iii. 5.

**Summary:** In this fragment of his writing, Irenaeus affirms, "And dipped himself," says [the Scripture], "seven times in Jordan," referring to 2 Kings 5:14. Irenaeus then asserts, "It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [it served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: "Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," referring to John 3:5.

**Commentary:** In this fragment, we see clearly Irenaeus' belief in baptismal regeneration. He first affirms, "And dipped himself," says [the Scripture], "seven times in Jordan," referring in context to **2 Kings 5 (KJV):1** Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

The reason that Naaman was sick was revealed in **2 Kings 5 (KJV):1** And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. 4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. 5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. 7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. 8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

Naaman was sick that he might know that there was a prophet in Israel. Not only so, but he was sick in order that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel as we read in **2 Kings 5 (KJV):9** So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. 11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? 14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. 15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

Irenaeus then asserts, "It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [it served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: "Except a man be born again through

water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,” referring to John 3:5.

Again, baptism is something we do, and is therefore a work. It is an action we take by faith in obedience to Jesus’ command. It has no saving power. It doesn’t merit anything just as faith doesn’t merit anything, nor doing good works, or loving one another, or any other action we take. We are commanded to do these things because we are saved, not to be saved. Good works are appropriate for those who have been saved, and bought with such a precious price. Our rewards are dependent on what we do after we believe, but not our salvation as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. 14 If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The foundation is Jesus Christ. That is, all that Jesus has done for us and is to us is our foundation. So what is Jesus to us? He is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption as in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB):30** But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”

This is why we sing “He’s everything to me.” But did you notice in this fragment that Irenaeus used the word “invocation”? And did you notice that he used the word “sacred” in front of water as in “sacred water”? The handling of holy things and the giving of invocations is the work of a priest. We will see another occurrence of the word “invocation” when we get to Irenaeus’ thoughts about Communion in **Chapter 22: Communion**. Could this be how the sacerdotal order came into the Church? If people are born again, not at the will of the Holy Spirit who blows like the wind, but at the invocation given at baptism, the necessity of a priest is understood, for who else would be qualified to give an invocation or handle holy things such as “the sacred water” as Irenaeus mentions above?

But speaking of water, Jesus and Nicodemus had a conversation recorded in the Gospel of John, chapter three. Jesus explains to Nicodemus that a man must be born again in order to see or enter the kingdom of God. In answer to Nicodemus question, “How can a man be born when he is old?,” Jesus responds and contrasts the human birth, the birth of the flesh, with the spiritual birth, the birth of the Spirit as we read in **John 3 (HCSB):1** There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Him at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with him.” 3 Jesus replied, “I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 “But how can anyone be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked Him. “Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. 8 The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

Jesus is saying that the Spirit gives birth to spirit, and the working of the Spirit is like the wind. We cannot tell where the wind comes from nor where it is going. So it is with “everyone who is born of the Spirit.” And when Jesus was explaining to the disciples what He meant by His body being the bread of God, and that he who eats His flesh and drinks His blood has eternal life, He said that it is the Spirit who gives life as we read in **John 6 (NASB):63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

It is the Spirit who gives life to our spirits when we are born again. This is why Paul says that we were made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Our physical bodies were not made alive, for they were already alive. It is our spirit that was dead in trespasses and sins. And it is in our spirit, after having believed in Jesus, that we are made alive by the Holy Spirit. That is, the Holy Spirit gives life to our spirit. The life he gives is eternal life. And those who have had this new birth experience are said to be raised up with Christ as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **2** Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. **3** For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Christ is said to be “our life” when we have been born again. We are also said to have a “new self,” literally a “new man” (Greek καίνος ἄνθρωπος pronounced kainon anthropon), created to be like God in righteousness and true holiness as in **Ephesians 4 (NIV):22** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23** to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24** and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

It is in this new man or self, which is our inner man or spirit, that we joyfully concur with the law of God as in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: **23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

The reason we joyfully concur with the law of God in our inner man is because we now have a new nature, having been born of the Spirit of God as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

This is why we are said to be a new creature as in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

And so we see that our outer man or fleshly body is going to die, but our inner man or spirit has the life of the Spirit and is renewed day by day as in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

So Jesus is not saying we are saved by the water of baptism in John, chapter three. He is talking about the fleshly or human birth of water, and he contrasts it with the spiritual birth of the Spirit. The fleshly birth by water, speaking of the water that surrounds the fetus in pregnancy, gives life to our fleshly bodies. But in order to enter the kingdom of God we must have a spiritual birth, and be born of the Spirit. Two births are required to enter the kingdom of God, one physical and one spiritual. So we are not saved when we are baptized. We are baptized because we have believed, and we are already saved. When we obey Jesus’ command to be baptized, we are simply giving evidence of our faith since taking this action is in obedience to the word of God.

The fact that we are saved apart from baptism is shown by the testimony of Peter in Acts, chapter 10, where Peter preaches to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, and they, upon hearing his message, were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues and exalted God as we read in **Acts 10 (NIV):44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. **45** The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. **46** For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, **47** “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” **48** So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

The Holy Spirit does not fall upon and fill unbelievers. Those who heard Peter’s message were born again upon hearing the words of the Gospel preached by Peter. And because they believed his words, they received the Holy Spirit at that time, even though they had not been baptized with water yet. When Peter saw that they had received the Holy Spirit just as he and his fellow apostles, he commanded them to be baptized. God was showing us that the Gentiles were also to be included in the church if they believed the Gospel. And God was also showing us that water baptism does not save us.

## Chapter 11: The Teaching of Marcion and the Gnostics

### Book 1: Chapter XXVII.—Doctrines of Cerdö and Marcion.

1. Cerdö was one who took his system from the followers of Simon, and came to live at Rome in the time of Hyginus, who held the ninth place in the episcopal succession from the apostles downwards. He taught that the God proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the former was known, but the latter unknown; while the one also was righteous, but the other benevolent.

2. Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and developed his doctrine. In so doing, he advanced the most daring blasphemy against Him who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring Him to be the author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to Himself. But Jesus being derived from that father who is above the God that made the world, and coming into Judæa in the times of Pontius Pilate the governor, who was the procurator of Tiberius Cæsar, was manifested in the form of a man to those who were in Judæa, abolishing the prophets and the law, and all the works of that God who made the world, whom also he calls Cosmocrator. Besides this, he mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most dearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father. He likewise persuaded his disciples that he himself was more worthy of credit than are those apostles who have handed down the Gospel to us, furnishing them not with the Gospel, but merely a fragment of it. In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetic writings which the apostle quotes, in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord.

3. Salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation. In addition to his blasphemy against God Himself, he advanced this also, truly speaking as with the mouth of the devil, and saying all things in direct opposition to the truth,—that Cain, and those like him, and the Sodomites, and the Egyptians, and others like them, and, in fine, all the nations who walked in all sorts of abomination, were saved by the Lord, on His descending into Hades, and on their running unto Him, and that they welcomed Him into their kingdom. But the serpent 2958 [Comp. cap. xxv. 3.] which was in Marcion declared that Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and those other righteous men who sprang 2959 We here follow the amended version proposed by the Benedictine editor. from the patriarch Abraham, with all the prophets, and those who were pleasing to God, did not partake in salvation. For since these men, he says, knew that their God was constantly tempting them, so now they suspected that He was tempting them, and did not run to Jesus, or believe His announcement: and for this reason he declared that their souls remained in Hades.

4. But since this man is the only one who has dared openly to mutilate the Scriptures, and unblushingly above all others to inveigh against God, I purpose specially to refute him, convicting him out of his own writings; and, with the help of God, I shall overthrow him out of those 2960 A promise never fulfilled: comp. book iii. 12, and Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 8. discourses of the Lord and the apostles, which are of authority with him, and of which he makes use. At present, however, I have simply been led to mention him, that thou mightest know that all those who in any way corrupt the truth, and injuriously affect the preaching of the Church, are the disciples and successors of Simon Magus of Samaria. Although they do not confess the name of their master, in order all the more to seduce others, yet they do teach his doctrines. They set forth, indeed, the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure, but in various ways they introduce the impieties of Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes, wickedly disseminating their own doctrines by the use of a good name, and, through means of its sweetness and beauty, extending to their hearers the bitter and malignant poison of the serpent, the great author of apostasy. 2961 [Rev. xii. 9.]

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that “Cerdo was one who took his system from the followers of Simon, and came to live at Rome in the time of Hyginus, who held the ninth place in the episcopal succession from the apostles downwards.” Irenaeus continues as he records that “He taught that the God proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the former was known, but the latter unknown; while the one also was righteous, but the other benevolent.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then testifies against the Gnostics as he records:

- “Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and developed his doctrine. In so doing, he advanced the most daring blasphemy against Him who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring Him to be the author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to Himself.”
- “But Jesus being derived from that father who is above the God that made the world, and coming into Judæa in the times of Pontius Pilate the governor, who was the procurator of Tiberius Cæsar, was manifested in the form of a man to those who were in Judæa, abolishing the prophets and the law, and all the works of that God who made the world, whom also he calls Cosmocrator.”
- “Besides this, he mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most dearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father.”
- “He likewise persuaded his disciples that he himself was more worthy of credit than are those apostles who have handed down the Gospel to us, furnishing them not with the Gospel, but merely a fragment of it.”
- “In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetic writings which the apostle quotes, in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies that Marcion also taught:

- “Salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation.”
- “In addition to his blasphemy against God Himself, he advanced this also, truly speaking as with the mouth of the devil, and saying all things in direct opposition to the truth,—that Cain, and those like him, and the Sodomites, and the Egyptians, and others like them, and, in fine, all the nations who walked in all sorts of abomination, were saved by the Lord, on His descending into Hades, and on their running unto Him, and that they welcomed Him into their kingdom.”
- “But the serpent was in Marcion declared that Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and those other righteous men who sprang from the patriarch Abraham, with all the prophets, and those who were pleasing to God, did not partake in salvation. For since these men, he says, knew that their God was constantly tempting them, so now they suspected that He was tempting them, and did not run to Jesus, or believe His announcement: and for this reason he declared that their souls remained in Hades.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus takes a stand against the errors of Mracion as he then testifies, “But since this man is the only one who has dared openly to mutilate the Scriptures, and unblushingly above all others to inveigh against God, I purpose specially to refute him, convicting him out of his own writings; and, with the help of God, I shall overthrow him out of those discourses of the Lord and the apostles, which are of authority with him, and of which he makes use.” Irenaeus then explains, “At present, however, I have simply been led to mention him, that thou mightest know that all those who in any way corrupt the truth, and injuriously affect the preaching of the Church, are the disciples and successors of Simon Magus of Samaria. Although they do not confess the name of their master, in order all the more to seduce others, yet they do teach his doctrines. They set forth, indeed, the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure, but in various ways they introduce the impieties of

Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes, wickedly disseminating their own doctrines by the use of a good name, and, through means of its sweetness and beauty, extending to their hearers the bitter and malignant poison of the serpent, the great author of apostasy,” referring to Revelation 12:9.

**Commentary:** It is helpful to know what Irenaeus is fighting against. The above section outlines the errors of Marcion in Irenaeus’ own words, and gives us a brief introduction to Gnostic beliefs.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that “Cerdo was one who took his system from the followers of Simon, and came to live at Rome in the time of Hyginus, who held the ninth place in the episcopal succession from the apostles downwards.” Irenaeus continues as he records that “He taught that the God proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the former was known, but the latter unknown; while the one also was righteous, but the other benevolent.”

Irenaeus is saying that the belief of Cerdo was that the God of the Old Testament was not the Father whom Jesus refers to in the New Testament. The idea proposed by Cerdo was that the Father whom Jesus referred to was above the God of the Old Testament. The God of the Old Testament was the one who “made the world,” but the god above Him was someone different since Jesus’ Father was loving, and unknown. This idea of Cerdo may be based on the following Scripture:

**John 17 (NIV):22** I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. 25 “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

However, the reason that the Father was not known by the world was because the world of mankind is dead in trespasses and sins. Until we believe in Jesus Christ, we are dead in trespasses and sins. Such a concept as Cerdo proposes is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures. This is evidently a doctrine of demons, and the teaching of a false god.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then testifies against the Gnostics as he records:

- “Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and developed his doctrine. In so doing, he advanced the most daring blasphemy against Him who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring Him to be the author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to Himself.”
- “But Jesus being derived from that father who is above the God that made the world, and coming into Judæa in the times of Pontius Pilate the governor, who was the procurator of Tiberius Cæsar, was manifested in the form of a man to those who were in Judæa, abolishing the prophets and the law, and all the works of that God who made the world, whom also he calls Cosmocrator.”

Irenaeus testifies that Marcion further developed this error by declaring the God of the Old Testament to be the “author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to Himself.” Irenaeus also testifies that Marcion believed that Jesus was “derived from that father who is above the God that made the world,” the Gnostic doctrine that taught that there was another god, Bythus, who existed before the God of the Old Testament. Irenaeus further states that Marcion believed that Jesus came to abolish the law and the prophets, “and all the works of that god who made the world.” But this is absolutely contrary to the Scriptures and the words of Jesus Himself as we read in **Luke 16 (NIV):16** “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. 17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

Jesus Himself said that He did not come to abolish but to fulfill as we read in **Matthew 5 (NIV):17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Irenaeus then testifies against the Gnostics as he records:

- “Besides this, he mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most dearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father.”
- “He likewise persuaded his disciples that he himself was more worthy of credit than are those apostles who have handed down the Gospel to us, furnishing them not with the Gospel, but merely a fragment of it.”
- “In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetic writings which the apostle quotes, in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord.”

Irenaeus also states that Marcion mutilates the Gospel of Luke to show only the verses which support his teaching. Likewise, Irenaeus testifies that he “dismembered” the epistles of Paul, so that they are really a product of his own fabrication. Evidently Marcion did not know about the curse on those who add or take away from the word of God as in **Revelation 22 (KJV):16** I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

We are not to tamper with the word of God.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies that Marcion also taught:

- “Salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation.”
- “In addition to his blasphemy against God Himself, he advanced this also, truly speaking as with the mouth of the devil, and saying all things in direct opposition to the truth,—that Cain, and those like him, and the Sodomites, and the Egyptians, and others like them, and, in fine, all the nations who walked in all sorts of abomination, were saved by the Lord, on His descending into Hades, and on their running unto Him, and that they welcomed Him into their kingdom.”
- “But the serpent was in Marcion declared that Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and those other righteous men who sprang from the patriarch Abraham, with all the prophets, and those who were pleasing to God, did not partake in salvation. For since these men, he says, knew that their God was constantly tempting them, so now they suspected that He was tempting them, and did not run to Jesus, or believe His announcement: and for this reason he declared that their souls remained in Hades.”

Irenaeus testifies that Marcion believed that salvation was only attained by believing his teaching, that the body was incapable of being saved, and that all the Old Testament saints remained in Hades. Again, this is absolutely contrary to Scripture. Paul speaks of the truth of the resurrection of our bodies and argues against those who said there is no resurrection in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):12** Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that

he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

Therefore, it is Marcion and his followers who are false witnesses. The Scriptures also speak of a godly lineage which includes Old Testament saints as being in the lineage of the Messiah as we read in **Matthew 1 (NIV):1** This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Matthew 1:1-16 details the entire lineage of Jesus, the Son of God, from Abraham to Joseph the husband of Mary. Luke himself plots this lineage from Joseph, the husband of Mary, all the way back to Adam, the son of God in Luke 3:23-38. Luke starts his record in **Luke 3 (NIV):23** Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli,...

And Luke ends his lineage in **Luke 3 (NIV):38** the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Rightly did Irenaeus testify that “the serpent was in Marcion,” for Jesus Himself said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day in **John 8 (KJV):56** Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

And Jesus even specifically pointed out Abel as righteous when He spoke woes to the Pharisees in **Matthew 23 (KJV):27** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

And in **Matthew 23 (KJV):33** Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus takes a stand against the errors of Mracion as he then testifies, “But since this man is the only one who has dared openly to mutilate the Scriptures, and unblushingly above all others to inveigh against God, I purpose specially to refute him, convicting him out of his own writings; and, with the help of God, I shall overthrow him out of those discourses of the Lord and the apostles, which are of authority with him, and of which he makes use.” We see Irenaeus’ reliance and faith in the Scriptures here.

Irenaeus then explains, “At present, however, I have simply been led to mention him, that thou mightest know that all those who in any way corrupt the truth, and injuriously affect the preaching of the Church, are the disciples and successors of Simon Magus of Samaria.” Simon seems to be the whipping boy of the Early Church Fathers and the tradition is very strong that points to him as the one responsible for all the errors of heresy. However, we should keep in mind that the Scripture tells us that Simon repented and believed the Gospel and was baptized, and that he also asked for forgiveness after Peter’s rebuke as in **Acts 8 (NIV):9** Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, 10 and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” 11 They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. 12 But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. 14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money 19 and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” 20 Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your

heart. 23 For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin." 24 Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

Irenaeus continues as he testifies against the Gnostics that, "Although they do not confess the name of their master, in order all the more to seduce others, yet they do teach his doctrines. They set forth, indeed, the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure, but in various ways they introduce the impieties of Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes, wickedly disseminating their own doctrines by the use of a good name, and, through means of its sweetness and beauty, extending to their hearers the bitter and malignant poison of the serpent, the great author of apostasy," referring to **Revelation 12 (NIV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

In light of this Scripture and knowing the zeal of the Early Church Fathers, I am inclined to think that Simon was only a convenient scapegoat of blame for heresy. The people that Irenaeus is writing against, Marcion, Cerdo, and others, invented a lot of their evil teachings on their own. There is a common denominator though in their writings which show them to be really of one author, and that is Satan. We need look no further. It is recorded that Simon repented. These other men did not.

## **Book 3: Chapter XVI.—Proofs from the apostolic writings, that Jesus Christ was one and the same, the only begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect man.**

1. But there are some who say that Jesus was merely a receptacle of Christ, upon whom the Christ, as a dove, descended from above, and that when He had declared the unnameable Father He entered into the Pleroma in an incomprehensible and invisible manner: for that He was not comprehended, not only by men, but not even by those powers and virtues which are in heaven, and that Jesus was the Son, but that Christ was the Father, and the Father of Christ, God; while others say that He merely suffered in outward appearance, being naturally impassible. The Valentinians, again, maintain that the dispensational Jesus was the same who passed through Mary, upon whom that Saviour from the more exalted [region] descended, who was also termed Pan, because He possessed the names (vocabula) of all those who had produced Him; but that [this latter] shared with Him, the dispensational one, His power and His name; so that by His means death was abolished, but the Father was made known by that Saviour who had descended from above, whom they do also allege to be Himself the receptacle of Christ and of the entire Pleroma; confessing, indeed, in tongue one Christ Jesus, but being divided in [actual] opinion: for, as I have already observed, it is the practice of these men to say that there was one Christ, who was produced by Monogenes, for the confirmation of the Pleroma; but that another, the Saviour, was sent [forth] for the glorification of the Father; and yet another, the dispensational one, and whom they represent as having suffered, who also bore [in himself] Christ, that Saviour who returned into the Pleroma. I judge it necessary therefore to take into account the entire mind of the apostles regarding our Lord Jesus Christ, and to show that not only did they never hold any such opinions regarding Him; but, still further, that they announced through the Holy Spirit, that those who should teach such doctrines were agents of Satan, sent forth for the purpose of overturning the faith of some, and drawing them away from life.

2. That John knew the one and the same Word of God, and that He was the only begotten, and that He became incarnate for our salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord, I have sufficiently proved from the word of John himself. And Matthew, too, recognising one and the same Jesus Christ, exhibiting his generation as a man from the Virgin, even as God did promise David that He would raise up from the fruit of his body an eternal King, having made the same promise to Abraham a long time previously, says: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Then, that he might free our mind from suspicion regarding Joseph, he says: "But the birth of Christ was on this wise. When His mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Then, when Joseph had it in contemplation to put Mary away, since she

proved with child, [Matthew tells us of] the angel of God standing by him, and saying: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins. Now this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, God with us;" clearly signifying that both the promise made to the fathers had been accomplished, that the Son of God was born of a virgin, and that He Himself was Christ the Saviour whom the prophets had foretold; not, as these men assert, that Jesus was He who was born of Mary, but that Christ was He who descended from above. Matthew might certainly have said, "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise;" but the Holy Ghost, foreseeing the corrupters [of the truth], and guarding by anticipation against their deceit, says by Matthew, "But the birth of Christ was on this wise;" and that He is Emmanuel, lest perchance we might consider Him as a mere man: for "not by the will of the flesh nor by the will of man, but by the will of God was the Word made flesh;" and that we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same.

3. Paul, when writing to the Romans, has explained this very point: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, predestinated unto the Gospel of God, which He had promised by His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was made to Him of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated the Son of God with power through the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ." And again, writing to the Romans about Israel, he says: "Whose are the fathers, and from whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed for ever." And again, in his Epistle to the Galatians, he says: "But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption;" plainly indicating one God, who did by the prophets make promise of the Son, and one Jesus Christ our Lord, who was of the seed of David according to His birth from Mary; and that Jesus Christ was appointed the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, as being the first begotten in all the creation; the Son of God being made the Son of man, that through Him we may receive the adoption,—humanity sustaining, and receiving, and embracing the Son of God. Wherefore Mark also says: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets." Knowing one and the same Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was announced by the prophets, who from the fruit of David's body was Emmanuel, "the messenger of great counsel of the Father;" through whom God caused the day-spring and the Just One to arise to the house of David, and raised up for him an horn of salvation, "and established a testimony in Jacob;" as David says when discoursing on the causes of His birth: "And He appointed a law in Israel, that another generation might know [Him,] the children which should be born from these, and they arising shall themselves declare to their children, so that they might set their hope in God, and seek after His commandments." And again, the angel said, when bringing good tidings to Mary: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David;" acknowledging that He who is the Son of the Highest, the same is Himself also the Son of David. And David, knowing by the Spirit the dispensation of the advent of this Person, by which He is supreme over all the living and dead, confessed Him as Lord, sitting on the right hand of the Most High Father.

4. But Simeon also—he who had received an intimation from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, until first he had beheld Christ Jesus—taking Him, the first-begotten of the Virgin, into his hands, blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel;" confessing thus, that the infant whom he was holding in his hands, Jesus, born of Mary, was Christ Himself, the Son of God, the light of all, the glory of Israel itself, and the peace and refreshing of those who had fallen asleep. For He was already despoiling men, by removing their ignorance, conferring upon them His own knowledge, and scattering abroad those who recognised Him, as Esaias says: "Call His name, Quickly spoil, Rapidly divide." Now these are the works of Christ. He therefore was Himself Christ,

whom Simeon carrying [in his arms] blessed the Most High; on beholding whom the shepherds glorified God; whom John, while yet in his mother's womb, and He (Christ) in that of Mary, recognising as the Lord, saluted with leaping; whom the Magi, when they had seen, adored, and offered their gifts [to Him], as I have already stated, and prostrated themselves to the eternal King, departed by another way, not now returning by the way of the Assyrians. "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, Father or mother, He shall receive the power of Damascus, and the spoils of Samaria, against the king of the Assyrians;" declaring, in a mysterious manner indeed, but emphatically, that the Lord did fight with a hidden hand against Amalek. For this cause, too, He suddenly removed those children belonging to the house of David, whose happy lot it was to have been born at that time, that He might send them on before into His kingdom; He, since He was Himself an infant, so arranging it that human infants should be martyrs, slain, according to the Scriptures, for the sake of Christ, who was born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the city of David.

5. Therefore did the Lord also say to His disciples after the resurrection, "O thoughtless ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" And again does He say to them: "These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they should understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, and that repentance for the remission of sins be preached in His name among all nations." Now this is He who was born of Mary; for He says: "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected, and crucified, and on the third day rise again." The Gospel, therefore, knew no other son of man but Him who was of Mary, who also suffered; and no Christ who flew away from Jesus before the passion; but Him who was born it knew as Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that this same suffered and rose again, as John, the disciple of the Lord, verifies, saying: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have eternal life in His name," —foreseeing these blasphemous systems which divide the Lord, as far as lies in their power, saying that He was formed of two different substances. For this reason also he has thus testified to us in his Epistle: "Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist doth come, now have many antichrists appeared; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but [they departed], that they might be made manifest that they are not of us. Know ye therefore, that every lie is from without, and is not of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist."

6. But inasmuch as all those before mentioned, although they certainly do with their tongue confess one Jesus Christ, make fools of themselves, thinking one thing and saying another; for their hypotheses vary, as I have already shown, alleging, [as they do,] that one Being suffered and was born, and that this was Jesus; but that there was another who descended upon Him, and that this was Christ, who also ascended again; and they argue, that he who proceeded from the Demiurge, or he who was dispensational, or he who sprang from Joseph, was the Being subject to suffering; but upon the latter there descended from the invisible and ineffable [places] the former, whom they assert to be incomprehensible, invisible, and impassible: they thus wander from the truth, because their doctrine departs from Him who is truly God, being ignorant that His only-begotten Word, who is always present with the human race, united to and mingled with His own creation, according to the Father's pleasure, and who became flesh, is Himself Jesus Christ our Lord, who did also suffer for us, and rose again on our behalf, and who will come again in the glory of His Father, to raise up all flesh, and for the manifestation of salvation, and to apply the rule of just judgment to all who were made by Him. There is therefore, as I have pointed out, one God the Father, and one Christ Jesus, who came by means of the whole dispensational arrangements [connected with Him], and gathered together all things in Himself. But in every respect, too, He is man, the formation of God; and thus He took up man into Himself, the invisible becoming visible, the incomprehensible being made comprehensible, the impassible becoming capable of suffering, and the Word being made man, thus summing up all

things in Himself: so that as in super-celestial, spiritual, and invisible things, the Word of God is supreme, so also in things visible and corporeal He might possess the supremacy, and, taking to Himself the pre-eminence, as well as constituting Himself Head of the Church, He might draw all things to Himself at the proper time.

7. With Him is nothing incomplete or out of due season, just as with the Father there is nothing incongruous. For all these things were foreknown by the Father; but the Son works them out at the proper time in perfect order and sequence. This was the reason why, when Mary was urging [Him] on to [perform] the wonderful miracle of the wine, and was desirous before the time to partake of the cup of emblematic significance, the Lord, checking her untimely haste, said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come" — waiting for that hour which was foreknown by the Father. This is also the reason why, when men were often desirous to take Him, it is said, "No man laid hands upon Him, for the hour of His being taken was not yet come;" nor the time of His passion, which had been foreknown by the Father; as also says the prophet Habakkuk, "By this Thou shalt be known when the years have drawn nigh; Thou shalt be set forth when the time comes; because my soul is disturbed by anger, Thou shalt remember Thy mercy." Paul also says: "But when the fulness of time came, God sent forth His Son." By which is made manifest, that all things which had been foreknown of the Father, our Lord did accomplish in their order, season, and hour, foreknown and fitting, being indeed one and the same, but rich and great. For He fulfils the bountiful and comprehensive will of His Father, inasmuch as He is Himself the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Lord of those who are under authority, and the God of all those things which have been formed, the only-begotten of the Father, Christ who was announced, and the Word of God, who became incarnate when the fulness of time had come, at which the Son of God had to become the Son of man.

8. All, therefore, are outside of the [Christian] dispensation, who, under pretext of knowledge, understand that Jesus was one, and Christ another, and the Only-begotten another, from whom again is the Word, and that the Saviour is another, whom these disciples of error allege to be a production of those who were made Æons in a state of degeneracy. Such men are to outward appearance sheep; for they appear to be like us, by what they say in public, repeating the same words as we do; but inwardly they are wolves. Their doctrine is homicidal, conjuring up, as it does, a number of gods, and simulating many Fathers, but lowering and dividing the Son of God in many ways. These are they against whom the Lord has cautioned us beforehand; and His disciple, in his Epistle already mentioned, commands us to avoid them, when he says: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Take heed to them, that ye lose not what ye have wrought." And again does he say in the Epistle: "Many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which separates Jesus Christ is not of God, but is of antichrist." These words agree with what was said in the Gospel, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Wherefore he again exclaims in his Epistle, "Every one that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, has been born of God;" knowing Jesus Christ to be one and the same, to whom the gates of heaven were opened, because of His taking upon Him flesh: who shall also come in the same flesh in which He suffered, revealing the glory of the Father.

9. Concurring with these statements, Paul, speaking to the Romans, declares: "Much more they who receive abundance of grace and righteousness for [eternal] life, shall reign by one, Christ Jesus." It follows from this, that he knew nothing of that Christ who flew away from Jesus; nor did he of the Saviour above, whom they hold to be impossible. For if, in truth, the one suffered, and the other remained incapable of suffering, and the one was born, but the other descended upon him who was born, and left him again, it is not one, but two, that are shown forth. But that the apostle did know Him as one, both who was born and who suffered, namely Christ Jesus, he again says in the same Epistle: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized in His death? that like as Christ rose from the dead, so should we also walk in newness of life." But again, showing that Christ did suffer, and was Himself the Son of God, who died for us, and redeemed us with His blood at the time appointed beforehand, he says: "For how is it, that Christ, when we were

yet without strength, in due time died for the ungodly? But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." He declares in the plainest manner, that the same Being who was laid hold of, and underwent suffering, and shed His blood for us, was both Christ and the Son of God, who did also rise again, and was taken up into heaven, as he himself [Paul] says: "But at the same time, [it, is] Christ [that] died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God." And again, "Knowing that Christ, rising from the dead, dieth no more:" for, as himself foreseeing, through the Spirit, the subdivisions of evil teachers [with regard to the Lord's person], and being desirous of cutting away from them all occasion of cavil, he says what has been already stated, [and also declares:] "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." This he does not utter to those alone who wish to hear: Do not err, [he says to all:] Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is one and the same, who did by suffering reconcile us to God, and rose from the dead; who is at the right hand of the Father, and perfect in all things; "who, when He was buffeted, struck not in return; who, when He suffered, threatened not;" and when He underwent tyranny, He prayed His Father that He would forgive those who had crucified Him. For He did Himself truly bring in salvation: since He is Himself the Word of God, Himself the Only-begotten of the Father, Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "But there are some who say that Jesus was merely a receptacle of Christ, upon whom the Christ, as a dove, descended from above, and that when He had declared the unnameable Father He entered into the Pleroma in an incomprehensible and invisible manner."

Irenaeus continues as he records the Gnostic teaching about Jesus:

- "for that He was not comprehended, not only by men, but not even by those powers and virtues which are in heaven,"
- "and that Jesus was the Son, but that Christ was the Father, and the Father of Christ, God;
- "while others say that He merely suffered in outward appearance, being naturally impassible."
- "The Valentinians, again, maintain that the dispensational Jesus was the same who passed through Mary, upon whom that Saviour from the more exalted [region] descended, who was also termed Pan, because He possessed the names (vocabula) of all those who had produced Him;"
- "but that [this latter] shared with Him, the dispensational one, His power and His name; so that by His means death was abolished, but the Father was made known by that Saviour who had descended from above, whom they do also allege to be Himself the receptacle of Christ and of the entire Pleroma;"
- "confessing, indeed, in tongue one Christ Jesus, but being divided in [actual] opinion."
- "for, as I have already observed, it is the practice of these men to say that there was one Christ, who was produced by Monogenes, for the confirmation of the Pleroma;"
- "but that another, the Saviour, was sent [forth] for the glorification of the Father;"
- "and yet another, the dispensational one, and whom they represent as having suffered, who also bore [in himself] Christ, that Saviour who returned into the Pleroma."

Irenaeus then advises as he again testifies, "I judge it necessary therefore to take into account the entire mind of the apostles regarding our Lord Jesus Christ, and to show that not only did they never hold any such opinions regarding Him; but, still further, that they announced through the Holy Spirit, that those who should teach such doctrines were agents of Satan, sent forth for the purpose of overturning the faith of some, and drawing them away from life."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies to Jesus as he records:

- "That John knew the one and the same Word of God, and that He was the only begotten, and that He became incarnate for our salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord, I have sufficiently proved from the word of John himself," referring to John 1:1, 14, 18, 3:16, and 3:18.

- “And Matthew, too, recognising one and the same Jesus Christ, exhibiting his generation as a man from the Virgin, even as God did promise David that He would raise up from the fruit of his body an eternal King, having made the same promise to Abraham a long time previously, says: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,” referring to Matthew 1: 1.
- “Then, that he might free our mind from suspicion regarding Joseph, he says: “But the birth of Christ was on this wise. When His mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost,” referring to Matthew 1:18.
- “Then, when Joseph had it in contemplation to put Mary away, since she proved with child, [Matthew tells us of] the angel of God standing by him, and saying: “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins,” referring to Matthew 1:20-23.
- “Now this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, God with us,” referring to Matthew 1:24-25.

Irenaeus then clearly testifies as follows:

- “clearly signifying that both the promise made to the fathers had been accomplished,”
- “that the Son of God was born of a virgin, and that He Himself was Christ the Saviour whom the prophets had foretold;”
- “not, as these men assert, that Jesus was He who was born of Mary, but that Christ was He who descended from above.”
- “Matthew might certainly have said, “Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise;” but the Holy Ghost, foreseeing the corrupters [of the truth], and guarding by anticipation against their deceit, says by Matthew, “But the birth of Christ was on this wise,””
- “and that He is Emmanuel,” referring to Matthew 1:23, lest perchance we might consider Him as a mere man.”
- “for “not by the will of the flesh nor by the will of man, but by the will of God was the Word made flesh,” referring to John 1:13-14.
- “and that we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “Paul, when writing to the Romans, has explained this very point: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, predestinated unto the Gospel of God, which He had promised by His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was made to Him of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated the Son of God with power through the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ,” referring to Romans 1:1-4. Irenaeus then again testifies, “And again, writing to the Romans about Israel, he says: “Whose are the fathers, and from whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed for ever,” referring to Romans 9:5. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And again, in his Epistle to the Galatians, he says: “But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption,” referring to Galatians 4:4-5. Irenaeus explains Paul as he affirms the following:

- “plainly indicating one God, who did by the prophets make promise of the Son,”
- “and one Jesus Christ our Lord, who was of the seed of David according to His birth from Mary;”
- “and that Jesus Christ was appointed the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, as being the first begotten in all the creation;”
- “the Son of God being made the Son of man, that through Him we may receive the adoption,— humanity sustaining, and receiving, and embracing the Son of God.”

Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “Wherefore Mark also says: “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets,” referring to Mark 1:1. Irenaeus then affirms that all these, “Knowing one and the same Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was announced by the prophets, who from the fruit of David’s body was Emmanuel, “the messenger of great counsel of the Father,” referring to Isaiah 7:14, and Isaiah 9:6 in the Septuagint, “through whom God caused the day-spring and the Just One to arise to the house of David, and raised up for him an horn of salvation,” referring to Luke 1:69,78. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and established a testimony in Jacob;” as David says when discoursing on the causes of His birth: “And He appointed a law in Israel, that another generation might know [Him,] the children which should be born from these, and they arising shall themselves declare to their children, so that they might set their hope in God, and seek after His commandments,” referring to Psalm 78:5-7. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And again, the angel said, when bringing good tidings to Mary: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David,” referring to Luke 1:32, “acknowledging that He who is the Son of the Highest, the same is Himself also the Son of David.” Irenaeus then concludes, “And David, knowing by the Spirit the dispensation of the advent of this Person, by which He is supreme over all the living and dead, confessed Him as Lord, sitting on the right hand of the Most High Father,” referring to Psalm 110:1.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “But Simeon also—he who had received an intimation from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, until first he had beheld Christ Jesus—taking Him, the first-begotten of the Virgin, into his hands, blessed God, and said, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel,” referring to Luke 2:25-32. Irenaeus explains that Simeon was “confessing thus, that the infant whom he was holding in his hands, Jesus, born of Mary, was Christ Himself, the Son of God, the light of all, the glory of Israel itself, and the peace and refreshing of those who had fallen asleep.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “For He was already despoiling men, by removing their ignorance, conferring upon them His own knowledge, and scattering abroad those who recognised Him, as Esaias says: “Call His name, Quickly spoil, Rapidly divide,” referring to part of Isaiah 8:3 in the Septuagint. Irenaeus then testifies, “Now these are the works of Christ.” Irenaeus then points out the following:

- “He therefore was Himself Christ, whom Simeon carrying [in his arms] blessed the Most High;”
- “on beholding whom the shepherds glorified God,” referring to Luke 2:15-20.
- “whom John, while yet in his mother’s womb, and He (Christ) in that of Mary, recognising as the Lord, saluted with leaping,” referring to Mary’s visit to Elizabeth in Luke 1:41-45.
- “whom the Magi, when they had seen, adored, and offered their gifts [to Him], as I have already stated, and prostrated themselves to the eternal King, departed by another way, not now returning by the way of the Assyrians,” referring to Matthew 2:12.
- “For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, Father or mother, He shall receive the power of Damascus, and the spoils of Samaria, against the king of the Assyrians,” referring to Isaiah 8:4, “declaring, in a mysterious manner indeed, but emphatically, that the Lord did fight with a hidden hand against Amalek.”
- “For this cause, too, He suddenly removed those children belonging to the house of David, whose happy lot it was to have been born at that time, that He might send them on before into His kingdom,” referring to Matthew 2:16-18.
- “He, since He was Himself an infant, so arranging it that human infants should be martyrs, slain, according to the Scriptures, for the sake of Christ, who was born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the city of David,” referring to Luke 2:4.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “Therefore did the Lord also say to His disciples after the resurrection, “O thoughtless ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?,” referring to Luke 24:25-26. Irenaeus then testifies, “And again does He say to them: “These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with

you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they should understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, and that repentance for the remission of sins be preached in His name among all nations,” referring to Luke 24:44-47. Irenaeus then testifies, “Now this is He who was born of Mary; for He says: “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected, and crucified, and on the third day rise again,” referring to Mark 8:31 and Luke 9:21-22. Irenaeus affirms the following:

- “The Gospel, therefore, knew no other son of man but Him who was of Mary, who also suffered;”
- “and no Christ who flew away from Jesus before the passion;”
- “but Him who was born it knew as Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that this same suffered and rose again, as John, the disciple of the Lord, verifies, saying: “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have eternal life in His name,” referring to John 20:30-31, —foreseeing these blasphemous systems which divide the Lord, as far as lies in their power, saying that He was formed of two different substances.”
- “For this reason also he has thus testified to us in his Epistle: “Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist doth come, now have many antichrists appeared; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us,” referring to 1 John 2:18-19, “for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but [they departed], that they might be made manifest that they are not of us. Know ye therefore, that every lie is from without, and is not of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist,” ,” referring to 1 John 2:20-22

In paragraph six, Irenaeus then again testifies, “But inasmuch as all those before mentioned, although they certainly do with their tongue confess one Jesus Christ, make fools of themselves, thinking one thing and saying another; for their hypotheses vary, as I have already shown, alleging, [as they do,]” as follows:

- “that one Being suffered and was born, and that this was Jesus; but that there was another who descended upon Him, and that this was Christ, who also ascended again;”
- “and they argue, that he who proceeded from the Demiurge, or he who was dispensational, or he who sprang from Joseph, was the Being subject to suffering; but upon the latter there descended from the invisible and ineffable [places] the former, whom they assert to be incomprehensible, invisible, and impossible.”

Irenaeus then testifies that, “they thus wander from the truth, because their doctrine departs from Him who is truly God, being ignorant that His only-begotten Word, who is always present with the human race, united to and mingled with His own creation, according to the Father’s pleasure, and who became flesh, is Himself Jesus Christ our Lord, who did also suffer for us, and rose again on our behalf, and who will come again in the glory of His Father, to raise up all flesh, and for the manifestation of salvation, and to apply the rule of just judgment to all who were made by Him.” Irenaeus again affirms, “There is therefore, as I have pointed out, one God the Father, and one Christ Jesus, who came by means of the whole dispensational arrangements [connected with Him], and gathered together all things in Himself.” And Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “But in every respect, too, He is man, the formation of God; and thus He took up man into Himself, the invisible becoming visible, the incomprehensible being made comprehensible, the impossible becoming capable of suffering, and the Word being made man, thus summing up all things in Himself: so that as in super-celestial, spiritual, and invisible things, the Word of God is supreme, so also in things visible and corporeal He might possess the supremacy, and, taking to Himself the pre-eminence, as well as constituting Himself Head of the Church, He might draw all things to Himself at the proper time,” referring to Colossians 1:18.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms that, “With Him is nothing incomplete or out of due season, just as with the Father there is nothing incongruous.” Irenaeus then adds, “For all these things were foreknown by the Father; but the Son works them out at the proper time in perfect order and sequence.” Irenaeus then explains:

- “This was the reason why when Mary was urging [Him] on to [perform] the wonderful miracle of the

wine, and was desirous before the time to partake of the cup of emblematic significance, the Lord, checking her untimely haste, said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come”— waiting for that hour which was foreknown by the Father,” and referring to John 2:1-3.

- “This is also the reason why, when men were often desirous to take Him, it is said, “No man laid hands upon Him, for the hour of His being taken was not yet come,” referring to John 7:30.
- “nor the time of His passion, which had been foreknown by the Father; as also says the prophet Habakkuk, “By this Thou shalt be known when the years have drawn nigh; Thou shalt be set forth when the time comes; because my soul is disturbed by anger, Thou shalt remember Thy mercy,” referring to Habakkuk 3:2.
- “Paul also says: “But when the fulness of time came, God sent forth His Son,” referring to Galatians 4:4.

Irenaeus then testifies, “By which is made manifest, that all things which had been foreknown of the Father, our Lord did accomplish in their order, season, and hour, foreknown and fitting, being indeed one and the same, but rich and great. For He fulfills the bountiful and comprehensive will of His Father, inasmuch as He is Himself the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Lord of those who are under authority, and the God of all those things which have been formed, the only-begotten of the Father, Christ who was announced, and the Word of God, who became incarnate when the fulness of time had come, at which the Son of God had to become the Son of man.”

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus affirms that, “All, therefore, are outside of the [Christian] dispensation, who, under pretext of knowledge, understand that Jesus was one, and Christ another, and the Only-begotten another, from whom again is the Word, and that the Saviour is another, whom these disciples of error allege to be a production of those who were made *Æons* in a state of degeneracy.” Irenaeus informs us that “Such men are to outward appearance sheep; for they appear to be like us, by what they say in public, repeating the same words as we do; but inwardly they are wolves,” referring to Matthew 7:15. Irenaeus does not mince words when he testifies, “Their doctrine is homicidal, conjuring up, as it does, a number of gods, and simulating many Fathers, but lowering and dividing the Son of God in many ways.” Irenaeus warns us that “These are they against whom the Lord has cautioned us beforehand,” referring to Matthew 10:16, 24:11,24,25. Irenaeus then warns, “and His disciple, in his Epistle already mentioned, commands us to avoid them, when he says: “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist, referring to 2 John 1:7. Irenaeus continues as he then warns, “Take heed to them, that ye lose not what ye have wrought,” referring to 2 John 1:8. Irenaeus then adds, “And again does he say in the Epistle: “Many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which separates Jesus Christ is not of God, but is of antichrist,” referring to 1 John 4:1-3. Irenaeus then points out that “These words agree with what was said in the Gospel, that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” referring to John 1:14. Then, showing the unity of the apostle John’s writings, Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Wherefore he again exclaims in his Epistle, “Every one that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, has been born of God,” referring to 1 John 5:1. Irenaeus then concludes, “knowing Jesus Christ to be one and the same, to whom the gates of heaven were opened, because of His taking upon Him flesh: who shall also come in the same flesh in which He suffered, revealing the glory of the Father.”

In paragraph nine, Irenaeus testifies, “Concurring with these statements, Paul, speaking to the Romans, declares: “Much more they who receive abundance of grace and righteousness for [eternal] life, shall reign by one, Christ Jesus,” referring to Romans 5:17. Irenaeus then affirms, “It follows from this, that he knew nothing of that Christ who flew away from Jesus; nor did he of the Saviour above, whom they hold to be impassible. For if, in truth, the one suffered, and the other remained incapable of suffering, and the one was born, but the other descended upon him who was born, and left him again, it is not one, but two, that are shown forth.” Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, “But that the apostle did know Him as one, both who was born and who suffered, namely Christ Jesus, he again says in the same Epistle: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized in His death? that like as Christ rose from the dead, so should we also walk in newness of life,” paraphrasing Romans 6:3-4. Irenaeus continues further as he testifies, “But again, showing

that Christ did suffer, and was Himself the Son of God, who died for us, and redeemed us with His blood at the time appointed beforehand, he says: "For how is it, that Christ, when we were yet without strength, in due time died for the ungodly? But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life," paraphrasing Romans 5:6-10. Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, "He declares in the plainest manner, that the same Being who was laid hold of, and underwent suffering, and shed His blood for us, was both Christ and the Son of God, who did also rise again, and was taken up into heaven, as he himself [Paul] says: "But at the same time, [it, is] Christ [that] died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God," referring to Romans 8:34. Irenaeus then adds, "And again, "Knowing that Christ, rising from the dead, dieth no more," referring to Romans 6:9, "for, as himself foreseeing, through the Spirit, the subdivisions of evil teachers [with regard to the Lord's person], and being desirous of cutting away from them all occasion of cavil, he says what has been already stated, [and also declares:] "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies," referring to Romans 8:11. Irenaeus then concludes as he warns, "This he does not utter to those alone who wish to hear: Do not err, [he says to all:] Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is one and the same, who did by suffering reconcile us to God, and rose from the dead; who is at the right hand of the Father, and perfect in all things; "who, when He was buffeted, struck not in return; who, when He suffered, threatened not," referring to 1 Peter 2:23, "and when He underwent tyranny, He prayed His Father that He would forgive those who had crucified Him," referring to Luke 23:34. Irenaeus then testifies in conclusion of this chapter, "For He did Himself truly bring in salvation: since He is Himself the Word of God, Himself the Only-begotten of the Father, Christ Jesus our Lord."

**Commentary:** In this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus gives us a telescopic view into the Gnostic teachings of his time. By understanding how he responds, we get a clear picture of the Gnostic doctrine.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "But there are some who say that Jesus was merely a receptacle of Christ, upon whom the Christ, as a dove, descended from above, and that when He had declared the unnameable Father He entered into the Pleroma in an incomprehensible and invisible manner."

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Irenaeus then advises as he again testifies, "I judge it necessary therefore to take into account the entire mind of the apostles regarding our Lord Jesus Christ, and to show that not only did they never hold any such opinions regarding Him; but, still further, that they announced through the Holy Spirit, that those who should teach such doctrines were agents of Satan, sent forth for the purpose of overturning the faith of some, and

drawing them away from life."

This is very astute of Irenaeus. He wants to show us that when taken as a whole, the writings of the apostles agree and give us a portrait of the real Jesus Christ. And this is exactly what Irenaeus does. He does not take the Scriptures out of context, but rather places them in context so that the truth may be discerned.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies to Jesus as he records:

- "That John knew the one and the same Word of God, and that He was the only begotten, and that He became incarnate for our salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord, I have sufficiently proved from the word of John himself," referring to John 1:1, 14, 18, 3:16, and 3:18.

The Scriptures attest to the veracity of Irenaeus' statements in **John 1 (NASB):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And in **John 1 (NASB):14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And in **John 1 (NASB):18** No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

And in **John 3 (NASB):18** "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- "And Matthew, too, recognising one and the same Jesus Christ, exhibiting his generation as a man from the Virgin, even as God did promise David that He would raise up from the fruit of his body an eternal King, having made the same promise to Abraham a long time previously, says: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," referring to **Matthew 1 (NIV):1** This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:
- "Then, that he might free our mind from suspicion regarding Joseph, he says: "But the birth of Christ was on this wise. When His mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost," referring to **Matthew 1 (NIV):18** This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.
- "Then, when Joseph had it in contemplation to put Mary away, since she proved with child, [Matthew tells us of] the angel of God standing by him, and saying: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins," referring to **Matthew 1 (NIV):20** But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").
- "Now this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, God with us," referring to **Matthew 1 (NIV):24** When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Irenaeus then clearly testifies as follows:

- "clearly signifying that both the promise made to the fathers had been accomplished,"
- "that the Son of God was born of a virgin, and that He Himself was Christ the Saviour whom the prophets had foretold;"
- "not, as these men assert, that Jesus was He who was born of Mary, but that Christ was He who descended from above."

- “Matthew might certainly have said, “Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise;” but the Holy Ghost, foreseeing the corrupters [of the truth], and guarding by anticipation against their deceit, says by Matthew, “But the birth of Christ was on this wise,””
- “and that He is Emmanuel,” referring again to Matthew 1:23, lest perchance we might consider Him as a mere man;” **Matthew 1 (NIV):23** “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).
- “for “not by the will of the flesh nor by the will of man, but by the will of God was the Word made flesh,” referring in context to **John 1 (NIV):12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- “and that we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same.“

Irenaeus takes the word of God slightly out of context here to prove his point that the “word was made flesh.” But the Scripture actually supports him just the same since those who receive him as He is, the word made flesh and the only begotten from the Father, are born of God.

Again, Irenaeus then affirms that “we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “Paul, when writing to the Romans, has explained this very point: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, predestinated unto the Gospel of God, which He had promised by His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was made to Him of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated the Son of God with power through the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ,” referring to **Romans 1 (KJV):1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Irenaeus then again testifies, “And again, writing to the Romans about Israel, he says: “Whose are the fathers, and from whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed for ever,” referring to **Romans 9 (KJV):5** Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And again, in his Epistle to the Galatians, he says: “But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption,” referring to **Galatians 4 (KJV):4** But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Irenaeus then explains Paul as he affirms the following:

- “plainly indicating one God, who did by the prophets make promise of the Son,”
- “and one Jesus Christ our Lord, who was of the seed of David according to His birth from Mary;” “and that Jesus Christ was appointed the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, as being the first begotten in all the creation;”
- “the Son of God being made the Son of man, that through Him we may receive the adoption,— humanity sustaining, and receiving, and embracing the Son of God.”

Not only so, but Irenaeus is also plainly testifying to his own faith that Jesus Christ is Lord over all, God blessed forever. Amen Irenaeus!

Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “Wherefore Mark also says: “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets,” referring to **Mark 1 (NIV):1** The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

Irenaeus then affirms that all these, “Knowing one and the same Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was announced by the prophets, who from the fruit of David’s body was Emmanuel, “the messenger of great counsel of the Father,” referring to Isaiah 7:14, and also Isaiah 9:6 in the Septuagint.

**Isaiah 7 (NASB):14** "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

**Isaiah 9 (Septuagint) 6** For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, whose government is upon his shoulder: and his name is called the Messenger of great counsel: for I will bring peace upon the princes, and health to him.

**Isaiah 9 (NASB):6** For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Irenaeus continues as he adds, “through whom God caused the day-spring and the Just One to arise to the house of David, and raised up for him an horn of salvation,” referring to **Luke 1 (NIV):69** He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

And to **Luke 1 (KJV):78** Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.

Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “and established a testimony in Jacob;” as David says when discoursing on the causes of His birth: “And He appointed a law in Israel, that another generation might know [Him,] the children which should be born from these, and they arising shall themselves declare to their children, so that they might set their hope in God, and seek after His commandments.”

Though Irenaeus attributes his quote to David, it was actually from Asaph’s Psalm 78, as we read in **Psalm 78 (NIV):5** He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, 6 so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. 7 Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And again, the angel said, when bringing good tidings to Mary: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David,” referring to **Luke 1 (NIV):32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.

Irenaeus then continues as he adds, “acknowledging that He who is the Son of the Highest, the same is Himself also the Son of David.” Irenaeus then concludes, “And David, knowing by the Spirit the dispensation of the advent of this Person, by which He is supreme over all the living and dead, confessed Him as Lord, sitting on the right hand of the Most High Father,” referring to **Psalm 110 (NIV):1** The LORD says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “But Simeon also—he who had received an intimation from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, until first he had beheld Christ Jesus—taking Him, the first-begotten of the Virgin, into his hands, blessed God, and said, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel,” referring to **Luke 2 (NIV):25** Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 29 “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

Irenaeus explains that Simeon was “confessing thus, that the infant whom he was holding in his hands, Jesus, born of Mary, was Christ Himself, the Son of God, the light of all, the glory of Israel itself, and the peace and refreshing of those who had fallen asleep.”

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “For He was already despoiling men, by removing their ignorance, conferring upon them His own knowledge, and scattering abroad those who recognised Him, as Esaias says: “Call His name, Quickly spoil, Rapidly divide,” referring to part of Isaiah 8:3 in the Septuagint.

Irenaeus is referring to a passage in Isaiah from which he extracts only the name of the child born to Isaiah as he then asserts that “He was already despoiling men, by removing their ignorance, conferring upon them His own knowledge, and scattering abroad those who recognised Him, as Esaias says: “Call His name, Quickly spoil, Rapidly divide.” Irenaeus then explains that this refers to Christ as he continues, “Now these are the works of Christ. He therefore was Himself Christ, whom Simeon carrying [in his arms] blessed the Most High.”

I believe Irenaeus means to say that, even as a babe, Christ Jesus brought immediate change to the world of mankind in that he was the fulfillment of the promise of God that a redeemer would come. But the verse in context relates to a coming judgment on Israel in Isaiah’s time. Here is the verse in context.

**Isaiah 8 (Septuagint):** 1 And the Lord said to me, Take to thyself a volume of a great new book, and write in it with a man’s pen concerning the making a rapid plunder of spoils; for it is near at hand. 2 And make me witnesses of faithful men, Urias, and Zacharias the son of Barachias. 3 And I went in to the prophetess; and she conceived, and bore a son. And the Lord said to me, Call his name, Spoil quickly, plunder speedily. 4 For before the child shall know how to call his father or his mother, one shall take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria before the king of the Assyrians.

**Isaiah 8 (NASB):** 1 Then the LORD said to me, “Take for yourself a large tablet and write on it in ordinary letters: Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey.<sup>2</sup> And I will take to Myself faithful witnesses for testimony, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.”<sup>3</sup> So I approached the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. Then the LORD said to me, “Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz;<sup>4</sup> for before the boy knows how to cry out ‘My father’ or ‘My mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria.”

The name Maher-shalal-hash-baz in Hebrew means “Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey,” as in verse 1. Isaiah was prophesying of coming judgment on Israel for their unfaithfulness as we read in **Isaiah 8 (KJV):** 5 The LORD spake also unto me again, saying, 6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah’s son; 7 Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: 8 And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

The Lord was saying that Israel was about to go into captivity to the Assyrians. This happened in 723 B.C.

So Irenaeus testifies, “Now these are the works of Christ,” and then points out the following:

- “He therefore was Himself Christ, whom Simeon carrying [in his arms] blessed the Most High;”
- “on beholding whom the shepherds glorified God,” referring in context to **Luke 2 (NIV):** 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” 15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go

to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

- “whom John, while yet in his mother’s womb, and He (Christ) in that of Mary, recognising as the Lord, saluted with leaping,” referring to Mary’s visit to Elizabeth in context in **Luke 1 (NIV)**:39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”
- “whom the Magi, when they had seen, adored, and offered their gifts [to Him], as I have already stated, and prostrated themselves to the eternal King, departed by another way, not now returning by the way of the Assyrians,” referring to **Matthew 2 (NIV)**:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

And to **Matthew 2 (NIV)**:12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

- “For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, Father or mother, He shall receive the power of Damascus, and the spoils of Samaria, against the king of the Assyrians,” referring to **Isaiah 8:4**, “declaring, in a mysterious manner indeed, but emphatically, that the Lord did fight with a hidden hand against Amalek.” Irenaeus asserts here that Isaiah refers to Christ when he says, “For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, Father or mother, He shall receive the power of Damascus, and the spoils of Samaria, against the king of the Assyrians,” referring to **Isaiah 8 (Septuagint)**:4 For before the child shall know how to call his father or his mother, one shall take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria before the king of the Assyrians.

And to **Isaiah 8 (KJV)**:4 For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

As we saw above, this was a prophecy of coming judgment on Israel and did not relate to Christ.

- “For this cause, too, He suddenly removed those children belonging to the house of David, whose happy lot it was to have been born at that time, that He might send them on before into His kingdom,” referring to **Matthew 2 (NIV)**:16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: 18 “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”
- “He, since He was Himself an infant, so arranging it that human infants should be martyrs, slain, according to the Scriptures, for the sake of Christ, who was born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the city of David,” referring to **Luke 2 (KJV)**:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “Therefore did the Lord also say to His disciples after the

resurrection, “O thoughtless ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?,” referring to **Luke 24 (NIV):25** He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”

Irenaeus then testifies, “And again does He say to them: “These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they should understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, and that repentance for the remission of sins be preached in His name among all nations,” referring to **Luke 24 (NIV):44** He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Irenaeus then testifies, “Now this is He who was born of Mary; for He says: “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected, and crucified, and on the third day rise again,” referring to **Mark 8 (NIV):31** He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

And to **Luke 9 (NIV):21** Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. 22 And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

Irenaeus then affirms the following:

- “The Gospel, therefore, knew no other son of man but Him who was of Mary, who also suffered;”
- “and no Christ who flew away from Jesus before the passion;”
- “but Him who was born it knew as Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that this same suffered and rose again, as John, the disciple of the Lord, verifies, saying: “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have eternal life in His name,” referring to **John 20 (NIV):30** Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- “—foreseeing these blasphemous systems which divide the Lord, as far as lies in their power, saying that He was formed of two different substances.”
- “For this reason also he has thus testified to us in his Epistle: “Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist doth come, now have many antichrists appeared; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us,” referring to **1 John 2 (KJV):18** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.
- “for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but [they departed], that they might be made manifest that they are not of us. Know ye therefore, that every lie is from without, and is not of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist,” ,” referring to **1 John 2 (KJV):20** But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus then again testifies, “But inasmuch as all those before mentioned, although they certainly do with their tongue confess one Jesus Christ, make fools of themselves, thinking one thing and saying another; for their hypotheses vary, as I have already shown, alleging, [as they do,]” as follows:

- “that one Being suffered and was born, and that this was Jesus; but that there was another who descended upon Him, and that this was Christ, who also ascended again;”
- “and they argue, that he who proceeded from the Demiurge, or he who was dispensational, or he who sprang from Joseph, was the Being subject to suffering; but upon the latter there descended from the invisible and ineffable [places] the former, whom they assert to be incomprehensible, invisible, and impassible.”

Irenaeus then testifies that, “they thus wander from the truth, because their doctrine departs from Him who is truly God, being ignorant that His only-begotten Word, who is always present with the human race, united to and mingled with His own creation, according to the Father’s pleasure, and who became flesh, is Himself Jesus Christ our Lord, who did also suffer for us, and rose again on our behalf,” **1 Peter 2 (KJV):21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

And to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):14** For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: **15** And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and who will come again in the glory of His Father, to raise up all flesh, and for the manifestation of salvation, and to apply the rule of just judgment to all who were made by Him,” reminding us of **Matthew 16 (NIV):27** For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

Irenaeus again affirms, “There is therefore, as I have pointed out, one God the Father, and one Christ Jesus, who came by means of the whole dispensational arrangements [connected with Him], and gathered together all things in Himself.” And Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “But in every respect, too, He is man, the formation of God; and thus He took up man into Himself, the invisible becoming visible, the incomprehensible being made comprehensible, the impassible becoming capable of suffering, and the Word being made man, thus summing up all things in Himself: so that as in super-celestial, spiritual, and invisible things, the Word of God is supreme, so also in things visible and corporeal He might possess the supremacy, and, taking to Himself the pre-eminence, as well as constituting Himself Head of the Church, He might draw all things to Himself at the proper time,” referring to **Colossians 1 (KJV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms that, “With Him is nothing incomplete or out of due season, just as with the Father there is nothing incongruous.” Irenaeus then adds, “For all these things were foreknown by the Father; but the Son works them out at the proper time in perfect order and sequence.” Irenaeus then explains:

- “This was the reason why when Mary was urging [Him] on to [perform] the wonderful miracle of the wine, and was desirous before the time to partake of the cup of emblematic significance, the Lord, checking her untimely haste, said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come”— waiting for that hour which was foreknown by the Father,” and referring to **John 2 (NIV):1** On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, **2** and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. **3** When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.” **4** “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.”
- “This is also the reason why, when men were often desirous to take Him, it is said, “No man laid hands upon Him, for the hour of His being taken was not yet come,” referring to **John 7 (NIV):30** At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.
- “nor the time of His passion, which had been foreknown by the Father; as also says the prophet Habakkuk, “By this Thou shalt be known when the years have drawn nigh; Thou shalt be set forth when the time comes; because my soul is disturbed by anger, Thou shalt remember Thy mercy.” Habakkuk did speak as in **Ambacum (Habakkuk) 3 (Septuagint):2** O Lord, I have heard thy report, and was afraid: I considered thy works, and was amazed: thou shalt be known between the two living creatures, thou shalt be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; thou shalt be manifested when the time is come; when my soul is troubled, thou wilt in wrath remember mercy. And also in **Habakkuk 3 (NASB):2**

LORD, I have heard the report about You *and* I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.

- “Paul also says: “But when the fulness of time came, God sent forth His Son,” referring to **Galatians 4 (KJV)**:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

Irenaeus then testifies,” By which is made manifest, that all things which had been foreknown of the Father, our Lord did accomplish in their order, season, and hour, foreknown and fitting, being indeed one and the same, but rich and great. For He fulfills the bountiful and comprehensive will of His Father, inasmuch as He is Himself the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Lord of those who are under authority, and the God of all those things which have been formed, the only-begotten of the Father, Christ who was announced, and the Word of God, who became incarnate when the fulness of time had come, at which the Son of God had to become the Son of man.”

Irenaeus unequivocally confesses his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with these words.

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus affirms that, “All, therefore, are outside of the [Christian] dispensation, who, under pretext of knowledge, understand that Jesus was one, and Christ another, and the Only-begotten another, from whom again is the Word, and that the Saviour is another, whom these disciples of error allege to be a production of those who were made *Æons* in a state of degeneracy.” Irenaeus informs us that “Such men are to outward appearance sheep; for they appear to be like us, by what they say in public, repeating the same words as we do; but inwardly they are wolves,” referring to **Matthew 7 (NIV)**:15 “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

Irenaeus does not mince words when he testifies, “Their doctrine is homicidal, conjuring up, as it does, a number of gods, and simulating many Fathers, but lowering and dividing the Son of God in many ways.” Irenaeus warns us that “These are they against whom the Lord has cautioned us beforehand,” referring to **Matthew 10 (NIV)**:16 “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

And to **Matthew 24 (NIV)**:11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.

And to **Matthew 24 (NIV)**:24 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.

Irenaeus then warns, “and His disciple, in his Epistle already mentioned, commands us to avoid them, when he says: “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist, referring to **2 John 1 (KJV)**:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Irenaeus continues as he then warns, “Take heed to them, that ye lose not what ye have wrought,” referring to **2 John 1 (KJV)**:8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Irenaeus then adds, “And again does he say in the Epistle: “Many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which separates Jesus Christ is not of God, but is of antichrist,” referring to **1 John 4 (KJV)**:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Irenaeus then points out that “These words agree with what was said in the Gospel, that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” referring to **John 1 (NASB)**:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Then, showing the unity of the apostle John’s writings, Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Wherefore he again exclaims in his Epistle, “Every one that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, has been born of God,” referring to **1 John 5 (KJV)**:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him

that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Irenaeus then concludes, “knowing Jesus Christ to be one and the same, to whom the gates of heaven were opened, because of His taking upon Him flesh: who shall also come in the same flesh in which He suffered, revealing the glory of the Father,” referring possibly to **Acts 1 (NIV)**:11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

And to **Matthew 16 (NIV)**:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

In paragraph nine, Irenaeus testifies, “Concurring with these statements, Paul, speaking to the Romans, declares: “Much more they who receive abundance of grace and righteousness for [eternal] life, shall reign by one, Christ Jesus,” referring to **Romans 5 (KJV)**:17 For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Irenaeus then affirms, “It follows from this, that he knew nothing of that Christ who flew away from Jesus; nor did he of the Saviour above, whom they hold to be impossible. For if, in truth, the one suffered, and the other remained incapable of suffering, and the one was born, but the other descended upon him who was born, and left him again, it is not one, but two, that are shown forth.” Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, “But that the apostle did know Him as one, both who was born and who suffered, namely Christ Jesus, he again says in the same Epistle: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized in His death? that like as Christ rose from the dead, so should we also walk in newness of life,” referring to **Romans 6 (KJV)**:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Irenaeus continues further as he testifies, “But again, showing that Christ did suffer, and was Himself the Son of God, who died for us, and redeemed us with His blood at the time appointed beforehand, he says: “For how is it, that Christ, when we were yet without strength, in due time died for the ungodly? But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life,” referring to **Romans 5 (KJV)**:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, ”He declares in the plainest manner, that the same Being who was laid hold of, and underwent suffering, and shed His blood for us, was both Christ and the Son of God, who did also rise again, and was taken up into heaven, as he himself [Paul] says: “But at the same time, [it, is] Christ [that] died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,” referring to **Romans 8 (NASB)**:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Irenaeus then adds, “And again, “Knowing that Christ, rising from the dead, dieth no more,” referring to **Romans 6 (KJV)**:9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

Irenaeus continues as he explains, “for, as himself foreseeing, through the Spirit, the subdivisions of evil teachers [with regard to the Lord’s person], and being desirous of cutting away from them all occasion of cavil, he says what has been already stated, [and also declares:] “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies,” referring to **Romans 8 (KJV)**:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Irenaeus then concludes as he warns, “This he does not utter to those alone who wish to hear: Do not err, [he says to all:] Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is one and the same, who did by suffering reconcile us to God, and

rose from the dead; who is at the right hand of the Father, and perfect in all things; “who, when He was buffeted, struck not in return; who, when He suffered, threatened not,” referring to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):23** Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and when He underwent tyranny, He prayed His Father that He would forgive those who had crucified Him,” referring to **Luke 23 (KJV):34** Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Irenaeus then testifies in conclusion of this chapter, “For He did Himself truly bring in salvation: since He is Himself the Word of God, Himself the Only-begotten of the Father, Christ Jesus our Lord.”

## Chapter 12: Teaching on the Atonement

**Book 3: Chapter XVIII.—Continuation of the foregoing argument. Proofs from the writings of St. Paul, and from the words of Our Lord, that Christ and Jesus cannot be considered as distinct beings; neither can it be alleged that the Son of God became man merely in appearance, but that He did so truly and actually.**

1. 3632 Again a Syriac fragment supplies some important words. See Harvey, vol. ii. p. 440.

As it has been clearly demonstrated that the Word, who existed in the beginning with God, by whom all things were made, who was also always present with mankind, was in these last days, according to the time appointed by the Father, united to His own workmanship, inasmuch as He became a man liable to suffering, [it follows] that every objection is set aside of those who say, "If our Lord was born at that time, Christ had therefore no previous existence." For I have shown that the Son of God did not then begin to exist, being with the Father from the beginning; but when He became incarnate, and was made man, He commenced afresh 3633 So the Syriac. The Latin has, "in seipso recapitulavit," *He summed up in Himself.* [As the Second Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 47.] the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus.

2. For as it was not possible that the man who had once for all been conquered, and who had been destroyed through disobedience, could reform himself, and obtain the prize of victory; and as it was also impossible that he could attain to salvation who had fallen under the power of sin,—the Son effected both these things, being the Word of God, descending from the Father, becoming incarnate, stooping low, even to death, and consummating the arranged plan of our salvation, upon whom [Paul], exhorting us unhesitatingly to believe, again says, "Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring down Christ; or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to liberate Christ again from the dead." Then he continues, "If thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shall be saved." And he renders the reason why the Son of God did these things, saying, "For to this end Christ both lived, and died, and revived, that He might rule over the living and the dead." And again, writing to the Corinthians, he declares, "But we preach Christ Jesus crucified;" and adds, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"

3. But who is it that has had fellowship with us in the matter of food? Whether is it he who is conceived of by them as the Christ above, who extended himself through Horos, and imparted a form to their mother; or is it He who is from the Virgin, Emmanuel, who did eat butter and honey, of whom the prophet declared, "He is also a man, and who shall know him?" He was likewise preached by Paul: "For I delivered," he says, "unto you first of all, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." It is plain, then, that Paul knew no other Christ besides Him alone, who both suffered, and was buried, and rose again, who was also born, and whom he speaks of as man. For after remarking, "But if Christ be preached, that He rose from the dead," he continues, rendering the reason of His incarnation, "For since by man came death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead." And everywhere, when [referring to] the passion of our Lord, and to His human nature, and His subjection to death, he employs the name of Christ, as in that passage: "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." And again: "But now, in Christ, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." And again: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree." And again: "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died;" indicating that the impassible Christ did not descend upon Jesus, but that He Himself, because He was Jesus Christ, suffered for us; He, who lay in the tomb, and rose again, who descended and ascended,—the Son of God having been made the Son of

man, as the very name itself doth declare. For in the name of Christ is implied, He that anoints, He that is anointed, and the unction itself with which He is anointed. And it is the Father who anoints, but the Son who is anointed by the Spirit, who is the unction, as the Word declares by Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me,"—pointing out both the anointing Father, the anointed Son, and the unction, which is the Spirit.

4. The Lord Himself, too, makes it evident who it was that suffered; for when He asked the disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" and when Peter had replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and when he had been commended by Him [in these words], "That flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but the Father who is in heaven," He made it clear that He, the Son of man, is Christ the Son of the living God. "For from that time forth," it is said, "He began to show to His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the priests, and be rejected, and crucified, and rise again the third day." He who was acknowledged by Peter as Christ, who pronounced him blessed because the Father had revealed the Son of the living God to him, said that He must Himself suffer many things, and be crucified; and then He rebuked Peter, who imagined that He was the Christ as the generality of men supposed [that the Christ should be], and was averse to the idea of His suffering, [and] said to the disciples, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose it for My sake shall save it." For these things Christ spoke openly, He being Himself the Saviour of those who should be delivered over to death for their confession of Him, and lose their lives.

5. If, however, He was Himself not to suffer, but should fly away from Jesus, why did He exhort His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him,—that cross which these men represent Him as not having taken up, but [speak of Him] as having relinquished the dispensation of suffering? For that He did not say this with reference to the acknowledging of the Stauros (cross) above, as some among them venture to expound, but with respect to the suffering which He should Himself undergo, and that His disciples should endure, He implies when He says, "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose, shall find it." And that His disciples must suffer for His sake, He [implied when He] said to the Jews, "Behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify." And to the disciples He was wont to say, "And ye shall stand before governors and kings for My sake; and they shall scourge some of you, and slay you, and persecute you from city to city." He knew, therefore, both those who should suffer persecution, and He knew those who should have to be scourged and slain because of Him; and He did not speak of any other cross, but of the suffering which He should Himself undergo first, and His disciples afterwards. For this purpose did He give them this exhortation: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to send both soul and body into hell;" [thus exhorting them] to hold fast those professions of faith which they had made in reference to Him. For He promised to confess before His Father those who should confess His name before men; but declared that He would deny those who should deny Him, and would be ashamed of those who should be ashamed to confess Him. And although these things are so, some of these men have proceeded to such a degree of temerity, that they even pour contempt upon the martyrs, and vituperate those who are slain on account of the confession of the Lord, and who suffer all things predicted by the Lord, and who in this respect strive to follow the footprints of the Lord's passion, having become martyrs of the suffering One; these we do also enroll with the martyrs themselves. For, when inquisition shall be made for their blood, and they shall attain to glory, then all shall be confounded by Christ, who have cast a slur upon their martyrdom. And from this fact, that He exclaimed upon the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," the long-suffering, patience, compassion, and goodness of Christ are exhibited, since He both suffered, and did Himself exculpate those who had maltreated Him. For the Word of God, who said to us, "Love your enemies, and pray for those that hate you," Himself did this very thing upon the cross; loving the human race to such a degree, that He even prayed for those putting Him to death. If, however, any one, going upon the supposition that there are two [Christs], forms a judgment in regard to them, that [Christ]

shall be found much the better one, and more patient, and the truly good one, who, in the midst of His own wounds and stripes, and the other [cruelties] inflicted upon Him, was beneficent, and unmindful of the wrongs perpetrated upon Him, than he who flew away, and sustained neither injury nor insult.

6. This also does likewise meet [the case] of those who maintain that He suffered only in appearance. For if He did not truly suffer, no thanks to Him, since there was no suffering at all; and when we shall actually begin to suffer, He will seem as leading us astray, exhorting us to endure buffering, and to turn the other 3658 Matt. v. 39 cheek, if He did not Himself before us in reality suffer the same; and as He misled them by seeming to them what He was not, so does He also mislead us, by exhorting us to endure what He did not endure Himself. [In that case] we shall be even above the Master, because we suffer and sustain what our Master never bore or endured. But as our Lord is alone truly Master, so the Son of God is truly good and patient, the Word of God the Father having been made the Son of man. For He fought and conquered; for He was man contending for the fathers, 3659 “Pro patribus, ἀντὶ τῶν πατρῶν. The reader will here observe the clear statement of the doctrine of atonement, whereby alone sin is done away.”—Harvey. And through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for He bound the strong man, 3660 Matt. xii. 29 and set free the weak, and endowed His own handiwork with salvation, by destroying sin. For He is a most holy and merciful Lord, and loves the human race.

7. Therefore, as I have already said, He caused man (human nature) to cleave to and to become, one with God. For unless man had overcome the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been legitimately vanquished. And again: unless it had been God who had freely given salvation, we could never have possessed it securely. And unless man had been joined to God, he could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility. For it was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and men, by His relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present man to God, while He revealed God to man. 3661 The Latin text, “et facere, ut et Deus assumeret hominem, et homo se dederet Deo,” here differs widely from the Greek preserved by Theodoret. We have followed the latter, which is preferred by all the editors. For, in what way could we be partaken of the adoption of sons, unless we had received from Him through the Son that fellowship which refers to Himself, unless His Word, having been made flesh, had entered into communion with us? Wherefore also He passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God. Those, therefore, who assert that He appeared putatively, and was neither born in the flesh nor truly made man, are as yet under the old condemnation, holding out patronage to sin; for, by their showing, death has not been vanquished, which “reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” 3662 Rom. v. 14. But the law coming, which was given by Moses, and testifying of sin that it is a sinner, did truly take away his (death’s) kingdom, showing that he was no king, but a robber; and it revealed him as a murderer. It laid, however, a weighty burden upon man, who had sin in himself, showing that he was liable to death. For as the law was spiritual, it merely made sin to stand out in relief, but did not destroy it. For sin had no dominion over the spirit, but over man. For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death. For as by the disobedience of the one man who was originally moulded from virgin soil, the many were made sinners, 3663 Rom. v. 19. and forfeited life; so was it necessary that, by the obedience of one man, who was originally born from a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation. Thus, then, was the Word of God made man, as also Moses says: “God, true are His works.” 3664 Deut. xxxii. 4. But if, not having been made flesh, He did appear as if flesh, His work was not a true one. But what He did appear, that He also was: God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man; and therefore His works are true.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues that, “As it has been clearly demonstrated that the Word, who

existed in the beginning with God, by whom all things were made, who was also always present with mankind, was in these last days, according to the time appointed by the Father, united to His own workmanship, inasmuch as He became a man liable to suffering, [it follows] that every objection is set aside of those who say, “If our Lord was born at that time, Christ had therefore no previous existence.” And Irenaeus affirms, “For I have shown that the Son of God did not then begin to exist, being with the Father from the beginning; but when He became incarnate, and was made man, He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “For as it was not possible that the man who had once for all been conquered, and who had been destroyed through disobedience, could reform himself, and obtain the prize of victory; and as it was also impossible that he could attain to salvation who had fallen under the power of sin,” referring to Romans 3:9, “—the Son effected both these things, being the Word of God, descending from the Father, becoming incarnate, stooping low, even to death, and consummating the arranged plan of our salvation, upon whom [Paul], exhorting us unhesitatingly to believe, again says, “Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring down Christ; or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to liberate Christ again from the dead.” Then he continues, “If thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shall be saved,” referring in context to Romans 10:6-10. Irenaeus again testifies, “And he renders the reason why the Son of God did these things, saying, “For to this end Christ both lived, and died, and revived, that He might rule over the living and the dead,” referring to Romans 14:9. Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “And again, writing to the Corinthians, he declares, “But we preach Christ Jesus crucified,” referring to 1 Corinthians 1:23, “and adds, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?,” referring to 1 Corinthians 10:16.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asks, “But who is it that has had fellowship with us in the matter of food? Whether is it he who is conceived of by them as the Christ above, who extended himself through Horos, and imparted a form to their mother; or is it He who is from the Virgin, Emmanuel, who did eat butter and honey,” referring to Isaiah 7:14-15, “of whom the prophet declared, “He is also a man, and who shall know him?,” possibly referring in context to Isaiah 53:1-4. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “He was likewise preached by Paul: “For I delivered,” he says, “unto you first of all, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Irenaeus then affirms, “It is plain, then, that Paul knew no other Christ besides Him alone, who both suffered, and was buried, and rose again, who was also born, and whom he speaks of as man. For after remarking, “But if Christ be preached, that He rose from the dead,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:12, “he continues, rendering the reason of His incarnation, “For since by man came death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:21. Irenaeus again testifies, “And everywhere, when [referring to] the passion of our Lord, and to His human nature, and His subjection to death, he employs the name of Christ, as in that passage: “Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died,” referring to Romans 14:15. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And again: “But now, in Christ, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ,” referring to Ephesians 2:13. Irenaeus then testifies, “And again: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree,” referring to Galatians 3:13. Irenaeus then testifies again, “And again: “And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died,” referring to 1 Corinthians 8:11, “indicating that the impassible Christ did not descend upon Jesus, but that He Himself, because He was Jesus Christ, suffered for us; He, who lay in the tomb, and rose again, who descended and ascended,—the Son of God having been made the Son of man, as the very name itself doth declare.” Irenaeus then points out, “For in the name of Christ is implied, He that anoints, He that is anointed, and the unction itself with which He is anointed.” And Irenaeus then affirms, “And it is the Father who anoints, but the Son who is anointed by the Spirit, who is the unction, as the Word declares by Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me,” referring to Isaiah 61:1, “—pointing out both the anointing Father, the anointed Son, and the unction, which is the Spirit.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “The Lord Himself, too, makes it evident who it was that suffered; for when He asked the disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?,” referring to Matthew 16:13,

"and when Peter had replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and when he had been commended by Him [in these words], "That flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but the Father who is in heaven," He made it clear that He, the Son of man, is Christ the Son of the living God," referring to Matthew 16:16-17. Irenaeus then continues, "For from that time forth," it is said, "He began to show to His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the priests, and be rejected, and crucified, and rise again the third day," referring to Matthew 16:21. Irenaeus then affirms, "He who was acknowledged by Peter as Christ, who pronounced him blessed because the Father had revealed the Son of the living God to him, said that He must Himself suffer many things, and be crucified; and then He rebuked Peter, who imagined that He was the Christ as the generality of men supposed [that the Christ should be], and was averse to the idea of His suffering," referring to Matthew 16:22-23, "[and] said to the disciples, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose it for My sake shall save it," referring to Matthew 16:24-25. And Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, "For these things Christ spoke openly, He being Himself the Saviour of those who should be delivered over to death for their confession of Him, and lose their lives."

In paragraph five, Irenaeus argues, "If, however, He was Himself not to suffer, but should fly away from Jesus, why did He exhort His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him," referring again to Matthew 16:24, "—that cross which these men represent Him as not having taken up, but [speak of Him] as having relinquished the dispensation of suffering?" Irenaeus then testifies, "For that He did not say this with reference to the acknowledging of the Stauros (cross) above, as some among them venture to expound, but with respect to the suffering which He should Himself undergo, and that His disciples should endure, He implies when He says, "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose, shall find it," referring again to Matthew 16:25. Again Irenaeus testifies, "And that His disciples must suffer for His sake, He [implied when He] said to the Jews, "Behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify," referring to Matthew 23:34. And Irenaeus continues to testify, "And to the disciples He was wont to say, "And ye shall stand before governors and kings for My sake; and they shall scourge some of you, and slay you, and persecute you from city to city," referring to Matthew 10:17-18. Irenaeus then affirms, "He knew, therefore, both those who should suffer persecution, and He knew those who should have to be scourged and slain because of Him; and He did not speak of any other cross, but of the suffering which He should Himself undergo first, and His disciples afterwards." Again Irenaeus testifies, "For this purpose did He give them this exhortation: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to send both soul and body into hell," referring to Matthew 10:28, "[thus exhorting them] to hold fast those professions of faith which they had made in reference to Him." Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "For He promised to confess before His Father those who should confess His name before men; but declared that He would deny those who should deny Him, and would be ashamed of those who should be ashamed to confess Him," referring to Matthew 10:32-33. Irenaeus then records, "And although these things are so, some of these men have proceeded to such a degree of temerity, that they even pour contempt upon the martyrs, and vituperate those who are slain on account of the confession of the Lord, and who suffer all things predicted by the Lord, and who in this respect strive to follow the footprints of the Lord's passion, having become martyrs of the suffering One; these we do also enroll with the martyrs themselves. For, when inquisition shall be made for their blood, and they shall attain to glory, then all shall be confounded by Christ, who have cast a slur upon their martyrdom." Irenaeus then testifies, "And from this fact, that He exclaimed upon the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," referring to Luke 23:34, "the long-suffering, patience, compassion, and goodness of Christ are exhibited, since He both suffered, and did Himself exculpate those who had maltreated Him." Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "For the Word of God, who said to us, "Love your enemies, and pray for those that hate you," referring to Matthew 5:44, "Himself did this very thing upon the cross; loving the human race to such a degree, that He even prayed for those putting Him to death." Irenaeus then affirms as he argues, "If, however, any one, going upon the supposition that there are two [Christs], forms a judgment in regard to them, that [Christ] shall be found much the better one, and more patient, and the truly good one, who, in the midst of His own wounds and stripes, and the other [cruelties] inflicted upon Him, was beneficent, and unmindful of the wrongs perpetrated upon Him, than he who flew away, and sustained neither injury nor insult."

In paragraph six, Irenaeus argues, “This also does likewise meet [the case] of those who maintain that He suffered only in appearance. For if He did not truly suffer, no thanks to Him, since there was no suffering at all; and when we shall actually begin to suffer, He will seem as leading us astray, exhorting us to endure buffering, and to turn the other cheek,” referring to Matthew 5:39, “if He did not Himself before us in reality suffer the same; and as He misled them by seeming to them what He was not, so does He also mislead us, by exhorting us to endure what He did not endure Himself.” Irenaeus then points out, “[In that case] we shall be even above the Master, because we suffer and sustain what our Master never bore or endured.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But as our Lord is alone truly Master, so the Son of God is truly good and patient, the Word of God the Father having been made the Son of man. For He fought and conquered; for He was man contending for the fathers.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for He bound the strong man,” referring to Matthew 12:29, “and set free the weak, and endowed His own handiwork with salvation, by destroying sin,” referring possibly to Hebrews 9:26. Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “For He is a most holy and merciful Lord, and loves the human race,” referring to John 3:16.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, “Therefore, as I have already said, He caused man (human nature) to cleave to and to become, one with God.” And Irenaeus then argues, point by point:

- “For unless man had overcome the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been legitimately vanquished.”
- “And again: unless it had been God who had freely given salvation, we could never have possessed it securely.”
- “And unless man had been joined to God, he could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility.”
- “For it was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and men, by His relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present man to God, while He revealed God to man.”
- “For, in what way could we be partaken of the adoption of sons, unless we had received from Him through the Son that fellowship which refers to Himself, unless His Word, having been made flesh, had entered into communion with us?”

Irenaeus then affirms, “Wherefore also He passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “Those, therefore, who assert that He appeared putatively, and was neither born in the flesh nor truly made man, are as yet under the old condemnation, holding out patronage to sin; for, by their showing, death has not been vanquished, which “reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” referring to Romans 5:14. Irenaeus then affirms, “But the law coming, which was given by Moses, and testifying of sin that it is a sinner, did truly take away his (death’s) kingdom, showing that he was no king, but a robber; and it revealed him as a murderer,” referring to John 10:1, John 8:44, and Hebrews 2:14. Irenaeus then affirms, “It laid, however, a weighty burden upon man, who had sin in himself, showing that he was liable to death,” referring to Romans 7:17. Irenaeus again testifies, “For as the law was spiritual,” referring to Romans 7:14, “it merely made sin to stand out in relief, but did not destroy it.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For sin had no dominion over the spirit, but over man,” referring to Rom 3:23. Irenaeus again testifies, “For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For as by the disobedience of the one man who was originally moulded from virgin soil, the many were made sinners,” referring to Matthew 5:19, “and forfeited life; so was it necessary that, by the obedience of one man, who was originally born from a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation.” Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, “Thus, then, was the Word of God made man, as also Moses says: “God, true are His works,” referring to Deuteronomy 32:4. And Irenaeus continues as he argues, “But if, not having been made flesh, He did appear as if flesh, His work was not a true one. But what He did appear, that He also was: God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man; and therefore His works are true.”

**Commentary:** Irenaeus' intention here in this chapter was not to write the doctrine of the atonement, but to destroy the arguments of the Gnostics. In his defense of the faith, Irenaeus gives us more understanding of what he was fighting against. It is helpful to understand what Irenaeus was fighting against so that we understand his arguments more clearly. Here are some of the Gnostic beliefs revealed in this chapter which are as follows:

- In paragraph one, some Gnostics said that Christ could have no previous existence if he was actually born a man.
- In paragraph three, some Gnostics said that Christ was above but “extended himself through Horos.” We will discuss Horos in **Chapter 16: The Gnostic Doctrine of the Seed**.
- In paragraph four and five, we find that the Gnostics were “averse to the idea of His suffering.”
- In paragraph five also, some Gnostics believed that the Christ flew away from Jesus on the cross. They also believed that the Christ did not take up the cross, but “relinquished the dispensation of suffering.”
- And also in paragraph five, we find that the Gnostics expounded that Christ only exhorted His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him “with reference to the acknowledging of the Stauros (cross) above.”
- Also in paragraph five, we find that some of the Gnostics “proceeded to such a degree of temerity, that they even pour contempt upon the martyrs, and vituperate those who are slain on account of the confession of the Lord, and who suffer all things predicted by the Lord, and who in this respect strive to follow the footprints of the Lord’s passion, having become martyrs of the suffering One.” These “have cast a slur upon their martyrdom.”
- In paragraph six we find that there were some Gnostics “who maintain that He suffered only in appearance.”
- And in paragraph seven we find that some Gnostics “assert that He appeared putatively, and was neither born in the flesh nor truly made man.”

Now, beginning in paragraph one, Irenaeus argues that, “As it has been clearly demonstrated that the Word, who existed in the beginning with God, by whom all things were made, who was also always present with mankind, was in these last days, according to the time appointed by the Father, united to His own workmanship, inasmuch as He became a man liable to suffering, [it follows] that every objection is set aside of those who say, “If our Lord was born at that time, Christ had therefore no previous existence.”

The Gnostics were asserting that because Jesus was a man, He could have had no previous existence. Irenaeus is refuting the teaching of the Gnostics who believed that Christ had no previous existence, and that Jesus did not really partake of the flesh but only appeared to. And Irenaeus states very clearly that He is “the Word” who “existed in the beginning with God,” and was He “by whom all things were made.” This is a direct reference to John’s Gospel in **John 1 (NASB):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Irenaeus here shows us his strong belief in the deity of Jesus Christ, as he then also affirms, “For I have shown that the Son of God did not then begin to exist, being with the Father from the beginning; but when He became incarnate, and was made man, He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus.”

Irenaeus freely admits that the Son of God “became incarnate, and was made man,” yet he states very clearly that He “did not then begin to exist, being with the Father from the beginning.” This is again a very strong confession of faith in the deity of Jesus Christ by Irenaeus.

Irenaeus is alluding to the reason that Christ came, which was for salvation. That is, Christ came to save man, and did so by becoming a man so that man might recover “what we had lost in Adam.”

As to his statement that “He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a

brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus,” Irenaeus is probably drawing from Paul’s words in **1 Corinthians 15 (NIV):22** For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

And in **1 Corinthians 15 (NIV):47** The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.

And in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The Scriptures do not specifically say that man lost the image and likeness of God when he sinned, though it is in some respects implied. Irenaeus may be referring to **Colossians 3 (KJV):9** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

The fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God is stated in two verses in Scripture, and is not in doubt. The first is in **Genesis 1 (NIV):26** Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

The second is in **Genesis 5 (NIV):1** This is the written account of Adam’s family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God.

After Adam sinned, it is stated in the Scripture that he bore a son in his own likeness according to his image as in **Genesis 5 (NIV):3** When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Though man sinned, the form of man is still in the image and likeness of God for it is the law of His being. However, man is dead in trespasses and sins in his spirit, and so it is in man’s spirit that he must be renewed and made alive to God. This is why Jesus came as a man, and in the flesh of a man, to redeem man as we read in **Philippians 2 (NIV):5** In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Man is still made in the image and likeness of God, but is dead in trespasses and sins. What man lost in Adam was righteousness and holiness of the truth as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

When we are born again, that is, when we are born of the Spirit, this righteousness and holiness of the truth is recovered. We are no longer under the power of our sinful flesh. This is also mentioned in **Colossians 3 (KJV):9** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

When we were dead in sin, we were excluded from the life of God because of our ignorance as in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):18** Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Now in Christ, this knowledge has been restored. So in our spirit we are made a new man or woman, created in righteousness and holiness of the truth, and renewed in knowledge according to the image of the One who created him. The human form is still our form, but the change has happened to our spirits on the inside. When we are born again, we are made partakers of the divine nature as we read in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

This is why Paul speaks of our inner man as being renewed day by day as in **2 Corinthians 4 (NIV):16** Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

However, our outer man of flesh, though it is made in the image and likeness of God, still has sin in its members as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (NIV)**:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Paul identifies himself as a believer when he says in verse 16 that he consents “unto the law that it is good,” and in verse 18 when he says that “to will is present with me,” that is, the will to do good. Then in verse 22 Paul says that he delights “in the law of God after the inward man.” An unbeliever could not say this. The fact is, according to the Scriptures, believers still have sin in their flesh. The apostle John warns us not to deny this fact in **1 John 1 (NASB)**:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

This is why Paul tells believers to put off the old, and to put on the new as we read again in **Ephesians 4 (NASB)**:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This is why we now groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our body as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (NASB)**:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves **groan** within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

We shall be changed at the resurrection as the Psalmist says in **Psalm 17 (NIV)**:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

And the apostle John mentions this as well in **1 John 3 (NASB)**:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

At the present time however, we believers are being changed in our soul, that is in our mind, will, emotions, and conscience to look more and more like Him as we read in **2 Corinthians 3 (NIV)**:18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

This change or transformation will ultimately result in our glorification as we read in **Romans 8 (NIV)**:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

We must be careful to include the entire context of the word of God in our interpretation of the Scriptures. Without qualification, Irenaeus’ statement that Christ came “so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus,” could lead us to believe that man has been restored to Adam’s innocent state before he fell into sin. This could lead us also to believe that we do not still have sin in our flesh after we are saved, and that we have attained a sinless state. While is true that we have a standing before God as righteous because of our justification, we must still wash our feet as Jesus told us in John 13:10. We will not be perfect until we see Him at the resurrection.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “For as it was not possible that the man who had once for all been conquered, and who had been destroyed through disobedience, could reform himself, and obtain the prize of victory; and as it was also impossible that he could attain to salvation who had fallen under the power of sin,” referring to **Romans 3 (KJV)**:9 What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.

We note that in the Greek, it does not say that we are “under the power of sin,” but simply that we are “under sin” as the King James Version has it. Even so, Irenaeus has here captured the essence of the atonement,

and correctly stated man's dilemma. That is, it is impossible for man "under the power of sin" to attain to his own salvation. Man cannot save himself.

Irenaeus then continues as he forcefully points out, "—the Son effected both these things, being the Word of God, descending from the Father, becoming incarnate, stooping low, even to death, and consummating the arranged plan of our salvation, upon whom [Paul], exhorting us unhesitatingly to believe, again says, "Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring down Christ; or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to liberate Christ again from the dead." Then he continues, "If thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shall be saved," referring in context to **Romans 10 (NIV):6** But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

This is the message of the Gospel being preached by Irenaeus in his refutation of the Gnostic heresies. Irenaeus has correctly stated that God has done for man what man could not do for himself. That is, God obtained the prize of victory, and has attained salvation for man.

Irenaeus then again testifies, "And he renders the reason why the Son of God did these things, saying, "For to this end Christ both lived, and died, and revived, that He might rule over the living and the dead," referring to **Romans 14 (NIV):9** For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

The context of this verse may be better understood when we read **Romans 14 (NIV):8** If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. The thought here is that Christ died and lived again so that He could raise from the dead those who believed in Him, for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, "And again, writing to the Corinthians, he declares, "But we preach Christ Jesus crucified," referring to **1 Corinthians 1 (NIV):23** but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.

That is, Paul preached the Christ actually died on the cross. The Gnostics were saying that Jesus died on the cross, but Christ flew away from Jesus on the cross and did not die on the cross.

Irenaeus then concludes, "and adds, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?," referring to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

That is, the communion celebration is a remembrance of the blood of Christ shed on the cross. Irenaeus' point is well taken. The Scriptures are perfectly clear. Christ died on the cross for us.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asks, "But who is it that has had fellowship with us in the matter of food? Whether is it he who is conceived of by them as the Christ above, who extended himself through Horos, and imparted a form to their mother; or is it He who is from the Virgin, Emmanuel, who did eat butter and honey," referring to **Isaiah 7 (NIV):14** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. 15 He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.

Irenaeus continues, "of whom the prophet declared, "He is also a man, and who shall know him?," possibly referring to **Isaiah 53 (KJV):1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Irenaeus points out that Christ was really a man who had a birth, and who had fellowship with us in eating and drinking as it was even prophesied that He would.

Irenaeus then testifies, “He was likewise preached by Paul: “For I delivered,” he says, “unto you first of all, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures,” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (NIV):3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Irenaeus again has stated the crux of the atonement. That is, Christ died for our sins, and this was according to the Scriptures, as was His death and resurrection.

Irenaeus then affirms, “It is plain, then, that Paul knew no other Christ besides Him alone, who both suffered, and was buried, and rose again, who was also born, and whom he speaks of as man. For after remarking, “But if Christ be preached, that He rose from the dead,” referring in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (NIV):12** But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Irenaeus then finishes his thought saying, “he continues, rendering the reason of His incarnation, “For since by man came death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead,” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (NIV):21** For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

Irenaeus argues forcefully here, and in accordance with the Scriptures, that God had a plan to save man from his sin, and that this plan was accomplished by Jesus Christ who was born, and died for our sins, and was raised again from the dead in order that man might also be raised from the dead.

Irenaeus then proves his point as he argues, “And everywhere, when [referring to] the passion of our Lord, and to His human nature, and His subjection to death, he employs the name of Christ, as in that passage: “Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died,” referring to **Romans 14 (NIV):15** If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And again: “But now, in Christ, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ,” referring to **Ephesians 2 (NIV):13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Irenaeus then testifies, “And again: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree,” referring to **Galatians 3 (NASB):13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”—

Irenaeus then testifies again, “And again: “And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died,” referring to **1 Corinthians 8 (NIV):11** So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.

And Irenaeus points out that Paul was “indicating that the impassible Christ did not descend upon Jesus, but that He Himself, because He was Jesus Christ, suffered for us; He, who lay in the tomb, and rose again, who descended and ascended,—the Son of God having been made the Son of man, as the very name itself doth declare.”

Irenaeus here points out that the Christ suffered for us, and he then points out, “For in the name of Christ is implied, He that anoints, He that is anointed, and the unction itself with which He is anointed.”

In Hebrew the word is מַשְׁאֵךְ (pronounced mawsheekh) and means anointed. **Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D., page 516.**

The Hebrew word translated into Greek is Χριστός (pronounced krestos), which comes from Χρίω (pronounced khreeo), and means “to smear or rub with oil,” and means by implication, “anoint.” **Strong's Concordance.**

Irenaeus then explains as he affirms, “And it is the Father who anoints, but the Son who is anointed by the Spirit, who is the unction, as the Word declares by Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me,” referring to **Isaiah 61 (NASB):1** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

Irenaeus affirms that this is “—pointing out both the anointing Father, the anointed Son, and the unction, which is the Spirit.” Irenaeus has admirably defended the faith, making good use of the Scriptures by here

pointing out the need for Christ to come and die for man's sin in order that He might attain salvation for man, which was something man could not do for himself.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus then testifies, "The Lord Himself, too, makes it evident who it was that suffered; for when He asked the disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" referring to **Matthew 16 (NIV):13** When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

Irenaeus then continues, "and when Peter had replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and when he had been commended by Him [in these words], "That flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but the Father who is in heaven," He made it clear that He, the Son of man, is Christ the Son of the living God," referring to **Matthew 16 (NIV):16** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

Again, Irenaeus has defended the faith here by clearly stating from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. Irenaeus then continues, "For from that time forth," it is said, "He began to show to His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the priests, and be rejected, and crucified, and rise again the third day," referring to **Matthew 16 (NIV):21** From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Irenaeus then affirms, "He who was acknowledged by Peter as Christ, who pronounced him blessed because the Father had revealed the Son of the living God to him, said that He must Himself suffer many things, and be crucified; and then He rebuked Peter, who imagined that He was the Christ as the generality of men supposed [that the Christ should be], and was averse to the idea of His suffering," referring to **Matthew 16 (NIV):22** Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Irenaeus continues, "[and] said to the disciples, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose it for My sake shall save it," referring to **Matthew 16 (NIV):24** Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

And Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, "For these things Christ spoke openly, He being Himself the Saviour of those who should be delivered over to death for their confession of Him, and lose their lives." Irenaeus points out that all is not lost by losing our lives for our confession of Him, for He is able to raise the dead to life again.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus argues forefully, "If, however, He was Himself not to suffer, but should fly away from Jesus, why did He exhort His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him," referring again to Matthew 16:24, "—that cross which these men represent Him as not having taken up, but [speak of Him] as having relinquished the dispensation of suffering?" Irenaeus then testifies, "For that He did not say this with reference to the acknowledging of the Stauros (cross) above, as some among them venture to expound, but with respect to the suffering which He should Himself undergo, and that His disciples should endure, He implies when He says, "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose, shall find it," referring again to Matthew 16:25. The Gnostics apparently denied that the Christ suffered for us in the flesh.

Again Irenaeus testifies, "And that His disciples must suffer for His sake, He [implied when He] said to the Jews, "Behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify," referring to **Matthew 23 (NIV):34** Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.

And Irenaeus continues to testify, "And to the disciples He was wont to say, "And ye shall stand before governors and kings for My sake; and they shall scourge some of you, and slay you, and persecute you from city to city," referring to **Matthew 10 (NIV):17** Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. 18 On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.

Irenaeus then affirms, “He knew, therefore, both those who should suffer persecution, and He knew those who should have to be scourged and slain because of Him; and He did not speak of any other cross, but of the suffering which He should Himself undergo first, and His disciples afterwards.” Again Irenaeus testifies, “For this purpose did He give them this exhortation: “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to send both soul and body into hell,” referring to **Matthew 10 (NIV):28** Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Irenaeus continues, “[thus exhorting them] to hold fast those professions of faith which they had made in reference to Him.”

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For He promised to confess before His Father those who should confess His name before men; but declared that He would deny those who should deny Him, and would be ashamed of those who should be ashamed to confess Him,” referring to **Matthew 10 (NIV):32** “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

Irenaeus argues very cogently for faith in Jesus Christ. His arguments are in agreement with the Scriptures and are compelling.

Irenaeus then records, “And although these things are so, some of these men have proceeded to such a degree of temerity, that they even pour contempt upon the martyrs, and vituperate those who are slain on account of the confession of the Lord, and who suffer all things predicted by the Lord, and who in this respect strive to follow the footprints of the Lord’s passion, having become martyrs of the suffering One; these we do also enroll with the martyrs themselves. For, when inquisition shall be made for their blood, and they shall attain to glory, then all shall be confounded by Christ, who have cast a slur upon their martyrdom.”

The Gnostics apparently even poured “contempt upon the martyrs,” and vituperated “those who are slain on account of the confession of the Lord.” Irenaeus then testifies, “And from this fact, that He exclaimed upon the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” referring to **Luke 23 (NIV):34** Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Irenaeus then continues, “the long-suffering, patience, compassion, and goodness of Christ are exhibited, since He both suffered, and did Himself exculpate those who had maltreated Him.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For the Word of God, who said to us, “Love your enemies, and pray for those that hate you,” referring to **Matthew 5 (NIV):44** But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

And Irenaeus affirms, “Himself did this very thing upon the cross; loving the human race to such a degree, that He even prayed for those putting Him to death.” Irenaeus then affirms as he argues, “If, however, any one, going upon the supposition that there are two [Christs], forms a judgment in regard to them, that [Christ] shall be found much the better one, and more patient, and the truly good one, who, in the midst of His own wounds and stripes, and the other [cruelties] inflicted upon Him, was beneficent, and unmindful of the wrongs perpetrated upon Him, than he who flew away, and sustained neither injury nor insult.” Bravo Irenaeus!

In paragraph six, Irenaeus argues, “This also does likewise meet [the case] of those who maintain that He suffered only in appearance. For if He did not truly suffer, no thanks to Him, since there was no suffering at all; and when we shall actually begin to suffer, He will seem as leading us astray, exhorting us to endure buffering, and to turn the other cheek,” referring to **Matthew 5 (NIV):39** But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

Irenaeus continues, “if He did not Himself before us in reality suffer the same; and as He misled them by seeming to them what He was not, so does He also mislead us, by exhorting us to endure what He did not endure Himself.” Irenaeus then forcefully points out, “[In that case] we shall be even above the Master, because we suffer and sustain what our Master never bore or endured.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But as our Lord is alone truly Master, so the Son of God is truly good and patient, the Word of God the Father having been made the Son of man. For He fought and conquered; for He was man contending for the fathers.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for He bound the strong man,” referring to **Matthew 12 (NIV):29** “Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.

And Irenaeus then finishes, “and set free the weak, and endowed His own handiwork with salvation, by destroying sin,” referring to possibly to **Hebrews 9 (NIV):26** Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “For He is a most holy and merciful Lord, and loves the human race,” referring to **John 3 (NIV):16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, “Therefore, as I have already said, He caused man (human nature) to cleave to and to become, one with God.” And Irenaeus then again argues forcefully, point by point:

- “For unless man had overcome the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been legitimately vanquished.”
- “And again: unless it had been God who had freely given salvation, we could never have possessed it securely.”
- “And unless man had been joined to God, he could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility.”
- “For it was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and men, by His relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present man to God, while He revealed God to man.”
- “For, in what way could we be partaken of the adoption of sons, unless we had received from Him through the Son that fellowship which refers to Himself, unless His Word, having been made flesh, had entered into communion with us?”

Irenaeus is trying to explain how man was saved here, which was necessary because of man’s sin. He then affirms, “Wherefore also He passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God.” Irenaeus believed that Jesus lived past 50 years of age. I will deal with this in **Chapter 18: Irenaeus Believed Jesus’ Age about 50 Years**, so I will not go into it here in detail. Suffice it to say that we can show from the Scriptures that Jesus was about 33 1/2 years of age when He died. But it was not necessary for Jesus to have lived through every stage of life for Him to restore communion with God to everyone as Irenaeus seems to suggest. The issue is sin. It is sin that keeps us from communion with God.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “Those, therefore, who assert that He appeared putatively, and was neither born in the flesh nor truly made man, are as yet under the old condemnation, holding out patronage to sin; for, by their showing, death has not been vanquished, which “reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” referring to **Romans 5 (NASB):14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Irenaeus then affirms, “But the law coming, which was given by Moses, and testifying of sin that it is a sinner, did truly take away his (death’s) kingdom, showing that he was no king, but a robber; and it revealed him as a murderer,” referring to **John 10 (NIV):1** “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

And to **John 8 (NIV):44** You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Irenaeus then affirms, “It laid, however, a weighty burden upon man, who had sin in himself, showing that he was liable to death,” referring to **Romans 7 (NASB):17** So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Irenaeus hits the nail on the head here. Man has sin in himself, which makes him liable to death. Irenaeus then again testifies, “For as the law was spiritual,” referring to **Romans 7 (NIV):14** We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

Irenaeus then continues, “it merely made sin to stand out in relief, but did not destroy it,” reminding us of **Romans 3 (NIV):20** Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

Irenaeus then affirms, “For sin had no dominion over the spirit, but over man,” referring to **Romans 3 (NIV):23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

This also agrees with Paul statement in **Romans 3 (NIV):9** What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.

Irenaeus again testifies, “For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death,” referring possibly to **Hebrews 2 (NIV):14** Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

And to **Hebrews 2 (NIV):17** For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For as by the disobedience of the one man who was originally moulded from virgin soil, the many were made sinners, and forfeited life; so was it necessary that, by the obedience of one man, who was originally born from a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation,” referring to **Romans 5 (NIV):19** For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, “Thus, then, was the Word of God made man, as also Moses says: “God, true are His works,” referring to **Deuteronomy 32 (Septuagint):4** As for God, his works are true, and all his ways are judgment: God is faithful, and there is no unrighteousness in him; just and holy is the Lord.

And as in **Deuteronomy 32 (NIV):4** He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

And Irenaeus continues as he argues, “But if, not having been made flesh, He did appear as if flesh, His work was not a true one. But what He did appear, that He also was: God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man; and therefore His works are true,” reminding us of **1 Corinthians 15 (NIV):56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And of **Hebrews 9 (KJV):26** For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Irenaeus has taken up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and destroyed the arguments of the Gnostics. We must say, “Bravo, Irenaeus.” His teaching is in accordance with the Scriptures. Though he did not give us the complete doctrine of atonement here, Irenaeus did assure us that Christ came as a man, was crucified, died, and was buried, and rose again, all for our sins. Irenaeus believed in the real Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as taught in the Scriptures.

## **Book 5: Chapter I.—Christ alone is able to teach divine things, and to redeem us: He, the same, took flesh of the Virgin Mary, not merely in appearance, but actually, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, in order to renovate us. Strictures on the conceits of Valentinus and Ebion.**

1. For in no other way could we have learned the things of God, unless our Master, existing as the Word, had become man. For no other being had the power of revealing to us the things of the Father, except His own proper Word. For what other person “knew the mind of the Lord,” or who else “has become His counsellor?” 4450 **Rom. xi. 34**. Again, we could have learned in no other way than by seeing our Teacher, and hearing His voice with our own ears, that, having become imitators of His works as well as doers of His words, we may have communion with Him, receiving increase from the perfect One, and from Him who is prior to all creation. We—who were but lately created by the only best and good Being, by Him also who has the gift of immortality, having been formed after His

likeness (predestinated, according to the prescience of the Father, that we, who had as yet no existence, might come into being), and made the first-fruits of creation 4451 “*Initium facturæ*,” which Grabe thinks should be thus translated with reference to Jas. i. 18.—have received, in the times known beforehand, [the blessings of salvation] according to the ministration of the Word, who is perfect in all things, as the mighty Word, and very man, who, redeeming us by His own blood in a manner consonant to reason, gave Himself as a redemption for those who had been led into captivity. And since the apostasy tyrannized over us unjustly, and, though we were by nature the property of the omnipotent God, alienated us contrary to nature, rendering us its own disciples, the Word of God, powerful in all things, and not defective with regard to His own justice, did righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it His own property, not by violent means, as the [apostasy] had obtained dominion over us at the beginning, when it insatiably snatched away what was not its own, but by means of persuasion, as became a God of counsel, who does not use violent means to obtain what He desires; so that neither should justice be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork of God go to destruction. Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, 4452 [Compare Clement, cap. 49, p. 18, this volume.] and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God,—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin.

2. Vain indeed are those who allege that He appeared in mere seeming. For these things were not done in appearance only, but in actual reality. But if He did appear as a man, when He was not a man, neither could the Holy Spirit have rested upon Him,—an occurrence which did actually take place—as the Spirit is invisible; nor, [in that case], was there any degree of truth in Him, for He was not that which He seemed to be. But I have already remarked that Abraham and the other prophets beheld Him after a prophetical manner, foretelling in vision what should come to pass. If, then, such a being has now appeared in outward semblance different from what he was in reality, there has been a certain prophetical vision made to men; and another advent of His must be looked forward to, in which He shall be such as He has now been seen in a prophetic manner. And I have proved already, that it is the same thing to say that He appeared merely to outward seeming, and [to affirm] that He received nothing from Mary. For He would not have been one truly possessing flesh and blood, by which He redeemed us, unless He had summed up in Himself the ancient formation of Adam. Vain therefore are the disciples of Valentinus who put forth this opinion, in order that they may exclude the flesh from salvation, and cast aside what God has fashioned.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “For in no other way could we have learned the things of God, unless our Master, existing as the Word, had become man. For no other being had the power of revealing to us the things of the Father, except His own proper Word. For what other person “knew the mind of the Lord,” or who else “has become His counsellor?,” referring to Romans 9:34. Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “Again, we could have learned in no other way than by seeing our Teacher, and hearing His voice with our own ears, that, having become imitators of His works as well as doers of His words, we may have communion with Him, receiving increase from the perfect One, and from Him who is prior to all creation.” Irenaeus then affirms, “We—who were but lately created by the only best and good Being, by Him also who has the gift of immortality, having been formed after His likeness (predestinated, according to the prescience of the Father, that we, who had as yet no existence, might come into being), and made the first-fruits of creation have received, in the times known beforehand, [the blessings of salvation] according to the ministration of the Word, who is perfect in all things, as the mighty Word, and very man, who, redeeming us by His own blood in a manner consonant to reason, gave Himself as a redemption for those who had been led into captivity.” Irenaeus then describes the apostasy as he affirms, “And since the apostasy tyrannized over us unjustly, and, though we were by nature the property of the omnipotent God, alienated us contrary to nature, rendering us its own disciples, the Word of God, powerful in all things, and not defective with regard to His own justice, did

righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it His own property, not by violent means, as the [apostasy] had obtained dominion over us at the beginning, when it insatiably snatched away what was not its own, but by means of persuasion, as became a God of counsel, who does not use violent means to obtain what He desires; so that neither should justice be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork of God go to destruction." Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God,—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "Vain indeed are those who allege that He appeared in mere seeming. For these things were not done in appearance only, but in actual reality. But if He did appear as a man, when He was not a man, neither could the Holy Spirit have rested upon Him,—an occurrence which did actually take place—as the Spirit is invisible; nor, [in that case], was there any degree of truth in Him, for He was not that which He seemed to be." Irenaeus then affirms, "But I have already remarked that Abraham and the other prophets beheld Him after a prophetical manner, foretelling in vision what should come to pass." Irenaeus then reasons, "If, then, such a being has now appeared in outward semblance different from what he was in reality, there has been a certain prophetical vision made to men; and another advent of His must be looked forward to, in which He shall be such as He has now been seen in a prophetic manner." Irenaeus continues as he again reasons, "And I have proved already, that it is the same thing to say that He appeared merely to outward seeming, and [to affirm] that He received nothing from Mary. For He would not have been one truly possessing flesh and blood, by which He redeemed us, unless He had summed up in Himself the ancient formation of Adam." Irenaeus then judges, "Vain therefore are the disciples of Valentinus who put forth this opinion, in order that they may exclude the flesh from salvation, and cast aside what God has fashioned."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "For in no other way could we have learned the things of God, unless our Master, existing as the Word, had become man. For no other being had the power of revealing to us the things of the Father, except His own proper Word. For what other person "knew the mind of the Lord," or who else "has become His counsellor?," referring to **Romans 11 (NIV):34** "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, "Again, we could have learned in no other way than by seeing our Teacher, and hearing His voice with our own ears, that, having become imitators of His works as well as doers of His words, we may have communion with Him, receiving increase from the perfect One, and from Him who is prior to all creation." Irenaeus then affirms, "We—who were but lately created by the only best and good Being, by Him also who has the gift of immortality, having been formed after His likeness (predestinated, according to the prescience of the Father, that we, who had as yet no existence, might come into being)," referring in context to **Romans 8 (NIV):29** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "and made the first-fruits of creation have received, in the times known beforehand, [the blessings of salvation] according to the ministration of the Word, who is perfect in all things, as the mighty Word, and very man, who, redeeming us by His own blood in a manner consonant to reason, gave Himself as a redemption for those who had been led into captivity," referring in part to **James 1 (NIV):18** He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

And to **Hebrews 9 (NIV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Irenaeus then describes the apostasy as he affirms, "And since the apostasy tyrannized over us unjustly, and, though we were by nature the property of the omnipotent God, alienated us contrary to nature, rendering us its own disciples, the Word of God, powerful in all things, and not defective with regard to His own justice, did righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it His own property, not by violent means, as the [apostasy] had obtained dominion over us at the beginning, when it insatiably snatched away what was not its own, but by means of persuasion, as became a God of counsel, who does not use violent means to obtain what

He desires; so that neither should justice be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork of God go to destruction.” ”

When Irenaeus says that “the Word of God, powerful in all things, and not defective with regard to His own justice, did righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it His own property,” he is saying that God was true to His word. Irenaeus points out that God did this redemption is such a way “so that neither should justice be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork of God go to destruction.” God is true to His word and does not say one thing and do another. John Piper says, “God’s righteousness is His unwavering allegiance to do what is right, that is, most ultimately, to uphold the infinite worth of His glory.” **The Future of Justification, A Response to N. T. Wright, by John Piper, page 78.**

Irenaeus speaks here of the tyranny of the apostasy. He says that the apostasy “tyrannized over us unjustly,” and “alienated us contrary to nature, rendering us its own disciples,” and “had obtained dominion over us at the beginning, when it insatiably snatched away what was not its own,” and did so by “violent means.” In this writing of Irenaeus, we are lead to believe that the “apostasy” caused the fall of man. Irenaeus mentions this apostasy in several chapters of his writing and there can be no doubt that he assigns the fault to Satan, the “leader of the apostasy.”

**Book 1: Chapter XXVII,** paragraph four, “They set forth, indeed, the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure, but in various ways they introduce the impieties of Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes, wickedly disseminating their own doctrines by the use of a good name, and, through means of its sweetness and beauty, extending to their hearers the bitter and malignant poison of the serpent, the great author of apostasy.”

**Book 2: Chapter XX,** paragraph three, “For the Lord, through means of suffering, “ascending into the lofty place, led captivity captive, gave gifts to men,” and conferred on those that believe in Him the power “to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy,” that is, of the leader of apostasy.

**Book 4: Chapter XLI,** paragraph one, “Inasmuch as the Lord has said that there are certain angels, [viz. those] of the devil, for whom eternal fire is prepared; and as, again, He declares with regard to the tares, “The tares are the children of the wicked one,” it must be affirmed that He has ascribed all who are of the apostasy to him who is the ringleader of this transgression.”

**Book 4: Chapter XLI,** paragraph two, “Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the devil has become the cause of apostasy to himself and others, justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of apostasy “sons of the devil” and “angels of the wicked one” (maligni).”

**Book 4: Chapter XLI,** paragraph three, “When, however, they believe and are subject to God, and go on and keep His doctrine, they are the sons of God; but when they have apostatized and fallen into transgression, they are ascribed to their chief, the devil—to him who first became the cause of apostasy to himself, and afterwards to others.

Irenaeus understood that it was Satan who sinned at first, as the “leader of the apostasy.” The serpent in the garden of Eden is revealed to be Satan in **Revelations 12 (NASB):9** And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

But it is also true that Irenaeus does not acquit man of his responsibility for joining the “apostasy” for in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII, paragraph 7,** he says, “The Lord has therefore endured all these things on our behalf, in order that we, having been instructed by means of them all, may be in all respects circumspect for the time to come, and that, having been rationally taught to love God, we may continue in His perfect love: for God has displayed long-suffering in the case of man’s apostasy; while man has been instructed by means of it, as also the prophet says, “Thine own apostasy shall heal thee;” God thus determining all things beforehand for the bringing of man to perfection, for his edification, and for the revelation of His dispensations, that goodness may both be made apparent, and righteousness perfected, and that the Church may be fashioned after the image of

His Son, and that man may finally be brought to maturity at some future time, becoming ripe through such privileges to see and comprehend God."

Irenaeus then gives us the essence of the atonement as he says, "Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God,—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin."

What stands out to me in this paragraph are Irenaeus' words "His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh," and this so justice would not "be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork of God go to destruction." This is exactly the idea of the atonement. Sin has to be atoned for, or man will go to destruction. This was the whole idea of the Old Covenant laws of sacrifice and offerings as in **Hebrews 9 (NIV):22** In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

For forgiveness to happen, there has to be atonement. And the atonement must equal the offense, and this according to the law as in **Exodus 21 (NIV):22** "If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. 23 But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Justice must not be infringed upon. Peter tells us that sin has been destroyed by Jesus when He died in the flesh for sins once and for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, as we read in **1 Peter 3 (NIV):18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Our God is an awesome God, and as the Psalmist says, His righteousness is limitless as in **Psalm 71 (NIV):19** Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things. Who is like you, God?

He is a God who does great things. There is no one like our God. We were apostate, hostile in mind, and engaged in evil deeds, yet He reconciled us through physical death as we read in **Colossians 1 (NIV):21** Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

The atonement is a great and awesome thing that the Lord has done for us.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "Vain indeed are those who allege that He appeared in mere seeming. For these things were not done in appearance only, but in actual reality. But if He did appear as a man, when He was not a man, neither could the Holy Spirit have rested upon Him,—an occurrence which did actually take place—as the Spirit is invisible," referring possibly to Matthew's account as in **Matthew 3 (NIV):13** Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Irenaeus continues as he argues, "nor, [in that case], was there any degree of truth in Him, for He was not that which He seemed to be." Irenaeus then affirms, "But I have already remarked that Abraham and the other prophets beheld Him after a prophetic manner, foretelling in vision what should come to pass." Irenaeus then reasons, "If, then, such a being has now appeared in outward semblance different from what he was in reality, there has been a certain prophetic vision made to men; and another advent of His must be looked forward to, in which He shall be such as He has now been seen in a prophetic manner." Irenaeus continues as he again reasons, "And I have proved already, that it is the same thing to say that He appeared merely to outward seeming, and [to affirm] that He received nothing from Mary. For He would not have been one truly possessing

flesh and blood, by which He redeemed us, unless He had summed up in Himself the ancient formation of Adam.” Irenaeus then judges, “Vain therefore are the disciples of Valentinus who put forth this opinion, in order that they may exclude the flesh from salvation, and cast aside what God has fashioned.”

Now the Gnostics’ assertion that Jesus only appeared to suffer reminds me of the test of spirits that John gave us as in **1 John 4 (NIV):1** Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2** This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, **3** but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. **4** You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. **5** They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. **6** We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

It is obvious that these Gnostics fail this test, and have the spirit of error. The fact that Jesus came in the flesh is plainly stated in the Scriptures in **Luke 1 (NIV):26** In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, **27** to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. **28** The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” **29** Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. **30** But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. **31** You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, **33** and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” **34** “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” **35** The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. **36** Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. **37** For no word from God will ever fail.” **38** “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

In this passage it is revealed that God sent the angel Gabriel to announce the birth of Jesus to Mary. His was no ordinary birth but it was a birth. And this birth actually took place in Bethlehem as it was prophesied. Luke tells us that shepherds saw the physical babe lying in a manger in **Luke 2 (NIV):8** And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. **11** Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” **13** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, **14** “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” **15** When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” **16** So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. **17** When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, **18** and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. **19** But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. **20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

In verse eleven above, the Savior who was born was named by the angels as Christ, the Lord, as Irenaeus also notes. And when Jesus was grown, He was baptized as we read in **John 1 (NIV):29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! **30** This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ **31** I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” **32** Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. **33** And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on

whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

Just as Irenaeus argues, the Spirit could not dwell in Him if He did not have a physical body. Lastly we note that John the apostle leaned on Jesus' physical body at the last supper as in **John 13 (KJV):25** He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

And in **John 21 (KJV):20** Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

Thus possessing a physical body, Jesus actually suffered as stated plainly in the Scriptures. By Jesus own words is this true, and when Peter tried to stop him, Jesus rebuked him as Irenaeus has also noted in **Mark 8 (NIV):31** He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Jesus explains to His disciples that the Scriptures foretold His death as we read in **Mark 9 (NIV):11** And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" 12 Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? 13 But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him."

Jesus is referring to Isaiah 53:1-12 which foretold of the suffering that the Messiah would have to undergo as we read in **Isaiah 53 (NIV):4** Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Luke tells us what happened before Jesus' crucifixion in **Luke 22 (NIV):63** The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. 64 They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophesy! Who hit you?" 65 And they said many other insulting things to him.

The Gospel of Matthew describes Jesus' death in **Matthew 27 (NIV):45** From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). 47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." 48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49 The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

Peter tells us His death was agony, being nailed to a cross as we read in **Acts 2 (NIV):22** "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

To those who don't believe He suffered, Jesus shows us the print of the nails in His hands as we read in **John 20 (NIV):24** Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Peter tells us that Jesus' flesh died as we read in **1 Peter 3 (KJV):18** For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

All of these Scriptures testify to the fact that Jesus had a real physical body. Truly Jesus fought our battles and conquered them for us. Our battle is against sin which had overpowered us. But Jesus truly destroyed our sin, as Irenaeus says, and died on the cross for us and paid the penalty that we deserved.

And truly God's love is so great that He made a way for us to be one with Him again as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

As Jesus was looking forward to His impending death on the cross, He prayed as in **John 17 (KJV):1** These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

To know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent is indeed eternal life. Jesus knew His time in the flesh was going to come to an end soon as we read in **John 17 (KJV):13** And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Jesus knew that the world is polluted with sin and that the world hates all those who are not of the world. Jesus set Himself apart from the world. That is, He sanctified Himself so that we might be sanctified and be one with the God the Father again just as He is one with the Father as we read in **John 17 (KJV):19** And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Jesus spoke of this oneness, this love relationship that God the Father wants with us. He also said that the greatest commandment, the one that is the fulfillment of the whole law is this, that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart as we read in **Matthew 22 (KJV):34** But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. 35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

God's whole purpose in creating man was that there would be a love relationship between God and man. That there would be a oneness, a communion, a sharing of feelings, a friendship, a concord was God's design from the beginning. Irenaeus says correctly that the law only brought the knowledge of sin in man to man's attention and awareness, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

But the law did not destroy sin and only "made sin to stand out in relief," as Irenaeus says. Irenaeus quotes the Scripture correctly, that it is the obedience of the one man that justifies and saves us as in **Romans 5 (KJV):19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Irenaeus does not present a full treatment of the meaning of the atonement in the Bible but he does point out the crux of it. That is, he points out that Jesus made satisfaction for our sin so that we can be one with God again. He is the only one who could make satisfaction for our sin since He was the only sinless man who ever lived. When He was on earth, through obedience He did "away with disobedience completely." His sacrifice was the one and only sacrifice ever offered that could do away with sin as we read again in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):26** For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Jesus has destroyed sin, again, as Irenaeus says, by making satisfaction for it and thereby redeeming man from the power of death as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):56** The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“The New Testament emphasis on the completion and finality of Christ’s sacrifice of himself for us has much practical application, because it assures us that there is no more penalty for sin left for us to pay. The penalty has entirely been paid by Christ, and we should have no remaining fear of condemnation or punishment.” **Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem, Chapter 27: The Atonement, page 578.**

## **Book 5: Chapter XVII.—There is but one Lord and one God, the Father and Creator of all things, who has loved us in Christ, given us commandments, and remitted our sins; whose Son and Word Christ proved Himself to be, when He forgave our sins.**

1. Now this being is the Creator (*Demiurgus*), who is, in respect of His love, the Father; but in respect of His power, He is Lord; and in respect of His wisdom, our Maker and Fashioner; by transgressing whose commandment we became His enemies. And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation, having become “the Mediator between God and men;” **4590 1 Tim. ii. 5.** propitiating indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned, and cancelling (*consolatus*) our disobedience by His own obedience; For this reason also He has taught us to say in prayer, “And forgive us our debts;” **4591 Matt. vi. 12.** since indeed He is our Father, whose debtors we were, having transgressed His commandments. But who is this Being? Is He some unknown one, and a Father who gives no commandment to any one? Or is He the God who is proclaimed in the Scriptures, to whom we were debtors, having transgressed His commandment? Now the commandment was given to man by the Word. For Adam, it is said, “heard the voice of the Lord God.” **4592 Gen. iii. 8.** Rightly then does His Word say to man, “Thy sins are forgiven thee;” **4593 Matt. ix. 2; Luke v. 20.** He, the same against whom we had sinned in the beginning, grants forgiveness of sins in the end. But if indeed we had disobeyed the command of any other, while it was a different being who said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee;” **4594 Matt. ix. 2; Luke v. 20.** such an one is neither good, nor true, nor just. For how can he be good, who does not give from what belongs to himself? Or how can he be just, who snatches away the goods of another? And in what way can sins be truly remitted, unless that He against whom we have sinned has Himself granted remission “through the bowels of mercy of our God,” in which “He has visited us” **4595 Luke i. 78.** through His Son?

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Now this being is the Creator (*Demiurgus*), who is, in respect of His love, the Father; but in respect of His power, He is Lord; and in respect of His wisdom, our Maker and Fashioner; by transgressing whose commandment we became His enemies, referring to Romans 5:10. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation, having become “the Mediator between God and men;” referring to 1 Timothy 2:5, “propitiating indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned, and cancelling (*consolatus*) our disobedience by His own obedience,” referring to Romans 3:25, 1 John 2:2. Irenaeus then testifies, “For this reason also He has taught us to say in prayer, “And forgive us our debts,” referring to Matthew 6:12, “since indeed He is our Father, whose debtors we were, having transgressed His commandments,” drawing from Romans 3:23. Irenaeus then challenges the Gnostics as he asks rhetorically, “But who is this Being? Is He some unknown one, and a Father who gives no commandment to any one? Or is He the God who is proclaimed in the Scriptures, to whom we were debtors, having transgressed His commandment?” Irenaeus then proves his point as he continues, “Now the commandment was given to man by the Word. For Adam, it is said, “heard the voice of the Lord God,” referring to Genesis 3:8 in the Septuagint. Irenaeus then refers to the Gospels when Jesus spoke to the paralytic before He healed him. “Rightly then does His Word say to man, “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” referring to Matthew 9:2 and Luke 5:20. Irenaeus then testifies, “He, the same against whom we had sinned in the beginning, grants forgiveness of sins in the end,” reminding us of Acts 13:38. Irenaeus then

reasons, “But if indeed we had disobeyed the command of any other, while it was a different being who said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee; such an one is neither good, nor true, nor just. For how can he be good, who does not give from what belongs to himself? Or how can he be just, who snatches away the goods of another? And in what way can sins be truly remitted, unless that He against whom we have sinned has Himself granted remission “through the bowels of mercy of our God,” in which “He has visited us” through His Son?,” referring to Luke 1:78.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Now this being is the Creator (*Demiurgus*), who is, in respect of His love, the Father; but in respect of His power, He is Lord; and in respect of His wisdom, our Maker and Fashioner; by transgressing whose commandment we became His enemies, referring to **Romans 5 (KJV):10** For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Paul uses the plural in the first person, that is, “we were enemies.” He includes himself in that category. The verses just before this one in Romans help us understand why we were enemies as they state we were helpless sinners as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

The Greek word used for enemies in verse 10 is ἐχθροί (pronounced echthroi). Vine’s says that as an adjective, it primarily denotes hated or hateful. It is used as a noun signifying an enemy, or adversary, and is said of the Devil. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 30.**

This is the word used in **Matthew 13 (KJV):39** The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

It is also used in reference to death in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):26** The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

The same word is also used in **Colossians 1 (KJV):21** And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unrepentant in his sight: 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

We must understand that before Christ we were by nature children of wrath as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation, having become “the Mediator between God and men;” referring in context to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Irenaeus then continues, “propitiating indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned, and cancelling (consolatus) our disobedience by His own obedience,” referring in context to **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

By the word “propitiating”, Irenaeus could also be referring to **1 John 2 (NASB):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.

And to **1 John 4 (NASB):10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

The Greek word for propitiation in these verses is ἵλασμός (pronounced hilasmus). **Strong’s Concordance** says that this word is a prime root and means atonement, i.e. (concretely) an expiator: propitiation; Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary says atonement is the “reparation for an offense or injury : SATISFACTION.”

And regarding our disobedience being cancelled “by His own obedience,” we find that Irenaeus refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, “For this reason also He has taught us to say in prayer, “And forgive us our debts,” referring to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And Irenaeus continues, “since indeed He is our Father, whose debtors we were, having transgressed His commandments,” drawing from Romans 3:23 above. Irenaeus then challenges the Gnostics as he asks rhetorically, “But who is this Being? Is He some unknown one, and a Father who gives no commandment to any one? Or is He the God who is proclaimed in the Scriptures, to whom we were debtors, having transgressed His commandment?” Irenaeus then proves his point as he continues, “Now the commandment was given to man by the Word. For Adam, it is said, “heard the voice of the Lord God,” referring in context to **Genesis 3 (Septuagint):9** And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the afternoon; and both Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the trees of the garden. 10 And the Lord God called Adam and said to him, Adam, where art thou? 11 And he said to him, I heard thy voice as thou walkedst in the garden, and I feared because I was naked and I hid myself.

Our more current version reads as in **Genesis 3 (NASB):8** They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”

Irenaeus then refers to the Gospels when Jesus spoke to the paralytic before He healed him. “Rightly then does His Word say to man, “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” referring to **Matthew 9 (KJV):2** And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

And to **Luke 5 (KJV):20** And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Irenaeus then testifies, “He, the same against whom we had sinned in the beginning, grants forgiveness of sins in the end,” reminding us of **Acts 13 (KJV):38** Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

And of **Hebrews 13 (KJV):8** Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Irenaeus then argues against the Gnostics as he reasons, “But if indeed we had disobeyed the command of any other, while it was a different being who said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee; such an one is neither good, nor true, nor just. For how can he be good, who does not give from what belongs to himself? Or how can he be just, who snatches away the goods of another? And in what way can sins be truly remitted, unless that He against whom we have sinned has Himself granted remission “through the bowels of mercy of our God,” in which “He has visited us” through His Son?,” referring to **Luke 1 (KJV):78** Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.

The point Irenaeus is making here is that, for God to forgive us our sin, He must be the one whom we transgressed against. If He were not, it would be fantasy forgiveness and not real and not according to the truth. As it is, “the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation.” The Lord Himself is our Savior as we read in **Luke 1 (KJV):68** Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

And it was through the Son, as Irenaeus points out, that this cancellation of debt, this propitiation, was made to the Father. That God the Father provided this propitiation was a matter of His mercy alone.

Also, in this paragraph, Irenaeus says of Jesus, “Rightly then does His Word say to man, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” Irenaeus is referring to Jesus as “the Word,” as he does frequently in His writings. The apostle John does the same in his Gospel as we read in **John 1 (NASB):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

That this word is the same word that became flesh and dwelt among us, there can be no doubt as we see in **John 1 (NASB):14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the

only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

Also, Irenaeus captures what the atonement means for mankind, which is the restoration of friendship with God through His incarnation. Our relationship with our Creator has been restored. Christ became “the Mediator between God and men propitiating indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned, and cancelling (*consolatus*) our disobedience by His own obedience.” Sin as an issue has been dealt with. We are free indeed by this truth.

Lewis Sperry Chafer says in this extended quote that in the Old Testament, the term atonement “is a translation of two Hebrew words, but one of them, Kophar, is generally in view and it is used about seventy times. Its meaning is ‘to cover.’ This, the distinct and limited meaning of the Hebrew word, should not be invested with New Testament ideas, which contemplate a finished or completed work. Under the Old Testament provision the one who had sinned was himself fully forgiven and released, but the ground upon which it could be wrought was itself only typical and not actual. God forgave and restored where sin was only covered by animal sacrifices, but the true basis upon which forgiveness could ever be granted was the intention on God’s part to take up the sin later that He had forgiven and deal with it righteously and effectively through the sacrificial death of His Son on the cross. That efficacious death was typified in the required animal sacrifice. According to Romans 3:25 –“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God”—the fact that Christ bore the sins which were committed before, which sins had already been forgiven on the typical ground that they were covered, ranks as one of the major accomplishments of His death. It is as though unnumbered promissory notes had been handed to Christ for Him to pay. If the notes are paid as promised, God is thereby proved to have been righteous in the forgiving of sin with no other demands having been made upon the sinner than that an offering be brought which, regardless of how much it was understood by that sinner, was in God’s sight an anticipation and recognition of His final meeting of every holy demand against sin by the efficacious blood of Christ. In other words, God pretermitted or passed over the sins, not judging them finally at the time they were forgiven. Such a course, it is obvious, would be a very unrighteous dealing if those sins were not in due time to be brought into judgment. All sins of the Mosaic age were thus shown to have been “covered” but not “taken away.” In contrast to this temporary expedient, all sin which God forgives has been and is now “taken away.” In two New Testament passages that vital contrast appears. It is written, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins....And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:4,11-14). Added to this is the direct statement of John 1:29, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” This great declaration from John was a doctrinal innovation of immeasurable proportions. The same contrast between the divine dealings with sin in the past dispensation and in the present dispensation is indicated again at Acts 17:30.” **Systematic Theology, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Volume VII, page 25-26.**

Dr. Chafer refers in context to **Acts 17 (KJV):30** And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

## Chapter 13: Refutation of the Teaching of the Transmigration of Souls

### Book 3: Chapter XXXIII.—Absurdity of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

1. We may subvert their doctrine as to transmigration from body to body by this fact, that souls remember nothing whatever of the events which took place in their previous states of existence. For if they were sent forth with this object, that they should have experience of every kind of action, they must of necessity retain a remembrance of those things which have been previously accomplished, that they might fill up those in which they were still deficient, and not by always hovering, without intermission, round the same pursuits, spend their labour wretchedly in vain (for the mere union of a body [with a soul] could not altogether extinguish the memory and contemplation of those things which had formerly been experienced 3281 Harvey thinks that this parenthesis has fallen out of its proper place, and would insert it immediately after the opening period of the chapter.), and especially as they came [into the world] for this very purpose. For as, when the body is asleep and at rest, whatever things the soul sees by herself, and does in a vision, recollecting many of these, she also communicates them to the body; and as it happens that, when one awakes, perhaps after a long time, he relates what he saw in a dream, so also would he undoubtedly remember those things which he did before he came into this particular body. For if that which is seen only for a very brief space of time, or has been conceived of simply in a phantasm, and by the soul alone, through means of a dream, is remembered after she has mingled again with the body, and been dispersed through all the members, much more would she remember those things in connection with which she stayed during so long a time, even throughout the whole period of a bypast life.

2. With reference to these objections, Plato, that ancient Athenian, who also was the first 3282 It is a mistake of Irenæus to say that the doctrine of metempsychosis originated with Plato: it was first publicly taught by Pythagoras, who learned it from the Egyptians. Comp. Clem. Alex., Strom., i. 15: Herodot., ii. 123. to introduce this opinion, when he could not set them aside, invented the [notion of] a cup of oblivion, imagining that in this way he would escape this sort of difficulty. He attempted no kind of proof [of his supposition], but simply replied dogmatically [to the objection in question], that when souls enter into this life, they are caused to drink of oblivion by that demon who watches their entrance [into the world], before they effect an entrance into the bodies [assigned them]. It escaped him, that [by speaking thus] he fell into another greater perplexity. For if the cup of oblivion, after it has been drunk, can obliterate the memory of all the deeds that have been done, how, O Plato, dost thou obtain the knowledge of this fact (since thy soul is now in the body), that, before it entered into the body, it was made to drink by the demon a drug which caused oblivion? For if thou hast a remembrance of the demon, and the cup, and the entrance [into life], thou oughtest also to be acquainted with other things; but if, on the other hand, thou art ignorant of them, then there is no truth in the story of the demon, nor in the cup of oblivion prepared with art.

3. In opposition, again, to those who affirm that the body itself is the drug of oblivion, this observation may be made: How, then, does it come to pass, that whatsoever the soul sees by her own instrumentality, both in dreams and by reflection or earnest mental exertion, while the body is passive, she remembers, and reports to her neighbours? But, again, if the body itself were [the cause of] oblivion, then the soul, as existing in the body, could not remember even those things which were perceived long ago either by means of the eyes or the ears; but, as soon as the eye was turned from the things looked at, the memory of them also would undoubtedly be destroyed. For the soul, as existing in the very [cause of] oblivion, could have no knowledge of anything else than that only which it saw at the present moment. How, too, could it become acquainted with divine things, and retain a remembrance of them while existing in the body, since, as they maintain, the body itself is [the cause of] oblivion? But the prophets also, when they were upon the earth, remembered likewise, on their returning to their ordinary state of mind, 3283 “In hominem conversi,” literally, “returning into man.” whatever things they spiritually saw or heard in visions of heavenly objects, and related them to

others. The body, therefore, does not cause the soul to forget those things which have been spiritually witnessed; but the soul teaches the body, and shares with it the spiritual vision which it has enjoyed.

4. For the body is not possessed of greater power than the soul, since indeed the former is inspired, and vivified, and increased, and held together by the latter; but the soul possesses

3284 "Possidet." Massuet supposes this word to represent κυριεύει, "rules over" and Stieren κρατύνει, governs; while Harvey thinks the whole clause corresponds to κρατεῖ καὶ κυριεύει τοῦ σώματος, which we have rendered above. and rules over the body. It is doubtless retarded in its velocity, just in the exact proportion in which the body shares in its motion; but it never loses the knowledge which properly belongs to it. For the body may be compared to an instrument; but the soul is possessed of the reason of an artist. As, therefore, the artist finds the idea of a work to spring up rapidly in his mind, but can only carry it out slowly by means of an instrument, owing to the want of perfect pliability in the matter acted upon, and thus the rapidity of his mental operation, being blended with the slow action of the instrument, gives rise to a moderate kind of movement [towards the end contemplated]; so also the soul, by being mixed up with the body belonging to it, is in a certain measure impeded, its rapidity being blended with the body's slowness. Yet it does not lose altogether its own peculiar powers; but while, as it were, sharing life with the body, it does not itself cease to live. Thus, too, while communicating other things to the body, it neither loses the knowledge of them, nor the memory of those things which have been witnessed.

5. If, therefore, the soul remembers nothing 3285 Literally, *none of things past*. of what took place in a former state of existence, but has a perception of those things which are here, it follows that she never existed in other bodies, nor did things of which she has no knowledge, nor [once] knew things which she cannot [now mentally] contemplate. But, as each one of us receives his body through the skillful working of God, so does he also possess his soul. For God is not so poor or destitute in resources, that He cannot confer its own proper soul on each individual body, even as He gives it also its special character. And therefore, when the number [fixed upon] is completed, [that number] which He had predetermined in His own counsel, all those who have been enrolled for life [eternal] shall rise again, having their own bodies, and having also their own souls, and their own spirits, in which they had pleased God. Those, on the other hand, who are worthy of punishment, shall go away into it, they too having their own souls and their own bodies, in which they stood apart from the grace of God. Both classes shall then cease from any longer begetting and being begotten, from marrying and being given in marriage; so that the number of mankind, corresponding to the foreordination of God, being completed, may fully realize the scheme formed by the Father. 3286 The Latin text is here very confused, but the Greek original of the greater part of this section has happily been preserved. [This Father here anticipates in outline many ideas which St. Augustine afterwards corrected and elaborated.]

**Summary:** Here in paragraph one, Irenaeus begins his refutation of the error of the "doctrine of transmigration from body to body." Simply, he says it is a fact that "souls remember nothing whatever of the events which took place in their previous states of existence." He reasons that, if the object is to "have experience of every kind of action," then they would have to have some recollection of what they had experienced so that they could experience new things and not "spend their labor wretchedly in vain." For just as a person who is asleep and has had a dream has some recollection when he awakes of what he saw in the dream, "so also would he undoubtedly remember those things which he did before he came into this particular body." If then one remembers a dream, why not "the whole period of a bypast life," Irenaeus asks?

In paragraph two, Irenaeus quotes the dogmatic reply of Plato, who believed in this teaching of the transmigration of souls, who also said that "when souls enter into this life, they are caused to drink of oblivion by that demon who watches their entrance [into the world], before they effect an entrance into the bodies [assigned them]." Of course Irenaeus did not let slip the fact that, if this were really true, then how did Plato "remember" that it was a demon drug which obliterated the memory, since he himself had a soul and a body?

In paragraph three, Irenaeus says that the body cannot be “the drug of oblivion,” that is, that which causes the memory to be erased. The reason is that, if the body were the drug of oblivion, even present day experiences would be erased and we would have no recollection of anything. In addition, we could not have recollection of spiritual things for the same reason. The Prophets, Irenaeus says, remembered their visions long afterwards and they related them to others. “The soul teaches the body, and shares with it the spiritual vision which it has enjoyed,” he says.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus says that “the soul possesses the body,” and “rules over the body.” The soul inspires, vivifies, increases, and holds together the body. The soul is “retarded in its velocity, just in the exact proportion in which the body shares in its motion.” The body is the instrument and the soul the artist. The soul does not cease to live though it shares life with the body. Therefore, it never loses the knowledge it possesses, “nor the memory of those things which have been witnessed.”

In paragraph five Irenaeus says that, if the soul “remembers nothing of what took place in a former state of existence,” then “it follows that she never existed in other bodies.” God gives each one his own body and soul and its special character. When the resurrection takes place, “all those who have been enrolled for life [eternal] shall rise again, having their own bodies, and having also their own souls, and their own spirits, in which they had pleased God.” Likewise, those who “stood apart from the grace of God” shall go to be punished “having their own souls and their own bodies.” Both classes shall marry no more and the number of mankind shall be fixed, “corresponding to the foreordination of God.”

**Commentary:** This is a good example of the method of Irenaeus and how he effectively demolishes a heresy.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus basically is arguing against reincarnation. He says that the soul has memory even in a dream state and therefore would remember a past life experience. This flies in the face of the heresy of the transmigration of souls which says that there is no remembrance whatever of events that took place in a previous state or states of existence.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus effectively demolishes the myth, whether started by Plato, or Pythagoras, or the Egyptians, that when a soul reincarnates or transmigrates into another existence, it is caused to drink a cup of oblivion. Irenaeus argues that this would wipe out all memory, and therefore is unproveable by any in existence currently, since they themselves who argue this position could not remember their former state because the cup of oblivion would have wiped it away from their memory.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus turns the argument that the body is the cup of oblivion on its heels and throws it crashing down, saying that there could be no memory at all if the body was the cup of oblivion, and that there would be no remembrance of divine things. He contrasts the Old Testament prophets who, after returning from a trance or a vision, remembered everything they saw spiritually and related these things to others.

Then in paragraph four, Irenaeus explains that the soul is the possessor of the body, not the other way around. As a musical instrument in the hands of a musician, so the body is played by the soul. Irenaeus says that an artist may have a burst of inspiration and creativity yet must he work out his composition at the pace allowed by his instrument which is not perfectly pliable. Thus are the rapidity of his ideas slowed by the medium by which they are expressed. So also, Irenaeus says, is the soul impeded by the body. The soul is the artist but the body is the instrument which does not prohibit movement, but moderates it so that the soul may be seen working out its expression through the body. The soul does not lose “its own peculiar powers” but shares its life with the body.

Lastly, in paragraph five Irenaeus shows that, because the soul has remembrance of things done in the present life, it stands to reason it never had any other existence since it remembers nothing of a preexistent state. Irenaeus says that it is God who gives the soul its own special character to match its own unique body. Irenaeus believes that God has “predetermined in His own counsel” the number of souls who will inherit eternal life and who will rise again “having their own bodies, and having also their own souls, and their own spirits, in which they had pleased God.” This seems to me to be in agreement with Paul in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his

purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

He states correctly that marriage will cease, and those who stood apart from the grace of God will go away to punishment just as we read in **Matthew 22 (KJV):30** For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

And there will also be a resurrection of the unrighteous dead who will have bodies and souls as we read in **Mark 9 (KJV):42** And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. 43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

## Chapter 14: The Gospel of Judas a Fake

### Book 1: Chapter XXXI.—Doctrines of the Cainites.

1. Others again declare that Cain derived his being from the Power above, and acknowledge that Esau, Korah, the Sodomites, and all such persons, are related to themselves. On this account, they add, they have been assailed by the Creator, yet no one of them has suffered injury. For Sophia was in the habit of carrying off that which belonged to her from them to herself. They declare that Judas the traitor was thoroughly acquainted with these things, and that he alone, knowing the truth as no others did, accomplished the mystery of the betrayal; by him all things, both earthly and heavenly, were thus thrown into confusion. They produce a fictitious history of this kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas.

**Summary:** Irenaeus testifies here that the Gnostics claimed that Cain, Esau, Korah, and the Sodomites were derived from “the Power above.” Irenaeus also testifies that they claim that the Creator assailed them but “no one of them has suffered injury.” Irenaeus also testifies that they claimed that Judas “accomplished the mystery of the betrayal,” and knew the truth “as no others did.” Irenaeus records that the Gospel of Judas is a “fictitious history.”

**Commentary:** It is helpful to know your enemy. The Gospel of Judas is a fake gospel. Did those who believe such a thing never read the Gospel of John? Jesus Himself says that Judas is lost as in **John 17 (KJV):12** While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

The Gospels tell us that Satan entered Judas as we read in **Mark 14 (KJV):17** And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? 20 And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

And in **Luke 22 (KJV):2** And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. 3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

And also in **John 13 (KJV):26** Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

It is recorded in the book of Acts that Matthias took Judas’ apostolic office as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):16** Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. 21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

It is evident that the Gospel of Judas is a false Gospel.

## Chapter 15: Intelligent Design in Creation

### Book 2: Chapter II.—The world was not formed by angels, or by any other being, contrary to the will of the most high God, but was made by the Father through the Word.

2990 [This noble chapter is a sort of homily on *Heb. i.*]

1. Those, moreover, who say that the world was formed by angels, or by any other maker of it, contrary to the will of Him who is the Supreme Father, err first of all in this very point, that they maintain that angels formed such and so mighty a creation, contrary to the will of the Most High God. This would imply that angels were more powerful than God; or if not so, that He was either careless, or inferior, or paid no regard to those things which took place among His own possessions, whether they turned out ill or well, so that He might drive away and prevent the one, while He praised and rejoiced over the other. But if one would not ascribe such conduct even to a man of any ability, how much less to God

2. Next let them tell us whether these things have been formed within the limits which are contained by Him, and in His proper territory, or in regions belonging to others, and lying beyond Him? But if they say [that these things were done] beyond Him, then all the absurdities already mentioned will face them, and the Supreme God will be enclosed by that which is beyond Him, in which also it will be necessary that He should find His end. If, on the other hand, [these things were done] within His own proper territory, it will be very idle to say that the world was thus formed within His proper territory against His will by angels who are themselves under His power, or by any other being, as if either He Himself did not behold all things which take place among His own possessions, or 2991 The common text has “ut:” we prefer to read “aut” with Erasmus and others. was not aware of the things to be done by angels.

3. If, however, [the things referred to were done] not against His will, but with His concurrence and knowledge, as some [of these men] think, the angels, or the Former of the world [whoever that may have been], will no longer be the causes of that formation, but the will of God. For if *He* is the Former of the world, He too made the angels, or at least was the cause of their creation; and He will be regarded as having made the world who prepared the causes of its formation. Although they maintain that the angels were made by a long succession downwards, or that the Former of the world [sprang] from the Supreme Father, as Basilides asserts; nevertheless that which is the cause of those things which have been made will still be traced to Him who was the Author of such a succession. [The case stands] just as regards success in war, which is ascribed to the king who prepared those things which are the cause of victory; and, in like manner, the creation of any state, or of any work, is referred to him who prepared materials for the accomplishment of those results which were afterwards brought about. Wherefore, we do not say that it was the axe which cut the wood, or the saw which divided it; but one would very properly say that the *man* cut and divided it who formed the axe and the saw for this purpose, and [who also formed] at a much earlier date all the tools by which the axe and the saw themselves were formed. With justice, therefore, according to an analogous process of reasoning, the Father of all will be declared the Former of this world, and not the angels, nor any other [so-called] former of the world, other than He who was its Author, and had formerly 2992 Vossius and others read “primus” instead of “prius,” but on defective ms. authority. been the cause of the preparation for a creation of this kind.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that those “Those, moreover, who say that the world was formed by angels, or by any other maker of it, contrary to the will of Him who is the Supreme Father, err first of all in this very point, that they maintain that angels formed such and so mighty a creation, contrary to the will of the Most High God.” Irenaeus concludes that, “This would imply that angels were more powerful than God; or if not so, that He was either careless, or inferior, or paid no regard to those things which took place among His own possessions, whether they turned out ill or well, so that He might drive away and prevent the one, while He

praised and rejoiced over the other.” Irenaeus then reasons, “But if one would not ascribe such conduct even to a man of any ability, how much less to God.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus goads the Gnostics as he says, “Next let them tell us whether these things have been formed within the limits which are contained by Him, and in His proper territory, or in regions belonging to others, and lying beyond Him?” Irenaeus then opposes them as he argues, “But if they say [that these things were done] beyond Him, then all the absurdities already mentioned will face them, and the Supreme God will be enclosed by that which is beyond Him, in which also it will be necessary that He should find His end.” Irenaeus then points out that, “If, on the other hand, [these things were done] within His own proper territory, it will be very idle to say that the world was thus formed within His proper territory against His will by angels who are themselves under His power, or by any other being, as if either He Himself did not behold all things which take place among His own possessions was not aware of the things to be done by angels.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus argues, “If, however, [the things referred to were done] not against His will, but with His concurrence and knowledge, as some [of these men] think, the angels, or the Former of the world [whoever that may have been], will no longer be the causes of that formation, but the will of God.” Irenaeus then reasons, “For if *He* is the Former of the world, He too made the angels, or at least was the cause of their creation; and He will be regarded as having made the world who prepared the causes of its formation.” Irenaeus then points out that, “Although they maintain that the angels were made by a long succession downwards, or that the Former of the world [sprang] from the Supreme Father, as Basilides asserts; nevertheless that which is the cause of those things which have been made will still be traced to Him who was the Author of such a succession.” Irenaeus then judges, “[The case stands] just as regards success in war, which is ascribed to the king who prepared those things which are the cause of victory; and, in like manner, the creation of any state, or of any work, is referred to him who prepared materials for the accomplishment of those results which were afterwards brought about.” Irenaeus then adds, “Wherefore, we do not say that it was the axe which cut the wood, or the saw which divided it; but one would very properly say that the *man* cut and divided it who formed the axe and the saw for this purpose, and [who also formed] at a much earlier date all the tools by which the axe and the saw themselves were formed.” And Irenaeus concludes, “With justice, therefore, according to an analogous process of reasoning, the Father of all will be declared the Former of this world, and not the angels, nor any other [so-called] former of the world, other than He who was its Author, and had formerly been the cause of the preparation for a creation of this kind.”

**Commentary:** Here in this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus’ clear thinking echoes even our present day theories of intelligent design. In paragraph one, he points out the absurdity of saying that the Supreme God did not know what the angels were doing when He created the world. Even a man knows what is being done to the things he possesses.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus again argues it is absurd to say that the Supreme God has an end, or that something is done beyond Him, behind His back as it were.

In paragraph three, he adds that even if God were only the cause of the formation of the world, and that someone else formed it, it is still caused by His will since He began the succession of events that led to its existence. Even if He only prepared for its formation, He is still its Author.

Irenaeus says that tools don’t exist without a purpose and a designer. Likewise, “we do not say that it was the axe which cut the wood, or the saw which divided it; but one would very properly say that the man cut and divided it who formed the axe and the saw for this purpose, and [who also formed] at a much earlier date all the tools by which the axe and the saw themselves were formed.” By this statement I see that Irenaeus understood the basis of the argument for intelligent design. Intelligence to form a saw implies intelligence to use a saw. And intelligence implies a designer. Today we know that man has DNA, which is the intelligence by which man’s physical being is formed. And so we must conclude that man therefore must have an intelligent designer, for where did the saw and the axe come from? And likewise where did DNA come from?

Just as a king who “prepared those things which are the cause of victory,” or the creation of any work is referred “to him who prepared materials for the accomplishment of those results which were afterwards brought about,” so also “with justice, therefore, according to an analogous process of reasoning, the Father of all will be

declared the Former of this world, and not the angels.” If a purpose can be seen in tools such as an axe or a saw, then so, “for a creation of this kind,” its author must have been the cause of the preparation.

Bravo Irenaeus!

## Chapter 16: The Gnostic Doctrine of the Seed

### Book 2: Chapter XIX.—Absurdities of the heretics as to their own origin: their opinions respecting the Demiurge shown to be equally untenable and ridiculous.

1. But what sort of talk also is this concerning their seed—that it was conceived by the mother according to the configuration of those angels who wait upon the Saviour,—shapeless, without form, and imperfect; and that it was deposited in the Demiurge without his knowledge, in order that through his instrumentality it might attain to perfection and form in that soul which he had, [so to speak,] filled with seed? This is to affirm, in the first place, that those angels who wait upon their Saviour are imperfect, and without figure or form; if indeed that which was conceived according to their appearance was generated any such kind of being [as has been described].

2. Then, in the next place, as to their saying that the Creator was ignorant of that deposit of seed which took place into him, and again, of that impartation of seed which was made by him to man, their words are futile and vain, and are in no way susceptible of proof. For how could he have been ignorant of it, if that seed had possessed any substance and peculiar properties? If, on the other hand, it was without substance and without quality, and so was really nothing, then, as a matter of course, he was ignorant of it. For those things which have a certain motion of their own, and quality, either of heat, or swiftness, or sweetness, or which differ from others in brilliance, do not escape the notice even of men, since they mingle in the sphere of human action: far less can they [be hidden from] God, the Maker of this universe. With reason, however, [is it said, that] their seed was not known to Him, since it is without any quality of general utility, and without the substance requisite for any action, and is, in fact, a pure nonentity. It really seems to me, that, with a view to such opinions, the Lord expressed Himself thus: “For every idle word that men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment.” 3088 *Matt. xii. 36.* [The serious spirit of this remark lends force to it as exposition.] For all teachers of a like character to these, who fill men’s ears with idle talk, shall, when they stand at the throne of judgment, render an account for those things which they have vainly imagined and falsely uttered against the Lord, proceeding, as they have done, to such a height of audacity as to declare of themselves that, on account of the substance of their seed, they are acquainted with the spiritual Pleroma, because that man who dwells within reveals to them the true Father; for the animal nature required 3089 *Comp. i. 6, 1.* to be disciplined by means of the senses. But [they hold that] the Demiurge, while receiving into himself the whole of this seed, through its being deposited in him by the Mother, still remained utterly ignorant of all things, and had no understanding of anything connected with the Pleroma.

3. And that they are the truly “spiritual,” inasmuch as a certain particle of the Father of the universe has been deposited in their souls, since, according to their assertions, they have souls formed of the same substance as the Demiurge himself, yet that he, although he received from the Mother, once for all, the whole [of the divine] seed, and possessed it in himself, still remained of an animal nature, and had not the slightest understanding of those things which are above, which things they boast that they themselves understand, while they are still on earth;—does not this crown all possible absurdity? For to imagine that the very same seed conveyed knowledge and perfection to the souls of these men, while it only gave rise to ignorance in the God who made them, is an opinion that can be held only by those utterly frantic, and totally destitute of common sense.

4. Further, it is also a most absurd and groundless thing for them to say that the seed was, by being thus deposited, reduced to form and increased, and so was prepared for all the reception of perfect rationality. For there will be in it an admixture of matter—that substance which they hold to have been derived from ignorance and defect; [and this will prove itself] more apt and useful than was the light of their Father, if indeed, when born, according to the contemplation of that [light], it was without form or figure, but derived from this [matter], form, and appearance, and increase, and

perfection. For if that light which proceeds from the Pleroma was the cause to a spiritual being that it possessed neither form, nor appearance, nor its own special magnitude, while its descent to this world added all these things to it, and brought it to perfection, then a sojourn here (which they also term darkness) would seem much more efficacious and useful than was the light of their Father. But how can it be regarded as other than ridiculous, to affirm that their mother ran the risk of being almost extinguished in matter, and was almost on the point of being destroyed by it, had she not then with difficulty stretched herself outwards, and leaped, [as it were,] out of herself, receiving assistance from the Father; but that her seed increased in this same matter, and received a form, and was made fit for the reception of perfect rationality; and this, too, while "bubbling up" among substances dissimilar and unfamiliar to itself, according to their own declaration that the earthly is opposed to the spiritual, and the spiritual to the earthly? How, then, could "a little particle," 442 "Parvum emissum"—a small emission, as they say, increase, and receive shape, and reach perfection, in the midst of substances contrary to and unfamiliar to itself?

5. But further, and in addition to what has been said, the question occurs, Did their mother, when she beheld the angels, bring forth the seed all at once, or only one by one [in succession]? If she brought forth the whole simultaneously and at once, that which was thus produced cannot now be of an infantile character: its descent, therefore, into those men who now exist must be superfluous. 443 That is, there could be no need for its descending into them that it might increase, receive form, and thus be prepared for the reception of perfect reason. But if one by one, then she did not form her conception according to the figure of those angels whom she beheld; for, contemplating them all together, and once for all, so as to conceive by them, she ought to have brought forth once for all the offspring of those from whose forms she had once for all conceived.

6. Why was it, too, that beholding the angels along with the Saviour, she did indeed conceive their images, but not that of the Saviour, who is far more beautiful than they? Did He not please her; and did she not, on that account, conceive after His likeness? How was it, too, that the Demiurge, whom they can call an animal being, having, as they maintain, his own special magnitude and figure, was produced perfect as respects his substance; while that which is spiritual, which also ought to be more effective than that which is animal, was sent forth imperfect, and he required to descend into a soul, that in it he might obtain form, and thus becoming perfect, might be rendered fit for the reception of perfect reason? If, then, he obtains form in mere earthly and animal men, he can no longer be said to be after the likeness of angels whom they call lights, but [after the likeness] of those men who are here below. For he will not possess in that case the likeness and appearance of angels, but of those souls in whom also he receives shape; just as water when poured into a vessel takes the form of that vessel, and if on any occasion it happens to congeal in it, it will acquire the form of the vessel in which it has thus been frozen, since souls themselves possess the figure of the body [in which they dwell]; for they themselves have been adapted to the vessel [in which they exist], as I have said before. If, then, that seed [referred to] is here solidified and formed into a definite shape, it will possess the figure of a man, and not the form of the angels. How is it possible, therefore, that that seed should be after images of the angels, seeing it has obtained a form after the likeness of men? Why, again, since it was of a spiritual nature, had it any need of descending into flesh? For what is carnal stands in need of that which is spiritual, if indeed it is to be saved, that in it it may be sanctified and cleared from all impurity, and that what is mortal may be swallowed up by immortality; but that which is spiritual has no need whatever of those things which are here below. For it is not we who benefit it, but it that improves us.

7. Still more manifestly is that talk of theirs concerning their seed proved to be false, and that in a way which must be evident to every one, by the fact that they declare those souls which have received seed from the Mother to be superior to all others; wherefore also they have been honoured by the Demiurge, and constituted princes, and kings, and priests. For if this were true, the high priest Caiaphas, and Annas, and the rest of the chief priests, and doctors of the law, and rulers of the people, would have been the first to believe in the Lord, agreeing as they did with respect 3095 The meaning apparently is, that by the high position which all these in common occupied, they proved

themselves, on the principles of the heretics, to belong to the favoured “seed,” and should therefore have eagerly have welcomed the Lord. Or the meaning may be, “hurrying together to that relationship,” that is, to the relationship secured by faith in Christ. to that relationship; and even before them should have been Herod the king. But since neither he, nor the chief priests, nor the rulers, nor the eminent of the people, turned to Him [in faith], but, on the contrary, those who sat begging by the highway, the deaf, and the blind, while He was rejected and despised by others, according to what Paul declares, “For ye see your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise men among you, not many noble, not many mighty; but those things of the world which were despised hath God chosen.”

3096 1 Cor. i. 26, 28, somewhat loosely quoted. Such souls, therefore, were not superior to others on account of the seed deposited in them, nor on this account were they honoured by the Demiurge.

8. As to the point, then, that their system is weak and untenable as well as utterly chimerical, enough has been said. For it is not needful, to use a common proverb, that one should drink up the ocean who wishes to learn that its water is salt. But, just as in the case of a statue which is made of clay, but coloured on the outside that it may be thought to be of gold, while it really is of clay, any one who takes out of it a small particle, and thus laying it open reveals the clay, will set free those who seek the truth from a false opinion; in the same way have I (by exposing not a small part only, but the several heads of their system which are of the greatest importance) shown to as many as do not wish unwittingly to be led astray, what is wicked, deceitful, seductive, and pernicious, connected with the school of the Valentinians, and all those other heretics who promulgate wicked opinions respecting the Demiurge, that is, the Fashioner and Former of this universe, and who is in fact the only true God—exhibiting, [as I have done,] how easily their views are overthrown.

9. For who that has any intelligence, and possesses only a small proportion of truth, can tolerate them, when they affirm that there is another god above the Creator; and that there is another Monogenes as well as another Word of God, whom also they describe as having been produced in [a state of] degeneracy; and another Christ, whom they assert to have been formed, along with the Holy Spirit, later than the rest of the Æons; and another Saviour, who, they say, did not proceed from the Father of all, but was a kind of joint production of those Æons who were formed in [a state of] degeneracy, and that He was produced of necessity on account of this very degeneracy? It is thus their opinion that, unless the Æons had been in a state of ignorance and degeneracy, neither Christ, nor the Holy Spirit, nor Horos, nor the Saviour, nor the angels, nor their Mother, nor her seed, nor the rest of the fabric of the world, would have been produced at all; but the universe would have been a desert, and destitute of the many good things which exist in it. They are therefore not only chargeable with impiety against the Creator, declaring Him the fruit of a defect, but also against Christ and the Holy Spirit, affirming that they were produced on account of that defect; and, in like manner, that the Saviour [was produced] subsequently to [the existence of] that defect. And who will tolerate the remainder of their vain talk, which they cunningly endeavour to accommodate to the parables, and have in this way plunged both themselves, and those who give credit to them, in the profoundest depths of impiety?

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asks, “But what sort of talk also is this concerning their seed—that it was conceived by the mother according to the configuration of those angels who wait upon the Saviour,—shapeless, without form, and imperfect; and that it was deposited in the Demiurge without his knowledge, in order that through his instrumentality it might attain to perfection and form in that soul which he had, [so to speak,] filled with seed?” Irenaeus concludes that to teach “This is to affirm, in the first place, that those angels who wait upon their Saviour are imperfect, and without figure or form; if indeed that which was conceived according to their appearance was generated any such kind of being [as has been described].”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “Then, in the next place, as to their saying that the Creator was ignorant of that deposit of seed which took place into him, and again, of that impartation of seed which was made by him to man, their words are futile and vain, and are in no way susceptible of proof.” Irenaeus then reasons, “For how could he have been ignorant of it, if that seed had possessed any substance and peculiar properties? If, on the other hand, it was without substance and without quality, and so was really nothing, then,

as a matter of course, he was ignorant of it. For those things which have a certain motion of their own, and quality, either of heat, or swiftness, or sweetness, or which differ from others in brilliance, do not escape the notice even of men, since they mingle in the sphere of human action: far less can they [be hidden from] God, the Maker of this universe." Irenaeus then concludes, "With reason, however, [is it said, that] their seed was not known to Him, since it is without any quality of general utility, and without the substance requisite for any action, and is, in fact, a pure nonentity." Irenaeus then testifies, "It really seems to me, that, with a view to such opinions, the Lord expressed Himself thus: "For every idle word that men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment," referring to Matthew 12:36. Irenaeus then judges, "For all teachers of a like character to these, who fill men's ears with idle talk, shall, when they stand at the throne of judgment, render an account for those things which they have vainly imagined and falsely uttered against the Lord, proceeding, as they have done, to such a height of audacity as to declare of themselves that, on account of the substance of their seed, they are acquainted with the spiritual Pleroma, because that man who dwells within reveals to them the true Father; for the animal nature required to be disciplined by means of the senses." Irenaeus then records, "But [they hold that] the Demiurge, while receiving into himself the whole of this seed, through its being deposited in him by the Mother, still remained utterly ignorant of all things, and had no understanding of anything connected with the Pleroma."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus explains the Gnostic beliefs as he records, "And that they are the truly "spiritual," inasmuch as a certain particle of the Father of the universe has been deposited in their souls, since, according to their assertions, they have souls formed of the same substance as the Demiurge himself, yet that he, although he received from the Mother, once for all, the whole [of the divine] seed, and possessed it in himself, still remained of an animal nature, and had not the slightest understanding of those things which are above, which things they boast that they themselves understand, while they are still on earth;—does not this crown all possible absurdity?" Irenaeus thus concludes, "For to imagine that the very same seed conveyed knowledge and perfection to the souls of these men, while it only gave rise to ignorance in the God who made them, is an opinion that can be held only by those utterly frantic, and totally destitute of common sense."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus argues, "Further, it is also a most absurd and groundless thing for them to say that the seed was, by being thus deposited, reduced to form and increased, and so was prepared for all the reception of perfect rationality." Irenaeus then reasons, "For there will be in it an admixture of matter—that substance which they hold to have been derived from ignorance and defect; [and this will prove itself] more apt and useful than was the light of their Father, if indeed, when born, according to the contemplation of that [light], it was without form or figure, but derived from this [matter], form, and appearance, and increase, and perfection." Irenaeus further reasons, "For if that light which proceeds from the Pleroma was the cause to a spiritual being that it possessed neither form, nor appearance, nor its own special magnitude, while its descent to this world added all these things to it, and brought it to perfection, then a sojourn here (which they also term darkness) would seem much more efficacious and useful than was the light of their Father." Irenaeus then rightly asks, "But how can it be regarded as other than ridiculous, to affirm that their mother ran the risk of being almost extinguished in matter, and was almost on the point of being destroyed by it, had she not then with difficulty stretched herself outwards, and leaped, [as it were,] out of herself, receiving assistance from the Father; but that her seed increased in this same matter, and received a form, and was made fit for the reception of perfect rationality; and this, too, while "bubbling up" among substances dissimilar and unfamiliar to itself, according to their own declaration that the earthly is opposed to the spiritual, and the spiritual to the earthly?" Irenaeus then concludes as he asks, "How, then, could "a little particle," as they say, increase, and receive shape, and reach perfection, in the midst of substances contrary to and unfamiliar to itself?"

Then in paragraph five, Irenaeus asks, "Did their mother, when she beheld the angels, bring forth the seed all at once, or only one by one [in succession]?" Irenaeus reasons that "If she brought forth the whole simultaneously and at once, that which was thus produced cannot now be of an infantile character: its descent, therefore, into those men who now exist must be superfluous." In this regard the editor's note, 443, is helpful as it explains, "That is, there could be no need for its descending into them that it might increase, receive form, and thus be prepared for the reception of perfect reason." Irenaeus then argues, "But if one by one, then she did not form her conception according to the figure of those angels whom she beheld; for, contemplating them all together, and once for all, so as to conceive by them, she ought to have brought forth once for all the offspring

of those from whose forms she had once for all conceived."

In paragraph six, Irenaeus, being most familiar with the Gnostic doctrine, asks, "Why was it, too, that, beholding the angels along with the Saviour, she did indeed conceive their images, but not that of the Saviour, who is far more beautiful than they?" Irenaeus chides the Gnostics as he again asks, "Did He not please her; and did she not, on that account, conceive after His likeness?" Irenaeus then adds, "How was it, too, that the Demiurge, whom they can call an animal being, having, as they maintain, his own special magnitude and figure, was produced perfect as respects his substance; while that which is spiritual, which also ought to be more effective than that which is animal, was sent forth imperfect, and he required to descend into a soul, that in it he might obtain form, and thus becoming perfect, might be rendered fit for the reception of perfect reason?" Irenaeus thus concludes, that "If, then, he obtains form in mere earthly and animal men, he can no longer be said to be after the likeness of angels whom they call lights, but [after the likeness] of those men who are here below." Irenaeus then explains, "For he will not possess in that case the likeness and appearance of angels, but of those souls in whom also he receives shape;" Irenaeus then reasons, "just as water when poured into a vessel takes the form of that vessel, and if on any occasion it happens to congeal in it, it will acquire the form of the vessel in which it has thus been frozen, since souls themselves possess the figure of the body [in which they dwell]; for they themselves have been adapted to the vessel [in which they exist], as I have said before." Again Irenaeus reasons, "If, then, that seed [referred to] is here solidified and formed into a definite shape, it will possess the figure of a man, and not the form of the angels." Irenaeus rightly asks, "How is it possible, therefore, that that seed should be after images of the angels, seeing it has obtained a form after the likeness of men?" And again Irenaeus asks, "Why, again, since it was of a spiritual nature, had it any need of descending into flesh?" Irenaeus then concludes, "For what is carnal stands in need of that which is spiritual, if indeed it is to be saved, that in it it may be sanctified and cleared from all impurity, and that what is mortal may be swallowed up by immortality; but that which is spiritual has no need whatever of those things which are here below. For it is not we who benefit it, but it that improves us."

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus reasons, "Still more manifestly is that talk of theirs concerning their seed proved to be false, and that in a way which must be evident to every one, by the fact that they declare those souls which have received seed from the Mother to be superior to all others; wherefore also they have been honoured by the Demiurge, and constituted princes, and kings, and priests. For if this were true, the high priest Caiaphas, and Annas, and the rest of the chief priests, and doctors of the law, and rulers of the people, would have been the first to believe in the Lord, agreeing as they did with respect to that relationship; and even before them should have been Herod the king." Irenaeus then testifies, "But since neither he, nor the chief priests, nor the rulers, nor the eminent of the people, turned to Him [in faith], but, on the contrary, those who sat begging by the highway, the deaf, and the blind, while He was rejected and despised by others, according to what Paul declares, "For ye see your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise men among you, not many noble, not many mighty; but those things of the world which were despised hath God chosen," referring to 1 Corinthians 1:26,28. Irenaeus concludes, "Such souls, therefore, were not superior to others on account of the seed deposited in them, nor on this account were they honoured by the Demiurge."

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus points out the obvious as he affirms, "As to the point, then, that their system is weak and untenable as well as utterly chimerical, enough has been said. For it is not needful, to use a common proverb, that one should drink up the ocean who wishes to learn that its water is salt." Irenaeus then reasons, "But, just as in the case of a statue which is made of clay, but coloured on the outside that it may be thought to be of gold, while it really is of clay, any one who takes out of it a small particle, and thus laying it open reveals the clay, will set free those who seek the truth from a false opinion; in the same way have I (by exposing not a small part only, but the several heads of their system which are of the greatest importance) shown to as many as do not wish wittingly to be led astray, what is wicked, deceitful, seductive, and pernicious, connected with the school of the Valentinians, and all those other heretics who promulgate wicked opinions respecting the Demiurge, that is, the Fashioner and Former of this universe, and who is in fact the only true God—exhibiting, [as I have done,] how easily their views are overthrown."

And in paragraph nine, Irenaeus thunders as he states, "For who that has any intelligence, and possesses only a small proportion of truth, can tolerate them, when they affirm that?"

- "there is another god above the Creator,"

- “and that there is another Monogenes as well as another Word of God, whom also they describe as having been produced in [a state of] degeneracy”;
- “and another Christ, whom they assert to have been formed, along with the Holy Spirit, later than the rest of the Æons;”
- “and another Saviour, who, they say, did not proceed from the Father of all, but was a kind of joint production of those Æons who were formed in [a state of] degeneracy, and that He was produced of necessity on account of this very degeneracy?”

Irenaeus continues to describe the Gnostics’ doctrine as he testifies, “It is thus their opinion that, unless the Æons had been in a state of ignorance and degeneracy, neither Christ, nor the Holy Spirit, nor Horos, nor the Saviour, nor the angels, nor their Mother, nor her seed, nor the rest of the fabric of the world, would have been produced at all;” Irenaeus then points out in rebuttal, “but the universe would have been a desert, and destitute of the many good things which exist in it.” Irenaeus then testifies, “They are therefore not only chargeable with impiety against the Creator, declaring Him the fruit of a defect, but also against Christ and the Holy Spirit, affirming that they were produced on account of that defect; and, in like manner, that the Saviour [was produced] subsequently to [the existence of] that defect. And who will tolerate the remainder of their vain talk, which they cunningly endeavour to accommodate to the parables, and have in this way plunged both themselves, and those who give credit to them, in the profoundest depths of impiety?”

**Commentary:** We must here give credit to Irenaeus here for he has most admirably defended the faith against a heresy that runs very deep in its absurd, weak, untenable, chimerical, and fanciful doctrines. Before commenting, it is good to remember some of the basic tenets of Gnostic teaching which we touched on when we reviewed basic Gnostic beliefs in **Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures** when we discussed **Book 4: Chapter XIX**. Here are the basic tenets of Gnosticism that are stated there:

- Matter is evil and spirit is good.
- The true God, Bythus, relating to the abyss, is unknowable.
- The Demiurge, creator of the earth and God of the Old Testament and of the Jews, is inferior to Bythus.
- The Pleroma is where the aeons dwelt.
- The aeons are beings born of Bythus and a consort.

Now to give some background of Gnostic belief, Irenaeus records of the Gnostics in **Book 1: Chapter I:**

1. They maintain, then, that in the invisible and ineffable heights above there exists a certain perfect, pre-existent Æon,<sup>16</sup> This term Æon (*Aiόv*) seems to have been formed from the words ἀεὶ ὄν, *ever-existing*. “We may take *aiόv*, therefore,” says Harvey (*Irenaeus*, cxix.), “in the Valentinian acceptation of the word, to mean an emanation from the divine substance, subsisting co-ordinately and co-eternally with the Deity, the Pleroma still remaining one.” whom they call Proarche, Propator, and Bythus, and describe as being invisible and incomprehensible. Eternal and unbegotten, he remained throughout innumerable cycles of ages in profound serenity and quiescence. There existed along with him Ennoea, whom they also call Charis and Sige. <sup>17</sup> Sige, however, was no true consort of Bythus, who included in himself the idea of male and female, and was the one cause of all things: comp. Hippolytus, *Philosop.*, vi. 29. There seems to have been considerable disagreement among these heretics as to the completion of the mystical number thirty. Valentinus himself appears to have considered Bythus as a monad, and Sige as a mere nonentity. The two latest Æons, Christ and the Holy Spirit, would then complete the number thirty. But other Gnostic teachers included both Bythus and Sige in that mystical number. At last this Bythus determined to send forth from himself the beginning of all things, and deposited this production (which he had resolved to bring forth) in his contemporary Sige, even as seed is deposited in the womb. She then, having received this seed, and becoming pregnant, gave birth to Nous, who was both similar and equal to him who had produced him, and was alone capable of comprehending his father’s greatness. This Nous they call also Monogenes, and Father, and the Beginning of all Things. Along with him

was also produced Aletheia; and these four constituted the first and first-begotten Pythagorean Tetrad, which they also denominate the root of all things. For there are first Bythus and Sige, and then Nous and Aletheia. And Monogenes, perceiving for what purpose he had been produced, also himself sent forth Logos and Zoe, being the father of all those who were to come after him, and the beginning and fashioning of the entire Pleroma. By the conjunction of Logos and Zoe were brought forth Anthropos and Ecclesia; and thus was formed the first-begotten Ogdoad, the root and substance of all things, called among them by four names, viz., Bythus, and Nous, and Logos, and Anthropos. For each of these is masculo-feminine, as follows: Propator was united by a conjunction with his Ennoea; then Monogenes, that is Nous, with Aletheia; Logos with Zoe, and Anthropos with Ecclesia.

2. These Æons having been produced for the glory of the Father, and wishing, by their own efforts, to effect this object, sent forth emanations by means of conjunction. Logos and Zoe, after producing Anthropos and Ecclesia, sent forth other ten Æons, whose names are the following: Bythius and Mixis, Ageratos and Henosis, Autophyes and Hedone, Acinetos and Syncrasis, Monogenes and Macaria.<sup>18</sup> It may be well to give here the English equivalents of the names of these Æons and their authors. They are as follows: Bythus, Profundity; Proarche, First-Beginning; Propator, First-Father; Ennoea, Idea; Charis, Grace; Sige, Silence; Nous, Intelligence; Aletheia, Truth; Logos, Word; Zoe, Life; Anthropos, Man; Ecclesia, Church; Bythius, Deep; Mixis, Mingling; Ageratos, Undecaying; Henosis, Union; Autophyes, Self-existent; Hedone, Pleasure; Acinetos, Immoveable; Syncrasis, Blending; Monogenes, Only-Begotten; Macaria, Happiness; Paracletus, Advocate; Pistis, Faith; Patricos, Ancestral; Elpis, Hope; Metricos, Metrical; Agape, Love; Ainos, Praise; Synesis, Understanding; Ecclesiasticus, Ecclesiastical; Macariotes, Felicity; Theletos, Desiderated; Sophia, Wisdom. These are the ten Æons whom they declare to have been produced by Logos and Zoe. They then add that Anthropos himself, along with Ecclesia, produced twelve Æons, to whom they give the following names: Paracletus and Pistis, Patricos and Elpis, Metricos and Agape, Ainos and Synesis, Ecclesiasticus and Macariotes, Theletos and Sophia.

3. Such are the thirty Æons in the erroneous system of these men; and they are described as being wrapped up, so to speak, in silence, and known to none [except these professing teachers]. Moreover, they declare that this invisible and spiritual Pleroma of theirs is tripartite, being divided into an Ogdoad, a Decad, and a Duodecad. And for this reason they affirm it was that the “Saviour”—for they do not please to call Him “Lord”—did no work in public during the space of thirty years,<sup>19</sup> Luke 3:23 thus setting forth the mystery of these Æons. They maintain also, that these thirty Æons are most plainly indicated in the parable <sup>20</sup> Matthew 20:1-16 of the labourers sent into the vineyard. For some are sent about the first hour, others about the third hour, others about the sixth hour, others about the ninth hour, and others about the eleventh hour. Now, if we add up the numbers of the hours here mentioned, the sum total will be thirty: for one, three, six, nine, and eleven, when added together, form thirty. And by the hours, they hold that the Æons were pointed out; while they maintain that these are great, and wonderful, and hitherto unspeakable mysteries which it is their special function to develop; and so they proceed when they find anything in the multitude <sup>21</sup> Some omit ἐν πλήθει, while others render the words “a definite number,” thus: “And if there is anything else in Scripture which is referred to by a definite number.” of things contained in the Scriptures which they can adopt and accommodate to their baseless speculations.

To summarize, Bythus is the “certain perfect, pre-existent Æon” who exists “in the invisible and ineffable heights above.” Bythus is “invisible and incomprehensible,” and “eternal and unbegotten,” and he has “remained throughout innumerable cycles of ages in profound serenity and quiescence.” And apparently, according to Irenaeus, the Gnostics believed that there “existed along with him Ennoea, whom they also call Charis and Sige.” Irenaeus then records that, “At last this Bythus determined to send forth from himself the beginning of all things, and deposited this production (which he had resolved to bring forth) in his contemporary Sige, even as seed is deposited in the womb. She then, having received this seed, and becoming pregnant,” she gave birth to Nous and Aletheia. Nous was also called Monogenes, and from Nous and Aletheia came “forth Logos and Zoe.” Nous became “the father of all those who were to come after him, and the beginning and fashioning of the entire Pleroma.” Eventually there were thirty Aeons “in the erroneous system of these men,” who tried to show that this was revealed in the Scriptures as they pointed to the parable of the

laborers in the vineyard in Matthew 20:1-16. They also use certain Greek words such as Logos meaning word, Aletheia meaning truth, Nous meaning mind, Zoe meaning life, and so forth, found in the Scriptures as names of their Aeons, supposing to show more Scriptural support for their scheme.

And in **Book 1: Chapter II**, Irenaeus explains the production of Jesus as follows:

**1.** They proceed to tell us that the Propator of their scheme was known only to Monogenes, who sprang from him; in other words, only to Nous, while to all the others he was invisible and incomprehensible. And, according to them, Nous alone took pleasure in contemplating the Father, and exulting in considering his immeasurable greatness; while he also meditated how he might communicate to the rest of the Aeons the greatness of the Father, revealing to them how vast and mighty he was, and how he was without beginning,—beyond comprehension, and altogether incapable of being seen. But, in accordance with the will of the Father, Sige restrained him, because it was his design to lead them all to an acquaintance with the aforesaid Propator, and to create within them a desire of investigating his nature. In like manner, the rest of the Aeons also, in a kind of quiet way, had a wish to behold the Author of their being, and to contemplate that First Cause which had no beginning.

**2.** But there rushed forth in advance of the rest that Aeon who was much the latest of them, and was the youngest of the Duodecad which sprang from Anthropos and Ecclesia, namely Sophia, and suffered passion apart from the embrace of her consort Theletos. This passion, indeed, first arose among those who were connected with Nous and Aletheia, but passed as by contagion to this degenerate Aeon, who acted under a pretence of love, but was in reality influenced by temerity, because she had not, like Nous, enjoyed communion with the perfect Father. This passion, they say, consisted in a desire to search into the nature of the Father; for she wished, according to them, to comprehend his greatness. When she could not attain her end, inasmuch as she aimed at an impossibility, and thus became involved in an extreme agony of mind, while both on account of the vast profundity as well as the unsearchable nature of the Father, and on account of the love she bore him, she was ever stretching herself forward, there was danger lest she should at last have been absorbed by his sweetness, and resolved into his absolute essence, unless she had met with that Power which supports all things, and preserves them outside of the unspeakable greatness. This power they term Horos; by whom, they say, she was restrained and supported; and that then, having with difficulty been brought back to herself, she was convinced that the Father is incomprehensible, and so laid aside her original design, along with that passion which had arisen within her from the overwhelming influence of her admiration.

**3.** But others of them fabulously describe the passion and restoration of Sophia as follows: They say that she, having engaged in an impossible and impracticable attempt, brought forth an amorphous substance, such as her female nature enabled her to produce. **22** Alluding to the Gnostic notion that, in generation, the male gives form, the female substance. Sophia, therefore, being a female Aeon, gave to her enthymesis substance alone, without form. Comp. Hippol., *Philosop.*, vi. 30. When she looked upon it, her first feeling was one of grief, on account of the imperfection of its generation, and then of fear lest this should end **23** Some render this obscure clause, "lest it should never attain perfection," but the above seems preferable. See Hippol., vi. 31, where the fear referred to is extended to the whole Pleroma. her own existence. Next she lost, as it were, all command of herself, and was in the greatest perplexity while endeavouring to discover the cause of all this, and in what way she might conceal what had happened. Being greatly harassed by these passions, she at last changed her mind, and endeavoured to return anew to the Father. When, however, she in some measure made the attempt, strength failed her, and she became a suppliant of the Father. The other Aeons, Nous in particular, presented their supplications along with her. And hence they declare material substance **24** "The reader will observe the parallel; as the enthymesis of Bythus produced intelligent substance, so the enthymesis of Sophia resulted in the formation of material substance."—Harvey. had its beginning from ignorance and grief, and fear and bewilderment.

**4.** The Father afterwards produces, in his own image, by means of Monogenes, the above-mentioned Horos, without conjunction, **25** Some propose reading these words in the dative rather than the accusative, and thus to make them refer

to the *image of the Father*, masculo-feminine. For they maintain that sometimes the Father acts in conjunction with Sige, but that at other times he shows himself independent both of male and female. They term this Horos both Stauros and Lytrotes, and Carpistes, and Horothetes, and Metagoges. 26 The meaning of these terms is as follows: Stauros means primarily *a stake*, and then *a cross*; Lytrotes is *a Redeemer*; Carpistes, according to Grabe, means *an Emancipator*, according to Neander *a Reaper*; Horothetes is *one that fixes boundaries*; and Metagoges is explained by Neander as being *one that brings back*, from the supposed function of Horos, to bring back all that sought to wander from the special grade of being assigned them. And by this Horos they declare that Sophia was purified and established, while she was also restored to her proper conjunction. For her enthymesis (or inborn idea) having been taken away from her, along with its supervening passion, she herself certainly remained within the Pleroma; but her enthymesis, with its passion, was separated from her by Horos, fenced. 27 The common text has ἀποστερηθῆναι, *was deprived*; but Billius proposes to read ἀποσταυρωθῆναι, in conformity with the ancient Latin version, “*crucifixam.*” off, and expelled from that circle. This enthymesis was, no doubt, a spiritual substance, possessing some of the natural tendencies of an Æon, but at the same time shapeless and without form, because it had received nothing. 28 That is, had not shared in any male influence, but was a purely female production. And on this account they say that it was an imbecile and feminine production. 29 Literally, “fruit.” Harvey remarks on this expression, “that what we understand by *emanations*, the Gnostic described as spiritual *fructification*; and as the seed of a tree is in itself, even in the embryo state, so these various Æons, as existing always in the divine nature, were co-eternal with it.”

5. After this substance had been placed outside of the Pleroma of the Æons, and its mother restored to her proper conjunction, they tell us that Monogenes, acting in accordance with the prudent forethought of the Father, gave origin to another conjugal pair, namely Christ and the Holy Spirit (lest any of the Æons should fall into a calamity similar to that of Sophia), for the purpose of fortifying and strengthening the Pleroma, and who at the same time completed the number of the Æons. Christ then instructed them as to the nature of their conjunction, and taught them that those who possessed a comprehension of the Unbegotten were sufficient for themselves. 30 This is an exceedingly obscure and difficult passage. Harvey’s rendering is: “For, say they, Christ taught them the nature of their copulæ, (namely,) that being cognisant of their (limited) perception of the Unbegotten they needed no higher knowledge, and that He enounced,” etc. the words seem scarcely capable of yielding this sense: we have followed the interpretation of Billius. He also announced among them what related to the knowledge of the Father,—namely, that he cannot be understood or comprehended, nor so much as seen or heard, except in so far as he is known by Monogenes only. And the reason why the rest of the Æons possess perpetual existence is found in that part of the Father’s nature which is incomprehensible; but the reason of their origin and formation was situated in that which may be comprehended regarding him, that is, in the Son. 31 Both the text and meaning are here very doubtful. Some think that the import of the sentence is, that the knowledge that the Father is incomprehensible secured the continued safety of the Æons, while the same knowledge conferred upon Monogenes his origin and form. Christ, then, who had just been produced, effected these things among them.

6. But the Holy Spirit 32 The Greek text inserts ἐν, *one*, before “Holy Spirit.” taught them to give thanks on being all rendered equal among themselves, and led them to a state of true repose. Thus, then, they tell us that the Æons were constituted equal to each other in form and sentiment, so that all became as Nous, and Logos, and Anthropos, and Christus. The female Æons, too, became all as Aletheia, and Zoe, and Spiritus, and Ecclesia. Everything, then, being thus established, and brought into a state of perfect rest, they next tell us that these beings sang praises with great joy to the Propator, who himself shared in the abounding exaltation. Then, out of gratitude for the great benefit which had been conferred on them, the whole Pleroma of the Æons, with one design and desire, and with the concurrence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, their Father also setting the seal of His approval on their conduct, brought together whatever each one had in himself of the greatest beauty and preciousness; and uniting all these contributions so as skilfully to blend the whole, they produced, to the honour and glory of Bythus, a being of most perfect beauty, the very star of the Pleroma, and the perfect fruit [of it], namely Jesus. Him they also speak of under the name of Saviour, and Christ, and patronymically, Logos, and Everything, because He was formed from the contributions of all. And then we are told that, by way of honour, angels of the same nature as Himself were simultaneously produced, to act as His body-guard.

To summarize, **Book 1: Chapter II** is a description of the “passion and restoration of Sophia,” who was evidently saved from being expelled from the Pleroma by Horos, whom “the Father afterwards produces, in his own image, by means of Monogenes.” This Horos “purified and established” Sophia, who “having engaged in an impossible and impracticable attempt, brought forth an amorphous substance, such as her female nature enabled her to produce.” Irenaeus defines “enthymesis” as he explains in paragraph 4, “For her enthymesis (or inborn idea) having been taken away from her, along with its supervening passion, she herself certainly remained within the Pleroma; but her enthymesis, with its passion, was separated from her by Horos, fenced off, and expelled from that circle. This enthymesis was, no doubt, a spiritual substance, possessing some of the natural tendencies of an Æon, but at the same time shapeless and without form, because it had received nothing. And on this account they say that it was an imbecile and feminine production.” This is important because this enthymesis is also termed Achamoth as we read in **Book 1: Chapter IV**, “The enthymesis of that Sophia who dwells above, which they also term Achamoth, <sup>63</sup> This term, though Tertullian declares himself to have been ignorant of its derivation, was evidently formed from the Hebrew word חוכמה —chockmah, *wisdom*, being removed from the Pleroma, together with her passion, they relate to have, as a matter of course, become violently excited in those places of darkness and vacuity [to which she had been banished].”

Irenaeus continues in **Book 1: Chapter II**, paragraph 5 and records, “After this substance had been placed outside of the Pleroma of the Æons, and its mother restored to her proper conjunction, they tell us that Monogenes, acting in accordance with the prudent forethought of the Father, gave origin to another conjugal pair, namely Christ and the Holy Spirit (lest any of the Æons should fall into a calamity similar to that of Sophia), for the purpose of fortifying and strengthening the Pleroma, and who at the same time completed the number of the Æons.” Irenaeus concludes in paragraph 6, “Then, out of gratitude for the great benefit which had been conferred on them, the whole Pleroma of the Æons, with one design and desire, and with the concurrence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, their Father also setting the seal of His approval on their conduct, brought together whatever each one had in himself of the greatest beauty and preciousness; and uniting all these contributions so as skilfully to blend the whole, they produced, to the honour and glory of Bythus, a being of most perfect beauty, the very star of the Pleroma, and the perfect fruit [of it], namely Jesus. Him they also speak of under the name of Saviour, and Christ, and patronymically, Logos, and Everything, because He was formed from the contributions of all. And then we are told that, by way of honour, angels of the same nature as Himself were simultaneously produced, to act as His body-guard.”

And in **Book 1: Chapter V**, Irenaeus explains the formation of the Demiurge as follows:

1. These three kinds of existence, then, having, according to them, been now formed,—one from the passion, which was matter; a second from the conversion, which was animal; and the third, that which she (Achamoth) herself brought forth, which was spiritual,—she next addressed herself to the task of giving these form. But she could not succeed in doing this as respected the spiritual existence, because it was of the same nature with herself. She therefore applied herself to give form to the animal substance which had proceeded from her own conversion, and to bring forth to light the instructions of the Saviour. <sup>78</sup> “In order that,” says Grabe, “this formation might not be merely *according to essence*, but also *according to knowledge*, as the formation of the mother Achamoth was characterized above.” And they say she first formed out of animal substance him who is Father and King of all things, both of these which are of the same nature with himself, that is, animal substances, which they also call right-handed, and those which sprang from the passion, and from matter, which they call left-handed. For they affirm that he formed all the things which came into existence after him, being secretly impelled thereto by his mother. From this circumstance they style him Metropator, <sup>79</sup> Metropator, as proceeding only from his mother Achamoth: Apator, as having no male progenitor. Apator, Demiurge, and Father, saying that he is Father of the substances on the right hand, that is, of the animal, but Demiurge of those on the left, that is, of the material, while he is at the same time the king of all. For they say that this Enthymesis, desirous of making all things to the honour of the Æons, formed images of them, or rather that the Saviour <sup>80</sup> Harvey remarks, “The Valentinian Saviour being an aggregation of all the æonic perfections, the images of them were reproduced by the spiritual conception of Achamoth beholding the glory of Σωτήρ. The reader will not fail to observe that every successive development is the reflex of a more divine

antecedent." did so through her instrumentality. And she, in the image 81 The relation indicated seems to be as follows: Achamoth, after being formed "according to knowledge," was outside of the Pleroma as the image of Propator, the Demiurge was as Nous, and the mundane angels which he formed corresponded to the other *Æons of the Pleroma*. of the invisible Father, kept herself concealed from the Demiurge. But he was in the image of the only-begotten Son, and the angels and archangels created by him were in the image of the rest of the *Æons*.

2. They affirm, therefore, that he was constituted the Father and God of everything outside of the Pleroma, being the creator of all animal and material substances. For he it was that discriminated these two kinds of existence hitherto confused, and made corporeal from incorporeal substances, fashioned things heavenly and earthly, and became the Framer (Demiurge) of things material and animal, of those on the right and those on the left, of the light and of the heavy, and of those tending upwards as well as of those tending downwards. He created also seven heavens, above which they say that he, the Demiurge, exists. And on this account they term him Hebdomas, and his mother Achamoth Ogdoads, preserving the number of the first-begotten and primary Ogdoad as the Pleroma. They affirm, moreover, that these seven heavens are intelligent, and speak of them as being angels, while they refer to the Demiurge himself as being an angel bearing a likeness to God; and in the same strain, they declare that Paradise, situated above the third heaven, is a fourth angel possessed of power, from whom Adam derived certain qualities while he conversed with him.

3. They go on to say that the Demiurge imagined that he created all these things of himself, while he in reality made them in conjunction with the productive power of Achamoth. He formed the heavens, yet was ignorant of the heavens; he fashioned man, yet knew not man; he brought to light the earth, yet had no acquaintance with the earth; and, in like manner, they declare that he was ignorant of the forms of all that he made, and knew not even of the existence of his own mother, but imagined that he himself was all things. They further affirm that his mother originated this opinion in his mind, because she desired to bring him forth possessed of such a character that he should be the head and source of his own essence, and the absolute ruler over every kind of operation [that was afterwards attempted]. This mother they also call Ogdoad, Sophia, Terra, Jerusalem, Holy Spirit, and, with a masculine reference, Lord. 82 "Achamoth by these names must be understood to have an intermediate position between the divine prototypal idea and creation: she was the reflex of the one, and therefore *masculo-feminine*; she was the pattern to be realized in the latter, and therefore was named *Earth and Jerusalem*." —Harvey. Her place of habitation is an intermediate one, above the Demiurge indeed, but below and outside of the Pleroma, even to the end. 83 But after the consummation here referred to, Achamoth regained the Pleroma: see below, chap. vii. 1.

4. As, then, they represent all material substance to be formed from three passions, viz., fear, grief, and perplexity, the account they give is as follows: Animal substances originated from fear and from conversion; the Demiurge they also describe as owing his origin to conversion; but the existence of all the other animal substances they ascribe to fear, such as the souls of irrational animals, and of wild beasts, and men. And on this account, he (the Demiurge), being incapable of recognising any spiritual essences, imagined himself to be God alone, and declared through the prophets, "I am God, and besides me there is none else." 84 Isaiah xlvi. 5, 6, Isaiah xlvi. 9. They further teach that the spirits of wickedness derived their origin from grief. Hence the devil, whom they also call Cosmocrator (the ruler of the world), and the demons, and the angels, and every wicked spiritual being that exists, found the source of their existence. They represent the Demiurge as being the son of that mother of theirs (Achamoth), and Cosmocrator as the creature of the Demiurge. Cosmocrator has knowledge of what is above himself, because he is a *spirit* of wickedness; but the Demiurge is ignorant of such things, inasmuch as he is merely *animal*. Their mother dwells in that place which is above the heavens, that is, in the intermediate abode; the Demiurge in the heavenly place, that is, in the hebdomad; but the Cosmocrator in this our world. The corporeal elements of the world, again, sprang, as we before remarked, from bewilderment and perplexity, as from a more ignoble source. Thus the earth arose from her state of stupor; water from the agitation caused by her fear; air from the consolidation of her grief; while fire, producing death and corruption, was inherent in all these elements, even as they teach that ignorance also lay concealed in these three passions.

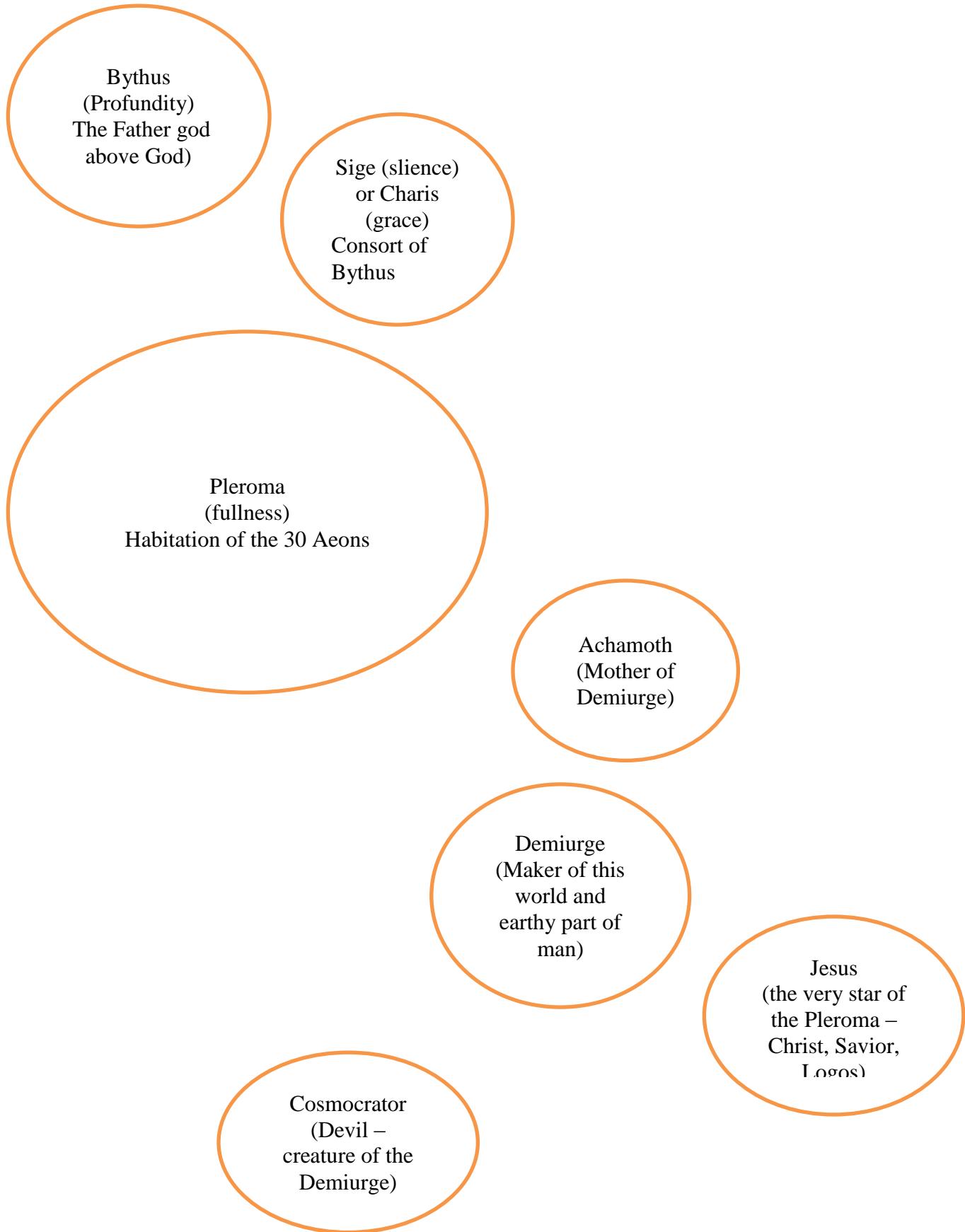
5. Having thus formed the world, he (the Demiurge) also created the earthly [part of] man, not taking him from this dry earth, but from an invisible substance consisting of fusible and fluid matter, and then afterwards, as they define the process, breathed into him the animal part of his nature. It was this latter which was created after his image and likeness. The material part, indeed, was very near to God, so far as the image went, but not

of the same substance with him. The animal, on the other hand, was so in respect to likeness; and hence his substance was called the spirit of life, because it took its rise from a spiritual outflowing. After all this, he was, they say, enveloped all round with a covering of skin; and by this they mean the outward sensitive flesh.

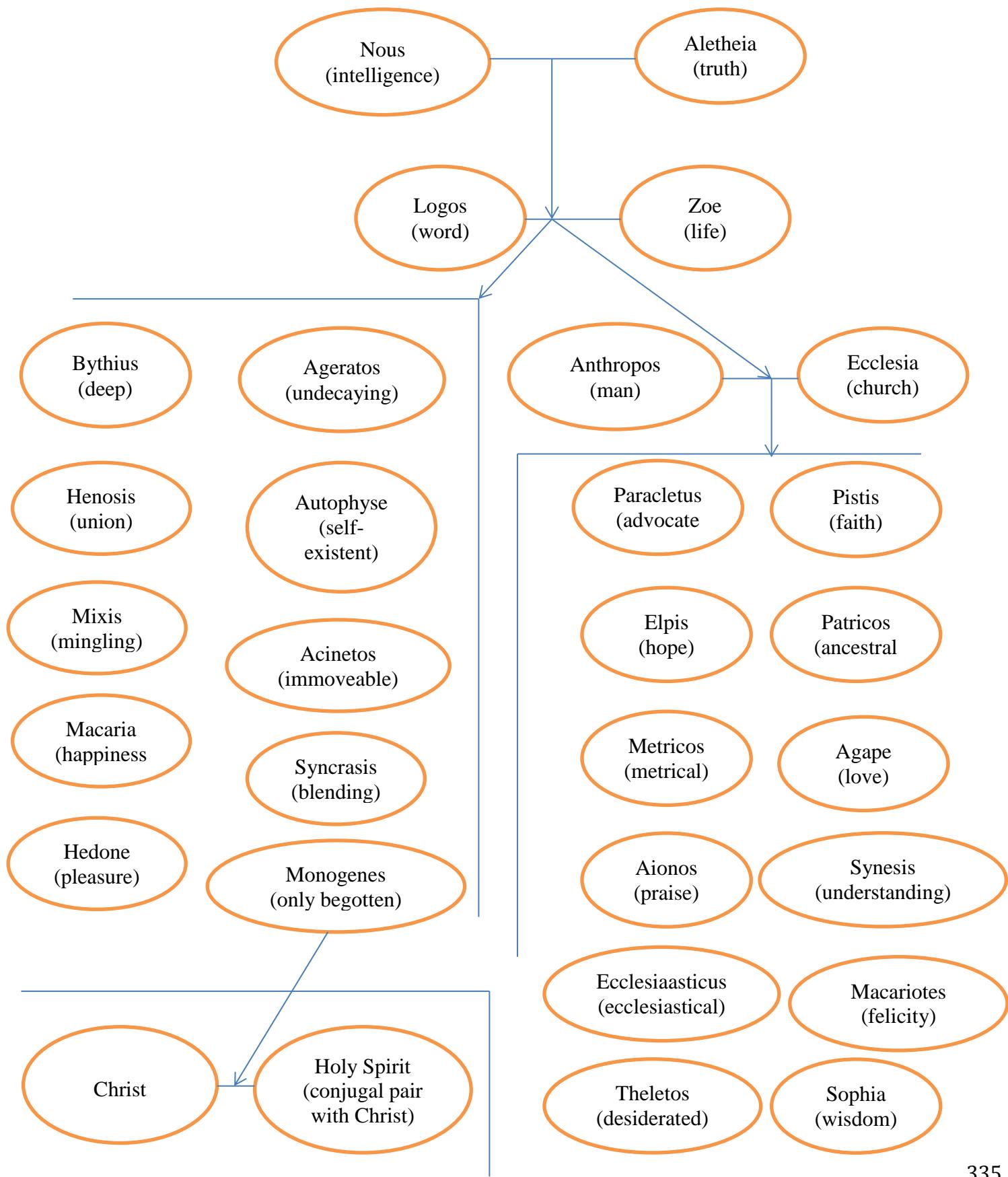
6. But they further affirm that the Demiurge himself was ignorant of that offspring of his mother Achamoth, which she brought forth as a consequence of her contemplation of those angels who waited on the Saviour, and which was, like herself, of a spiritual nature. She took advantage of this ignorance to deposit it (her production) in him without his knowledge, in order that, being by his instrumentality infused into that animal soul proceeding from himself, and being thus carried as in a womb in this material body, while it gradually increased in strength, might in course of time become fitted for the reception of perfect rationality. 85 An account is here given of the infusion of a spiritual principle into mankind. The Demiurge himself could give no more than the animal soul; but, unwittingly to himself, he was made the instrument of conveying that spiritual essence from Achamoth, which had grown up within her from the contemplation of those angels who accompanied the Saviour. Thus it came to pass, then, according to them, that, without any knowledge on the part of the Demiurge, the man formed by his inspiration was at the same time, through an unspeakable providence, rendered a spiritual man by the simultaneous inspiration received from Sophia. For, as he was ignorant of his mother, so neither did he recognise her offspring. This [offspring] they also declare to be the Ecclesia, an emblem of the Ecclesia which is above. This, then, is the kind of man whom they conceive of: he has his animal soul from the Demiurge, his body from the earth, his fleshy part from matter, and his spiritual man from the mother Achamoth.

Now putting all of this loosely together, we have the following scheme painted by Irenaeus of the Gnostic doctrines.

# Gnostic Scheme



# Aeons in the Pleroma



Now, with this as background, we return to paragraph one of this **Book 2: Chapter XIX**. Irenaeus asks, “But what sort of talk also is this concerning their seed—that it was conceived by the mother according to the configuration of those angels who wait upon the Saviour,—shapeless, without form, and imperfect; and that it was deposited in the Demiurge without his knowledge, in order that through his instrumentality it might attain to perfection and form in that soul which he had, [so to speak,] filled with seed?” Irenaeus concludes that to teach “This is to affirm, in the first place, that those angels who wait upon their Saviour are imperfect, and without figure or form; if indeed that which was conceived according to their appearance was generated any such kind of being [as has been described].”

Irenaeus is here restating a belief of the Gnostics, that the mother, Achamoth, conceived seed “according to the configuration of those angels who wait upon the Saviour,—shapeless, without form, and imperfect.” This seed according to Gnostic belief apparently “was deposited in the Demiurge without his knowledge.” This was so that “through his instrumentality it might attain to perfection and form in that soul which he had, [so to speak,] filled with seed.” Irenaeus then reasons that, if the seed needed to attain to perfection, then it was imperfect. Therefore, if it was conceived according to the appearance of the angels, then this is the same as affirming “in the first place, that those angels who wait upon their Saviour are imperfect, and without figure or form; if indeed that which was conceived according to their appearance was generated any such kind of being [as has been described].”

To summarize, in paragraph one we learn that the Demiurge received a deposit of seed within himself without his knowledge, and that he would deposit a seed in a human being, and that it would ripen into perfection so to speak, and form in the soul he had filled with seed, that is, that he had deposited seed in.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “Then, in the next place, as to their saying that the Creator was ignorant of that deposit of seed which took place into him, and again, of that impartation of seed which was made by him to man, their words are futile and vain, and are in no way susceptible of proof.” Irenaeus then reasons, “For how could he have been ignorant of it, if that seed had possessed any substance and peculiar properties? If, on the other hand, it was without substance and without quality, and so was really nothing, then, as a matter of course, he was ignorant of it. For those things which have a certain motion of their own, and quality, either of heat, or swiftness, or sweetness, or which differ from others in brilliance, do not escape the notice even of men, since they mingle in the sphere of human action: far less can they [be hidden from] God, the Maker of this universe.” Remember that “God, the Maker of this universe,” according to the Gnostic doctrine, is the Demiurge, and inferior god to Bythus.

Irenaeus then concludes, “With reason, however, [is it said, that] their seed was not known to Him, since it is without any quality of general utility, and without the substance requisite for any action, and is, in fact, a pure nonentity.” Irenaeus then testifies, “It really seems to me, that, with a view to such opinions, the Lord expressed Himself thus: “For every idle word that men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment,” referring to Matthew 12:36.

To summarize, here in paragraph two, Irenaeus pulls apart the Gnostic scheme. He asks how could the Creator, that is the Demiurge, be ignorant of seed being placed within him, and even more, how could he be ignorant “of that impartation of seed which was made by him to man?” Irenaeus says that “their words are futile and vain, and are in no way susceptible of proof.” Even men, he says, notice that which is “in the sphere of human action.” How then could “they [be hidden from] God, the Maker of this universe?” And so Irenaeus concludes that these are teachers “who fill men’s ears with idle talk,” and they shall “stand at the throne of judgment,” and “render an account for those things which they have vainly imagined and falsely uttered against the Lord,” referring to Jesus’ words in **Matthew 12 (KJV):36** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Bravo Irenaeus! Continuing in paragraph two, we see that Irenaeus then judges, “For all teachers of a like character to these, who fill men’s ears with idle talk, shall, when they stand at the throne of judgment, render an account for those things which they have vainly imagined and falsely uttered against the Lord, proceeding, as they have done, to such a height of audacity as to declare of themselves that, on account of the substance of their seed, they are acquainted with the spiritual Pleroma, because that man who dwells within reveals to them the true Father; for the animal nature required to be disciplined by means of the senses.” We will give more description of “the animal nature” Irenaeus mentions here shortly.

Irenaeus then records, “But [they hold that] the Demiurge, while receiving into himself the whole of this seed, through its being deposited in him by the Mother, still remained utterly ignorant of all things, and had no understanding of anything connected with the Pleroma.”

Again to summarize, in order to show the absolute absurdity of the Gnostic teachings, Irenaeus reasons how could man be aware of the seed placed in him, and yet “the Demiurge, while receiving into himself the whole of this seed, through its being deposited in him by the Mother, still remained utterly ignorant of all things, and had no understanding of anything connected with the Pleroma.” The Pleroma again was where the aeons dwelt.

Now we note that the Demiurge was a term borrowed from Greek philosophy by the Gnostics. In the Columbia Encyclopedia, we find the following definition:

**demiurge** (dĕm’ēürj’) [Gr.,=workman, craftsman], name given by Plato in a mythological passage in the Timaeus to the creator God. In Gnosticism the Demiurge, creator of the material world, was not God but the Archon, or chief of the lowest order of spirits or aeons. According to the Gnostics, the Demiurge was able to endow man only with psyche (sensual soul)—the pneuma (rational soul) having been added by God. The Gnostics identified the Demiurge with the Jehovah of the Hebrews. In philosophy the term is used to denote a divinity who is the builder of the universe rather than its creator. **The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed. | 2012 | Copyright.**

Now with regard to “the animal nature” Irenaeus mentions above, we note that Irenaeus says in this paragraph two that the Gnostics “proceeding, as they have done, to such a height of audacity as to declare of themselves that, on account of the substance of their seed, they are acquainted with the spiritual Pleroma, because that man who dwells within reveals to them the true Father; for the animal nature required to be disciplined by means of the senses.”

This “animal nature” is referred to by Irenaeus in **Book 1: Chapter VI** as follows:

1. There being thus three kinds of substances, they declare of all that is material (which they also describe as being “on the left hand”) that it must of necessity perish, inasmuch as it is incapable of receiving any *afflatus* of incorruption. As to every animal existence (which they also denominate “on the right hand”), they hold that, inasmuch as it is a mean between the spiritual and the material, it passes to the side to which inclination draws it. Spiritual substance, again, they describe as having been sent forth for this end, that, being here united with that which is animal, it might assume shape, the two elements being simultaneously subjected to the same discipline. And this they declare to be “the salt” **86 Matthew v. 13, 14.** and “the light of the world.” For the animal substance had need of training by means of the outward senses; and on this account they affirm that the world was created, as well as that the Saviour came to the animal substance (which was possessed of free-will), that He might secure for it salvation. For they affirm that He received the first-fruits of those whom He was to save [as follows], from Achamoth that which was spiritual, while He was invested by the Demiurge with the animal Christ, but was begirt **87** “The doctrine of Valentinus, therefore,” says Harvey, “as regards the human nature of Christ, was essentially Docetic. His body was *animal*, but not *material*, and only visible and tangible as having been formed κατ’ οἰκονομίαν and κατεσκευασμένον ἀρρόήτῳ τέχνῃ.” by a [special] dispensation with a body endowed with an animal nature, yet constructed with unspeakable skill, so that it might be visible and tangible, and capable of enduring suffering. At the same time, they deny that He assumed anything material [into His nature], since indeed matter is incapable of salvation. They further hold that the consummation of all things will take place when all that is spiritual has been formed and perfected by Gnosis (knowledge); and by this they mean spiritual men who have attained to the perfect knowledge of God, and been initiated into these mysteries by Achamoth. And they represent themselves to be these persons.

2. Animal men, again, are instructed in animal things; such men, namely, as are established by their works, and by a mere faith, while they have not perfect knowledge. We of the Church, they say, are these persons. **88** [That is, *carnal*; men of the carnal mind, *psychic* instead of *pneumatic*. **Rom. viii. 6.**] Wherefore also they maintain that good works are necessary to us, for that otherwise it is impossible we should be saved. But as to themselves, they hold that they shall be entirely and undoubtedly saved, not by means of conduct, but

because they are spiritual by nature. 89 On account of what they had received from Achamoth. For, just as it is impossible that material substance should partake of salvation (since, indeed, they maintain that it is incapable of receiving it), so again it is impossible that spiritual substance (by which they mean themselves) should ever come under the power of corruption, whatever the sort of actions in which they indulged. For even as gold, when submersed in filth, loses not on that account its beauty, but retains its own native qualities, the filth having no power to injure the gold, so they affirm that they cannot in any measure suffer hurt, or lose their spiritual substance, whatever the material actions in which they may be involved.

3. Wherefore also it comes to pass, that the “most perfect” among them addict themselves without fear to all those kinds of forbidden deeds of which the Scriptures assure us that “they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” 90 Galatians v. 21. For instance, they make no scruple about eating meats offered in sacrifice to idols, imagining that they can in this way contract no defilement. Then, again, at every heathen festival celebrated in honour of the idols, these men are the first to assemble; and to such a pitch do they go, that some of them do not even keep away from that bloody spectacle hateful both to God and men, in which gladiators either fight with wild beasts, or singly encounter one another. Others of them yield themselves up to the lusts of the flesh with the utmost greediness, maintaining that carnal things should be allowed to the carnal nature, while spiritual things are provided for the spiritual. Some of them, moreover, are in the habit of defiling those women to whom they have taught the above doctrine, as has frequently been confessed by those women who have been led astray by certain of them, on their returning to the Church of God, and acknowledging this along with the rest of their errors. Others of them, too, openly and without a blush, having become passionately attached to certain women, seduce them away from their husbands, and contract marriages of their own with them. Others of them, again, who pretend at first to live in all modesty with them as with sisters, have in course of time been revealed in their true colours, when the sister has been found with child by her [pretended] brother.

4. And committing many other abominations and impieties, they run us down (who from the fear of God guard against sinning even in thought or word) as utterly contemptible and ignorant persons, while they highly exalt themselves, and claim to be perfect, and the elect seed. For they declare that we simply receive grace for use, wherefore also it will again be taken away from us; but that they themselves have grace as their own special possession, which has descended from above by means of an unspeakable and indescribable conjunction; and on this account more will be given them. 91 Comp. Luke xix. 26. They maintain, therefore, that in every way it is always necessary for them to practise the mystery of conjunction. And that they may persuade the thoughtless to believe this, they are in the habit of using these very words, “Whosoever being *in* this world does not so love a woman as to obtain possession of her, is not of the truth, nor shall attain to the truth. But whosoever being *of* 92 Comp. John xvii. 16. The Valentinians, while *in the world*, claimed to be not *of the world*, as animal men were. this world has intercourse with woman, shall not attain to the truth, because he has so acted under the power of concupiscence.” On this account, they tell us that it is necessary for us whom they call *animal* men, and describe as being *of* the world, to practise continence and good works, that by this means we may attain at length to the intermediate habitation, but that to them who are called “the spiritual and perfect” such a course of conduct is not at all necessary. For it is not conduct of any kind which leads into the Pleroma, but the seed sent forth thence in a feeble, immature state, and here brought to perfection.

Irenaeus records that the Gnostics believed that there were three kinds of substances, the material, the spiritual, and the animal. The animal “is a mean between the spiritual and the material,” and “it passes to the side to which inclination draws it.” The Gnostics describe the spiritual substance “as having been sent forth for this end, that, being here united with that which is animal, it might assume shape, the two elements being simultaneously subjected to the same discipline.” Irenaeus says that they declare this to be “the salt” and “the light of the world.” The Gnostics believed that “the animal substance had need of training by means of the outward senses; and on this account they affirm that the world was created, as well as that the Saviour came to the animal substance (which was possessed of free-will), that He might secure for it salvation.” The Gnostics, according to Irenaeus, also deny that Christ “assumed anything material [into His nature], since indeed matter is incapable of salvation.” Irenaeus here states also that, “They further hold that the consummation of all things will take place when all that is spiritual has been formed and perfected by Gnosis (knowledge); and by this they

mean spiritual men who have attained to the perfect knowledge of God, and been initiated into these mysteries by Achamoth. And they represent themselves to be these persons."

So we could liken the "animal" to the soul of man, that is, the unseen parts of man relating to the mind, will, emotions, and conscience. The flesh would relate to the "material" part of man which cannot be saved according to Gnostic teaching.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus explains the Gnostic beliefs as he records, "And that they are the truly "spiritual," inasmuch as a certain particle of the Father of the universe has been deposited in their souls, since, according to their assertions, they have souls formed of the same substance as the Demiurge himself, yet that he, although he received from the Mother, once for all, the whole [of the divine] seed, and possessed it in himself, still remained of an animal nature, and had not the slightest understanding of those things which are above, which things they boast that they themselves understand, while they are still on earth;—does not this crown all possible absurdity?" Irenaeus thus concludes, "For to imagine that the very same seed conveyed knowledge and perfection to the souls of these men, while it only gave rise to ignorance in the God who made them, is an opinion that can be held only by those utterly frantic, and totally destitute of common sense."

Now we must agree with Irenaeus that the assertions of the Gnostics "crown all possible absurdity." For "to imagine that the very same seed conveyed knowledge and perfection to the souls of these men, while it only gave rise to ignorance in the God who made them, is an opinion that can be held only by those utterly frantic, and totally destitute of common sense," as Irenaeus says.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus argues, "Further, it is also a most absurd and groundless thing for them to say that the seed was, by being thus deposited, reduced to form and increased, and so was prepared for all the reception of perfect rationality." Irenaeus then reasons, "For there will be in it an admixture of matter—that substance which they hold to have been derived from ignorance and defect; [and this will prove itself] more apt and useful than was the light of their Father, if indeed, when born, according to the contemplation of that [light], it was without form or figure, but derived from this [matter], form, and appearance, and increase, and perfection."

To summarize, Irenaeus points out that, "if indeed, when born, according to the contemplation of that [light]," the seed "was without form or figure, but derived from this [matter], form, and appearance, and increase, and perfection," it will be more "useful than was the light of their Father."

Irenaeus further reasons, "For if that light which proceeds from the Pleroma was the cause to a spiritual being that it possessed neither form, nor appearance, nor its own special magnitude, while its descent to this world added all these things to it, and brought it to perfection, then a sojourn here (which they also term darkness) would seem much more efficacious and useful than was the light of their Father."

This we would call common sense. Bravo Irenaeus!

Irenaeus then rightly asks, "But how can it be regarded as other than ridiculous, to affirm that their mother ran the risk of being almost extinguished in matter, and was almost on the point of being destroyed by it, had she not then with difficulty stretched herself outwards, and leaped, [as it were,] out of herself, receiving assistance from the Father; but that her seed increased in this same matter, and received a form, and was made fit for the reception of perfect rationality; and this, too, while "bubbling up" among substances dissimilar and unfamiliar to itself, according to their own declaration that the earthly is opposed to the spiritual, and the spiritual to the earthly?" Irenaeus then concludes as he asks, "How, then, could "a little particle," as they say, increase, and receive shape, and reach perfection, in the midst of substances contrary to and unfamiliar to itself?"

Yes, to summarize again, Irenaeus asks "how can it be regarded as other than ridiculous, to affirm that," the "earthly is opposed to the spiritual, and the spiritual to the earthly," and yet assert that "a little particle" could "increase, and receive shape, and reach perfection, in the midst of substances contrary to and unfamiliar to itself?"

Then in paragraph five, Irenaeus asks, "Did their mother, when she beheld the angels, bring forth the seed all at once, or only one by one [in succession]?" Irenaeus reasons that "If she brought forth the whole simultaneously and at once, that which was thus produced cannot now be of an infantile character: its descent, therefore, into those men who now exist must be superfluous." In this regard the editor's note, 443, is helpful as it explains, "That is, there could be no need for its descending into them that it might increase, receive form, and

thus be prepared for the reception of perfect reason.” The editor’s note makes perfect sense.

Irenaeus then argues, “But if one by one, then she did not form her conception according to the figure of those angels whom she beheld; for, contemplating them all together, and once for all, so as to conceive by them, she ought to have brought forth once for all the offspring of those from whose forms she had once for all conceived.”

In paragraph five, Irenaeus does battle with the wind. Whether the mother in the Gnostic scheme gave birth all at once or one by one is a question to which there is no answer. This argument probably made more sense to those who were immediately impacted by the Gnostic teaching in Irenaeus’ time.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus, being most familiar with the Gnostic doctrine, asks, “Why was it, too, that, beholding the angels along with the Saviour, she did indeed conceive their images, but not that of the Saviour, who is far more beautiful than they?” Irenaeus chides the Gnostics as he again asks, “Did He not please her; and did she not, on that account, conceive after His likeness?” Irenaeus then adds, “How was it, too, that the Demiurge, whom they can call an animal being, having, as they maintain, his own special magnitude and figure, was produced perfect as respects his substance; while that which is spiritual, which also ought to be more effective than that which is animal, was sent forth imperfect, and he required to descend into a soul, that in it he might obtain form, and thus becoming perfect, might be rendered fit for the reception of perfect reason?”

Irenaeus thus concludes, that “If, then, he obtains form in mere earthly and animal men, he can no longer be said to be after the likeness of angels whom they call lights, but [after the likeness] of those men who are here below.” Irenaeus then explains, “For he will not possess in that case the likeness and appearance of angels, but of those souls in whom also he receives shape;” Irenaeus then reasons, “just as water when poured into a vessel takes the form of that vessel, and if on any occasion it happens to congeal in it, it will acquire the form of the vessel in which it has thus been frozen, since souls themselves possess the figure of the body [in which they dwell]; for they themselves have been adapted to the vessel [in which they exist], as I have said before.” Of course, Irenaeus makes perfect sense here.

Again Irenaeus reasons, “If, then, that seed [referred to] is here solidified and formed into a definite shape, it will possess the figure of a man, and not the form of the angels.” Irenaeus rightly asks, “How is it possible, therefore, that that seed should be after images of the angels, seeing it has obtained a form after the likeness of men?” And again Irenaeus asks, “Why, again, since it was of a spiritual nature, had it any need of descending into flesh?” Irenaeus then concludes, “For what is carnal stands in need of that which is spiritual, if indeed it is to be saved, that in it it may be sanctified and cleared from all impurity, and that what is mortal may be swallowed up by immortality; but that which is spiritual has no need whatever of those things which are here below. For it is not we who benefit it, but it that improves us.”

In paragraph six, the gist of Irenaeus’ argument is summed up when he points out that, “If, then, that seed [referred to] is here solidified and formed into a definite shape, it will possess the figure of a man, and not the form of the angels.” How then “is it possible, therefore,” Irenaeus asks, “that that seed should be after images of the angels, seeing it has obtained a form after the likeness of men?” Again, Irenaeus combats this heresy as he asks, “Why, again, since it was of a spiritual nature, had it any need of descending into flesh?” Irenaeus points out that “what is carnal stands in need of that which is spiritual, if indeed it is to be saved, that in it it may be sanctified and cleared from all impurity, and that what is mortal may be swallowed up by immortality; but that which is spiritual has no need whatever of those things which are here below.” We don’t benefit the spiritual but the spiritual benefits us, Irenaeus argues.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus reasons, “Still more manifestly is that talk of theirs concerning their seed proved to be false, and that in a way which must be evident to every one, by the fact that they declare those souls which have received seed from the Mother to be superior to all others; wherefore also they have been honoured by the Demiurge, and constituted princes, and kings, and priests. For if this were true, the high priest Caiaphas, and Annas, and the rest of the chief priests, and doctors of the law, and rulers of the people, would have been the first to believe in the Lord, agreeing as they did with respect to that relationship; and even before them should have been Herod the king.” Irenaeus then testifies, “But since neither he, nor the chief priests, nor the rulers, nor the eminent of the people, turned to Him [in faith], but, on the contrary, those who sat begging by the highway, the deaf, and the blind, while He was rejected and despised by others, according to what Paul declares, “For ye see your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise men among you, not many noble, not

many mighty; but those things of the world which were despised hath God chosen,” referring in context to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):26** For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Irenaeus rightly concludes, “Such souls, therefore, were not superior to others on account of the seed deposited in them, nor on this account were they honoured by the Demiurge.”

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus points out the obvious as he affirms, “As to the point, then, that their system is weak and untenable as well as utterly chimerical, enough has been said. For it is not needful, to use a common proverb, that one should drink up the ocean who wishes to learn that its water is salt.” Irenaeus then reasons, “But, just as in the case of a statue which is made of clay, but coloured on the outside that it may be thought to be of gold, while it really is of clay, any one who takes out of it a small particle, and thus laying it open reveals the clay, will set free those who seek the truth from a false opinion; in the same way have I (by exposing not a small part only, but the several heads of their system which are of the greatest importance) shown to as many as do not wish wittingly to be led astray, what is wicked, deceitful, seductive, and pernicious, connected with the school of the Valentinians, and all those other heretics who promulgate wicked opinions respecting the Demiurge, that is, the Fashioner and Former of this universe, and who is in fact the only true God—exhibiting, [as I have done,] how easily their views are overthrown.”

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus boldly declares that the Gnostic “system is weak and untenable as well as utterly chimerical.” Irenaeus says that the Gnostics are covered on the outside with gold but on the inside they are statues made of clay. While they are thought to be of gold, anyone who examines even “a small particle” of their teaching will reveal the clay, and “will set free those who seek the truth from a false opinion.” Again, Irenaeus boldly declares that “in the same way have I (by exposing not a small part only, but the several heads of their system which are of the greatest importance) shown to as many as do not wish wittingly to be led astray, what is wicked, deceitful, seductive, and pernicious, connected with the school of the Valentinians, and all those other heretics who promulgate wicked opinions respecting the Demiurge, that is, the Fashioner and Former of this universe, and who is in fact the only true God.” Irenaeus testifies that their views are easily overthrown, just as he has done here in this chapter of his writing.

And in paragraph nine, Irenaeus thunders as he states, “For who that has any intelligence, and possesses only a small proportion of truth, can tolerate them, when they affirm that:”

- “there is another god above the Creator;”
- “and that there is another Monogenes as well as another Word of God, whom also they describe as having been produced in [a state of] degeneracy”;
- “and another Christ, whom they assert to have been formed, along with the Holy Spirit, later than the rest of the Æons;”
- “and another Saviour, who, they say, did not proceed from the Father of all, but was a kind of joint production of those Æons who were formed in [a state of] degeneracy, and that He was produced of necessity on account of this very degeneracy?”

Irenaeus continues to describe the Gnostics’ doctrine as he testifies, “It is thus their opinion that, unless the Æons had been in a state of ignorance and degeneracy, neither Christ, nor the Holy Spirit, nor Horos, nor the Saviour, nor the angels, nor their Mother, nor her seed, nor the rest of the fabric of the world, would have been produced at all;” Irenaeus then points out in rebuttal, “but the universe would have been a desert, and destitute of the many good things which exist in it.” Irenaeus then testifies, “They are therefore not only chargeable with impiety against the Creator, declaring Him the fruit of a defect, but also against Christ and the Holy Spirit, affirming that they were produced on account of that defect; and, in like manner, that the Saviour [was produced] subsequently to [the existence of] that defect. And who will tolerate the remainder of their vain talk,

which they cunningly endeavour to accommodate to the parables, and have in this way plunged both themselves, and those who give credit to them, in the profoundest depths of impiety?"

Wikipedia has the following for the word, Monogenes.

**Monogenēs** (μονογενῆς) is a Greek word which may be used both as an adjective monogenēs pais only child, or only legitimate child, special child, and also on its own as a noun; o monogenēs "the only one", or "the only legitimate child".

Wikipedia has the following for the word, Horos.

**Horos** - A figure entirely peculiar to Valentinian Gnosticism is that of Horos (the Limiter). The name is perhaps an echo of the Egyptian Horus. The task of Horos is to separate the fallen Aeons from the upper world of Aeons. At the same time he becomes a kind of world-creative power, who in this capacity helps to construct an ordered world out of Sophia and her passions. He is also called Stauros (cross), and we frequently meet with references to the figure of Stauros. Speculations about the Stauros are older than Christianity, and a Platonic conception may have been at work here.

Irenaeus boldly declares that the Gnostics "are therefore not only chargeable with impiety against the Creator, declaring Him the fruit of a defect, but also against Christ and the Holy Spirit, affirming that they were produced on account of that defect; and, in like manner, that the Saviour [was produced] subsequently to [the existence of] that defect." Irenaeus adds that with "their vain talk, which they cunningly endeavour to accommodate to the parables," the Gnostics have also "plunged both themselves, and those who give credit to them, in the profoundest depths of impiety." Bravo Irenaeus! He has defended the faith admirably here.

## Chapter 17: The Passion of Christ

### Book 2: Chapter XX.—Futility of the arguments adduced to demonstrate the sufferings of the twelfth Æon, from the parables, the treachery of Judas, and the passion of our Saviour.

1. That they improperly and illogically apply both the parables and the actions of the Lord to their falsely-devised system, I prove as follows: They endeavour, for instance, to demonstrate that passion which, they say, happened in the case of the twelfth Æon, from this fact, that the passion of the Saviour was brought about by the twelfth apostle, and happened in the twelfth month. For they hold that He preached [only] for one year after His baptism. They maintain also that the same thing was clearly set forth in the case of her who suffered from the issue of blood. For the woman suffered during twelve years, and through touching the hem of the Saviour's garment she was made whole by that power which went forth from the Saviour, and which, they affirm, had a previous existence. For that Power who suffered was stretching herself outwards and flowing into immensity, so that she was in danger of being dissolved into the general substance [of the Æons]; but then, touching the primary Tetrad, which is typified by the hem of the garment, she was arrested, and ceased from her passion.

2. Then, again, as to their assertion that the passion of the twelfth Æon was proved through the conduct of Judas, how is it possible that Judas can be compared [with this Æon] as being an emblem of her—he who was expelled from the number of the twelve,<sup>450</sup> Or, "from the twelfth number"—the twelfth position among the apostles. And never restored to his place? For that Æon, whose type they declare Judas to be, after being separated from her Enthymesis, was restored or recalled [to her former position]; but Judas was deprived [of his office], and cast out, while Matthias was ordained in his place, according to what is written, "And his bishopric let another take."<sup>451</sup> Acts i. 20, from Ps. cix. 8. They ought therefore to maintain that the twelfth Æon was cast out of the Pleroma, and that another was produced, or sent forth to fill her place; if, that is to say, she is pointed at in Judas. Moreover, they tell us that it was the Æon herself who suffered, but Judas was the betrayer, [and not the sufferer.] Even they themselves acknowledge that it was the suffering Christ, and not Judas, who came to [the endurance of] passion. How, then, could Judas, the betrayer of Him who had to suffer for our salvation, be the type and image of that Æon who suffered?

3. But, in truth, the passion of Christ was neither similar to the passion of the Æon, nor did it take place in similar circumstances. For the Æon underwent a passion of dissolution and destruction, so that she who suffered was in danger also of being destroyed. But the Lord, our Christ, underwent a valid, and not a merely<sup>452</sup> The text is here uncertain. Most editions read "et quæ non cederet," but Harvey prefers "quæ non accederet" (for "accideret"), and remarks that the corresponding Greek would be καὶ οὐ τυχόν, which we have translated as above. accidental passion; not only was He Himself not in danger of being destroyed, but He also established fallen man<sup>453</sup> "Corruptum hominem." by His own strength, and recalled him to incorruption. The Æon, again, underwent passion while she was seeking after the Father, and was not able to find Him; but the Lord suffered that He might bring those who have wandered from the Father, back to knowledge and to His fellowship. The search into the greatness of the Father became to her a passion leading to destruction; but the Lord, having suffered, and bestowing the knowledge of the Father, conferred on us salvation. Her passion, as they declare, gave origin to a female offspring, weak, infirm, unformed, and ineffective; but His passion gave rise to strength and power. For the Lord, through means of suffering, "ascending into the lofty place, led captivity captive, gave gifts to men,"<sup>454</sup> Ps. Ixviii. 18; Eph. iv. 8. and conferred on those that believe in Him the power "to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy,"<sup>455</sup> Luke x. 19; [Mark xvi. 17, 18.] that is, of the leader of apostasy. Our Lord also by His passion destroyed death, and dispersed error, and put an end to corruption, and destroyed ignorance, while He manifested life and revealed truth, and bestowed the gift of incorruption. But their Æon, when she had suffered, established<sup>456</sup> Though the reading "substituit" is found in all the mss.

and editions, it has been deemed corrupt, and “sustinuit” has been proposed instead of it. Harvey supposes it the equivalent of ὑπέστησε, and then somewhat strangely adds “for ἀπέστησε.” There seems to us no difficulty in the word, and consequently no necessity for change. ignorance, and brought forth a substance without shape, out of which all material works have been produced—death, corruption, error, and such like.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus explains the Gnostic heresy as he says, “That they improperly and illogically apply both the parables and the actions of the Lord to their falsely-devised system, I prove as follows:”

- “They endeavour, for instance, to demonstrate that passion which, they say, happened in the case of the twelfth Æon, from this fact, that the passion of the Saviour was brought about by the twelfth apostle, and happened in the twelfth month.”
- “For they hold that He preached [only] for one year after His baptism.”
- “They maintain also that the same thing was clearly set forth in the case of her who suffered from the issue of blood. For the woman suffered during twelve years, and through touching the hem of the Saviour’s garment she was made whole by that power which went forth from the Saviour, and which, they affirm, had a previous existence. For that Power who suffered was stretching herself outwards and flowing into immensity, so that she was in danger of being dissolved into the general substance [of the Æons]; but then, touching the primary Tetrad, which is typified by the hem of the garment, she was arrested, and ceased from her passion.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus debunks the Gnostic heresy about Judas as he explains, “Then, again, as to their assertion that the passion of the twelfth Æon was proved through the conduct of Judas, how is it possible that Judas can be compared [with this Æon] as being an emblem of her—he who was expelled from the number of the twelve, And never restored to his place? For that Æon, whose type they declare Judas to be, after being separated from her Enthymesis, was restored or recalled [to her former position]; but Judas was deprived [of his office], and cast out, while Matthias was ordained in his place, according to what is written, “And his bishopric let another take,” referring to Acts 1:20 and Psalm 109:8.

Irenaeus continues to show the unreasonableness of Gnostic teaching as he explains further, “They ought therefore to maintain that the twelfth Æon was cast out of the Pleroma, and that another was produced, or sent forth to fill her place; if, that is to say, she is pointed at in Judas. Moreover, they tell us that it was the Æon herself who suffered, but Judas was the betrayer, [and not the sufferer.] Even they themselves acknowledge that it was the suffering Christ, and not Judas, who came to [the endurance of] passion. How, then, could Judas, the betrayer of Him who had to suffer for our salvation, be the type and image of that Æon who suffered?”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus contrasts the “passion of Christ” with “the passion of the Aeon,” as he testifies, “But, in truth, the passion of Christ was neither similar to the passion of the Æon, nor did it take place in similar circumstances.” Irenaeus then makes the following observations about the differences between the “the passion of the Aeon” and the “passion of Christ”:

- “For the Æon underwent a passion of dissolution and destruction, so that she who suffered was in danger also of being destroyed. But the Lord, our Christ, underwent a valid, and not a merely accidental passion; not only was He Himself not in danger of being destroyed, but He also established fallen man by His own strength, and recalled him to incorruption.”
- “The Æon, again, underwent passion while she was seeking after the Father, and was not able to find Him; but the Lord suffered that He might bring those who have wandered from the Father, back to knowledge and to His fellowship.”
- “The search into the greatness of the Father became to her a passion leading to destruction; but the Lord, having suffered, and bestowing the knowledge of the Father, conferred on us salvation.”
- “Her passion, as they declare, gave origin to a female offspring, weak, infirm, unformed, and

ineffective; but His passion gave rise to strength and power. For the Lord, through means of suffering, “ascending into the lofty place, led captivity captive, gave gifts to men,” referring to Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8, “and conferred on those that believe in Him the power “to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy,” referring to Luke 10:19 and Mark 16:17-18, “that is, of the leader of apostasy.”

- “Our Lord also by His passion destroyed death, and dispersed error, and put an end to corruption, and destroyed ignorance, while He manifested life and revealed truth, and bestowed the gift of incorruption. But their *Æon*, when she had suffered, ignorance, and brought forth a substance without shape, out of which all material works have been produced—death, corruption, error, and such like.”

**Commentary:** Here Irenaeus points out the error of the Gnostics in trying to compare the Passion of Jesus Christ to the 12<sup>th</sup> Aeon. We could summarize the difference simply by saying that Jesus succeeded and the 12<sup>th</sup> Aeon failed.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus explains the Gnostic heresy as he says, “That they improperly and illogically apply both the parables and the actions of the Lord to their falsely-devised system, I prove as follows:”

- “They endeavour, for instance, to demonstrate that passion which, they say, happened in the case of the twelfth *Æon*, from this fact, that the passion of the Saviour was brought about by the twelfth apostle, and happened in the twelfth month.”

There is no record in the Scriptures that Judas was the twelfth apostle.

- “For they hold that He preached [only] for one year after His baptism.”

The testimony of Scripture as we shall see in the following, **Chapter 18: Irenaeus Believed Jesus’ Age about 50 Years**, is that Jesus preached for three and one half years.

- “They maintain also that the same thing was clearly set forth in the case of her who suffered from the issue of blood. For the woman suffered during twelve years, and through touching the hem of the Saviour’s garment she was made whole by that power which went forth from the Saviour, and which, they affirm, had a previous existence. For that Power who suffered was stretching herself outwards and flowing into immensity, so that she was in danger of being dissolved into the general substance [of the *Æons*]; but then, touching the primary Tetrad, which is typified by the hem of the garment, she was arrested, and ceased from her passion.”

Nothing is said in the Scripture about an Aeon, or a Tetrad. The passage they are referring to is recorded in **Matthew 9 (NIV):20** Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.” 22 Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed at that moment.

Jesus points out that it was her faith that had made her well. The woman had faith in Jesus’ power to heal her. This is also stated in **Mark 5 (NIV):25** And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. 30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” 31 “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’” 32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to

her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Mark reveals that the power to heal the woman proceeded from Jesus. Though Jesus did not see the woman when she touched his garment, He perceived that power had gone out of Him. The woman herself came to Jesus and told Him the truth. She admitted that it was Jesus whom she had had faith in to heal her. No mention of Tetrads or Aeons is to be found here. The Scripture says that it was the Holy Spirit who empowered Jesus as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV):38** How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus debunks the Gnostic heresy about Judas as he explains, “Then, again, as to their assertion that the passion of the twelfth *Æon* was proved through the conduct of Judas, how is it possible that Judas can be compared [with this *Æon*] as being an emblem of her—he who was expelled from the number of the twelve, And never restored to his place? For that *Æon*, whose type they declare Judas to be, after being separated from her Enthymesis, was restored or recalled [to her former position]; but Judas was deprived [of his office], and cast out, while Matthias was ordained in his place, according to what is written, “And his bishopric let another take,” referring in context to **Acts 1 (KJV):15** And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) 16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. 21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

And to **Psalm 109 (KJV):8** Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

Irenaeus continues to show the unreasonableness of Gnostic teaching as he explains further, “They ought therefore to maintain that the twelfth *Æon* was cast out of the Pleroma, and that another was produced, or sent forth to fill her place; if, that is to say, she is pointed at in Judas. Moreover, they tell us that it was the *Æon* herself who suffered, but Judas was the betrayer, [and not the sufferer.] Even they themselves acknowledge that it was the suffering Christ, and not Judas, who came to [the endurance of] passion. How, then, could Judas, the betrayer of Him who had to suffer for our salvation, be the type and image of that *Æon* who suffered?”

Irenaeus’ argument is valid.

In paragraph three, Ireneaus contrasts the “passion of Christ” with “the passion of the Aeon,” as he testifies, “But, in truth, the passion of Christ was neither similar to the passion of the *Æon*, nor did it take place in similar circumstances.” Ireneaus then makes the following observations about the differences between the “the passion of the Aeon” and the “passion of Christ”:

The following attributes may be discerned concerning the “the passion of the Aeon”:

- the “*Æon* underwent a passion of dissolution and destruction, so that she who suffered was in danger also of being destroyed.”
- The “*Æon*, again, underwent passion while she was seeking after the Father, and was not able to find Him;”
- The “search into the greatness of the Father became to her a passion leading to destruction;”
- “Her passion, as they declare, gave origin to a female offspring, weak, infirm, unformed, and ineffective;”

- their *Æon*, when she had suffered, established ignorance, and brought forth a substance without shape, out of which all material works have been produced—death, corruption, error, and such like.”

The following attributes in contrast may be discerned concerning the “passion of the Christ”:

- the “Lord, our Christ, underwent a valid, and not a merely accidental passion; not only was He Himself not in danger of being destroyed, but He also established fallen man by His own strength, and recalled him to incorruption.”
- the “Lord suffered that He might bring those who have wandered from the Father, back to knowledge and to His fellowship.”
- the “Lord, having suffered, and bestowing the knowledge of the Father, conferred on us salvation.”
- “His passion gave rise to strength and power. For the Lord, through means of suffering, “ascending into the lofty place, led captivity captive, gave gifts to men,” referring to Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8, “and conferred on those that believe in Him the power “to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy,” referring to Luke 10:19 and Mark 16:17-18, “that is, of the leader of apostasy.”
- “Our Lord also by His passion destroyed death, and dispersed error, and put an end to corruption, and destroyed ignorance, while He manifested life and revealed truth, and bestowed the gift of incorruption.”

Irenaeus points out in paragraph three that Jesus’ passion was real. Jesus’ death and resurrection were not a cunningly devised fairy tale as Peter testifies in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):16** For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Being an eyewitness, Peter testifies that he and the other eyewitnesses who have written the Scriptures have the word of prophecy made more sure as we read in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):19** So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one’s own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Peter spoke of things he really saw and heard as an eyewitness. Therefore when he was moved by the Holy Spirit to write his epistles, we do well to pay attention to him as he says, to a lamp shining in a dark place. Peter actually heard Jesus utter the words that Irenaeus refers to in **Luke 10 (NASB):19** "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

These words are echoed in the Gospel of Mark in **Mark 16 (NASB):18** "These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; 19 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

The Lord Jesus accomplished real things as Irenaeus points out when he says, “Our Lord also by His passion destroyed death, and dispersed error, and put an end to corruption, and destroyed ignorance, while He manifested life and revealed truth, and bestowed the gift of incorruption.”

Now Peter also testifies to the writings of Paul as we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):14** Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Irenaeus also refers to Paul when he testifies, “His passion gave rise to strength and power. For the Lord,

through means of suffering, “ascending into the lofty place, led captivity captive, gave gifts to men,” referring in context to **Ephesians 4 (NASB):7** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.” 9 (Now this *expression*, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth to lead those righteous men and women who had died prior to His death on the cross into heaven itself, just as Irenaeus testifies, “For the Lord, through means of suffering, “ascending into the lofty place, led captivity captive, gave gifts to men,” referring to Ephesians 4:8. This is a fulfillment of Psalm 68 which in context reads as in **Psalm 68 (NASB):18** You have ascended on high, You have led captive *Your* captives; You have received gifts among men, Even *among* the rebellious also, that the LORD God may dwell *there*. 19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God *who* is our salvation. Selah. 20 God is to us a God of deliverances; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. 21 Surely God will shatter the head of His enemies, The hairy crown of him who goes on in his guilty deeds.

When the Gnostics interpret the Scriptures in this way, they are like a thief trying to enter by another way, and not by the door as we read in **John 10 (NIV):1** “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” 6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. 7 Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. 11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

The Gnostics, just like thieves and robbers, have lied in wait to deceive by using Christian phrases out of context. Their words sound holy but they have taken Biblical terms completely out of context and used them to have an appearance of godliness, as it were in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

## Chapter 18: Irenaeus Believed Jesus' Age about 50 Years

**Book 2: Chapter XXII.—The thirty Æons are not typified by the fact that Christ was baptized in His thirtieth year: He did not suffer in the twelfth month after His baptism, but was more than fifty years old when He died.**

...

4. Being thirty years old when He came to be baptized, and then possessing the full age of a Master, 3131 Or, "teacher," *magistri*. He came to Jerusalem, so that He might be properly acknowledged 3132 Harvey strangely remarks here, that "the reading *audiret*, followed by Massuet, makes no sense." He gives *audiretur* in his text, but proposes to read *ordiretur*. The passage may, however, be translated as above, without departing from the Benedictine reading *audiret*, by all as a Master. For He did not seem one thing while He was another, as those affirm who describe Him as being man only in appearance; but what He was, that He also appeared to be. Being a Master, therefore, He also possessed the age of a Master, not despising or evading any condition of humanity, nor setting aside in Himself that law which He had 3133 "Neque solvens suam legem in se humani generis." Massuet would expunge "suam;" but, as Harvey well observes, "it has a peculiar significance, *nor abrogating his own law.*" appointed for the human race, but sanctifying every age, by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself. For He came to save all through means of Himself—all, I say, who through Him are born again to God 3134 "Renascuntur in Deum." The reference in these words is doubtless to baptism, as clearly appears from comparing book iii. 17, 1.—infants, 3135 It has been remarked by Wall and others, that we have here the statement of a valuable fact as to the baptism of infants in the primitive Church. and children, and boys, and youths, and old men. He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness, and submission; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord. So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise. Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be "the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence," 3136 Col. i. 18. the Prince of life, 3137 Acts iii. 15. existing before all, and going before all. 3138 [That our Lord was *prematurely* old may be inferred from the text which Irenæus regards as proof that he literally lived to be old. St. John viii. 56, 57; comp. Isa. liii. 2.]

5. They, however, that they may establish their false opinion regarding that which is written, "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," maintain that He preached for one year only, and then suffered in the twelfth month. [In speaking thus,] they are forgetful to their own disadvantage, destroying His whole work, and robbing Him of that age which is both more necessary and more honourable than any other; that more advanced age, I mean, during which also as a teacher He excelled all others. For how could He have had disciples, if He did not teach? And how could He have taught, unless He had reached the age of a Master? For when He came to be baptized, He had not yet completed His thirtieth year, but was beginning to be about thirty years of age (for thus Luke, who has mentioned His years, has expressed it: "Now Jesus was, as it were, beginning to be thirty years old," 3139 Luke iii. 23. when He came to receive baptism); and, [according to these men,] He preached only one year reckoning from His baptism. On completing His thirtieth year He suffered, being in fact still a young man, and who had by no means attained to advanced age. Now, that the first stage of early life embraces thirty years, 3140 The Latin text of this clause is, "Quia autem triginta annorum ætas prima indolis est juvenis"—words which it seems almost impossible to translate. Grabe regarded "indolis" as being in the nominative, while Massuet contends it is in the genitive case; and so regarding it, we might translate, "Now that the age of thirty is the first age of the

mind of youth," etc. But Harvey re-translates the clause into Greek as follows: "Οτι δε ή των τριακοντα ετων ήλικια ή πρώτη της διαθέσεως εστι νέας— words which we have endeavoured to render as above. The meaning clearly is, that the age of thirty marked the transition point from youth to maturity. and that this extends onwards to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, [affirming] that John conveyed to them that information. 3141 With respect to this extraordinary assertion of Irenaeus, Harvey remarks: "The reader may here perceive the unsatisfactory character of tradition, where a mere fact is concerned. From reasonings founded upon the evangelical history, as well as from a preponderance of external testimony, it is most certain that our Lord's ministry extended but little over three years; yet here Irenaeus states that it included more than ten years, and appeals to a tradition derived, as he says, from those who had conversed with an apostle" And he remained among them up to the times of Trajan. 3142 Trajan's reign commenced a.d. 98, and St. John is said to have lived to the age of a hundred years. Some of them, moreover, saw not only John, but the other apostles also, and heard the very same account from them, and bear testimony as to the [validity of] the statement. Whom then should we rather believe? Whether such men as these, or Ptolemæus, who never saw the apostles, and who never even in his dreams attained to the slightest trace of an apostle?

**Summary:** In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies that, "Being thirty years old when He came to be baptized," referring to Luke 3:23, "and then possessing the full age of a Master, He came to Jerusalem, so that He might be properly acknowledged by all as a Master." Irenaeus then affirms, "For He did not seem one thing while He was another, as those affirm who describe Him as being man only in appearance; but what He was, that He also appeared to be." Irenaeus then asserts, "Being a Master, therefore, He also possessed the age of a Master, not despising or evading any condition of humanity, nor setting aside in Himself that law which He had appointed for the human race, but sanctifying every age, by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself." Irenaeus then testifies, "For He came to save all through means of Himself—all, I say, who through Him are born again to God—infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men," referring possibly to John 1:12-13. Irenaeus then affirms, "He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness, and submission; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord." Irenaeus then asserts, "So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise." Irenaeus then testifies, "Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be "the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence," referring to Colossians 1:18, "the Prince of life," referring to Acts 3:15, "existing before all, and going before all," referring in part to Colossians 1:17.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies that the Gnostics in order that "they may establish their false opinion regarding that which is written, "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," maintain that He preached for one year only, and then suffered in the twelfth month." Irenaeus then argues, "[In speaking thus,] they are forgetful to their own disadvantage, destroying His whole work, and robbing Him of that age which is both more necessary and more honourable than any other; that more advanced age, I mean, during which also as a teacher He excelled all others. For how could He have had disciples, if He did not teach? And how could He have taught, unless He had reached the age of a Master? For when He came to be baptized, He had not yet completed His thirtieth year, but was beginning to be about thirty years of age (for thus Luke, who has mentioned His years, has expressed it: "Now Jesus was, as it were, beginning to be thirty years old," when He came to receive baptism)," referring to Luke 3:23. Irenaeus continues as he says, "and, [according to these men,] He preached only one year reckoning from His baptism. On completing His thirtieth year He suffered, being in fact still a young man, and who had by no means attained to advanced age."

Irenaeus then argues, "Now, that the first stage of early life embraces thirty years, and that this extends

onwards to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, [affirming] that John conveyed to them that information. And he remained among them up to the times of Trajan. Some of them, moreover, saw not only John, but the other apostles also, and heard the very same account from them, and bear testimony as to the [validity of] the statement. Whom then should we rather believe? Whether such men as these, or Ptolemæus, who never saw the apostles, and who never even in his dreams attained to the slightest trace of an apostle?"

**Commentary:** In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies that, "Being thirty years old when He came to be baptized," referring to **Luke 3 (ESV):23** Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli.

Irenaeus continues as he then asserts, "and then possessing the full age of a Master, He came to Jerusalem, so that He might be properly acknowledged by all as a Master." Irenaeus then affirms, "For He did not seem one thing while He was another, as those affirm who describe Him as being man only in appearance; but what He was, that He also appeared to be." Irenaeus then asserts, "Being a Master, therefore, He also possessed the age of a Master, not despising or evading any condition of humanity, nor setting aside in Himself that law which He had appointed for the human race, but sanctifying every age, by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself." That is, Irenaeus is saying that, because Jesus was a Master teacher, it goes without saying that he was the age of a master. However, we note that Jesus was the teacher because He is the Son of God, and not because He was of mature in age.

Irenaeus then testifies, "For He came to save all through means of Himself—all, I say, who through Him are born again to God—infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men," referring possibly to **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Irenaeus then affirms, "He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness, and submission; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord." It is true that He came to save all ages, every man, woman, and child. He is our example no matter what our age.

Irenaeus then asserts, "So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise."

While it is true that Jesus sanctified every age of man or woman, it is not true that he reached the age of fifty as we shall see.

Irenaeus then testifies, "Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be "the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence," referring to **Colossians 1 (ESV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, "the Prince of life," referring in context to **Acts 3 (ESV):14** But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

Irenaeus again testifies as he concludes, "existing before all, and going before all," referring in part to **Colossians 1 (ESV):17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies that the Gnostics in order that "they may establish their false opinion regarding that which is written, "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," maintain that He preached for one year only, and then suffered in the twelfth month." Apparently the Gnostics were taking Jesus' words in Luke, chapter 4, out of context. The verse reads in context as in **Luke 4 (KJV):17** And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent

me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke is referring to **Isaiah 61 (KJV):1** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

The Gnostics were saying that because Jesus was proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, He therefore preached for only one year. This is false as we shall see.

Irenaeus then argues, “[In speaking thus,] they are forgetful to their own disadvantage, destroying His whole work, and robbing Him of that age which is both more necessary and more honourable than any other; that more advanced age, I mean, during which also as a teacher He excelled all others. For how could He have had disciples, if He did not teach? And how could He have taught, unless He had reached the age of a Master? For when He came to be baptized, He had not yet completed His thirtieth year, but was beginning to be about thirty years of age (for thus Luke, who has mentioned His years, has expressed it: “Now Jesus was, as it were, beginning to be thirty years old,” when He came to receive baptism),” referring again to **Luke 3 (NASB):23** When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph.

Irenaeus then continues as he says, “and, [according to these men,] He preached only one year reckoning from His baptism. On completing His thirtieth year He suffered, being in fact still a young man, and who had by no means attained to advanced age.”

Irenaeus then argues from the traditions of his time, “Now, that the first stage of early life embraces thirty years, and that this extends onwards to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, [affirming] that John conveyed to them that information.”

Irenaeus does not supply us with any first hand accounts to support this assertion. He continues as he again asserts, “And he remained among them up to the times of Trajan. Some of them, moreover, saw not only John, but the other apostles also, and heard the very same account from them, and bear testimony as to the [validity of] the statement. Whom then should we rather believe? Whether such men as these, or Ptolemaeus, who never saw the apostles, and who never even in his dreams attained to the slightest trace of an apostle?”

We will see here very clearly how much of a grip tradition had on the thinking of Irenaeus and the Church in Irenaeus’ time.

Now here in paragraph five, Irenaeus believes Jesus reached almost 50 years old and he bases this assertion on the Gospel of John as we read in **John 8 (NASB):57** So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

At least Irenaeus in part uses Scripture references to support his contention. He argues that to be a teacher, one would have to have reached close to 50 years of age. With men, this is often true, especially in Irenaeus’ time. However, Jesus was not dependent on man for His message or His wisdom. Therefore He did not need years of study to validate His message. He Himself said His words were not His own but His Father’s as in **John 17 (NASB):8** for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

Again, Jesus told us that His words and teaching were not His but the Father’s as we read in **John 7 (NASB):16** So Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 17 "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. 18 "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

His words came from the Holy Spirit as we see in **John 3 (NASB):34** "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.

Besides this, a thorough reading of the New Testament reveals Jesus to have begun his ministry at about 30 years of age and continuing for about 3 ½ years as we read in **Luke 3 (ESV):23** Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli.

We know that John the Baptist was born about 6 months prior to Jesus for the angel says to Mary in **Luke 1 (ESV):36** And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

As Jesus was ministering, and before John was put in prison, the Scripture records in **Luke 7 (NIV):18** The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, 19 calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” 20 And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’” 21 In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. 22 And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. 23 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” 24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. 26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is he of whom it is written, “‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’”

Speaking of John, Luke looks ahead to his imprisonment as we read in **Luke 3 (KJV):18** And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. 19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

But Luke then looks back at when Jesus came to be baptized by him in the Jordan as in **Luke 3 (KJV):21** Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Luke then comes current and describes how Jesus went from the Jordan where John was baptizing to the wilderness for forty days as we read in **Luke 4 (ESV):1** And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.

But then He immediately was led by the Spirit to begin His ministry as Luke continues his narrative in **Luke 4 (KJV):14** And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Jesus Himself also tells us a parable that hints at His age as we see in **Luke 13 (KJV):6** He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

History records that Pontius Pilate's retirement will not allow Jesus to have reached the age of years that would include Him in Trajan's reign who reigned as Roman Emperor from 98 A.D. until his death in 117 A.D. We know that Pilate was relieved from duty in 36 A.D. Jesus had to have been crucified before this. Schaff says, “Pontius Pilate was ten years governor of Judaea, from A.D. 26 to 36. Herod Antipas was deposed by Caligula, A.D. 39. Philip, his brother, died A.D. 34. Consequently, Christ must have died before A.D. 34, at an

age of thirty-three, if we allow three years for his public ministry.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume I, Chapter II, page 121, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff also says that the date of Herod’s death has been “verified by the astronomical calculation of the eclipse of the moon, which took place March 13, A.U. 750, a few days before Herod’s death. Allowing two months or more for the vents between the birth of Christ and the murder of the Innocents by Herod, the Nativity must be put back at least to February or January, A.U. 750 (or B.C. 4), if no earlier.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume I, Chapter II, page 112, Philip P. Schaff.**

But Irenaeus’ history books were not like ours, and he can be forgiven for this misinterpretation. Irenaeus was also fighting the Gnostic heresy, and was earnestly contending for the faith. One of his shields was a little wobbly. It is better now.

One more thing we should note. Jesus’ authority to preach and teach was not because of His age, but because of His anointing by the Holy Spirit as we read in **Luke 4 (KJV):32** And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

And in **Luke 4 (KJV):36** And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

And in **John 5 (KJV):36** But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

And again in **John 10 (KJV):25** Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.

And in **John 14 (KJV):10** Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

And in **Acts 10 (KJV):38** How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

## Chapter 19: Spiritual Gifts

### Book 2: Chapter XXXI.—Recapitulation and application of the foregoing arguments.

...

2. Moreover, those also will be thus confuted who belong to Simon and Carpocrates, and if there be any others who are said to perform miracles—who do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind, by means of magical deceptions, and with universal deceit, thus entailing greater harm than good on those who believe them, with respect to the point on which they lead them astray. For they can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons—[none, indeed,] except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity—the entire Church in that particular locality entreating [the boon] with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints—that they do not even believe this can be possibly be done, [and hold] that the resurrection from the dead

3263 Comp. 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. [On the sub-apostolic age and this subject of miracles, Newman, in spite of his sophistical argumentation, may well be consulted for his references, etc. *Translation of the Abbé Fleury*, p. xi. Oxford, 1842.] is simply an acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim.

**Summary:** In this paragraph, Irenaeus warns, “Moreover, those also will be thus confuted who belong to Simon and Carpocrates, and if there be any others who are said to perform miracles—who do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind, by means of magical deceptions, and with universal deceit, thus entailing greater harm than good on those who believe them, with respect to the point on which they lead them astray.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For they can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons—[none, indeed,] except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity—the entire Church in that particular locality entreating [the boon] with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints—that they do not even believe this can be possibly be done, [and hold] that the resurrection from the dead is simply an acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim.”

against deceitful workers who “are said to perform miracles.” These deceivers “do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind.” They use magic and deceit and do “greater harm than good on those who believe them.” These deceitful workers cannot “confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons.” They cannot cure anything, Irenaeus says, except maybe move a demon from one person to another. Neither are they “able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity—the entire Church in that particular locality entreating [the boon] with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man

has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints.” These deceitful workers “do not even believe this can be possibly be done.” That is, these deceivers do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Instead, they hold that it is “simply an acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim.”

**Commentary:** In this paragraph, Irenaeus warns, against deceitful workers who “are said to perform miracles.” These deceivers “do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind.” They use magic and deceit and do “greater harm than good on those who believe them.” These deceitful workers cannot “confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons.” They cannot cure anything, Irenaeus says, except maybe move a demon from one person to another. Neither are they “able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity—the entire Church in that particular locality entreating [the boon] with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints.” These deceitful workers “do not even believe this can be possibly be done.” That is, these deceivers do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Instead, they hold that it is “simply an acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim.”

Irenaeus is here concerned about the source of the power that is effecting the miracle, and rightly so. He testifies here that, “those also will be thus confuted who belong to Simon and Carpocrates, and if there be any others who are said to perform miracles—who do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind, by means of magical deceptions, and with universal deceit, thus entailing greater harm than good on those who believe them, with respect to the point on which they lead them astray.” “Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur,” Irenaeus says. Irenaeus is saying that the power must be of God and it must connect to the truth, and be for the wellbeing of man in order to be effective.

In other words, we must judge the source of the power, whether it is of God or not, in order to trust that it will be effective. Irenaeus says that if it does not meet these criteria, it will do more harm than good. His point is that the remedies done by other sources than God are not “effective remedies.” Those who believe in such powers do not have a firm grasp of what the resurrection means, their resurrection being only “an acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim,” which is a fantasy and no resurrection at all.

While Irenaeus points out the deceptive nature of miracles which are supposedly done by those who would lead people astray from the true God, he also acknowledges and testifies to the power of God working miracles reported in the Gospels, as well as His answers to the prayers of the saints which “has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity.” Irenaeus also acknowledges the presence of demons as he testifies against the deceitful workers saying, “For they can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons—[none, indeed,] except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this.”

Such deceitful workers remind us of Paul’s warning to Timothy in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. **16** But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. **17** And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; **18** Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. **19** Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Now regarding the source of the power of deceitful workers, in the Book of Acts we see an example of such a demonic source of power in Simon Magus, but note that Simon repented and believed the Gospel as we read in **Acts 8 (KJV):9** But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: **10** To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. **11** And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. **12** But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both

men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

Luke tells us here that Simon himself believed, and he was baptized as well. Luke continues his narrative in **Acts 8 (KJV)**:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the LORD for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

Simon seems to have repented as we see here that he asks Peter for prayer to be forgiven of his sin.

Another example of a demonic source of power is found in the Scriptures when Barnabas and Paul were sent out by the Holy Spirit on a missionary journey as in **Acts 13 (KJV)**:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. 6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withheld them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. 10 And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Elymas the magician withheld the work of the Lord and sought to turn people away from the faith. Hopefully, the judgment of God resulted in his repentance.

On Paul's second missionary journey we see another instance of demonic power when Paul and Silas encounter a girl with a spirit of divination as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV)**:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Paul cast out the spirit of divination in the name of Jesus Christ. This freed the girl for a time. We don't know if she truly repented or a worse thing happened to her. However, by casting out the spirit, God opened another door in their ministry as is recorded in **Acts 16 (KJV)**:19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, 20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that

the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

The casting out of the spirit of divination ultimately resulted in the jailer's salvation and his whole household. This was an instance of the spiritual gift of working of miracles exercised by Paul. That is, Paul had the gift of the Spirit to work the miracle of casting out a demon, for this cannot be done by human strength alone.

It is helpful to know a little about demon possession. In this story in the Gospel of Luke, a man had a spirit that caused him to be mute, and Jesus uses this event to teach us about demons as we read in **Luke 11 (KJV):14** And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. 15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. 16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. 17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. 18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. 19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. 20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. 21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. 23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. 24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. 25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. 26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

In this passage, when the demon left the man, he was able to speak. Jesus, in answer to some of the crowd's claim that He cast out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons, said that Satan's kingdom could not stand if Satan is casting out Satan so to speak. Jesus describes demon possession as a strong man overpowering another man and taking the spoils. Jesus then says that He casts out demons by the finger of God. By this He meant the Spirit of God. He then warns us that after the demon, or strong man, is cast out, he may come back if we don't walk in obedience to the Lord and the word of God. Our last state in that case would be worse than the first. Jesus was real.

We note that Ireneaeus does testify that bodily infirmity has often been cured and even resurrection from the dead "has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity—the entire Church in that particular locality entreating [the boon] with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints."

The Holy Spirit was still manifesting in the time of Irenaeus, according to Irenaeus' testimony.

## **Book 2: Chapter XXXII.—Further exposure of the wicked and blasphemous doctrines of the heretics.**

...

4. If, however, they maintain that the Lord, too, performed such works simply in appearance, we shall refer them to the prophetic writings, and prove from these both that all things were thus 3274 **That is, as being done *in reality*, and not in appearance,** predicted regarding Him, and did take place undoubtedly, and that He is the only Son of God. Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up,

and remained 3275 Harvey here notes: “The reader will not fail to remark this highly interesting testimony, that the divine χαρίσματα bestowed upon the infant Church were not wholly extinct in the days of Irenaeus. Possibly the venerable Father is speaking from his own personal recollection of some who had been raised from the dead, and had continued for a time living witnesses of the efficacy of Christian faith.” [See cap. xxxi., *supra*.] among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practising deception upon any, nor taking any reward 3276 Comp. *Acts viii. 9, 18.* from them [on account of such miraculous interpositions]. For as she has received freely 3277 *Matt. x. 8.* from God, freely also does she minister [to others].

**Summary:** In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “If, however, they maintain that the Lord, too, performed such works simply in appearance, we shall refer them to the prophetic writings, and prove from these both that all things were thus predicted regarding Him, and did take place undoubtedly, and that He is the only Son of God.” Irenaeus elaborates as he further testifies, “For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years.” Irenaeus then asks as he testifies, “And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practising deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them [on account of such miraculous interpositions]. For as she has received freely from God, freely also does she minister [to others],” referring to Matthew 10:8.

**Commentary:** Irenaeus again testifies that the Holy Spirit was very much present in the church of his day, as he begins by arguing in defense of the faith here in paragraph four, “If, however, they maintain that the Lord, too, performed such works simply in appearance, we shall refer them to the prophetic writings, and prove from these both that all things were thus predicted regarding Him, and did take place undoubtedly, and that He is the only Son of God.” Irenaeus gives strong testimony to his faith when he says, “He is the only Son of God.”

Irenaeus then also testifies that evil spirits evidently were still around as well, for such believers were driving them out, as he records, “For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church.”

Not only so, but Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years.”

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Irenaeus then testifies speaking of the Church worldwide, “For as she has received freely from God, freely also does she minister [to others],” referring to **Matthew 10 (KJV):8** Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Irenaeus is testifying to the current operation by the Church worldwide of the gifts of the Holy Spirit of God.

Irenaeus here points to the number of times and ways the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been exercised throughout the world by believers. We must agree with Irenaeus for Jesus Himself said that this would happen in **John 14 (KJV):12** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Since a gift of the Spirit is something we could not do without His enablement, we note that there are nine such spiritual gifts mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

In verse 7 above, it is called a “manifestation of the Spirit.” That is, the Spirit is present during the operation of the gift, and though He is unseen, the evidence of His presence is revealed by the working of the gift He gives the one exercising it.

Irenaeus notes that “some do certainly and truly drive out devils,” which is a gift of the Spirit, that is, the working of miracles. “Others have foreknowledge of things to come,” which is a gift of the Spirit, the word of wisdom since it relates to the future. Others “see visions,” which would also be a gift of the Spirit. This would also be one of the revelation gifts, either the word of wisdom or the word of knowledge. An example of the word of knowledge is seen in **Acts 9 (KJV):10** And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

When the Lord revealed where Paul was staying, this was a word of knowledge. That is, it is a fact revealed by God that Ananias could not have known without the Spirit of God revealing it to him.

As we continue to read in Acts, we see the results of Ananias’ obedience of faith in **Acts 9 (KJV):13** Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies that others “utter prophetic expressions,” which is also a gift of the Spirit, that is, prophecy. Vine’s says that the word “prophecy” “signifies the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God (pro, forth, phemi, to speak).” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 221.**

That is, we could say the to prophesy means to “speak for another,” and in this case, to speak for God, or to be God’s mouthpiece. This gift is not so much for the instruction of believers, but for edification, exhortation, and comfort as Paul instructs in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Irenaeus continues as he further testifies that “Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole,” which is a gift of the Spirit, that is, the gifts of healing. And Irenaeus further

testifies, "Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years," which is also a gift of the Spirit, the working of miracles.

These are manifestations of the Spirit, and not in any way human abilities. A human ability is something that we can do apart from anyone else, like sweeping the floor, doing the dishes, driving a car. Though these may be acts of serving, we don't need the Holy Spirit's help to do these things. Spiritual gifts are abilities of the Spirit that we could not do on our own without His help. As an example of this we could look at the gift of prophecy. The Old Testament prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **21** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Holy men of God spoke as they were moved or prompted by the Holy Spirit. Then in the New Testament the same principle applies. However, the apostles in the early church were eyewitnesses and therefore had the prophetic word more sure as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):16** For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. **17** For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **18** And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. **19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

The apostles were the authors of the New Testament because of this very fact. We who come after the apostolic period do not prophesy with the same authority of Scripture. However there is still a place for the gift of prophecy in the sense of edification, admonition or exhortation, and consolation or comfort as Paul teaches in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):1** Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. **2** For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. **3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. **4** He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. **5** I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

The church needs edifying and building up today, just as much as it ever did. And all ministry in the Church should be done by the Holy Spirit. Though preaching is not mentioned as a spiritual gift, it should be done by the Holy Spirit as we read in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):10** Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: **11** Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. **12** Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

It is the Spirit of Christ speaking through us that wins souls. This is all new to us when we are just saved. At first we have an awareness of another world that we never really knew existed before. Our vision now extends vertically and not just horizontally as it was when we were unsaved. But when we have faith in Jesus Christ and are born of the Spirit, we are actually made alive in our spirit and we begin to be aware of the presence of God in our lives. As we read or hear teaching from the word of God, our faith grows. As we apply the word of God to our lives and begin to live by its principles, the awareness of God's presence in our lives and in others grows. At the same time, we are conscious that there is evil in the world, and the presence of evil will cause something to stir in our spirit as well. Gradually, we learn that we do not have to fear this awareness. As we realize that Satan is just a dog on a leash, and that God loves us and is for us and has given us authority in Jesus' name, we become more and more confident in Him, and we become willing and ready to be used by God in this area. We are told to pray for each other that we may be healed as we read in **James 5 (KJV):13** Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. **14** Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: **15** And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. **16** Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The

effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. 17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Indeed, a distinguishing mark of Israel was that there were no feeble and sick among them as long as they walked with God as we read in **Exodus 15 (KJV):26** And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst healed them as we read in **Deuteronomy 7 (KJV):11** Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. 12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: 13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15 And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.

The Holy Spirit is the same today as He was yesterday as in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):8** Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

He still heals and empowers Christians, just as he did in Irenaeus' day.

It is worth noting here that the early Church was taught not to take rewards for the good works they did as in **Acts 8 (KJV):18** And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the LORD for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

Irenaeus also is referring to Jesus' words in **Matthew 10 (KJV):8** Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

## **Book 3: Chapter XI.—Proofs in continuation, extracted from St. John's Gospel. The Gospels are four in number, neither more nor less. Mystic reasons for this.**

...  
9. These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those, [I mean,] who represent the aspects of the Gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer. The former class [do so], that they may seem to have discovered more than is of the truth; the latter, that they may set the dispensations of God aside. For Marcion, rejecting the entire Gospel, yea rather, cutting himself off from the Gospel, boasts that he has part in the [blessings of] the Gospel. 3461 The old Latin reads, "partem gloriatur se habere Evangelii." Massuet changed *partem* into *pariter*, thinking that *partem* gave a sense inconsistent with the Marcionite curtailment of St. Luke. Harvey, however, observes: "But the *Gospel*, here means the *blessings of the Gospel*, in which Marcion certainly claimed a share." Others, again (the Montanists), that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; 3462 *John xiv. 16*, etc. but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit.

Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitæ) 3463 Slighting, as did some later heretics, the Pauline Epistles, who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren. We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, 3464 1 Cor. xi. 4, 5, he speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church. Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, 3465 Matt. xii. 31, they fall into the irremissible sin. But those who are from Valentinus, being, on the other hand, altogether reckless, while they put forth their own compositions, boast that they possess more Gospels than there really are. Indeed, they have arrived at such a pitch of audacity, as to entitle their comparatively recent writing “the Gospel of Truth,” though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the Apostles, so that they have really no Gospel which is not full of blasphemy. For if what they have published is the Gospel of truth, and yet is totally unlike those which have been handed down to us from the apostles, any who please may learn, as is shown from the Scriptures themselves, that that which has been handed down from the apostles can no longer be reckoned the Gospel of truth. But that these Gospels alone are true and reliable, and admit neither an increase nor diminution of the aforesaid number, I have proved by so many and such [arguments]. For, since God made all things in due proportion and adaptation, it was fit also that the outward aspect of the Gospel should be well arranged and harmonized. The opinion of those men, therefore, who handed the Gospel down to us, having been investigated, from their very fountainheads, let us proceed also to the remaining apostles, and inquire into their doctrine with regard to God; then, in due course we shall listen to the very words of the Lord.

**Summary:** In paragraph nine, Irenaeus affirms, “These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those, [I mean,] who represent the aspects of the Gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer.” Irenaeus then explains, “The former class [do so], that they may seem to have discovered more than is of the truth; the latter, that they may set the dispensations of God aside.” Irenaeus then gives an example as he testifies, “For Marcion, rejecting the entire Gospel, yea rather, cutting himself off from the Gospel, boasts that he has part in the [blessings of] the Gospel.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Others, again (the Montanists), that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that *aspect* [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John’s Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete,” John 14:16,26, 15:26,27, 16:7,13, “but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitæ) who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren.” Irenaeus continues as he warns, “We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church,” referring to 1 Corinthians 11:4,5. Irenaeus then judges, “Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, they fall into the irremissible sin,” referring to Matthew 12:31. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But those who are from Valentinus, being, on the other hand, altogether reckless, while they put forth their own compositions, boast that they possess more Gospels than there really are.” Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “Indeed, they have arrived at such a pitch of audacity, as to entitle their comparatively recent writing “the Gospel of Truth,” though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the Apostles, so that they have really no Gospel which is not full of blasphemy. For if what they have published is the Gospel of truth, and yet is totally unlike those which have been handed down to us from the apostles, any who please may learn, as is shown from the Scriptures themselves, that that which has been handed down from the apostles can no longer be reckoned the Gospel of truth.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But that these Gospels alone are true and reliable, and admit neither an increase nor diminution of the aforesaid number, I have proved by so many and such [arguments]. For, since God made all things in due proportion and adaptation, it was fit also that the outward aspect of the Gospel should be well arranged and harmonized. The

opinion of those men, therefore, who handed the Gospel down to us, having been investigated, from their very fountainheads, let us proceed also to the remaining apostles, and inquire into their doctrine with regard to God; then, in due course we shall listen to the very words of the Lord."

**Commentary:** Irenaeus is here defending the four gospels, as they have been handed down by the apostles, against those who would mutilate them or add to their number. He rejects specifically Marcion, whom he believes has himself rejected the entire Gospel message. By this he means that Marcion so corrupted the Gospel by his writings that he in effect rejected it. Irenaeus records that the Montanists say that there are no gifts of the Spirit. Irenaeus is adamant that the Spirit has been "poured out upon the human race" as was promised by Jesus in John's Gospel as in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; **17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

And in **John 15 (KJV):26** But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: **27** And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

And in **John 16 (KJV):7** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Irenaeus testifies that the Montanists do not admit the prophetic Spirit, and therefore do not admit the Apostle Paul who spoke of both men and women prophesying in the Church as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):1** Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. **2** Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. **3** But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. **4** Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. **5** But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. **6** For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. **7** For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

Irenaeus refers specifically to the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**, which I have quoted in the previous section. Irenaeus says that those who deny the Holy Spirit fall into the irremissible sin as in **Matthew 12 (KJV):30** He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. **31** Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. **32** And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Irenaeus testifies that these new gospels of Valentinus and Marcion do not agree even in part with the true gospels. They are therefore false gospels as in **Galatians 1 (KJV):8** But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. **9** As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

There are many today who do not admit the gifts of the Spirit, or the prophetic Spirit, though they do allow for the fruit of the Spirit, that is, love, joy, peace, and so forth. We must have grace for each other. We must follow the Lord's command by Paul not to judge our brother as in **Romans 14 (KJV):1** Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

And in **Romans 14 (KJV):10** But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. **11** For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. **12** So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

And in **Romans 14 (KJV):13** Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

And in **Romans 14 (KJV):22** Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

I myself am convinced that the Holy Spirit still manifests His presence in the Church today in miracles and diverse gifts of the Spirit. But I also believe that exercising the gifts without the fruit of the Spirit is not the most excellent way. We must exercise the gifts with love, and with the fruit of the Spirit, or we are nothing as in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

## **Book 5: Chapter VI.—God will bestow salvation upon the whole nature of man, consisting of body and soul in close union, since the Word took it upon Him, and adorned with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, of whom our bodies are, and are termed, the temples.**

1. Now God shall be glorified in His handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modelled after, His own Son. For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man, and not [merely] a part of man, was made in the likeness of God. Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a *part* of the man, but certainly not *the* man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God. For this reason does the apostle declare, “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,” **4476 1 Cor. ii. 6** terming those persons “perfect” who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear **4477** *The old Latin has “audivimus,” have heard.* many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms “spiritual,” they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit, and not because their flesh has been stripped off and taken away, and because they have become purely spiritual. For if any one take away the substance of flesh, that is, of the handiwork [of God], and understand that which is purely spiritual, such then would not be a spiritual man but would be the spirit of a man, or the Spirit of God. But when the spirit here blended with the soul is united to [God’s] handiwork, the man is rendered spiritual and perfect because of the outpouring of the Spirit, and this is he who was made in the image and likeness of God. But if the Spirit be wanting to the soul, he who is such is indeed of an animal nature, and being left carnal, shall be an imperfect being, possessing indeed the image [of God] in his formation (*in plasmate*), but not receiving the similitude through the Spirit; and thus is this being imperfect. Thus also, if any one take away the image and set aside the handiwork, he cannot then understand this as being a man, but as either some part of a man, as I have already said, or as something else than a man. For that flesh which has been molded is not a perfect man in itself, but the body of a man, and part of a man. Neither is the soul itself, considered apart by itself, the man; but it is the soul of a man, and part of a man. Neither is the spirit a man, for it is called the spirit, and not a man; but the commingling and union of all these constitutes the perfect man. And for this cause does the apostle, explaining himself, make it clear that the saved man is a complete man as well as a spiritual man; saying thus in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, “Now the God of peace sanctify you perfect (*perfectos*); and may your spirit, and soul, and body be preserved whole without complaint to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.” **4478 1 Thess. v. 23.** [I have before referred the student to the “Biblical Psychology” of Prof.

**Delitzsch (translation), T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1868.** Now what was his object in praying that these three—that is, soul, body, and spirit—might be preserved to the coming of the Lord, unless he was aware of the [future] reintegration and union of the three, and [that they should be heirs of] one and the same salvation? For this cause also he declares that those are “the perfect” who present unto the Lord the three [component parts] without offence. Those, then, are the perfect who have had the Spirit of God remaining in them, and have preserved their souls and bodies blameless, holding fast the faith of God, that is, that faith which is [directed] towards God, and maintaining righteous dealings with respect to their neighbours.

2. Whence also he says, that this handiwork is “the temple of God,” thus declaring: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man, therefore, will defile the temple of God, him will God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which [temple] ye are.” Here he manifestly declares the body to be the temple in which the Spirit dwells. As also the Lord speaks in reference to Himself, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. He spake this, however,” it is said, “of the temple of His body.” And not only does he (the apostle) acknowledge our bodies to be a temple, but even the temple of Christ, saying thus to the Corinthians, “Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?” He speaks these things, not in reference to some other spiritual man; for a being of such a nature could have nothing to do with an harlot: but he declares “our body,” that is, the flesh which continues in sanctity and purity, to be “the members of Christ;” but that when it becomes one with an harlot, it becomes the members of an harlot. And for this reason he said, “If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy.” How then is it not the utmost blasphemy to allege, that the temple of God, in which the Spirit of the Father dwells, and the members of Christ, do not partake of salvation, but are reduced to perdition? Also, that our bodies are raised not from their own substance, but by the power of God, he says to the Corinthians, “Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. But God hath both raised up the Lord, and shall raise us up by His own power.”

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “Now God shall be glorified in His handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modelled after, His own Son.” Irenaeus then explains, “For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man, and not [merely] a part of man, was made in the likeness of God. Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a *part* of the man, but certainly not *the* man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For this reason does the apostle declare, “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,” referring to 1 Corinthians 2:6, “terming those persons “perfect” who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak,” referring to 1 Corinthians 14:18. Irenaeus then testifies, “In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms “spiritual,” they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit, and not because their flesh has been stripped off and taken away, and because they have become purely spiritual.” Irenaeus then argues, “For if any one take away the substance of flesh, that is, of the handiwork [of God], and understand that which is purely spiritual, such then would not be a spiritual man but would be the spirit of a man, or the Spirit of God. But when the spirit here blended with the soul is united to [God’s] handiwork, the man is rendered spiritual and perfect because of the outpouring of the Spirit, and this is he who was made in the image and likeness of God.” Irenaeus continues as he explains, “But if the Spirit be wanting to the soul, he who is such is indeed of an animal nature, and being left carnal, shall be an imperfect being, possessing indeed the image [of God] in his formation (*in plasmate*), but not receiving the similitude through the Spirit; and thus is this being imperfect. Thus also, if any one take away the image and set aside the handiwork, he cannot then understand this as being a man, but as either some part of a man, as I have already said, or as something else than a man. For that flesh which has been molded is not a perfect man in itself, but the body of a man, and part of a man. Neither is the soul itself, considered apart by itself, the man; but it is the

soul of a man, and part of a man. Neither is the spirit a man, for it is called the spirit, and not a man; but the commingling and union of all these constitutes the perfect man.” Irenaeus then testifies, “And for this cause does the apostle, explaining himself, make it clear that the saved man is a complete man as well as a spiritual man; saying thus in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, “Now the God of peace sanctify you perfect (*perfectos*); and may your spirit, and soul, and body be preserved whole without complaint to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ,” referring to 1 Thessalonians 5:23. And Irenaeus concludes as he again explains, “Now what was his object in praying that these three—that is, soul, body, and spirit—might be preserved to the coming of the Lord, unless he was aware of the [future] reintegration and union of the three, and [that they should be heirs of] one and the same salvation? For this cause also he declares that those are “the perfect” who present unto the Lord the three [component parts] without offence. Those, then, are the perfect who have had the Spirit of God remaining in them, and have preserved their souls and bodies blameless, holding fast the faith of God, that is, that faith which is [directed] towards God, and maintaining righteous dealings with respect to their neighbours.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “Whence also he says, that this handiwork is “the temple of God,” thus declaring: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man, therefore, will defile the temple of God, him will God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which [temple] ye are,” referring to 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Irenaeus then affirms, “Here he manifestly declares the body to be the temple in which the Spirit dwells. As also the Lord speaks in reference to Himself, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. He spake this, however,” it is said, “of the temple of His body,” referring to John 2:19-21. Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, “And not only does he (the apostle) acknowledge our bodies to be a temple, but even the temple of Christ, saying thus to the Corinthians, “Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?” He is referring to 1 Corinthians 6:15. Irenaeus then explains his thinking as he says, “He speaks these things, not in reference to some other spiritual man; for a being of such a nature could have nothing to do with an harlot: but he declares “our body,” that is, the flesh which continues in sanctity and purity, to be “the members of Christ;” but that when it becomes one with an harlot, it becomes the members of an harlot.” Irenaeus then again testifies, “And for this reason he said, “If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy,” 1 Corinthians 3:17. Irenaeus then affirms, “How then is it not the utmost blasphemy to allege, that the temple of God, in which the Spirit of the Father dwells, and the members of Christ, do not partake of salvation, but are reduced to perdition?” Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “Also, that our bodies are raised not from their own substance, but by the power of God, he says to the Corinthians, “Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. But God hath both raised up the Lord, and shall raise us up by His own power,” 1 Corinthians 6:13-14.

**Commentary:** Irenaeus first affirms in paragraph one, “Now God shall be glorified in His handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modelled after, His own Son.” This statement reminds us of **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Irenaeus then affirms, “For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man, and not [merely] a part of man, was made in the likeness of God.” This reminds us of **Genesis 1 (KJV):26** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Man is said to have been formed by God of dust as in **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And in the Septuagint we read as in **Genesis 2 (Septuagint):7** And God formed the man of dust of the earth, and breathed upon his face the breath of life, and the man became a living soul.

And woman was formed from man by the Lord as we read in **Genesis 2 (NASB):22** The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

And He made them male and female in the likeness of God as we read in **Genesis 5 (KJV):1** This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; 2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

Irenaeus then affirms, “Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a part of the man, but certainly not the man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God.” Irenaeus is defending the Church against the Gnostics who did not believe that the body, the flesh, would be resurrected. Irenaeus is trying to explain why and how the flesh will be saved.

Irenaeus then affirms, “For this reason does the apostle declare, “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,” referring to **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):6** Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

Note that the word “mature”, or the word “perfect” as used by Irenaeus, is the Greek word τέλειος (pronounced teleios) from τέλος (pronounced telos) which “signifies having reached its end (telos), finished, complete, perfect. It is used (I) of persons (a) primarily of physical development, then, with ethical import, fully grown, mature.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 173-4.**

To understand what this word “teleios” means, we read where the word is used again in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):20** Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.

The word “mature” in this verse is again τέλειος (pronounce teleios), and means mature, in contrast to being an infant in your thinking. The ones to whom Paul was addressing as “perfect” in 1 Corinthians 2:6 were the mature believers, those who were no longer children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. They had grown to the place where they were strong in the Lord and in His word.

Irenaeus then explains what he means, that is, his interpretation, as he says, “terming those persons “perfect” who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak,” referring to **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):18** I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;

Irenaeus then testifies, “In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms “spiritual,” they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit, and not because their flesh has been stripped off and taken away, and because they have become purely spiritual.”

Irenaeus testifies to the presence of the Spirit of God in the brethren in the Church in his time, as well as to the manifestations of the Spirit through the brethren. He states the simple truth that we can still be spiritual in our flesh. This flies in the face of the Gnostic belief that the flesh is evil. Now I know of no record that states that Irenaeus himself spoke in tongues. However apparently there were some in his day that were as he reports here.

Irenaeus then argues, “For if any one take away the substance of flesh, that is, of the handiwork [of God], and understand that which is purely spiritual, such then would not be a spiritual man but would be the spirit of a man, or the Spirit of God.” That is, God made us to have body, soul, and spirit. Irenaeus continues as he says, “But when the spirit here blended with the soul is united to [God’s] handiwork, the man is rendered spiritual and perfect because of the outpouring of the Spirit, and this is he who was made in the image and likeness of God.” That is, Irenaeus is saying that it is the Spirit of God that makes man spiritual.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “But if the Spirit be wanting to the soul, he who is such is indeed of an animal nature, and being left carnal, shall be an imperfect being, possessing indeed the image [of God] in his formation (in plasmate), but not receiving the similitude through the Spirit; and thus is this being imperfect.”

It is true that without the Spirit of God, man is imperfect and is still in his sinful state, and is left carnal. This is what Paul was saying in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the

flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Now Irenaeus continues as he explains, "Thus also, if any one take away the image and set aside the handiwork, he cannot then understand this as being a man, but as either some part of a man, as I have already said, or as something else than a man." The flesh is important, Irenaeus says, because it tells us what a man is. We would not know a man except we saw him in the flesh. Irenaeus then points out, "For that flesh which has been molded is not a perfect man in itself, but the body of a man, and part of a man. Neither is the soul itself, considered apart by itself, the man; but it is the soul of a man, and part of a man. Neither is the spirit a man, for it is called the spirit, and not a man; but the commingling and union of all these constitutes the perfect man."

Irenaeus then testifies referring to the apostle Paul, "And for this cause does the apostle, explaining himself, make it clear that the saved man is a complete man as well as a spiritual man; saying thus in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, "Now the God of peace sanctify you perfect (perfectos); and may your spirit, and soul, and body be preserved whole without complaint to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ," referring to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "wholly" in this verse is the Greek word ὅλοτελής (pronounced holotelēs). This word comes from two Greek words, ὅλος (pronounced holos) meaning all or wholly, and τέλος (pronounced telos) meaning end. It is literally "whole-complete," or "through and through;" It is "the Apostle's desire is that the sanctification of the believer may extend to every part of his being." This word "draws attention to the person as a whole," and "to the several parts which constitute him." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. IV, page 213-214.** This word is the word Irenaeus translates as "perfect (perfectos)" above.

The word "whole" is also in this verse. It is the Greek word ὅλοκληρος (pronounced holoklēros), and this word means "complete, sound in every part" (holos, "whole," kleros, "a lot," i.e., with all that has fallen by lot). **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 36.**

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "Now what was his object in praying that these three—that is, soul, body, and spirit—might be preserved to the coming of the Lord, unless he was aware of the [future] reintegration and union of the three, and [that they should be heirs of] one and the same salvation?" Irenaeus thus points out that all three parts of man, body, soul, and spirit, will be united in salvation. This is in direct opposition to the Gnostic teaching that the body will not be saved.

Now Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "For this cause also he declares that those are "the perfect" who present unto the Lord the three [component parts] without offence." However, this is not quite what the Scripture is saying, but in fact is a misinterpretation. The Scripture is a prayer of the apostle that God would entirely sanctify the Thessalonians, and that their spirit and soul and body would be preserved complete, that is, together as a lot with all its component parts, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture is not saying that the ones who present body, soul, and spirit to the Lord without offence are "the perfect". In his zeal to defend the faith against the Gnostic belief that the body is not saved, Irenaeus places a condition on our salvation that is not there. The Scripture does not say, "if you keep your spirit, soul, and body perfect and without offence you will be saved," but rather is the prayer of Paul that God would do the work of sanctification in the Thessalonians and preserve their spirit, soul, and body whole and blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus. This is a prayer that God most certainly would answer.

And Peter explains that we who have faith are kept by the power of God through faith as we read in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Yet Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "Those, then, are the perfect who have had the Spirit of God remaining in them, and have preserved their souls and bodies blameless, holding fast the faith of God, that is, that faith which is [directed] towards God, and maintaining righteous dealings with respect to their neighbours."

Irenaeus here turns it around and says that the perfect are those who keep the Holy Spirit in themselves by not falling into sin. He is saying that in this way they "have preserved their souls and bodies blameless." But the Scripture in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is a prayer that God would preserve them, and not that they would

preserve themselves.

Irenaeus believed that after we had believed in the Lord Jesus, and received the Spirit of God, that we could lose the Spirit if we did not walk “in communion of the Spirit”, that is, if we walked in the flesh. We have already touched on this in **Chapter 7: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven** when we looked at paragraphs 3 and 4 in **Book 5: Chapter IX** of Irenaeus’ writing. Irenaeus says in paragraph three, “As therefore he says, when we were destitute of the celestial Spirit, we walked in former times in the oldness of the flesh, not obeying God; so now let us, receiving the Spirit, walk in newness of life, obeying God. Inasmuch, therefore, as without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God, lest, having become non-participators of the Divine Spirit, we lose the kingdom of heaven; and he exclaims, that flesh in itself, and blood, cannot possess the kingdom of God.” And again in paragraph four, Irenaeus writes, “In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Just as if he were to say, “Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

When we accept Christ and are born again, we have the Spirit of God as the life of our Spirit, since we are born of the Spirit. And this life which we possess is eternal life being a life given us by the Spirit of God. This is why John says that he that has the Son has eternal life as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. **13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We don’t lose the Holy Spirit if we sin. That would mean that we would have to be born again all over again. God had a plan. Jesus tells us that we do not have to be born all over again when we sin once we have had a bath. Once we have had a bath by believing in Him, we just have to wash our feet as we read in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “Whence also he says, that this handiwork is “the temple of God,” thus declaring: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man, therefore, will defile the temple of God, him will God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which [temple] ye are,” referring to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? **17** If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Irenaeus then affirms, “Here he manifestly declares the body to be the temple in which the Spirit dwells. As also the Lord speaks in reference to Himself, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. He spake this, however,” it is said, “of the temple of His body,” referring to **John 2 (KJV):19** Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. **20** Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? **21** But he spake of the temple of his body. **22** When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Irenaeus is saying that the “body is the temple in which the Spirit dwells.” This is in direct opposition to the Gnostic teaching that the body is evil. And Irenaeus is also saying that the Lord also referred to His body as a temple.

Not only so, but Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, “And not only does he (the apostle) acknowledge our bodies to be a temple, but even the temple of Christ, saying thus to the Corinthians, “Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?” He is referring to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):15** Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

Irenaeus then explains his thinking as he says, “He speaks these things, not in reference to some other spiritual man; for a being of such a nature could have nothing to do with an harlot: but he declares “our body,”

that is, the flesh which continues in sanctity and purity, to be “the members of Christ;” but that when it becomes one with an harlot, it becomes the members of an harlot.” Irenaeus then again testifies, “And for this reason he said, “If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy,” referring again in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Irenaeus here again leaves the door open for the believer to lose the Spirit of God by not continuing “in sanctity and purity,” or by becoming “one with an harlot.” However, the thought here in chapter 3 of 1 Corinthians is of rewards as Paul explains in the previous verses in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The Scripture is saying that the one has faith in Jesus Christ, yet produces only wood, hay, or straw will suffer loss in this life, yet he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. There is no thought of preserving our salvation here. The Scripture is speaking of future rewards for the obedience of faith in this life.

Irenaeus then affirms, “How then is it not the utmost blasphemy to allege, that the temple of God, in which the Spirit of the Father dwells, and the members of Christ, do not partake of salvation, but are reduced to perdition?” Irenaeus here adamantly opposes the teaching of the Gnostics, calling it the “utmost blasphemy.”

Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “Also, that our bodies are raised not from their own substance, but by the power of God, he says to the Corinthians, “Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. But God hath both raised up the Lord, and shall raise us up by His own power,” referring in context to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):13** Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. 14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

His point against the Gnostics is well taken. However, he again makes our salvation conditional when he interprets Paul to say that the “flesh which continues in sanctity and purity, to be “the members of Christ,”” referring to 1 Corinthians 6:15 above. Irenaeus leaves us without a way if we commit the sin of fornication, that is, if we become one with a harlot.

Irenaeus does not understand how the Christian is to deal with sin once he is saved by faith in Jesus Christ. If we commit harlotry, to be sure, we dishonor our Head, who is Christ. And we can expect to be disciplined by a good Father. But the God who forgave us our sins when we believed in Jesus Christ also continues to forgive us and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: **2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He is the only sacrifice for sin. We have only to confess it to regain His fellowship. It does not mean that we are not members of Christ any more. We are sinning sons, not sinning sinners. Nevertheless, Irenaeus admirably defends the faith against the Gnostic error that asserts that the body will not be saved.

Irenaeus also here testifies to the ongoing practice of spiritual gifts in the Church in his day. Though he does not mention any gifting of his own, he strongly attests to the validity of their practice in the Church of his day.

## **Book 5: Chapter VIII.—The gifts of the Holy Spirit which we receive prepare us for incorruption, render us spiritual, and separate us from carnal men. These two classes are signified by the clean and unclean animals in the legal dispensation.**

1. But we do now receive a certain portion of His Spirit, tending towards perfection, and preparing us for incorruption, being little by little accustomed to receive and bear God; which also the

apostle terms “an earnest,” that is, a part of the honour which has been promised us by God, where he says in the Epistle to the Ephesians, “In which ye also, having heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, believing in which we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.” 4495 Eph. i. 13, etc. This earnest, therefore, thus dwelling in us, renders us spiritual even now, and the mortal is swallowed up by immortality. 4496 2 Cor. v. 4. “For ye,” he declares, “are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”

4497 Rom. viii. 9 This, however does not take place by a casting away of the flesh, but by the impartation of the Spirit. For those to whom he was writing were not without flesh, but they were those who had received the Spirit of God, “by which we cry, Abba, Father.” 4498 Rom. viii. 15. If therefore, at the present time, having the earnest, we do cry, “Abba, Father,” what shall it be when, on rising again, we behold Him face to face; when all the members shall burst out into a continuous hymn of triumph, glorifying Him who raised them from the dead, and gave the gift of eternal life? For if the earnest, gathering man into itself, does even now cause him to cry, “Abba, Father,” what shall the complete grace of the Spirit effect, which shall be given to men by God? It will render us like unto Him, and accomplish the will 4499 This is adopting Harvey’s emendation of “voluntatem” for “voluntate.” of the Father; for it shall make man after the image and likeness of God.

2. Those persons, then, who possess the earnest of the Spirit, and who are not enslaved by the lusts of the flesh, but are subject to the Spirit, and who in all things walk according to the light of reason, does the apostle properly term “spiritual,” because the Spirit of God dwells in them. Now, spiritual men shall not be incorporeal spirits; but our substance, that is, the union of flesh and spirit, receiving the Spirit of God, makes up the spiritual man. But those who do indeed reject the Spirit’s counsel, and are the slaves of fleshly lusts, and lead lives contrary to reason, and who, without restraint, plunge headlong into their own desires, having no longing after the Divine Spirit, do live after the manner of swine and of dogs; these men, [I say], does the apostle very properly term “carnal,” because they have no thought of anything else except carnal things.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “But we do now receive a certain portion of His Spirit, tending towards perfection, and preparing us for incorruption, being little by little accustomed to receive and bear God; which also the apostle terms “an earnest,” that is, a part of the honour which has been promised us by God, where he says in the Epistle to the Ephesians, “In which ye also, having heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, believing in which we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance,” referring to Ephesians 1:13. Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, “This earnest, therefore, thus dwelling in us, renders us spiritual even now, and the mortal is swallowed up by immortality,” referring in part to 2 Corinthians 5:4. And he adds, “For ye,” he declares, “are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you,” referring to Romans 8:9. Irenaeus then affirms, “This, however does not take place by a casting away of the flesh, but by the impartation of the Spirit. For those to whom he was writing were not without flesh, but they were those who had received the Spirit of God, “by which we cry, Abba, Father,” referring to Romans 8:15. Irenaeus then argues cogently, “If therefore, at the present time, having the earnest, we do cry, “Abba, Father,” what shall it be when, on rising again, we behold Him face to face; when all the members shall burst out into a continuous hymn of triumph, glorifying Him who raised them from the dead, and gave the gift of eternal life? For if the earnest, gathering man into itself, does even now cause him to cry, “Abba, Father,” what shall the complete grace of the Spirit effect, which shall be given to men by God? It will render us like unto Him, and accomplish the will of the Father; for it shall make man after the image and likeness of God.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “Those persons, then, who possess the earnest of the Spirit, and who are not enslaved by the lusts of the flesh, but are subject to the Spirit, and who in all things walk according to the light of reason, does the apostle properly term “spiritual,” because the Spirit of God dwells in them.” Irenaeus then explains, “Now, spiritual men shall not be incorporeal spirits; but our substance, that is, the union of flesh and spirit, receiving the Spirit of God, makes up the spiritual man.” And Irenaeus concludes, “But those who do indeed reject the Spirit’s counsel, and are the slaves of fleshly lusts, and lead lives contrary to reason, and who, without restraint, plunge headlong into their own desires, having no longing after the Divine Spirit, do

live after the manner of swine and of dogs; these men, [I say], does the apostle very properly term “carnal,” because they have no thought of anything else except carnal things.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “But we do now receive a certain portion of His Spirit, tending towards perfection, and preparing us for incorruption, being little by little accustomed to receive and bear God; which also the apostle terms “an earnest,” that is, a part of the honour which has been promised us by God, where he says in the Epistle to the Ephesians, “In which ye also, having heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, believing in which we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance,” referring to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, **14** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Irenaeus’ confession is that when we believe, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. The word “earnest” in the Greek is ἀρραβών (pronounced arrabōn). Vine’s says that this word means “originally, earnest money deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase was not completed”, and “In general usage it came to denote a pledge or earnest of any sort.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 11.**

In the context of what Paul wrote in Ephesians, we see that the Holy Spirit is given as a pledge of our inheritance. Our spirit, being born of God, is redeemed the moment we believe the gospel message. When we are born again of the Spirit, we receive a new nature, being born of God, as we read in **John 1 (NASB):12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Just as a son cannot be the son of another earthly father once he is born, so we cannot change our Heavenly Father to another father once we are born of God. And though Irenaeus does not quote the rest of Ephesians 1:14, it is helpful to read the verses in order to place this verse in its proper context. The words translated in the NASB in verse 14 above, “with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory,” are as follows in the Greek, as stated in **The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 760:**

εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.  
till [the] redemption of the possession to (the) praise of the glory of Him.

We know that when we are saved, we become God’s possession having been bought with a price as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

In other words, when we have faith in Christ as our Lord and Savior, we become God’s possession. The purchase has been completed. We are then sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given to us as an earnest or a pledge until our redemption is complete. Our spirit has been redeemed, and our souls, that is, our mind, will, emotions, and conscience are being progressively sanctified. But our redemption will be complete when our bodies are actually changed to be like His glorious body. Then we will be like Him. This will happen at the resurrection. And this earnest or pledge is given by God Himself. Since we are now God’s property, there is no power in heaven or hell that can keep us from Him. We are His possession. There is no going back. And this is to the praise of His glory.

This sealing of the Spirit then is really a pledge that God will complete His promise of redemption for us, that is, that He will redeem our bodies. But now we are said to groan within ourselves, waiting for this event as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, “This earnest, therefore, thus dwelling in us, renders us spiritual even now, and the mortal is swallowed up by immortality,” referring in part to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):4** For

we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Irenaeus then adds, “For ye,” he declares, “are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you,” referring in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Yes, Irenaeus is correct. We are now in the Spirit because of the Spirit’s indwelling in us as believers. Those who have not believed are still “in the flesh.” But Paul really uses the term “spiritual” to apply to those who have learned to discipline their flesh. When we first come to Christ, there may be much in our souls that is not pleasing to God. Old ways of thinking may need to change. Feelings from the past, such as old hatreds or hurts, may need to be processed and resolved. This takes time to process. We must be taught in the Scriptures the Biblical truths about salvation so that we will know how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honor as Paul encourages in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):1** Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. 2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

Paul wrote this to brethren, that is, to believers. In order for us to know how to possess our own vessel in sanctification and honor, we must be taught in the word of God. God knows that we are not perfect yet. This is why it is His will that we be sanctified. As we walk in the light of His word, we are cleansed as the apostle John says in **1 John 1 (NASB):6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Believers who have not learned to discipline their flesh are what Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 terms “fleshly” or “carnal”, that is, “babes in Christ”. The Spirit dwelling in us now means simply that we are “in the Spirit.” We become spiritual as we walk in the light and discipline our flesh.

Irenaeus then continues, as he affirms, “This, however does not take place by a casting away of the flesh, but by the impartation of the Spirit. For those to whom he was writing were not without flesh, but they were those who had received the Spirit of God, “by which we cry, Abba, Father,” referring in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, hereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Irenaeus has effectively defended the faith here against the Gnostic belief that the body will not be saved. Irenaeus has shown how the body will be saved for the one who believes in Jesus Christ, receiving His Spirit.

Irenaeus then argues cogently, “If therefore, at the present time, having the earnest, we do cry, “Abba, Father,” what shall it be when, on rising again, we behold Him face to face; when all the members shall burst out into a continuous hymn of triumph, glorifying Him who raised them from the dead, and gave the gift of eternal life? For if the earnest, gathering man into itself, does even now cause him to cry, “Abba, Father,” what shall the complete grace of the Spirit effect, which shall be given to men by God? It will render us like unto Him, and accomplish the will of the Father; for it shall make man after the image and likeness of God.”

Yes, when we see Him we will be like Him as John the apostle wrote in **1 John 3 (NASB):2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

And when we finally behold Him face to face, we can only imagine what “the complete grace of the Spirit” will effect. At that time we will be rendered completely like Him, after His image and likeness. This was God’s plan all along as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to

be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Now, in regard to his first statement in paragraph one, that we are “being little by little accustomed to receive and bear God,” this is true in one sense for our sanctification is a progressive work of the Spirit as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

As we present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* our spiritual service of worship, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind. The knowledge of God, as revealed by the Spirit in the word of God, renews our minds, and we are transformed or changed to be more like our Lord and Savior. We are not to go on being conformed to this world, but we are to be transformed. This is a progressive work of sanctification in the lives of believers as Paul reveals in **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):18** But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Though we have the Spirit when we accept Christ, the Spirit does not take over our lives and force us to live holy lives. We must continue as we began, that is, by faith as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

We received Him by faith, and we continue by faith to walk in Him. As we grow in grace and knowledge, we become more like Him, being changed from glory to glory. This was Peter’s encouragement in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Now, again in regard to Irenaeus’ first statement in paragraph one, that we are “being little by little accustomed to receive and bear God,” Paul, speaking of the new birth, says that God has shown in our hearts as in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):6** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

The treasure that we hold inside of us is Jesus Christ as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

When we accept Christ, and are born again of the Spirit, Christ is said to be in us because of the new nature that is born in our spirits. In a very real way we are new creations in Christ. We bear His nature in us as His children born of His Spirit, and we also have His Spirit indwelling us. Though we are not perfect yet, God is at work in us as Paul says in **Philippians 2 (KJV):13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Christ is not partly in us, or gradually more and more in us, but He is wholly in us. When we receive Him, we get all of Him.

Now in paragraph two, Irenaeus defines the spiritual and carnal person:

- Irenaeus defines the spiritual as he affirms, “Those persons, then, who possess the earnest of the Spirit, and who are not enslaved by the lusts of the flesh, but are subject to the Spirit, and who in all things walk according to the light of reason, does the apostle properly term “spiritual,” because the Spirit of God dwells in them.” Irenaeus then adds, “Now, spiritual men shall not be incorporeal spirits; but our substance, that is, the union of flesh and spirit, receiving the Spirit of God, makes up the spiritual man.”
- Irenaeus defines the carnal ones as he concludes, “But those who do indeed reject the Spirit’s counsel, and are the slaves of fleshly lusts, and lead lives contrary to reason, and who, without restraint, plunge headlong into their own desires, having no longing after the Divine Spirit, do live after the manner of swine and of dogs; these men, [I say], does the apostle very properly

term “carnal,” because they have no thought of anything else except carnal things.”

In addition, we know that Irenaeus also says in **Book 5: Chapter IX, paragraph 2**, “On the other hand, as many as fear God and trust in His Son’s advent, and who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts,—such men as these shall be properly called both “pure,” and “spiritual,” and “those living to God,” because they possess the Spirit of the Father, who purifies man, and raises him up to the life of God.”

Irenaeus seems to have thought that the mere presence of the Spirit of God in the believer’s life makes him or her spiritual. Paul says in Romans 8:9 that if we have not the Spirit of God we are none of His. But in 1 Corinthians 3:1, Paul talks about being spiritual, that is, to be controlled by the Spirit of God.

The apostle Paul gives us clues as to what he means when he speaks of those who are spiritual versus those who are fleshly or carnal as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Paul describes three classes of people in these verses. First there are the spiritual ones. These are those to whom Paul would give solid food. Second are the ones of flesh, who are as infants in Christ, and to whom the apostle would give milk. Third are those who are mere men. The verse actually reads in the Greek as follows, again as stated in **The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 662:**

Καὶ ἐγώ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἡδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ως πνευματικοῖς ἀλλ’ ως  
And I, brothers not am able to speak to you as to those who are spiritual but as  
σαρκινοῖς, ως νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ  
to those who are fleshly as to infants in Christ

So the translation of verse one reads, “And I, brothers, am not able to speak to you as to those who are spiritual, but as to those who are fleshly, as to infants in Christ.” Paul did not say that the Corinthians did not belong to Christ, but that they were yet as infants in Christ.

From what Paul says here, jealousy and strife among the brethren in Christ would not be attributes of one whom he would call spiritual. The Corinthians, Paul says, were not able to receive solid food because they only had the spiritual maturity of infants. This he could tell by their fleshly behavior. Here is how verse three actually reads in the Greek, also as stated in **The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 662:**

ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἔστε. ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοί  
still for fleshly you are whereas for among you envying and strife not fleshly  
ἔστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε.  
are you and according to a man you walk

So the translation of verse three reads, “For you are still fleshly, for whereas among you (are) envying and strife, are you not fleshly, and you walk according to (the limitations of one who is just) a man (that is, who does not have the Spirit of God).

Paul is not talking about who has the Spirit of God and who does not, but about how those who had the Spirit of God were walking. The Corinthians were walking as if they did not have the Spirit of God, whom they most certainly did have as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Now the Scriptures also describe the one who needs milk and not solid food in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):11** Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is

unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The Corinthians were much like these Hebrews. They had become dull of hearing, and they needed someone to again give them milk and not solid food. The one who is spiritual partakes of this solid food because they have their senses trained to discern both good and evil. It is not because the Corinthians had not been taught in the word of God, or that they did not have the Spirit of God living in them, that they were still fleshly. It is because they were not walking in the light of what they had heard after they were saved so that they might grow up as spiritual men and women. The Corinthians were “as infants in Christ,” that is, as those who had just been saved. As we walk in the light of what we hear of the word of God, we must put off our old behavior and put on the new in order that we may become spiritual and be cleansed of our fleshly behavior. If we do not walk in the light of what we hear of the word of God, we eventually become deluded as James tells us in **James 1 (KJV):22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Now Paul also says that he does speak wisdom among those who are mature as he says in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Paul also says that God’s wisdom is revealed to us by the Spirit of God in **1 Corinthians**

**2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Again, Paul reveals that the Corinthians had received the Spirit which is of God. If we walk in the flesh, that is, in our old behavior, we will not be able to receive this wisdom as Paul says in **1 Corinthians**

**2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

The Corinthians were acting as mere men, and were not listening to the Spirit of God indwelling them. That is, they were not yielding or giving the Spirit of God His proper place in their lives. This explains why Paul could not give the Corinthians solid food since their behavior made it impossible for them to hear the Spirit. Much like a newborn baby would choke on anything but milk, so the Corinthians were not able to receive the solid food in the word of God.

Although the apostle Paul describes the Corinthians as still carnal, he does not mean that they are not saved. Irenaeus is a little too harsh when he describes the Corinthians, or any who are like the Corinthians, as “those who do indeed reject the Spirit’s counsel, and are the slaves of fleshly lusts, and lead lives contrary to reason, and who, without restraint, plunge headlong into their own desires, having no longing after the Divine Spirit,” and who “do live after the manner of swine and of dogs;” To say that the Corinthians lived this way is not reflected in the epistles of Paul to the Corinthians. Irenaeus then also says that “these men, [I say], does the apostle very properly term “carnal,” because they have no thought of anything else except carnal things,” referring to Paul’s words to the Corinthians in chapter three that they were carnal. Paul himself does not describe the Corinthians as Irenaeus does. The Corinthians had not rejected the Spirit’s counsel for Paul praises them as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):4** I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Corinthians were not lacking any gift Paul says in verse seven above. The word gift in the Greek is χαρισματι (pronounced charismati), speaking of spiritual gifts. Paul is saying that they exercised all of the gifts of the Spirit, but that they were doing so in a fleshly or carnal way. Later on in this epistle Paul teaches them about the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit, and that there must be the fruit of the Spirit in their lives for the gifts to profit the one using them as we read in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):1** If I speak with the tongues of men

and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Paul was not saying that the Corinthians did not have the Spirit of God, for they were exercising all of the gifts of the Spirit. Paul was saying that walking in the flesh does not produce growth. It is love that edifies as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 8 (KJV):1** Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

The Corinthians were not to stop using the gifts of the Spirit, but they were to exercise them in love in order to edify the church as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):1** Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Paul was teaching the Corinthians these truths so that they would grow up to be spiritual men and women of God. There were some who were walking as if they were only carnal, and needed to discipline their flesh. This did not mean that the Spirit of God had left the Corinthians, or that He did not dwell in them as Irenaeus intimates. Our God is a consuming fire. We must discipline ourselves or He will discipline us. Yet once we believe from our hearts that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and confess with our mouth that He is Lord, we are saved as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

## Chapter 20: The Theory of Apostolic Succession

**Book 3: Chapter I.—The apostles did not commence to preach the Gospel, or to place anything on record until they were endowed with the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. They preached one God alone, Maker of heaven and earth.**

1. We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.

3309 See 1 Tim. iii. 15, where these terms are used in reference to the Church. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed "perfect knowledge," as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews 3310 On this and similar statements in the Fathers, the reader may consult Dr. Roberts's *Discussions on the Gospels*, in which they are fully criticised, and the Greek original of St. Matthew's Gospel maintained. in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.

2. These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ the Son of God. If any one do not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that, "We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith." Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed "perfect knowledge," as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles." Irenaeus then testifies "For after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge." Irenaeus then testifies, "they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God." Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church." Irenaeus further testifies that, "After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter." Irenaeus continues as he testifies that "Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ the Son of God." Irenaeus further affirms that, "If any one do not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he

despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that, "We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith."

Irenaeus strongly testifies to the apostolic witness here. The apostles' message was proclaimed "in public," and "at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith." Irenaeus uses strong words when he continues and affirms, "For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed "perfect knowledge," as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles."

Irenaeus wants to distance himself and the Church from any other Gospel, as it were, than the Gospel that was preached in public by the apostles, and also handed down to us in the Scriptures by the apostles, who were companions of Jesus Christ and eyewitnesses of His person.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies that "For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge," referring to their baptism with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Acts, chapter 2. Irenaeus then testifies, "they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God."

Irenaeus here emphasizes that the Gospel is to be possessed "equally and individually." What good news Irenaeus proclaims!

Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect," although the original was probably written in Greek by Matthew. It is however not improbable that it was later translated into Hebrew by Matthew, and was the first of many Bible translations into a common language.

Irenaeus then continues, "while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church."

Scholars have written whole books to try to answer the question whether Peter was ever in Rome. The direct evidence of the Scriptures states that Paul and Peter agreed that Peter would take the Gospel to the circumcised and Paul would go to the uncircumcised as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV):6** But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

Cephas is another name of for Peter. And Peter is later seen to be writing from the church he planted in Babylon as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):13** The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

There is no reason to think that the Babylon Peter mentions here is symbolic of Rome, since Babylon is where the Jews were finally exiled to in 586 B.C., and it is likely that many were still there. Yet it is still possible and highly likely that he arrived in Rome at some time in his life, and that he was martyred there. However, the circumstances of his martyrdom, and whether he was crucified upside down as traditions says, are more unlikely.

Irenaeus then testifies that, "After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter," referring to the Gospel of Mark. The words, "After their departure," are speaking of the deaths of Peter and Paul.

Irenaeus then testifies as well that, “Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him,” referring to the Gospel of Luke. Lastly, Irenaeus tells us where John wrote his gospel as he testifies, “Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ the Son of God.”

Irenaeus testifies to the veracity of the four New Testament Gospels and to the witness of the apostles to the one God, creator of heaven and earth, the same who was “announced by the law and the prophets,” and to “one Christ, the Son of God.” Irenaeus says that these are truths taught by the companions of the Lord, who we note were eye-witnesses. Irenaeus here also issues the anathema on those who disagree with the truth of the Gospels, as he further affirms, “If any one do not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics.”

For this testimony I say, “Bravo Irenaeus, defender of the faith.”

Now, of note here in this chapter of Irenaeus’ writing is his use of the term “perfect knowledge”. Irenaeus seems to use this term in contradistinction to the Gnostic teaching that hidden knowledge, or Gnosis as they called it, was imparted to “the perfect” apart “and privily from the rest,” as we will see in **Book 3:**

**Chapter III,** shortly. It is this term, “perfect knowledge,” that I believe, was a key to the development of the theory of Apostolic Succession. We will use the following from Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, as a good working definition of the theory of Apostolic Succession. In doing so, I am not saying that Irenaeus taught this doctrine. I am saying that his teaching was pivotal in the development of this doctrine. Also, I do not believe that Irenaeus came up with this line of reasoning on his own. It seems to me that this kind of thinking was going on very early in the Church up to and including the time of his writing, and was already in the making when Irenaeus was born in about 120 A.D. Why else would the churches have maintained a list of presbyters and of the apostle that ordained them? By the time Irenaeus is writing, he lists twelve bishops of Rome which we will see shortly listed in **Book 3, Chapter III, paragraph 3.** Incidentally, this would place Irenaeus’ writing of Book 3 during the office of the episcopate of Eleutherius between 175 and 189 A.D.

## Source: Wikipedia

**Apostolic succession** (Greek: Αποστολική διαδοχή) is a doctrine, held by some Christian denominations, which asserts that the chosen successors (properly ordained bishops) of the Twelve Apostles, from the first century to the present day, have inherited the spiritual, ecclesiastical and sacramental authority, power, and responsibility that were conferred upon them by the Apostles, who in turn received their spiritual authority from Jesus Christ.

The Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, Oriental Orthodox churches, the Anglican Communion and some Lutheran churches are the predominant proponents of this doctrine. To them, present-day bishops, as the successors of previous bishops, going back to the early days of Christianity, have spiritual and ecclesiastical power by this unbroken chain of ordinations stemming from the Apostles. This link with the Apostles guarantees for them their authority in matters of faith, morals and the valid administration of sacraments. This is reaffirmed every Sunday in the reciting of the Nicene Creed by priests and congregants, with the words, "We believe in one holy and catholic and apostolic Church..." All adherents view proper consecration of bishops as essential to maintaining apostolic succession.

The Catholic Church additionally believes that a bishop's authority on matters of faith and morals is infallible when what he teaches is universally taught by all the college of bishops in communion with the Bishop of Rome (the Pope), who in turn is seen as the successor of Saint Peter the Apostle and the Vicar of Christ on Earth. Nevertheless, Apostolic succession is to be distinguished from the Petrine supremacy (see Papacy and Coptic Pope).

Most Protestants consider the authority given to the apostles as unique, proper to them alone. They reject any doctrine of a succession of their power. The Protestant view of ecclesiastical authority differs accordingly.

Now in this section, we have just an inkling of what came to be the teaching of Apostolic succession. First of all, Irenaeus asserts that “the plan of our salvation” comes down to us through the apostles, first through their preaching, but then “at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.” Irenaeus is here contending for the faith. He is asserting that the Gospel message is pure, and that it is the same message preached at first by the apostles, and now handed down to those in Irenaeus’ time. This is commendable and right. But his next statement that “it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed “perfect knowledge,” as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles” is striking and worthy of discussion. It is not striking because of those who boast “themselves as improvers of the apostles,” for these are the heretics. It is striking because Irenaeus uses the word “unlawful.” This word speaks of government. The bishops in Irenaeus’ time felt that they had been handed the government of the Church from the apostles as we shall see. Irenaeus also uses the words “perfect knowledge.” This speaks of authority, as does the word “unlawful.”

Now the primary meaning of Irenaeus’ use of the word “unlawful” must be that it is not in accordance with what the governing body of the Church teaches, and is therefore not authorized. Irenaeus is preparing us for what he will say in **Book 3: Chapter III**, in which he will place the primary authority of Church government in the hands of the bishop of Rome. Irenaeus is contending that it is against reason to believe or teach that the apostles did not get the salvation message right when they first preached it, and that they somehow were missing something that needed to be added later or corrected later, and this of course by the “improvers of the Apostles.”

So Irenaeus is contending that the apostles received “perfect knowledge” in contradistinction to the so called “perfect knowledge” of the Gnostic teachers. Irenaeus contends that the message preached and written by the apostles was inspired by the Holy Spirit who had just been poured out “from on high” on the disciples at Pentecost, and that what the apostles spoke and wrote was the truth. Now we understand that Irenaeus is fighting heresy here, and defending the Church against those who would be “improvers of the apostles.” And, it is true that what the apostles proclaimed as the Gospel and what they wrote in the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which Irenaeus lists and upholds, was the truth, and that by the Holy Spirit. However, it would be an exaggeration to say that the apostles had all knowledge, or even complete knowledge, for it is evident that they walked by faith, and were examples to us to do the same. That the apostles did not have complete knowledge when they began to preach is proven by Scripture in the book of Acts, chapter 10, where Peter is seen to be unaware that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Now as we read in Acts, Chapter 10, a Roman Centurion, Cornelius, who feared God with all his household and supported the Jewish people with alms and who prayed to God continually, receives a vision of an angel who told him that his prayers have been heard, and that he is to send men to Joppa, and ask for Peter who is staying at the house of Simon the tanner. At the same time, God gave Peter a vision which said in essence to no longer call unclean what God has cleansed in Acts 10:9-17. When the men that Cornelius had sent arrived at Simon’s house, and asked for Peter, the Holy Spirit told Peter to go with them even though he knew they were Gentiles as we read in Acts 10:18-24. To go anywhere with Gentiles would have been a step of faith on Peter’s part since he was a Jew, but Peter took that step of faith. When he arrived at Cornelius’s house, the first words out of his mouth were that it was unlawful for him to associate with Gentiles as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV):25** And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. **26** But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. **27** And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. **28** And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. **29** Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

Cornelius then tells Peter of his vision in **Acts 10 (KJV):30** And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright

clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

After Cornelius told Peter about the vision he received, Peter then understood what God was doing, and he then preaches the Gospel to them as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

When Peter heard them speaking in tongues and praising God, he knew for certain that the Gentiles also were to be included in the Gospel as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

The apostles had to walk by faith in order for the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, as Jesus promised them He would do in **John 16 (KJV)**:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Did they have “perfect knowledge”? Not in the sense that they were super men. Paul chides the Corinthians about the current appellation of the twelve apostles as being something a little more than human. He defends his apostleship as we read in **2 Corinthians 11 (ESV)**:5 Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.

The word for “super” in Greek is ὑπερλίαν (pronounced huperlian). Vine’s says that this word comes from two words huper, meaning over, and lian meaning exceedingly, pre-eminently, very much. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 187**. The apostles were not exceedingly apostolic. They had the Holy Spirit, but still had to walk by faith. And the Holy Spirit they had is the same Holy Spirit we have today, who have believed and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior as Peter promises in **Acts 2 (ESV)**:38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

Peter’s promise to them was as good then as it is today. The Holy Spirit is the same yesterday, today, and forever. But the whole issue of apostolic succession is in vision here. Paul was saying that his message of the Gospel was in no way inferior to the other apostles who had actually rubbed shoulders with Jesus Christ. These “super” apostles had the same Gospel that Paul was preaching. And so the Corinthians did not have to say, as some of them were saying, that they were of Paul, or Apollos, or Peter (Cephas), or Christ as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV)**:12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

The issue was division in the Church as Paul continues in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):13** Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

The issue was not whether you believed in Paul, or Peter, or Apollos, but whether you believed in Jesus Christ, and receive Him through the Gospel. And the Gospel that was preached was not made a little better or a lot better or more authorized or less authorized if it was preached by an apostle, or one designated by an apostle, or by just an ordinary believer. It is the message of the Gospel preached in the power of the Holy Spirit that saves people, and not the messenger. And so we see the beginning of an error that began with very good intentions. Irenaeus was trying to defend the Gospel, and he was pulling out all the stops. It is true that much of the world of his time was illiterate, and relied heavily on those who were. And even if they were literate, there were few copies of all of the writings of the apostles going around. They first had to be gathered. In the plan and purpose of God, we see God's wisdom in building His Church. He did not tell the apostles that they were writing the New Testament, and that it would be complete when the apostle John dies, and then at that time an angelic proclamation would go forth stating that the New Testament had been completed. The apostles walked by faith one step at a time, and were only human. God wants us to walk by faith also, for without faith it is impossible to please Him as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

## **Book 3: Chapter II.—The heretics follow neither Scripture nor tradition.**

1. When, however, they are confuted from the Scriptures, they turn round and accuse these same Scriptures, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and [assert] that they are ambiguous, and that the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition. For [they allege] that the truth was not delivered by means of written documents, but *vivâ voce*: wherefore also Paul declared, "But we speak wisdom among those that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world." **3311 1 Cor. ii. 6.** And this wisdom each one of them alleges to be the fiction of his own inventing, forsooth; so that, according to their idea, the truth properly resides at one time in Valentinus, at another in Marcion, at another in Cerinthus, then afterwards in Basilides, or has even been indifferently in any other opponent, **3312 This is Harvey's rendering of the old Latin, *in illo qui contra disputat.*** who could speak nothing pertaining to salvation. For every one of these men, being altogether of a perverse disposition, depraving the system of truth, is not ashamed to preach himself.

2. But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth. For [they maintain] that the apostles intermingled the things of the law with the words of the Saviour; and that not the apostles alone, but even the Lord Himself, spoke as at one time from the Demiurge, at another from the intermediate place, and yet again from the Pleroma, but that they themselves, indubitably, unsulliedly, and purely, have knowledge of the hidden mystery: this is, indeed, to blaspheme their Creator after a most impudent manner! It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition.

3. Such are the adversaries with whom we have to deal, my very dear friend, endeavouring like slippery serpents to escape at all points. Where-fore they must be opposed at all points, if perchance, by cutting off their retreat, we may succeed in turning them back to the truth. For, though it is not an easy thing for a soul under the influence of error to repent, yet, on the other hand, it is not altogether impossible to escape from error when the truth is brought alongside it.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus records, “When, however, they are confuted from the Scriptures, they turn round and accuse these same Scriptures, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and [assert] that they are ambiguous, and that the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition. For [they allege] that the truth was not delivered by means of written documents, but *vivâ voce*: wherefore also Paul declared, “But we speak wisdom among those that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world,” referring to 1 Corinthians 2:6. Irenaeus further testifies, “And this wisdom each one of them alleges to be the fiction of his own inventing, forsooth; so that, according to their idea, the truth properly resides at one time in Valentinus, at another in Marcion, at another in Cerinthus, then afterwards in Basilides, or has even been indifferently in any other opponent, who could speak nothing pertaining to salvation. For every one of these men, being altogether of a perverse disposition, depraving the system of truth, is not ashamed to preach himself.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth.” And Irenaeus records, “For [they maintain] that the apostles intermingled the things of the law with the words of the Saviour; and that not the apostles alone, but even the Lord Himself, spoke as at one time from the Demiurge, at another from the intermediate place, and yet again from the Pleroma, but that they themselves, indubitably, unsulliedly, and purely, have knowledge of the hidden mystery: this is, indeed, to blaspheme their Creator after a most impudent manner! It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “Such are the adversaries with whom we have to deal, my very dear friend, endeavouring like slippery serpents to escape at all points. Wherefore they must be opposed at all points, if per-chance, by cutting off their retreat, we may succeed in turning them back to the truth. For, though it is not an easy thing for a soul under the influence of error to repent, yet, on the other hand, it is not altogether impossible to escape from error when the truth is brought alongside it.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus boldly defends the faith as he records, “When, however, they are confuted from the Scriptures, they turn round and accuse these same Scriptures, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and [assert] that they are ambiguous, and that the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition. For [they allege] that the truth was not delivered by means of written documents, but *vivâ voce*: wherefore also Paul declared, “But we speak wisdom among those that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world,” referring to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

Irenaeus further testifies against the Gnostics as he records, “And this wisdom each one of them alleges to be the fiction of his own inventing, forsooth; so that, according to their idea, the truth properly resides at one time in Valentinus, at another in Marcion, at another in Cerinthus, then afterwards in Basilides, or has even been indifferently in any other opponent, who could speak nothing pertaining to salvation. For every one of these men, being altogether of a perverse disposition, depraving the system of truth, is not ashamed to preach himself.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth.”

In writing this, Irenaeus has set forth the basic premise of the theory of apostolic succession. That is, according to this theory, there is truth that was handed down from the apostles, and that is not recorded in their writings, and that is preserved in that succession of bishops who can trace their succession back to a foundational apostle.

Irenaeus then testifies against the Gnostics as he records, “For [they maintain] that the apostles intermingled the things of the law with the words of the Saviour; and that not the apostles alone, but even the Lord Himself, spoke as at one time from the Demiurge, at another from the intermediate place, and yet again from the Pleroma, but that they themselves, indubitably, unsulliedly, and purely, have knowledge of the hidden mystery: this is, indeed, to blaspheme their Creator after a most impudent manner!”

Irenaeus then concludes, “It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition.” And here Irenaeus makes the tradition that is handed down by the means of apostolic succession equal with the Scripture.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “Such are the adversaries with whom we have to deal, my very dear friend, endeavouring like slippery serpents to escape at all points. Where-fore they must be opposed at all points, if per-chance, by cutting off their retreat, we may succeed in turning them back to the truth. For, though it is not an easy thing for a soul under the influence of error to repent, yet, on the other hand, it is not altogether impossible to escape from error when the truth is brought alongside it.”

Irenaeus’ concern for turning the heretics back to the truth is a worthy one. And Irenaeus is to be commended for his stand against the Gnostic heresy.

Irenaeus begins his argument in this chapter by repudiating the Gnostic opposition to the Scriptures and the tradition “which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches.” The Gnostics opposed both the Scriptures and this supposed apostolic tradition. However in their opposition, they themselves were using the slippery slope of their own tradition to bolster their claim to authenticity.

Irenaeus is very strict in his own reliance upon the Scriptures, establishing almost every assertive statement which he makes with a reference to Scripture. But there are times when we have no other explanation for his statements than that he is appealing to the tradition upheld by the Church of his day. The question really is why Irenaeus felt the need to rely on tradition when he had the entire Scriptures apparently at his fingertips, since he quotes from almost every book in the Old and New Testament.

As we study the book of Acts, and the writings of the apostles, we notice that God reveals truth to humble hearts. As we saw in the previous chapter, in Peter’s experience at the house of Cornelius, the apostles did not know at first that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. Even after it was revealed to Peter, the reticence of the Church to receive this truth is clearly seen in **Acts 11 (KJV):1** And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Peter then defends his preaching to the Gentiles as he recounts the vision that the Lord gave him as we read in **Acts 11 (KJV):4** But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: 6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man’s house:

It is evident that when the Spirit of God said, “What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy,” He was referring to the Gentiles, for as Peter continues, he relates what Cornelius told him as we read in **Acts 11 (KJV):13** And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

Peter then testifies as in **Acts 11 (KJV):15** And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

This council at Jerusalem came to the conclusion that “God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance *that leads to life.*” That is, they realized that the Gospel was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews.

Now, the understanding of the entire Church before that time, which was under the direction of the apostles, was that the gospel was for the Jews only as we read in **Acts 11 (KJV):19** Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

However, this all changed with Peter's vision and the preaching of the Gospel at the house of Cornelius. God revealed this revelation to Peter who then repeated it by word of mouth to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. This is how the Lord led the early Church. Because of this, there began to be a great reliance on the apostle's teaching by word of mouth, that is, orally. We see this also in the writings of Paul, first in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

Then in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):15** Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

And again in **2 Thessalonians 3 (KJV):6** Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

These Scriptures give some justification for Irenaeus' statements regarding the tradition handed down by the apostles. And Irenaeus appears to reflect the thinking in the Church of his day. The Church was relying on a crutch given them by the apostles until the complete revelation of the New Testament was given. This appears to have been God's plan.

We must also remember that Paul did not have the New Testament available to give to new believers as we have today. And he could not expect them to remember everything he had taught them in the short time he was with them. Many of Paul's epistles to the churches he planted are corrective, proving the fact that even the traditions of the churches planted by the apostles could not be relied upon once the apostle was no longer around to correct them.

And Paul and the other apostles could not have known all that God was doing through them. The apostles did know that they were writing the New Testament when they wrote their epistles or Gospels. There was no proclamation by angel or otherwise that another apostolic writing was to be added to the New Testament. By a little here and a little there, the New Testament began to be formed. The entire revelation of the New Testament was not given at the outpouring of Pentecost. Until Paul and the other apostles wrote the Gospels and their epistles, there was no New Testament. But God gradually gave the Church the revelation contained in the apostles' writings, which we now call the New Testament. And gradually the Lord gave the Church illumination as to which writings were to be included in the New Testament canon. There is now no more need for the crutch of tradition.

Paul also seemed to separate his ancestral traditions before he was saved, from the truth of the word of God in the Old Testament as we see in **Galatians 1 (KJV):14** And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

And he warns against the tradition of men as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):8** Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Jesus also warned against the tradition of men as we read in **Mark 7 (KJV):8** For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

By commanding the disciples to hold to the tradition which they received from himself and the other apostles, Paul was not commanding them in any way to invalidate the word of God by their tradition. All tradition must be examined to see whether it invalidates the word of God or not. If any tradition is not supported by the word of God, it should be discarded. Especially is this true today.

The point is that we cannot invalidate the word of God by our tradition, whatever it may be. Therefore, all tradition must be judged by the word of God, and not the other way around. And tradition is not equal to the word of God, whether it be handed down by a church with a bishop in apostolic succession, or, as the Jews believed in Jesus' time, the tradition of the elders.

Also, we must remember that in the apostolic period, that is, the time of the apostles, the canon was not closed officially. There was no angelic proclamation or revelation that, at John's death, the canon would be closed. It took time for the apostolic writings to be gathered. Who knew if they had them all? Therefore, the churches waited on God to show them what to do. Each church held tenaciously to the truth it had received, either from the pen of an apostle, or by word of mouth from an apostle. After all, the gospel is preached by word of mouth, and even today men and women are saved by this same word preached in the power of the same Holy Spirit that filled and empowered the apostles. But the Church has since recognized that the canon was closed with the death of John. All tradition must agree with the word of God or be released and discarded. Only then will the whole Church come into "the unity of the faith" Paul spoke of in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even Christ*.

Now it is God's will that we be sanctified as we read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):2** For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. **3** For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

This sanctification comes about by the word God as Jesus Himself said in **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus still holds out the possibility that these heretics could repent. It is not "impossible to escape from error when the truth is brought alongside it," just as Irenaeus says. This reminds me of Paul's encouragement to Timothy as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):24** And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, **25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; **26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Now in the early church mind, someone or something had to take the place of the apostles to arbitrate disputes. When Jerusalem fell in 70 A.D. there was no more going up to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles and elders. Only gradually did the Church realize that the word of God was their sole source of truth, and that they had to close the canon. The Church finally realized that the apostles had a more sure word of prophecy, to which they would do well to pay attention to as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):16** For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. **17** For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **18** And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. **19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: **20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **21** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The winds of doctrine, especially Gnostic doctrine, were blowing through the Church from all directions during the time of the early Church. This made it necessary to set a standard by which all Church teaching could be authenticated. This is illustrated very graphically in the Easter letter of Athanasius of A.D. 367. I have included it here in its entirety because of its huge statement. You may also check this out at the following web address:

<http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Athanasius.html>

It can also be viewed here:

<http://www.ccel.org/cCEL/schaff/nPNF204.xxv.iii.iii.xxv.html>

Now, here is the letter...

**From Letter XXXIX.—(For 367.) Of the particular books and their number, which are accepted by the Church. From the thirty-ninth Letter of Holy Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, on the Paschal festival; wherein he defines canonically what are the divine books which are accepted by the Church.**

...1. They have 4539 This section is preserved in the Coptic (Memphitic) Life of S. Theodore (Amélineau *Ann. du Musée Guimet*. xvii. p. 239). Its contents and the context in which it is quoted appear decisive for its identification as part of Letter 39. But the Letter from which the fragment comes is stated in the context to have been received by Theodore in the spring previous to his death. If Theodore died in 364, as seems probable on other grounds (see p. 569, note 3), the speech from which our fragment comes must have been written for him by his biographer. This is not unlikely, nor does it throw any suspicion on the genuineness of the fragment itself. fabricated books which they call books of tables 4540 Copt. ἀπογράμμων: astrological charts or tables appear to be meant. , in which they shew stars, to which they give the names of Saints. And therein of a truth they have inflicted on themselves a double reproach: those who have written such books, because they have perfected themselves in a lying and contemptible science; and as to the ignorant and simple, they have led them astray by evil thoughts concerning the right faith established in all truth and upright in the presence of God.

...2. But 4541 The remainder of the thirty-ninth Letter has long been before the world, having been preserved, with the heading of the Letter, in the original Greek, by Theodorus Balsamon. It may be found in the first volume of the Benedictine edition of the works of S. Athan. tom. i. p. 767. ed. 1777. [Migne, *ubi supra*]. A Syriac translation of it was discovered by Cureton in an anonymous Commentary on the Scriptures in the collection of the British Museum (Cod. 12, 168). This translation commences only at the quotation from S. Luke. The Syriac is apparently the work of a different translator. since we have made mention of heretics as dead, but of ourselves as possessing the Divine Scriptures for salvation; and since I fear lest, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians 4542 2 Cor. xi. 3. , some few of the simple should be beguiled from their simplicity and purity, by the subtlety of certain men, and should henceforth read other books—those called apocryphal—led astray by the similarity of their names with the true books; I beseech you to bear patiently, if I also write, by way of remembrance, of matters with which you are acquainted, influenced by the need and advantage of the Church.

3. In proceeding to make mention of these things, I shall adopt, to commend my undertaking, the pattern of Luke the Evangelist, saying on my own account: ‘Forasmuch as some have taken in hand 4543 Luke i. 1. , to reduce into order for themselves the books termed apocryphal, and to mix them up with the divinely inspired Scripture, concerning which we have been fully persuaded, as they who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, delivered to the fathers; it seemed good to me also, having been urged thereto by true brethren, and having learned from the beginning, to set before you the books included in the Canon, and handed down, and accredited as Divine; to the end that any one who has fallen into error may condemn those who have led him astray; and that he who has continued steadfast in purity may again rejoice, having these things brought to his remembrance.

4. There are, then, of the Old Testament, twenty-two books in number; for, as I have heard, it is handed down that this is the number of the letters among the Hebrews; their respective order and names being as follows. The first is Genesis, then Exodus, next Leviticus, after that Numbers, and then Deuteronomy. Following these there is Joshua, the son of Nun, then Judges, then Ruth. And again, after these four books of Kings, the first and second being reckoned as one book, and so likewise the third and fourth as one book. And again, the first and second of the Chronicles are reckoned as one book. Again Ezra, the first and second 4544 i.e. Ezra and Nehemiah. are similarly one book. After these there is the book of Psalms, then the Proverbs, next Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. Job follows, then the Prophets, the twelve being reckoned as one book. Then

Isaiah, one book, then Jeremiah with Baruch, Lamentations, and 4545 i.e. **Baruch vi.**—The Syriac has the conjunction, which is rejected by the Benedictine editors. the epistle, one book; afterwards, Ezekiel and Daniel, each one book. Thus far constitutes the Old Testament.

5. Again it is not tedious to speak of the [books] of the New Testament. These are, the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen Epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John.

6. These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these. For concerning these the Lord put to shame the Sadducees, and said, ‘Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.’ And He reproved the Jews, saying, ‘Search the Scriptures, for these are they that testify of Me 4546 **Matt. xxii. 29; John v. 39.**’

7. But for greater exactness I add this also, writing of necessity; that there are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. The Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Sirach, and Esther, and Judith, and Tobit, and that which is called the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Shepherd. But the former, my brethren, are included in the Canon, the latter being [merely] read; nor is there in any place a mention of apocryphal writings. But they are an invention of heretics, who write them when they choose, bestowing upon them their approbation, and assigning to them a date, that so, using them as ancient writings, they may find occasion to lead astray the simple.

And so in A.D. 367, Athanasius in his Easter letter, enumerated the 49 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament which together form our Bible. And the Church today recognizes this as the final closure date of the canon of Scripture.

### **Book 3: Chapter III.—A refutation of the heretics, from the fact that, in the various Churches, a perpetual succession of bishops was kept up.**

1. It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about. For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.

2. Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes

down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority, 3313 The Latin text of this difficult but important clause is, "Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potiorem principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam." Both the text and meaning have here given rise to much discussion. It is impossible to say with certainty of what words in the Greek original "potiorem principalitatem" may be the translation. We are far from sure that the rendering given above is correct, but we have been unable to think of anything better. [A most extraordinary confession. It would be hard to find a worse; but take the following from a candid Roman Catholic, which is better and more literal: "For to this Church, on account of more potent principality, it is necessary that every Church (that is, those who are on every side faithful) resort; in which Church ever, by those who are on every side, has been preserved that tradition which is from the apostles." (Berington and Kirk, vol. i. p. 252.) Here it is obvious that the faith was kept at Rome, by those who resort there from all quarters. She was a mirror of the Catholic World, owing here orthodoxy to them; not the Sun, dispensing her own light to others, but the glass bringing their rays into a focus. See note at end of book iii.] A discussion of the subject may be seen in chap. xii. of Dr. Wordsworth's *St. Hippolytus and the Church of Rome*, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.

3. The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone [in this], for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles. In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome despatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. From this document, whosoever chooses to do so, may learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolical tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things. To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telesphorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate. In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.

4. But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, 3314 Polycarp suffered about the year 167, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. His great age of eighty-six years implies that he was contemporary with St. John for nearly twenty years. departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time,—a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics. He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of

Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles,—that, namely, which is handed down by the Church. 3315 So the Greek. The Latin reads: “which he also handed down to the Church.” There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, “Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.” And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, “Dost thou know me?” “I do know thee, the first-born of Satan.” Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as Paul also says, “A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” 3316 Tit. iii. 10. There is also a very powerful 3317 ἵκανωτάτη. Harvey translates this *all-sufficient*, and thus paraphrases: *But his Epistle is all-sufficient, to teach those that are desirous to learn.* Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth. Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that, “It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world.” Irenaeus then records, “and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about.” Again Irenaeus testifies, “For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves.” Irenaeus then concludes, “For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus reasons, “Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops.” Irenaeus then concludes, “For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus records that, “The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric.” It is Irenaeus’ testimony that, “This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone [in this], for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles.” Irenaeus then records that, “In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome despatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. From this document, whosoever chooses to do so, may

learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolical tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things.” Irenaeus then continues, “To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telesphorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate.” Irenaeus then records, “In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us.” Irenaeus then asserts, “And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true.” Irenaeus also records that, “To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time,—a man who was of much greater weight, and a more stedfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics.” Irenaeus also testifies, referring to Polycarp, “He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles,—that, namely, which is handed down by the Church.” Irenaeus then records, “There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, “Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within,” and that “Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, “Dost thou know me?” “I do know thee, the first-born of Satan,” indicating “the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth.” Irenaeus testifies that “Paul also says, “A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself,” referring to Titus 3:10-11. Irenaeus continues by testifying that, “There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth.” Irenaeus concludes by testifying, “Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that, “It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world.” Irenaeus then records, “and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times;” Irenaeus then testifies that those in this succession of bishops were “those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about.” Irenaeus is here again stating the basic theory of apostolic succession.

Again Irenaeus testifies, “For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves.”

The “perfect” were the Gnostics who believed that they had been given special knowledge. Paul called this false knowledge in **1 Timothy 6 (KJV):20** O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

The word “science” in Greek is the word γνῶσις (pronounced *gnosis*) and “the word simply means “knowledge””. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 326.**

Irenaeus then concludes, “For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in

all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity."

It was Irenaeus' belief, and the Church in his day, that the apostles had committed the Churches which they had planted to the bishops, and had given them a complete understanding of all the will of God which they possessed, and also had delivered up their own place of government to these bishops as well. This understanding of the will of God, which was given to the first bishop by the founding apostle, was handed down by the bishop to his successor. And each bishop in turn would hand down this understanding. This understanding would include all of the oral teaching the apostle gave the bishop as well as the written word so that the traditions of the church were considered equal in authority with the written word of the apostle. Thus we have the theory of apostolic succession.

However this belief of the early Church may be, we must understand that to assert that the apostles left the bishops to whom they had committed the Churches behind as their successors, and delivered up their own place of government to these bishops, makes it possible to also assert that these bishops have as much authority as the apostles had. This is not supported by the Scriptures as we shall see.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus reasons, "Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings;" Irenaeus did not allow meetings that were not under the authority of one of the churches with an established apostolic succession.

He then asserts, "[we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops." Irenaeus then concludes, "For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre- eminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere." Irenaeus has just laid the groundwork for the belief in a head bishop of the whole Church to be in Rome.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus records that, "The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate." Paul does indeed mention a Linus in **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):21** Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

Irenaeus then continues, "To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric." It is Irenaeus' testimony that, "This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone [in this], for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles." However, merely to have heard an apostle did not guarantee that the apostle's teaching was being understood and followed. This is evident from the correction that Paul gave the Corinthians in his two epistles to them.

Irenaeus then records that, "In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome despatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. From this document, whosoever chooses to do so, may learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolical tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things." Irenaeus is clearly speaking against the Gnostics, and trying to defend the Church against their heresy.

Irenaeus then continues, "To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus;

then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telesphorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate.” Irenaeus places the writing of his third book during the episcopate of Eleutherius who was bishop between 174 to 189 A.D. And although Irenaeus does not mention it by verse, he does say that Clement was “conversant” with the apostles, and Paul does name a Clement as his fellow worker in **Philippians 4 (KJV):3** And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Whether this is the same Clement who was bishop of Rome is not known for certain.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, ”But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true.” Irenaeus also records that, “To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time,—a man who was of much greater weight, and a more stedfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics.”

Now Note 3314 in paragraph four says that Polycarp died at age 86 in the year 167 A.D. This would make his birth to have occurred in the year 81 A.D. The note then states this would make him a contemporary of the apostle John for nearly twenty years. This assumes John lived until 101 A.D. of course. And of course, it also means that Polycarp was born in 81 A.D. Therefore, he would just have grown to adulthood when the apostle John was promoted to glory. So just how close he was to the apostle John is uncertain in my mind. His writings do not have any great depth to them, though they do show a deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Polycarp does not touch on much of the teaching in the New Testament, unlike Irenaeus who hits on almost every major doctrine. Both men’s writings are good and valuable.

Irenaeus then also testifies, referring to Polycarp, “He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles,—that, namely, which is handed down by the Church.” Irenaeus then records, “There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, “Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.” It is hard to believe that the apostle John, who was witness to Jesus’ miracles, and to the vision on the mountain, and to the resurrection, and who wrote the Gospel of John, and the three epistles that bear his name, would have fled from the presence of such a heretic as Cerinthus. John most certainly would have commanded the devil to flee.

Irenaeus continues, “And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, “Dost thou know me?” “I do know thee, the first-born of Satan,” indicating “the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth.” But the Lord’s brother, the apostle James, wrote in **James 4 (KJV):7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

And the apostle Peter wrote in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Irenaeus then testifies that “Paul also says, “A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself,” referring to **Titus 3 (KJV):10** A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

Irenaeus continues by testifying that, “There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth.” Irenaeus concludes by testifying, “Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles.” This is a rather interesting statement by Irenaeus. We will discuss this in a moment.

## Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter III

So to summarize his argument in this chapter, Irenaeus believed that, since this apostolical tradition is common to all the churches, Rome may be taken as representative of them all. And, since Rome is central to the empire and a “potent principality,” making communication more feasible, and since the church was founded by “the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul,” and since the church in Rome has maintained a verifiable list of its succession of bishops, Rome should have the preeminence of authority and all the churches should agree with Rome. And, since Rome’s episcopal succession is firmly established and known, why try to maintain another list of episcopal succession of all the churches, since Rome’s succession list is in itself the “most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.”

Now Irenaeus shows us his concern here that not only should the truth of the Scriptures be acknowledged, but that the Scriptures should be interpreted correctly, and not misinterpreted as the Gnostics were doing. However, Irenaeus does not encourage the churches or believers to listen to the Holy Spirit for guidance into all truth. Instead, he resorts to the tradition of the church in Rome as a guarantee, a “most abundant proof” he says, that “there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.”

At this point, we might ask ourselves why Irenaeus would not resort to the Scriptures exclusively instead of relying on the slippery slope of tradition. We will never know everything Irenaeus was thinking and feeling. However, Irenaeus may have taken the following into account:

- The winds of heresy were blowing vehemently within the churches themselves as Gnostic believers were reportedly among the very brethren in the churches themselves.
- The church had gone through persecutions under Nero and Trajan before Irenaeus was born. Irenaeus knew himself what persecution was like for he was appointed bishop of Lyons after the former bishop was martyred, and he lived under the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180), the Roman emperor under whom the martyrdom of Polycarp is recorded. Irenaeus himself may have known persecution again under the Roman emperor, Septimus Severus (202-210), and it is possible he was himself martyred during that persecution.
- It is very probable that the illiteracy rate was very high in the early church. Paul himself did not ask everyone in every church to read his letters themselves, but that they should be read to the churches by the overseers, the bishops.

Looking back we might also note that it is evident that doctrinal knowledge of the word of God did not go much beyond the creedal statements of the time. It is also evident that leaven was creeping into the churches in the forms of legalism and sacerdotalism. This was of course all based on “apostolical tradition” that “has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.”

All of this may have played a part in what Irenaeus was feeling and thinking, and could be reasons for his relying on the “apostolical tradition” in addition to the Scriptures as sources of truth. Irenaeus definitely saw that the threat of Gnosticism was real. He himself in his mind is contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, as he perceived it, against the Gnostics who “are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things.” Irenaeus points out in paragraph two that the “apostolical tradition” of the Church is much older than the Gnostic heresies. He is trying to show that the consistent teaching of the Church, that is, the “apostolical tradition,” was being followed and adhered to from the beginning by all the churches which were planted by apostles. That is, he is trying to show that the faith of these churches planted by apostles is the same, and that it has nothing to do with these new doctrines of heresy that are being propagated by the Gnostics. And this “apostolical tradition” could be clearly seen, Irenaeus thought, by examining that tradition which the Church in Rome “had lately received from the apostles,

proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels.” He also adds here that “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches.” Irenaeus seems to emphasize that Rome is an example of “the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.” For the rest of what this apostolical tradition might include, see the sections under **Chapter 4: Irenaeus’ Statement of Faith**.

Irenaeus is to be applauded for overturning this idea of hidden knowledge, or gnosis, which the Gnostics claimed the Apostles imparted to the “perfect,” but which was actually a perversion of the Gospel. However, he is following the tradition of his time which dictated that a list of bishops appointed by apostles be kept by all the churches which were planted by apostles. He seems to feel that this was some sort of guarantee that the church was preaching and teaching the truth.

Irenaeus also speaks of “the inheritance of the episcopate” by which I believe he means “the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth.” In other words, the apostles handed down how to do church, that is the “tradition from the apostles,” and the truth of the Gospel message in their writings to the bishops they appointed. Irenaeus felt that this succession of bishops was the “most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.” We will talk more about what Irenaeus means by “the inheritance of the episcopate” in the next section.

Irenaeus admits that “it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches.” And so he concludes that the Church in Rome should be the Church to look to as the representative and central authority of all the Churches. And so, any Church that meets together but does not agree with Rome is not authorized and is unlawful, “for it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority” or “more potent principality,” whichever you prefer. Irenaeus’ argument runs this way.

1. The “tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul” has been preserved by the succession of their bishops, and their list of successive bishops is known and continuous to the time of Irenaeus writing.
2. The apostles, Peter and Paul, appointed Linus to be their successor at Rome.
3. Rome’s succession list, which he names here, “is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.”
4. Clement was bishop of Rome from 88 A.D. to 97 A.D. and he “might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes.”
5. The office of bishop holds the inheritance of the episcopate as Irenaeus clearly says in paragraph three when he states, “Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate.”
6. Irenaeus states “In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us.”

Irenaeus is right to defend the Church, but in his zeal to defend the church against the false doctrine of the Gnostics, he is validating a form of Church government that is not found in the Scriptures. He has in essence recommended a new head in Rome, when Jesus Christ is the sole head of the Church, and is its central authority, as Paul states in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):23** For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

And the most abundant proof of a vivifying faith present in the Church is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst, including the manifestations of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. As for the teaching of the Apostles, it has been preserved for us in their writings which are a more sure word of prophecy than any traditions of any sort. It is the Holy Spirit that guides believers into all truth, and He does this by illuminating the word of God as it has been received in the 27 books of the New Testament, and the 49 books of the Old Testament. Jesus spoke of this guidance by the Holy Spirit in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The Holy Spirit revealed this truth through the apostles, and illuminates this truth to us. This is what Paul is saying in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

God revealed His truth to the apostles through their writings in the New Testament, just as he did the Old Testament books through the prophets. We then are guided into all truth by the same Holy Spirit as we read and study their writings. How could we read or study tradition? It would only be studying hearsay. It has been true in every age that we must be born again, and have the Holy Spirit's help to understand the "things of the Spirit of God." And this is true for every believer, and not just the bishop, or the overseer. This is how we abide in Him as John reveals in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

So we can see clearly here how far the theory of apostolic succession had gone in its development in the early Church. It had not yet received recognition as a doctrine yet. But it is clearly seen as having been in development in the time of Irenaeus and was supported by his writings. The point in my mind is that no matter how much the presbyters appointed by the apostles understood of the apostle's teaching, all of their traditions, writings, and practices should agree with the written word of God that is inspired by God as in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Tradition is never said to be inspired. The word of God as revealed in the 49 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament is all we need with the Holy Spirit's help to discern all the truth that the Lord would have us to know.

Now suppose we imagine ourselves present in the time of Irenaeus. Considering the fact that all of the apostle's writings were not gathered yet into the New Testament, it is reasonable to believe that each church had only as much truth as the apostle who founded it. Therefore, there would be no bishop that had all the knowledge, or "perfect knowledge," of the apostles in the apostle's life time. Even Peter admitted there were some things hard to understand in Paul's writings as we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):14** Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Peter did not know everything that Paul knew, and Paul did not know everything that Peter knew. Paul had wisdom given to him that was different than Peter's wisdom. And likewise Peter had wisdom that only he could have, being an eyewitness of the Lord Jesus' life and death and resurrection. Paul appreciated Peter and gave him the right hand of fellowship as did Peter to Paul as we see in **Galatians 2 (KJV):6** But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me

toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

And Paul in the very next verses rebuked Peter because he stood condemned as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV):11** But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Even the apostles were not above correction as we see here. Peter now knew that the Gentiles were included in God's plan of salvation. Yet he still maintained some Jewish legalism, and was not fully entering into the freedom of the Gospel.

The word of God is true solely because it is the word of God. It is not more true because it is attested to by the succession of the bishops of Rome who have preached "the apostolical tradition" continuously and have been faithfully preserving it continuously. And the Church, inasmuch as it has been obedient to the word of God, is a pillar and support of the truth. But the word of God is still the word of God, regardless of man's obedience. Not so tradition since for tradition to be anything handed down, it is dependent on the faithfulness of the bishop. Being thus dependent on tradition, we then make ourselves dependent on man by which we bring a curse on ourselves as we read in **jeremiah 17 (NASB):5** Thus says the LORD, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD.

Also, Irenaeus argues that the Church at Ephesus "is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles" simply because it was founded by Paul, and because the apostle John remained with them until the time of Trajan who reigned as Roman Emperor from 98 A.D. to 117 A.D. Irenaeus here is vouching for the faithfulness of the Church at Ephesus because Paul founded it, and the apostle John was there! Did Irenaeus never read this very apostle's book called Revelation in which he writes as in **Revelation 2 (KJV):1** Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Does God really need anything from man to back up His act? This very church at Ephesus was in danger of having their lampstand removed out of its place because they had left their first love, and were in need of repentance. Our faith does not rest on the testimony of man, or the preservation of any church's tradition. Our faith rests on Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory forever.

We might ask ourselves, is our faith in the Church, or in the Lord? Let us, as the Psalmist, put our trust in the Lord as in **Psalm 118 (KJV):8** *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*

Irenaeus is begging the issue here. I realize he is trying to defend the faith. But the truth is in the Scriptures. Whether or not the churches or individuals were walking in the truth, and a witness to the one apostolic faith, is a matter of the history of each individual church. It was not something Irenaeus could verify in his time and, only in as much as he knew it to be the case, could he say it was so. All of Irenaeus' thinking here is very logical and easy to follow. And his zeal to defend the Church is commendable. Yet, his logical process goes beyond the Scriptures which do not say that the apostles were leaving the bishops "behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men" when they departed this life. Neither by

extension do the Scriptures point to Rome as a central authority of tradition or episcopal government. The bishops were to be overseers of local churches and nothing more according to the Scriptures. The Scriptures say that when Paul was in Miletus, he sent for the elders of the Church at Ephesus in Acts, chapter 20. When they arrived, he told them that they knew how he taught them publicly and from house to house and kept back nothing that was profitable to them as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the LORD with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

His advice to the elders, whom he also calls overseers which is the same word translated bishops, is stated in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Paul knew that savage wolves would come in not sparing the flock, and even from among themselves men would arise “speaking perverse” things and drawing disciples after them. He could have said, “But you have no need to worry because I have appointed a blameless man as bishop, and all you have to do is keep a record of any successive bishops and you’ll be okay! The truth is preserved by the office of the episcopate, and not in the man himself.” But he didn’t. Rather, when he left them and knew that he would not see them again, he commended them to God, and to the word of His grace as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):32** And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

When Paul left the Church at Ephesus, He commended them to God and to the word of His grace, that is, to the word that was inspired by God. He did not leave them dependent on man, but on God. And it is the word of God that is able to give us the inheritance among all those who are sanctified, and not a list of bishops who may or may not have followed the Lord, be they appointed in an apostolic succession or not.

Again, in regards to Irenaeus’ statements in paragraph four, it is highly unlikely that John felt any fear of Cerinthus or a bath house falling down on him. John is the one who wrote as in **1 John 5 (KJV):4** For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

John also wrote as in **1 John 4 (KJV):1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

And John also wrote as in **1 John 4 (KJV):18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

These statements don’t make John sound like someone who would be afraid of a heretic. When Paul encountered someone who resisted the Gospel, he did not “fly” as it were. Instead, Paul rebuked evil spirits as he did in **Acts 13 (KJV):8** But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. 10 And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

The result of the manifestations of the Spirit in the apostle's ministry was that people were converted to the faith and saved. Rather than horror, they simply brought discipline to bear as Irenaeus himself acknowledged when he referred to **Titus 3 (KJV):10** A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; **11** Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

May our faith ever rest on the power of God as Paul spoke in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. **3** And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. **4** And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: **5** That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

## **Book 3: Chapter IV.—The truth is to be found nowhere else but in the Catholic Church, the sole depository of apostolical doctrine. Heresies are of recent formation, and cannot trace their origin up to the apostles.**

1. Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life. **3318 Rev. xxii. 17.** For she is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers. On this account are we bound to avoid *them*, but to make choice of the thing pertaining to the Church with the utmost diligence, and to lay hold of the tradition of the truth. For how stands the case? Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question **3319 Latin, "modica quæstione."** among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient Churches with which the apostles held constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question? For how should it be if the apostles themselves had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary, [in that case,] to follow the course of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they did commit the Churches?

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life,” referring in part to Revelation 22:17. Irenaeus then asserts, “For she is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers,” referring in part to John 10:1. And Irenaeus then reasons, “On this account are we bound to avoid *them*, but to make choice of the thing pertaining to the Church with the utmost diligence, and to lay hold of the tradition of the truth. For how stands the case? Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient Churches with which the apostles held constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question? For how should it be if the apostles themselves had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary, [in that case,] to follow the course of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they did commit the Churches?”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church;” By proofs here, Irenaeus is referring to the previous section in **Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 3**, where he says, “In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.” And in the same **Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 4**, he says, “There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the

preaching of the truth. Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles."

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life." The "water of life" is mentioned in **Revelation 22 (KJV):17** And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

It is also mentioned in **Revelation 7 (KJV):16** They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

And it is also mentioned in **Revelation 21 (KJV):6** And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

And it is also mentioned in **Revelation 22 (KJV):1** And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The water of life is never mentioned in the Scriptures as being in the hands of the Church. Irenaeus then places the entrance to life in the hands of the church, as he then asserts, "For she is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers," referring in part to **John 10 (KJV):1** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

And Irenaeus then reasons, "On this account are we bound to avoid *them*, but to make choice of the thing pertaining to the Church with the utmost diligence, and to lay hold of the tradition of the truth. For how stands the case? Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient Churches with which the apostles held constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question? For how should it be if the apostles themselves had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary, [in that case,] to follow the course of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they did commit the Churches?"

Irenaeus' question regarding whether it would be necessary to rely on tradition which the apostles handed down if they had not left us writings is purely hypothetical. Yes, it would be necessary "to follow the course of tradition" which the apostles handed down to us if they "had not left us writings." But the simple fact is that they have left us writings, and therefore the point is moot. From the simple fact that Irenaeus even asks such a question, we may infer that there was more ritual in the Church of his day than reality.

## Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter IV

Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John, chapter 10, that He is the door into the sheepfold. All who came before Him are thieves and robbers. For Irenaeus to apply this metaphor to the church is to obscure the original meaning of Jesus' words. The Church didn't die for the sheep, but Jesus did. The water of life Irenaeus mentions comes from Jesus, not the Church as we read in **John 4 (KJV):7** There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) 9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Then again we read in **John 7 (KJV):37** In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

The bishops of the church are merely under shepherds of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. Inasmuch as they follow Him, the sheep can follow them. But if they do not follow Jesus, the sheep are not under obligation to follow them. It is the shepherd who enters by the door that the sheep will follow as we see in **John 10 (KJV):1** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Jesus explains what He means by the door in **John 10 (KJV):6** This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

Irenaeus says, "For she," speaking of the Church, "is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers." This is in direct opposition to what Jesus taught here in John 10:1-8. Irenaeus has introduced an entity, which he names the Church, to be another intermediary, an entrance, or a door as it were, to salvation. It is a door to the door, that is, Jesus, if you will.

Jesus continues as He says that the sheep must enter through Him in **John 10 (KJV):9** I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Jesus says that He is the door and anyone who enters through Him will be saved and go in and out and find pasture. The pasture He is speaking of is the nourishment of His word, and fellowship with Him. Jesus is talking about relationship with Himself and with the Father. Jesus is the chief Shepherd. There is one flock and one shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. Jesus says in verse 2 above that even the shepherds, that is, those who desire to be overseers of this one flock, must enter by the door. And all must know His voice in order to follow Him. Hearing and knowing His voice ourselves speaks of an intimate relationship with our Savior that all the sheep are to have, just the same as the shepherds, or overseers.

There is only one mediator between God and men, speaking of one door to relationship with the Father, as Paul reveals in **1 Timothy 2 (NASB):3** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

To place another door before this door is to make an artificial distance between my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is my Lord and my Savior because I believe in Him, and in His resurrection from the dead. I have entered by the door, and I am saved by Him alone, for no one else has given themselves as a ransom for me. No one else could.

Now, in 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul calls the church the household of God, the pillar and support of the truth as we read in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):15** But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The church is not the truth itself, but the support of the truth. The church is the construct of God and, as such, it supports the truth. God is not dependent on the church, but the church is dependent on God. In other words, we are God's building or God's house, and not the other way around as we see in **Hebrews 3 (KJV):1** Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; 2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. 3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. 4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. 5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Jesus said He is the way, the truth, and the life as we read in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Jesus did not make room for any other intermediaries. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on Him. And He wants relationship with us. He is also the chief cornerstone of the Church as Peter himself testifies in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Jesus is the stone which the builders rejected, and not Peter, as Jesus Himself tells us in the parable of the landowner in **Matthew 21 (KJV):33** Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. 40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. 42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

And He is the foundation of the Church, and there is no other, upon which we all build as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

And, Jesus said He would build His church on the statement of Peter that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God as we read in **Matthew 16 (KJV):13** When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock

I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

There is a word play in Matthew 16:18 above in the Greek which the English translation does not bring out. Here is the verse in Greek.

KATA MATΘAION 16:18 κἀγὼ δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ  
According to Matthew 16:18 I also and to you say that you are Peter and on this bedrock

οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ πύλαι ἄδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς  
I will build my church and the gates of Hades not shall prevail against it.

Literally, it says in verse 18, “And I also to you say that you are Peter (Πέτρος a stone) and upon this bedrock (πέτρᾳ a bedrock) I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

The word play here is with the name Peter, which is petros, and which means a stone, and with petra, which means bedrock, and which also is in a different declension than petros. This means that the two words are not in apposition, that is, they are not referring to each other syntactically. The word petra means a “mass of rock,” and is the same word translated “rock” in **Matthew 7 (KJV):24** Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

When Jesus used a different word for rock, He pointed to Himself. Jesus was saying to the effect that, upon this rock of your testimony, Peter, that is, that I am the Son of God, I will build My Church. Now to say, as Vincent does in his **Word Studies of the New Testament, Volume 1, page 91**, that “the reference of petra to Christ is forced and unnatural,” is, I believe, to take Jesus’ words out of context with the rest of the New Testament, and indeed with the rest of Scripture. Vincent also says of this verse that “The obvious reference is to Peter.” I believe it is true that Peter could have thought that Jesus’ words had some reference to him at the time that Jesus spoke this to him. However, he seems to have corrected himself later on for he says, as quoted previously, that we “as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house” in 1 Peter 2:5. Peter then points to Jesus as the chief cornerstone in 1 Peter 2:6-8. Jesus pointed this out as well in Matthew 21:42 as quoted above where Jesus calls Himself the chief cornerstone. And, the weight of the Old Testament Scriptures agree that the Lord is the preeminent rock. There is no other as we read in **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV):3** Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

As well we read in **1 Samuel 2 (KJV):2** There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

And David says in **2 Samuel 22 (KJV):1** And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: 2 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; 3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. 4 I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

And in **2 Samuel 22 (KJV):32** For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?

He is the one we praise as in **2 Samuel 22 (KJV):47** The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.

And in **Psalm 18 (KJV):2** The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

And in **Psalm 28 (NASB):1** A Psalm of David. To You, O LORD, I call; My rock, do not be deaf to me, For if You are silent to me, I will become like those who go down to the pit.

And in **Psalm 62 (KJV):2** He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

And that the rock was God in the Old Testament is attested to by Paul in **1 Corinthians 10 (NASB):1** Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; **2** And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; **3** And did all eat the same spiritual meat; **4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. **5** But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

The **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 302, says that petra “denotes a mass of rock, as distinct from petros, a detached stone or boulder, or a stone that might be thrown or easily moved.”

It is this rock that we put our trust in as we read in **Psalm 89 (KJV):26** He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.

And in **Isaiah 26 (KJV):4** Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

And in **Psalm 28 (KJV):7** The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

We must preserve the context of the words of Scripture when we interpret Scripture. Our faith is not in tradition, but in the real person of Jesus Christ who is in heaven with the Father. We are blessed if we trust in Him as the Lord says in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):5** Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. **6** For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. **7** Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. **8** For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

## **Book 4: Chapter XXVI.—The treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ; the true exposition of the Scriptures is to be found in the Church alone.**

...

2. Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God—namely, strange doctrines—shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud. **4159 Lev. x. 1, 2.** But such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, [shall] remain among those in hell (*apud inferos*), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Choré, Dathan, and Abiron.

**4160 Num. xvi. 33.** But those who cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church, [shall] receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did. **4161 1 Kings xiv. 10.**

3. Those, however, who are believed to be presbyters by many, but serve their own lusts, and, do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts, but conduct themselves with contempt towards others, and are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat, and work evil deeds in secret, saying, “No man sees us,” shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance (*secundum gloriam*), nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart; and they shall hear those words, to be found in Daniel the prophet: “O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust perverted thy heart. **4162 Susanna 56.** Thou that art waxen old in

wicked days, now thy sins which thou hast committed aforetime are come to light; for thou hast pronounced false judgments, and hast been accustomed to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay." 4163 *Ibid.* ver. 52, etc.; Ex. xxiii. 7. Of whom also did the Lord say: "But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite the man-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." 4164 Matt. xxiv. 48, etc.; Luke xii. 45.

4. From all such persons, therefore, it behooves us to keep aloof, but to adhere to those who, as I have already observed, do hold the doctrine of the apostles, and who, together with the order of priesthood (*presbyterii ordine*), display sound speech and blameless conduct for the confirmation and correction of others. 4165 [Contrast this spirit of a primitive Father, with the state of things which Wiclif rose up to purify, five hundred years ago.] In this way, Moses, to whom such a leadership was entrusted, relying on a good conscience, cleared himself before God, saying, "I have not in covetousness taken anything belonging to one of these men, nor have I done evil to one of them." 4166 Num. xvi. 15. In this way, too, Samuel, who judged the people so many years, and bore rule over Israel without any pride, in the end cleared himself, saying, "I have walked before you from my childhood even unto this day: answer me in the sight of God, and before His anointed (*Christi ejus*); whose ox or whose ass of yours have I taken, or over whom have I tyrannized, or whom have I oppressed? or if I have received from the hand of any a bribe or [so much as] a shoe, speak out against me, and I will restore it to you." 4167 1 Sam. xii. 3. And when the people had said to him, "Thou hast not tyrannized, neither hast thou oppressed us neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand," he called the Lord to witness, saying, "The Lord is witness, and His Anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they said to him, He is witness." In this strain also the Apostle Paul, inasmuch as he had a good conscience, said to the Corinthians: "For we are not as many, who corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ;" 4168 2 Cor. ii. 17. "We have injured no man, corrupted no man, circumvented no man." 4169 2 Cor. vii. 2.

5. Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says: "I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness." 4170 Isa. ix. 17. Of whom also did the Lord declare, "Who then shall be a faithful steward (*actor*), good and wise, whom the Lord sets over His household, to give them their meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing." 4171 Matt. xxiv. 45, 46. Paul then, teaching us where one may find such, says, "God hath placed in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers." 4172 1 Cor. xii. 28. Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behooves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, 4173 [Note the limitation; not the succession only, but with it (1) pure morality and holiness and (2) unadulterated testimony. No catholicity apart from these.] and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech. For these also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things; and they increase that love [which we have] for the Son of God, who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake: and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets.

**Summary:** Note that I have discussed **Book 4: Chapter XXVI, paragraph 1**, in **Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures**, in this volume. We start here then in paragraph two.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus exhorts, "Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father." Continuing, Irenaeus then asserts, "But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them]

either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God—namely, strange doctrines—shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud,” referring to Leviticus 10:1,2. Irenaeus then judges, “But such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, [shall] remain among those in hell (*apud inferos*), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron,” referring to Numbers 16:24,33. Irenaeus concludes, “But those who cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church, [shall] receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did,” referring to 1 Kings 14:7-14.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus warns, “Those, however, who are believed to be presbyters by many, but serve their own lusts, and, do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts, but conduct themselves with contempt towards others, and are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat, and work evil deeds in secret, saying, “No man sees us,” shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance (*secundum gloriam*), nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart,” referring to 1 Samuel 16:7. Irenaeus continues as he warns, “and they shall hear those words, to be found in Daniel the prophet: “O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust perverted thy heart,” referring to the apocryphal book, Susanna 56. Irenaeus continues his warning as he says, “Thou that art waxen old in wicked days, now thy sins which thou hast committed aforetime are come to light; for thou hast pronounced false judgments, and hast been accustomed to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay,” referring to the apocryphal book, Susanna 52, and Exodus 23:6-7. Irenaeus concludes his warning as he says, “Of whom also did the Lord say: “But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite the man-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers,” referring to Matthew 24:48-51, and Luke 12:45-46.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus continues as he again warns, “From all such persons, therefore, it behooves us to keep aloof, but to adhere to those who, as I have already observed, do hold the doctrine of the apostles, and who, together with the order of priesthood (*presbyterii ordine*), display sound speech and blameless conduct for the confirmation and correction of others.” Irenaeus then affirms, “In this way, Moses, to whom such a leadership was entrusted, relying on a good conscience, cleared himself before God, saying, “I have not in covetousness taken anything belonging to one of these men, nor have I done evil to one of them,” referring to Numbers 16:15. Irenaeus adds as he again affirms, “In this way, too, Samuel, who judged the people so many years, and bore rule over Israel without any pride, in the end cleared himself, saying, “I have walked before you from my childhood even unto this day: answer me in the sight of God, and before His anointed (*Christi ejus*); whose ox or whose ass of yours have I taken, or over whom have I tyrannized, or whom have I oppressed? or if I have received from the hand of any a bribe or [so much as] a shoe, speak out against me, and I will restore it to you,” referring to 1 Samuel 12:3. Irenaeus then continues again to affirm, “And when the people had said to him, “Thou hast not tyrannized, neither hast thou oppressed us neither hast thou taken ought of any man’s hand,” he called the Lord to witness, saying, “The Lord is witness, and His Anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they said to him, He is witness,” referring to 1 Samuel 12:4-5. Irenaeus then testifies, “In this strain also the Apostle Paul, inasmuch as he had a good conscience, said to the Corinthians: “For we are not as many, who corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ,” referring to 2 Corinthians 2:17. And Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “We have injured no man, corrupted no man, circumvented no man,” referring to 2 Corinthians 7:2.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus affirms, “Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says: “I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness,” referring to Isaiah 60:17. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Of whom also did the Lord declare, “Who then shall be a faithful steward (*actor*), good and wise, whom the Lord sets over His household, to give them their meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing,” referring to Matthew 24:45-46. Again Irenaeus testifies, “Paul then, teaching us where one may find such, says, “God hath placed in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers,” referring to 1 Corinthians 12:28. Irenaeus then adds, “Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behooves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess

that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech. For these also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things; and they increase that love [which we have] for the Son of God, who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake: and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets."

**Commentary:** In paragraph two, Irenaeus exhorts, "Wherfore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. The "succession of the episcopate" refers to the succession of the bishops. It is the presbyters together with the bishops who "possess the succession from the apostles." Irenaeus is saying that both have "together" received "the certain gift of truth." This gift of truth was handed down to them because they "possess the succession from the apostles."

To understand Irenaeus thinking in regards to the "gift of truth" which he believed the apostles have handed down through the succession of the episcopate, we note that in **Book 3: Chapter V, paragraph one**, he wrote, "The apostles, likewise, being disciples of the truth, are above all falsehood; for a lie has no fellowship with the truth, just as darkness has none with light, but the presence of the one shuts out that of the other." So the mere presence of the truth in the apostles closed the door to falsehood according to Irenaeus. However, the Scriptures, and the apostles for that matter, do not teach that we are without sin in this life. The reason we die is because our bodies are mortal. The reason our bodies are mortal is because they have a sin nature which we inherited from Adam. The apostles had a sin nature, as did the presbyters whom they appointed. Our trust is in God who anointed the apostles, and gave us the Scriptures even through their imperfection. But this is why we cannot trust in tradition. The apostles still had a sin nature, and were not perfect. Our faith is in God, and in His word, given to us through imperfect vessels.

Continuing, Irenaeus asserts, "But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory." This suspicion that Irenaeus advocates, we note, is solely based on the fact that they had departed from the primitive succession, that is, from the "succession from the apostles," and were apparently meeting therefore in an unauthorized assembly "in any place whatsoever." However, even in the Old Testament, there was no prohibition on where you could meet to worship. After the temple was built, there was a prohibition on where you could offer sacrifice. And yet, Irenaeus continues as he says, "For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God—namely, strange doctrines—shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud," referring to **Leviticus 10 (KJV):1** And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. **2** And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

But this judgment was under the law and the Old Covenant. Under the New Covenant, there is no authorized place of worship such as a temple or house of God. And yet, Irenaeus continues as he judges, "But such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, [shall] remain among those in hell (apud inferos), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron," referring to **Numbers 16 (KJV):24** Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

And to **Numbers 16 (KJV):33** They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

And Irenaeus adds further that "those who cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church, [shall] receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did," referring to **1 Kings 14 (KJV):10** Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

Jeroboam was anointed to be king over the ten tribes when they split off from Judah and Benjamin in 930 B.C. after Solomon died. The Lord had told Ahijah the prophet to speak to Jeroboam as in we read in **1 Kings 14 (KJV):7** Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, **8** And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; **9** But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back:

The judgments on Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and Jeroboam were under the law and the Old Covenant. These were just judgments for God is just. However, for Irenaeus to mention these in support of his teaching of the succession of the episcopate is to invest the Church with an authority that goes beyond the Scriptures. There is such a thing as Church discipline. And God will punish evil doers. But we ourselves are not to rain down curses or judgment on those who do evil. Paul says as much in **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):5** Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

God did not send Jesus to judge the world but to save it as we read in **John 3 (KJV):17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus warns, “Those, however, who are believed to be presbyters by many, but serve their own lusts, and, do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts, but conduct themselves with contempt towards others, and are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat, and work evil deeds in secret, saying, “No man sees us,” shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance (*secundum gloriam*), nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart;” referring to **1 Samuel 16 (KJV):7** But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Irenaeus continues as he warns, “and they shall hear those words, to be found in Daniel the prophet: “O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust perverted thy heart,” referring to the apocryphal book, Susanna 56. Irenaeus continues his warning as he says, “Thou that art waxen old in wicked days, now thy sins which thou hast committed aforetime are come to light; for thou hast pronounced false judgments, and hast been accustomed to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay,” referring again to the apocryphal book, Susanna 52, and Exodus 23:6-7. Irenaeus here quotes from the Apocryphal book, Susannah, as if it were “words, to be found in Daniel the prophet.” So we should understand that Irenaeus is not giving the Apocryphal book, Susannah, approval as Scripture. Rather, he mistook the reference to be from Daniel the prophet.

Irenaeus also quotes here from Exodus when he says, “the Lord saith, The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay,” referring to **Exodus 23 (KJV):6** Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. **7** Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

Irenaeus concludes his warning as he says, “Of whom also did the Lord say: “But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite the man-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers,” referring to **Matthew 24 (KJV):48** But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; **49** And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; **50** The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, **51** And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Irenaeus is touching on Church discipline here. Israel was organized as a nation and received laws from the Lord for the punishment of evil doers. The Church is not organized as a nation, but is the body of Christ. Israel was given land, and had to fight to possess that land. The Church has not been given land, and is not to fight to possess any land. The Church is a spiritual body, and our inheritance is spiritual, not physical.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus continues as he again warns, “From all such persons, therefore, it behoves us to keep aloof, but to adhere to those who, as I have already observed, do hold the doctrine of the apostles, and who, together with the order of priesthood (*presbyterii ordine*), display sound speech and blameless conduct for the confirmation and correction of others.” We will deal with the “order of priesthood” in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood**. And certainly it is wise to keep aloof from those who teach false doctrine. If an elder teaches false doctrine, we are to hold him accountable as we read in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):19** Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. **20** Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

And Paul further advises us as in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):9** I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: **10** Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. **11** But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. **12** For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? **13** But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Irenaeus then affirms, “In this way, Moses, to whom such a leadership was entrusted, relying on a good conscience, cleared himself before God, saying, “I have not in covetousness taken anything belonging to one of these men, nor have I done evil to one of them,” referring to **Numbers 16 (KJV):15** And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

Here Irenaeus points out that Moses is a good example to us of a good leader who did not fleece the flock as it were. Irenaeus then adds as he again affirms, “In this way, too, Samuel, who judged the people so many years, and bore rule over Israel without any pride, in the end cleared himself, saying, “I have walked before you from my childhood even unto this day: answer me in the sight of God, and before His anointed (*Christi ejus*); whose ox or whose ass of yours have I taken, or over whom have I tyrannized, or whom have I oppressed? or if I have received from the hand of any a bribe or [so much as] a shoe, speak out against me, and I will restore it to you,” referring to **1 Samuel 12 (KJV):3** Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

Irenaeus then continues again to affirm, “And when the people had said to him, “Thou hast not tyrannized, neither hast thou oppressed us neither hast thou taken ought of any man’s hand,” he called the Lord to witness, saying, “The Lord is witness, and His Anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they said to him, He is witness,” referring to **1 Samuel 12 (KJV):4** And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man’s hand. **5** And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.

Note how clearly and correctly Irenaeus quotes from the Old Testament. Irenaeus then testifies, “In this strain also the Apostle Paul, inasmuch as he had a good conscience, said to the Corinthians: “For we are not as many, who corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ,” referring to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):17** For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

And Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “We have injured no man, corrupted no man, circumvented no man,” referring to **2 Corinthians 7 (KJV):2** Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus affirms, “Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says: “I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness,” referring to **Isaiah 60 (KJV):17** For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

The Septuagint has a similar reading as we read in **Esaias 60 (Septuagint):17** And for brass I will bring thee gold, and for iron I will bring thee silver, and instead of wood I will bring thee brass, and instead of stones, iron; and I will make thy princes peaceable, and thine overseers righteous.

The last part of verse 17 reads in the Greek Septuagint as follows:

καὶ δώσω τοὺς ἄρχοντάς σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους σου ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ  
and I will give the rulers of you in peace and the overseers (bishops) of you in righteousness

This verse was prophesied by Isaiah in the context of Israel's future regathering and blessing as Isaiah states in **Isaiah 60 (KJV):1** Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

And in **Isaiah 60 (KJV):10** And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. 11 Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. 12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

This prophecy in Isaiah is relating to Israel, and not to the Church.

Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, "Of whom also did the Lord declare, "Who then shall be a faithful steward (*actor*), good and wise, whom the Lord sets over His household, to give them their meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing," referring to **Matthew 24 (KJV):45** Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

It is helpful to look at the verse right before this one to put it in context as we read in **Matthew 24 (KJV):44** Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Jesus is speaking of His return in the last days. In Mark, He says that this is not just for overseers but for all as we read in **Mark 13 (KJV):33** Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Again Irenaeus testifies, "Paul then, teaching us where one may find such, says, "God hath placed in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers," referring in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Irenaeus is saying that we may find faithful, good, and wise stewards in the Church for that is where God has placed them. Irenaeus then adds, "Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behooves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech. For these also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things; and they increase that love [which we have] for the Son of God, who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake: and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets."

It is interesting that Irenaeus should use the word "gifts" as he says, "Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed." The gifts of the Spirit are spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. These gifts are supernatural enablements of the Spirit of God given to the members as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The Holy Spirit distributes to each one individually just as He wills. The gifts that the Holy Spirit gives are at His discretion, and He gives to each one. That is, He gives to each member of the body of Christ a gift or

gifts. These gifts of the Spirit are spiritual gifts that enable the believer to think and act supernaturally. But Irenaeus is using the word “gifts” in a different sense here. He is saying that the apostles, prophets, and teachers are the gifts that the Lord has placed in the Church. This type of gift relates not to a spiritual gift, but to a place in the body of Christ that has a specific function. In other words, some function as apostles, some as prophets, some as teachers, and so on.

To be an apostle, a prophet, a teacher, or pastor is a gift given by God. It is a gift that relates to a specific function in the body of Christ. All members of the body of Christ have such a gift, though all do not have the same gift as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):29** Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

This sense of the word, “gift”, is also mentioned in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):7** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Notice in verse 7 that grace is given to each one according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Then in verse 8, He gave gifts to men. Then in verse 11, he says that He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers. This, he says in verse 12, was for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, or ministry, to the building up of the body of Christ. And these gifts are given until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ, he says in verse 13. Because these are gifts from God, they are not transferrable.

As we continue reading in Ephesians, Paul says that, since God gives grace to each one, we must each do our part to build up each other in love in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

And as we read on in 1 Corinthians, we see that the body of Christ is not one member but many in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.

As we continue to read in 1 Corinthians, we see that not all the members have the same function in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):15** If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

So it is God who has set the members in the body as it pleased Him, and who also has given gifts relating to a specific function in the body of Christ. Some are hands, some feet, some eyes, some ears, but each part is valuable and necessary. Without it, where would the body be, as Paul says.

Again, we continue as we read that God has so composed the body that there should be no division in it, for there is no member in it that can say, I have no need of you, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):19** And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant

honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Paul was teaching the Corinthians that it is not about who your bishop is, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. It is about who your Head is. If your Head is Christ, then you are a part of His body. You have a definite place in His body ordained by God. There is a definite order in His body as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

This verse reads in **The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament** by Reverend Dr. Alfred Marshall as follows:

καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους δεύτερον προφήτας τρίτον διδασκάλους  
and some placed God in the church first apostles second prophets thirdly teachers  
ἔπειτα δυνάμεις ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ιαμάτων ἀντιλήμψεις κυβερνήσεις γένη γλωσσῶν  
then powers then gifts of healing helps governings kinds of tongues

The word “placed” in the Greek is ἔθετο (pronounced etheto) which is the third person, singular, aorist 2, indicative, middle form of τίθημι (pronounced tithēmi). This word means to put or to place. It also means “to set, with design, in a certain arrangement or position,” according to **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition by Moulton, page 404**. The gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor and teacher are not appointed by the Church, or attained by seminary degree, or any degree. As we look further in the Scriptures, we see that God has placed each member in the body of Christ as He wished as in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):18** But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

The word “each” means that He has placed all the members in the body as it pleased Him. The word “placed” here is the same Greek word in the same form as the Greek word in verse 28 above. God is building His Church, and He places the members in the body of Christ as He chooses. And the Lord places us as members in the body of Christ the moment we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This placement into the body of Christ is a sovereign act of God by the Holy Spirit for God is building His Church as Jesus said in **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus said, “I will build my church.” We need to remember that it is His Church. He is the one building His Church. We need to take our direction from Him. Now because God has placed each one in the body as He desired, our position in Christ is not transferable. This means that the apostles could not transfer their authority as apostles to the bishops they appointed. The apostolic gift is given by God and is not transferable.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXVI

Now again, Irenaeus says in paragraph five, “Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behooves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech.”

So far then, Irenaeus’ argument for the theory of apostolic succession in this chapter runs this way:

We should obey the good presbyters and the bishops who are in the Church because they have the following qualifications:

- “possess the succession from the apostles” - paragraph two
- “received the certain gift of truth” - paragraph two
- “hold the doctrine of the apostles” - paragraph four
- “display sound speech and blameless conduct for the confirmation and correction of others.” - paragraph four
- The Church nourishes good presbyters - paragraph five
- Paul taught us where to find such good presbyters, when he says, “God hath placed in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers.” - paragraph five
- Since “the gifts of the Lord have been placed” in the Church, “there it behooves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech.” - paragraph five
- These then who “possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles” do as follows:
  - “also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things;” - paragraph five
  - “and they increase that love [which we have] for the Son of God, who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake” - paragraph five
  - “and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets.” paragraph five

Irenaeus wanted to protect the Church from the bad presbyters and bishops who do the following:

- “depart from the primitive succession” - paragraph two
- “assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever” - paragraph two
- Are either
  - “heretics of perverse minds,” - paragraph two
  - “schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing,” - paragraph two
  - “hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory” - paragraph two
- “have fallen from the truth” - paragraph two
- “bring strange fire to the altar of God— namely, strange doctrines” - paragraph two
- “shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud” - paragraph two
- “rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God” - paragraph two
  - shall “remain among those in hell (apud inferos), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron” - paragraph two
- “cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church” - paragraph two
  - “shall receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did” - paragraph two
- “are believed to be presbyters by many, but”
  - “serve their own lusts” - paragraph three
  - “do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts” – paragraph three
  - “conduct themselves with contempt towards others” - paragraph three
  - “are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat” - paragraph three
  - “work evil deeds in secret, saying, “No man sees us,”” - paragraph three
  - “shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance (secundum gloriam), nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart” - paragraph three
  - “shall hear those words, to be found in Daniel the prophet: “O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust perverted thy heart. Thou that art waxen old in wicked days, now thy sins which thou hast committed aforetime are come to light; for thou hast pronounced false judgments, and hast been accustomed to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay.”” - paragraph three (note that the quote is not from Daniel but from Susanna)
  - “Of whom also did the Lord say: “But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth

his coming, and shall begin to smite the man-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.””

Clearly Irenaeus was concerned about preserving the unity of the Church. He was concerned about preserving the truth as it had been taught by the apostles. He was concerned about protecting the Church from false doctrine. He wanted to preserve the faith in the one God who created all things. And he wanted the Church to increase in love for the Son of God. These are all noble goals.

Maintaining the list of successive bishops from the apostles was apparently being done in Irenaeus’ day. He himself is able to list those of Rome. However, when he says that these successive bishops “received the certain gift of truth,” he exceeds what the Scriptures teach. This statement is unverifiable. No such statement is found in Scripture concerning this. And again, when he says that these bishops in the succession from an apostolic appointment “hold the doctrine of the apostles,” this is again unverifiable. Whether one holds the doctrine of the apostles depends on whether one has been taught this doctrine, and in addition, on whether one has been faithful to the Lord. It is not absorbed by the laying on of hands. Gifts of the Spirit were imparted in this way as we see in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

And in **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):6** Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

And in **Romans 1 (KJV):11** For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

But doctrinal knowledge is not obtained by the laying on of hands. Paul encourages Timothy to give diligence to show Himself approved to God in **2 Timothy 2 (NASB):15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Doctrinal knowledge comes as we are taught the word of God by faithful teachers, and as we walk in the light of God’s word. And knowledge is something we grow in as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):17** Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. **18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Spiritual growth comes only by speak the truth in love as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: **16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

When we are born again, we are babes in Christ. As we are nourished on the milk of the word, we grow up spiritually. There is no way to instantaneously grow. Paul says as much in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. **7** So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. **8** Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. **9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.

Irenaeus leaves us with the impression that the bishops in apostolic succession have received the truth by their very appointment. They hold the doctrine of the apostles because of the very fact that they are bishops in apostolic succession. Paul’s encouragement to Timothy was to set an example of those who believe as we read in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):12** Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Timothy was an apostle as we read in **1 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):1** Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):5** For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: 6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

Though Timothy was an apostle and not a bishop, Paul's encouragement to him is also good for bishops as we see in Peter's exhortation in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Again Paul encourages Timothy in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):15** Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Now Irenaeus wanted to protect the Church from the bad presbyters and bishops who "depart from the primitive succession" and "assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever." Irenaeus assumes that the apostolic ministry has passed away, and that the apostles left the bishops in charge of the Church, having delivered up "their own place of government to these men," as we saw in **Book 3: Chapter III**. However, the Scriptures do not teach that apostolic ministry has passed away. In fact, they teach the opposite as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

The word "until" in verse 13 means that the apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers will continue to be given by God as gifts to the Church until we all attain the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. One only has to look at the Church today with all its many denominations and doctrines to know that we are not there yet. The Church must recognize true apostolic ministry if it is to ever reach the unity and maturity that Paul is speaking of in Ephesians 4:13.

Irenaeus believed that the apostolic ministry had ceased when the last of the Biblical apostles died. These apostles were foundational apostles. They were eyewitnesses or those who knew eyewitnesses of the Lord Jesus. Their testimony will forever be a more sure word of prophecy. However, the planting of churches, and the laying of doctrinal foundations in these churches, is still a necessary ministry today. Though the church by in large does not recognize them today, they are still planting and laying foundations as the Church is growing to maturity. True apostles will not have a badge on their arm saying that they are apostles. You will know them by their fruits. Just as we know good bishops today, so we can know worthy men who have apostolic ministry by their fruit.

Now Irenaeus' goal to protect the Church in his day from bad presbyters and bishops is noble. But his method of trying to get everyone to line up in the Churches who could show apostolic succession was only successful in establishing a fleshly unity. His was a unity of outward form, which tended toward ritual. The "tradition of truth" varied from church to church, though they each may have been in apostolic succession. Irenaeus saw this and his solution was to have all the churches agree with the church in Rome whose apostolic succession Irenaeus himself lists in **Book 3: Chapter III** as we have already discussed. This solution may have seemed acceptable at the time, but it had disastrous results as the history of the Reformation records.

Not only so, but Irenaeus judges all who depart from this "primitive succession" as "heretics of perverse minds," "schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing," "hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory," and those who "have fallen from the truth," and who "bring strange fire to the altar of God—namely, strange doctrines." He even rains down a curse on them saying that they "shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud." This is a blueprint for disaster. Is it any wonder that the Church eventually held an inquisition against heretics, even putting them to death by burning them at the stake. John Hus and William Tyndale are the most noteworthy and well known examples of this. This was murder under the auspices of

doing God service as Jesus warned would happen in **John 16 (KJV):1** These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

Irenaeus seems to be less harsh on the bad presbyters, than on those who depart from the primitive succession of the apostles. Although these bad presbyters do not depart from the “primitive succession, they “serve their own lusts, and, do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts, but conduct themselves with contempt towards others, and are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat, and work evil deeds in secret, saying, “No man sees us.” These, he says, “shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance (*secundum gloriam*), nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart; and they shall hear those words, to be found in Daniel the prophet: “O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust perverted thy heart. Thou that art waxen old in wicked days, now thy sins which thou hast committed aforetime are come to light; for thou hast pronounced false judgments, and hast been accustomed to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay.” Again, this is a reference to the apocryphal book, Susanna, and not to the prophet Daniel.

Irenaeus does not rain down a curse on these, but seems to leave their judgment to the Lord as he concludes, “Of whom also did the Lord say: “But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite the man-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.” It is almost as if he has a dual standard. Is this because he believes these presbyters “possess the succession from the apostles,” “received the certain gift of truth,” and “hold the doctrine of the apostles,” and thus should be treated differently? It is without doubt.

Irenaeus has put the bishops on a pedestal from which it would be very difficult to remove them. He does this so that the Church will be strong and not give way to the Gnostic heretics. However, in his zeal, he has exceeded what is written in the Scriptures. Paul warns against this in **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):6** And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

Paul commands us to take care how we build on the foundation that he and the other apostles laid, which is Jesus Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

God has not left the government of the Church up to man. The Holy Spirit is in charge here on earth in the Church. It is He who is directing all of the building as we see in **Acts 13 (KJV):2** As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Again we see in Paul’s ministry that the Holy Spirit is directing him in **Acts 16 (KJV):6** Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

The Holy Spirit is directing all of the building of the Church here on earth. And it is He who appoints the bishops, that is the overseers as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Now, we also read in Titus, chapter 1, that Paul commanded Titus to appoint elders in **Titus 1 (KJV):5** For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

But this appointment was under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The word “appoint” in Greek is καταστήσῃς (pronounced katasteses), and is the second person singular aorist 1, subjunctive active of κατάστημα (pronounced katastema) which is a derivative of καθίστημι (pronounced kathistēmi) from κατά (pronounced kata) and ίστημι (pronounced histemi), and meaning roughly “to cause to stand according to”. Vine’s says it usually means “to appoint a person to a position.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 66.**

According to Vine’s, the word “elder” in the Greek is πρεσβύτερος (pronounced presbyteros) and means “an old man” or “an elder.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 20.** This word “elder” in the context of the Church did not mean “an old man,” but it meant someone who was not a novice or a new convert as Paul instructs in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):6** Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

In other words, the elder in the Church was someone who was mature spiritually. Notice that the position of elder is not mentioned as one of the gifts in **1 Corinthians 12:28** or **Ephesians 4:11**. A person who is gifted may be an elder however just as Peter, who was an apostle, reveals in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Note the instructions that Peter gives his “fellow” elders. He tells them to shepherd the flock as examples, not lording it over those allotted to their charge, but exercising oversight willingly, and not under compulsion.

Now again, note that Barnabas and Paul appointed elders in every church as we read in **Acts 14 (KJV):19** And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. 20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commanded them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Now when Paul was at Miletus he called for the elders of the Church in Ephesus as in **Acts 20 (KJV):17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Paul warns these same elders in Ephesus to be on guard for themselves as well as the flock as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Note that Paul did not call for the bishops at Ephesus but the elders. The reason is because the elders were the bishops. The word for overseers in this verse is ἐπίσκοπος (pronounced episkopos) which is where we get our English word bishop from. Vine’s says that the word literally means overseer coming from the Greek word epi, meaning over, and skopeo, to look or watch. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 128.** In other words, an elder and an overseer, or a bishop, is the same office in the New Testament. Not so in Irenaeus’ understanding. Note also that it was the Holy Spirit that made them overseers, and not the Church. Neither were they elected by the congregation.

Notice that Irenaeus here makes a distinction between the presbyter succession and the succession of the episcopate, or the succession of the bishops, as he says, “Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father.”

That is, he makes a distinction between a presbyter and a bishop. And he says these all together “have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father.” By this I believe he is referring

to the deposit of truth that he says the apostles placed in the hands of the Church. Irenaeus says in **Book 3: Chapter IV** that the apostles “like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth.” We discussed this in the previous section.

This “deposit of truth” makes his teaching of apostolic succession more understandable. The Church is now in possession of a “deposit of truth” lodged in her hands, and given by the apostles. Following then the logic of Irenaeus, this “certain gift of truth” may be given by the Church’s authority to each presbyter and bishop since the “deposit of truth” is in the hands of the Church, and as long as men are appointed by the hands of the Church, the truth can then be given as a “certain gift” to its appointed ones, regardless of their faithfulness.

Again, following the logic of Irenaeus, he seems to be saying that, because the truth is in the Church’s hands and thereby in the presbyters’ hands, it is then “incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church” since they are the Church’s leaders. Also, since this truth is in the hands of the Church which is represented by the bishops and presbyters, it may be found in no other place and in no other way. Therefore, it is incumbent “to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory.” And Irenaeus believes “the fire from heaven” will burn up all “such as rise up in opposition to the truth.” And those who cause division in the Church will receive Jeroboam’s punishment as we discussed above relating to 1 Kings 14:7-14.

Now, Irenaeus continues in paragraph two saying that a presbyter must not serve his own lusts but “place the fear of God supreme in their hearts.” They must not “conduct themselves with contempt towards others,” or be “puffed up with pride of holding the chief seat,” and they must not “work evil deeds in secret,” Irenaeus says. And here again I must say, “Bravo, Irenaeus!” The Lord does not allow sin in leadership, no matter who it is or what office they hold. And in regard to the Church holding a deposit or gift of truth given to it by the apostles, I suppose you could say the Church is the custodian of the word of God, much like Israel was as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):1** What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? **2** Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

But the Scriptures nowhere speak of the Church as the recipient of a deposit of truth in the way that Irenaeus describes, as if the truth were resident in the offices of the Church, and the holder of the office automatically had all truth and all knowledge without instruction or study of the Scriptures. Jesus promised the disciples that they would be the recipients of the Spirit of truth as we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; **17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

And Jesus said that this same Spirit of truth would guide them into all truth in **John 16 (KJV):12** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. **13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. **14** He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. **15** All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Was it just to the apostles only that the Lord made this promise of the Spirit? The Scriptures state that this same Spirit of truth was promised as a gift to all believers in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. **39** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

And this same Spirit of God dwells in the Church as a temple of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (JHV):19** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; **20** And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; **21** In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: **22** In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

And every believer is a member of Christ’s body, and is spoken of as a temple of the Holy Spirit in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):15** Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the

members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. 16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

I believe that the real “gift of truth” is the pure, unadulterated gospel which was first preached by the apostles who were filled with the Spirit. This “gift of truth” is received by all who receive the Spirit of truth today, and not just by a presbyter or bishop. And Jesus said He was the truth as we read in **John 14 (KJV):5** Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

All who receive Jesus receive the truth, that is, they receive all of Jesus. But knowledge of the truth is contingent on learning His word and abiding in it as Jesus said in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

There are no guarantees. We don’t ever arrive. We must keep His word if we are to abide in Him. It is not enough to have an appointment by an apostle to point to as our certificate of authority. A Seminary degree does not guarantee a righteous life. We must obey His word if we are to shepherd others. It is true that His followers are given the mystery of the kingdom of God as we read in **Mark 4 (KJV):10** And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. 11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

The mystery of the Kingdom of God is given to all who believe in Him. To say that the presbyters and bishops receive a “certain gift of truth” other than what all believers have received exceeds what is written in the Scripture, and gives them a place elevated somewhere above other believers. To give someone a “gift of truth” as Irenaeus describes implies that they are free from error. It is true that all Scripture is inspired by God as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

But this does not make the vessel through whom the Spirit of God speaks in possession of a “gift of truth”, and incapable of uttering error. That is merely tradition. Elders can still sin as we see in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):19** Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

Elders and bishops still have a sin nature just as other believers. We are all accountable to God. Elders, or bishops, or overseers must be an example of godly living to their flock, and not lords who are not accountable to others. We all must be subject to each other in the Lord. We all have a responsibility to speak the truth in love to each other. We must all put off the old man and put on the new man. No one is excluded from this be they apostle, prophet, bishop, elder, or one who merely shows mercy to another. All of us are accountable to God, and will be called to account by Him in the final judgment.

As Paul told the Corinthians, we all work together and we all stand by faith as we read in **2 Corinthians 1 (KJV):24** Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

Saying that the bishops and elders have received a certain gift of truth creates an artificial distance between believers and the elders, who are overseers or bishops, when there is really no difference. We are all saved by grace through the blood of Jesus.

A division is being made here between the clergy, that is, the bishops and presbyters, and the rank and file believers, the laity. Irenaeus is giving us a telescopic view into the early the Church government that existed in his day, and which he did not initiate but which he was defending. We must keep in mind that the Church was over one hundred years old by the time Irenaeus was writing his book, Against Heresies. However, is this the Church government that God has ordained? We will talk more about Church government in **Chapter: 21 The Church.**

Also, notice in paragraph four the words “order of priesthood.” Irenaeus says in effect it behooves us “to adhere to those who, as I have already observed, do hold the doctrine of the apostles, and who, together with the order of priesthood (presbyterii ordine), display sound speech and blameless conduct for the confirmation and correction of others.” We will talk more about this order of priesthood in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood**.

## **Book 5: Chapter XX.—Those pastors are to be heard to whom the apostles committed the Churches, possessing one and the same doctrine of salvation; the heretics, on the other hand, are to be avoided. We must think soberly with regard to the mysteries of the faith.**

1. Now all these [heretics] are of much later date than the bishops to whom the apostles committed the Churches; which fact I have in the third book taken all pains to demonstrate. It follows, then, as a matter of course, that these heretics aforementioned, since they are blind to the truth, and deviate from the [right] way, will walk in various roads; and therefore the footsteps of their doctrine are scattered here and there without agreement or connection. But the path of those belonging to the Church circumscribes the whole world, as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles, and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same, since all receive one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit, and are conversant with the same commandments, and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution, 4619 “Et eandem figuram ejus quæ est erga ecclesiam ordinatio[n]is custodientibus.” Grabe supposes this refers to the ordained ministry of the Church, but Harvey thinks it refers more probably to its general constitution. and expect the same advent of the Lord, and await the same salvation of the complete man, that is, of the soul and body. And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, 4620 [He thus outlines the creed, and epitomizes “the faith once delivered to the saints,” as all that is requisite to salvation. in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world. For to her is entrusted the light of God; and therefore the “wisdom” of God, by means of which she saves all men, “is declared in [its] going forth; it uttereth [its voice] faithfully in the streets, is preached on the tops of the walls, and speaks continually in the gates of the city.” 4621 Prov. i. 20, 21. For the Church preaches the truth everywhere, and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ.

2. Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the Church, call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters, not taking into consideration of how much greater consequence is a religious man, even in a private station, than a blasphemous and impudent sophist. 4622 That is, the private Christian as contrasted with the sophist of the schools. Now, such are all the heretics, and those who imagine that they have hit upon something more beyond the truth, so that by following those things already mentioned, proceeding on their way variously, inharmoniously, and foolishly, not keeping always to the same opinions with regard to the same things, as blind men are led by the blind, they shall deservedly fall into the ditch of ignorance lying in their path, ever seeking and never finding out the truth. 4623 2 Tim. iii. 7. It behooves us, therefore, to avoid their doctrines, and to take careful heed lest we suffer any injury from them; but to flee to the Church, and be brought up in her bosom, and be nourished with the Lord’s Scriptures. For the Church has been planted as a garden (*paradisus*) in this world; therefore says the Spirit of God, “Thou mayest freely eat from every tree of the garden,” 4624 Gen. ii. 16. that is, Eat ye from every Scripture of the Lord; but ye shall not eat with an uplifted mind, nor touch any heretical discord. For these men do profess that they have themselves the knowledge of good and evil; and they set their own impious minds above the God who made them. They therefore form opinions on what is beyond the limits of the understanding. For this cause also the apostle says, “Be not wise beyond what it is fitting to be wise, but be wise prudently,” 4625 Rom. xii. 3. that we be not cast forth by eating of the “knowledge” of these men (that knowledge which knows more than it should do) from the paradise of life. Into this paradise the

Lord has introduced those who obey His call, “summing up in Himself all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth;” 4626 Eph. i. 10 but the things in heaven are spiritual, while those on earth constitute the dispensation in human nature (*secundum hominem est dispositio*). These things, therefore, He recapitulated in Himself: by uniting man to the Spirit, and causing the Spirit to dwell in man, He is Himself made the head of the Spirit, and gives the Spirit to be the head of man: for through Him (the Spirit) we see, and hear, and speak.

**Summary:** Here in paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Now all these [heretics] are of much later date than the bishops to whom the apostles committed the Churches.” He continues as he reasons, “It follows, then, as a matter of course, that these heretics aforementioned, since they are blind to the truth, and deviate from the [right] way, will walk in various roads; and therefore the footsteps of their doctrine are scattered here and there without agreement or connection.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But the path of those belonging to the Church circumscribes the whole world, as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles, and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same, since”…

- “all receive one and the same God the Father,”
- “and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God,”
- “and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit,”
- “and are conversant with the same commandments,”
- “and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution”
- “and expect the same advent of the Lord,”
- “and await the same salvation of the complete man, that is, of the soul and body.”

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world. For to her is entrusted the light of God; and therefore the “wisdom” of God, by means of which she saves all men, “is declared in [its] going forth; it uttereth [its voice] faithfully in the streets, is preached on the tops of the walls, and speaks continually in the gates of the city,” referring to Proverbs 1:20-21. Irenaeus then concludes, “For the Church preaches the truth everywhere, and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus warns that, “Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the Church, call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters, not taking into consideration of how much greater consequence is a religious man, even in a private station, than a blasphemous and impudent sophist.” Irenaeus continues as he then affirms, “Now, such are all the heretics, and those who imagine that they have hit upon something more beyond the truth, so that by following those things already mentioned, proceeding on their way variously, inharmoniously, and foolishly, not keeping always to the same opinions with regard to the same things, as blind men are led by the blind, they shall deservedly fall into the ditch of ignorance lying in their path, ever seeking and never finding out the truth,” referring to 2 Timothy 3:7.

Irenaeus then warns, “It behooves us, therefore, to avoid their doctrines, and to take careful heed lest we suffer any injury from them; but to flee to the Church, and be brought up in her bosom, and be nourished with the Lord’s Scriptures.” Irenaeus then asserts, “For the Church has been planted as a garden (paradisus) in this world; therefore says the Spirit of God, “Thou mayest freely eat from every tree of the garden,” referring to Genesis 2:16, that is, ”Eat ye from every Scripture of the Lord; but ye shall not eat with an uplifted mind, nor touch any heretical discord.” Irenaeus then again warns, “For these men do profess that they have themselves the knowledge of good and evil; and they set their own impious minds above the God who made them. They therefore form opinions on what is beyond the limits of the understanding.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For this cause also the apostle says, “Be not wise beyond what it is fitting to be wise, but be wise prudently,” referring to Romans 12:3, “that we be not cast forth by eating of the “knowledge” of these men (that knowledge which knows more than it should do) from the paradise of life.” Irenaeus then testifies, “Into this paradise the Lord has introduced those who obey His call, “summing up in Himself all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth,” referring to Ephesians 1:10, “but the things in heaven are spiritual, while those on earth constitute the

dispensation in human nature (*secundum hominem est dispositio*).” Irenaeus then concludes as he says, “These things, therefore, He recapitulated in Himself: by uniting man to the Spirit, and causing the Spirit to dwell in man, He is Himself made the head of the Spirit, and gives the Spirit to be the head of man: for through Him (the Spirit) we see, and hear, and speak.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that the heretics came at a “much later date than the bishops to whom the apostles committed the Churches.” He continues as he reasons, “It follows, then, as a matter of course, that these heretics aforementioned, since they are blind to the truth, and deviate from the [right] way, will walk in various roads; and therefore the footsteps of their doctrine are scattered here and there without agreement or connection.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But the path of those belonging to the Church circumscribes the whole world, as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles, and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same since”...

- “all receive one and the same God the Father,”
- “and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God,”
- “and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit,”
- “and are conversant with the same commandments,”
- “and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution”
- “and expect the same advent of the Lord,”
- “and await the same salvation of the complete man, that is, of the soul and body.”

After this vision of the Church, Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world. For to her is entrusted the light of God; and therefore the “wisdom” of God, by means of which she saves all men, “is declared in [its] going forth; it uttereth [its voice] faithfully in the streets, is preached on the tops of the walls, and speaks continually in the gates of the city,” referring in context to **Proverbs 1 (Septuagint):20** Wisdom sings aloud in passages, and in the broad places speaks boldly. 21 And she makes proclamation on the top of the walls, and sits by the gates of princes; and at the gates of the city boldly says...

Another version reads as in **Proverbs 1 (NASB):20** Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square; 21 At the head of the noisy streets she cries out; At the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings.

Irenaeus then concludes, “For the Church preaches the truth everywhere, and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ.”

We read in the Old Testament that the candlestick in the tabernacle, which the Lord commanded Moses to make, had six branches plus a stem as in **Exodus 25 (KJV):31** And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knobs, and his flowers, shall be of the same. 32 And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side:

And in **Exodus 25 (KJV):37** And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it.

We also find seven golden lampstands in the apostle John’s vision on the isle of Patmos as we read in **Revelation 1 (KJV):9** I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Irenaeus believed that the Church was the new Israel. That is, he believed that the Church had replaced

Israel, and all the Old Testament prophecies relating to Israel were now to be fulfilled in the Church. It is true that the natural branches of Israel have been cut off until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in. But after this, the Lord will again revisit Israel, and make them the head of the nations. We will discuss this in greater detail in the next chapter, **Chapter 21: The Church**.

Irenaeus then continues in paragraph two as he warns, “Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the Church, call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters, not taking into consideration of how much greater consequence is a religious man, even in a private station, than a blasphemous and impudent sophist.” Sophists were professional teachers in ancient Greece.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “Now, such are all the heretics, and those who imagine that they have hit upon something more beyond the truth, so that by following those things already mentioned, proceeding on their way variously, inharmoniously, and foolishly, not keeping always to the same opinions with regard to the same things, as blind men are led by the blind, they shall deservedly fall into the ditch of ignorance lying in their path, ever seeking and never finding out the truth,” referring to **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):7** Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Irenaeus then warns, “It behooves us, therefore, to avoid their doctrines, and to take careful heed lest we suffer any injury from them; but to flee to the Church, and be brought up in her bosom, and be nourished with the Lord’s Scriptures.” Irenaeus then asserts, “For the Church has been planted as a garden (paradisus) in this world; therefore says the Spirit of God, “Thou mayest freely eat from every tree of the garden,” referring to **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

Irenaeus then continues as he warns, “that is, ”Eat ye from every Scripture of the Lord; but ye shall not eat with an uplifted mind, nor touch any heretical discord.”

Irenaeus then again warns, “For these men do profess that they have themselves the knowledge of good and evil; and they set their own impious minds above the God who made them. They therefore form opinions on what is beyond the limits of the understanding.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For this cause also the apostle says, “Be not wise beyond what it is fitting to be wise, but be wise prudently,” referring in context to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

This same warning is also found in **Romans 12 (KJV):16** Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

And for that matter, it is also found in what Solomon admonished in **Proverbs 3 (KJV):7** Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

Irenaeus continues as he explains that the apostle, by Romans 12:3, was warning “that we be not cast forth by eating of the “knowledge” of these men (that knowledge which knows more than it should do) from the paradise of life.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “Into this paradise the Lord has introduced those who obey His call, “summing up in Himself all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth,” referring in context to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):10** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

## A Summary of Irenaeus’ Vision of the Heretics

- “Now all these [heretics]”
  - “are of much later date than the bishops to whom the apostles committed the Churches;” paragraph one
  - “since they are blind to the truth,” paragraph one
  - “and deviate from the [right] way,” paragraph one

- “will walk in various roads;” paragraph one
  - “and therefore the footsteps of their doctrine are scattered here and there without agreement or connection.” paragraph one
- “Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the Church,”
  - “call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters, not taking into consideration of how much greater consequence is a religious man, even in a private station, than a blasphemous and impudent sophist.” paragraph two
  - “Now, such are all the heretics,” paragraph two
  - “and those who imagine that they have hit upon something more beyond the truth,” paragraph two
  - “so that by following those things already mentioned, proceeding on their way variously, inharmoniously, and foolishly, not keeping always to the same opinions with regard to the same things, as blind men are led by the blind, they shall deservedly fall into the ditch of ignorance lying in their path, ever seeking and never finding out the truth.” paragraph two
  - “For these men do profess that they have themselves the knowledge of good and evil; and they set their own impious minds above the God who made them.” paragraph two
  - “They therefore form opinions on what is beyond the limits of the understanding.” paragraph two

Those who eat “of the “knowledge” of these men (that knowledge which knows more than it should do)” will be cast forth “from the paradise of life.” paragraph two

## A Summary of Irenaeus’ Vision of the Church

- “The path of those belonging to the Church circumscribes the whole world,” paragraph one
- “as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles,” paragraph one
- “and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same,
  - “since all receive one and the same God the Father,” paragraph one
  - “and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God,” paragraph one
  - “and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit,” paragraph one
  - “and are conversant with the same commandments,” paragraph one
  - “and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution,” paragraph one
  - “and expect the same advent of the Lord,” paragraph one
  - “and await the same salvation of the complete man, that is, of the soul and body.” paragraph one
- “And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world.” paragraph one
- “For to her is entrusted the light of God;” paragraph one
- “and therefore the “wisdom” of God,” paragraph one
  - “by means of which she saves all men,” paragraph one
  - “is declared in [its] going forth;” paragraph one
  - “it uttereth [its voice] faithfully in the streets, “paragraph one
  - “is preached on the tops of the walls,” paragraph one
  - “and speaks continually in the gates of the city.” paragraph one
- “For the Church preaches the truth everywhere,” paragraph one
- “and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ.” paragraph one
- It behooves us ”to flee to the Church, and be brought up in her bosom, and be nourished with the Lord’s Scriptures.” paragraph two
- “For the Church has been planted as a garden (paradisus) in this world;”

- “therefore, says the Spirit of God, “Thou mayest freely eat from every tree of the garden,” so those in the Church can eat from every Scripture of the Lord, but not with an uplifted mind, nor touching any heretical discord.” paragraph two
- In this way those in the Church will not be “cast forth by eating of the “knowledge” of these men (that knowledge which knows more than it should do) from the paradise of life.” paragraph two
- “Into this paradise the Lord has introduced those who obey His call, “summing up in Himself all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth;”” paragraph two
- “but the things in heaven are spiritual, while those on earth constitute the dispensation in human nature (secundum hominem est dispositio).” paragraph two

All of Irenaeus' encouragement is good as it concerns heresy, and as it concerns those who preach heresy, or false doctrine, or things contrary to Scripture. However, Irenaeus forbids even to “call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters.” This differs with Paul's instructions to Timothy in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):19** Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. **20** Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

Elders, that is presbyters, or bishops, that is overseers, are accountable to God for their actions. If two or three witnesses are found, they may be rebuked before all if they continue in known sin. Such a rebuke may also be given for teaching strange doctrines as Paul says in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):3** As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, **4** Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

Elders are to be held accountable for what they teach. Our teaching must be in agreement with the Scripture in all ways.

Now, in regards to the Church, Irenaeus is very zealous to protect the Church from heresy. However, in his zeal to defend the faith, he exceeds the teaching of the Scriptures in regards to the Church. This may seem harmless and trivial at first, but it must be understood that any deviation from the Scriptures gives room for wide interpretation.

For example, the Church is never characterized in the Scriptures as being entrusted with “the light of God, and therefore the “wisdom” of God, by means of which she saves all men.” The Scriptures say that the Living God, and He alone, is the Savior of all men as we read in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):10** For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

To say that the Church saves all men by means of the wisdom of God with which she is entrusted is to obscure the message of salvation. The message of salvation, that is the Gospel, is about relationship with the living God through His Son, Jesus Christ. To place anything or anyone in between God and man, other than Jesus Christ, is to hinder the believer's intimacy with his Savior.

The Church also is not the instrument of salvation. The Church is the body of Christ. It is the members of the body of Christ who are the instruments or vessels that the Lord uses to preach the message of salvation. The members of the Church, which is Christ's body, are laborers together with God as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):5** Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? **6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. **7** So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. **8** Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. **9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

The Holy Spirit, working through individuals in the body of Christ, is saving souls by acting through the word that is preached as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):21** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

It is when we believe and obey the truth that we are born again as we read in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):22** Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: **23** Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

The born again experience of the believer is a work of the Spirit as Jesus says in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

I realize that Irenaeus wants to differentiate between the heretic's vision of the Church, and what he perceived to be the Church of his day, but to say that the Church is the light of God, and therefore the wisdom of God is to give the Church a corporate identity which is not supported by the Scriptures.

When Jesus started His preaching ministry, the people saw great light as we read in **Matthew 4 (KJV):12** Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Jesus also said He was the light of the world, and that those who follow Him would have the light of life as we read in **John 8 (NASB):12** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Then also Jesus told His disciples in the sermon on the Mount to let their light shine before men so that they might glorify our Father in heaven as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):14** Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The light of life is in believers. Irenaeus reasons that the Church possesses "the sure tradition from the apostles," and also their writings, the Scriptures, and so the Church has been entrusted with "the light of God, and therefore the wisdom of God, by means of which she saves all men." In so doing, he is making the church the means by which its members possess the light of life, as if this light of life was somehow dependent on obedience to the Church, and the teaching of the Church. But the opposite is true. We don't become members of the Church until we have the light of life which is given us when we believe and are born again. The Church is composed of its members who have the light of life. It is only these born again believers who have the light of life who compose the Church which is Christ's body.

Irenaeus is giving the Church a corporate identity which she does not have. His goal is to protect the unity of the Church, and to protect the doctrine of the Church from heresy. But in so doing, he has made the Church something that she is not. Irenaeus is making salvation dependent on believing what the Church preaches instead of what the word of God actually says. The Church does not save any man or woman, and neither do we as believers. What saves men and women is faith in the word of God as it is spoken by the Holy Spirit. It is this very word that brings about faith as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):14** How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Also, the Church is never portrayed in the Scriptures as a mother nourishing her children with the Scriptures from her bosom, nor "planted as a garden in this world." It is also not pictured as a paradise in this world. The Church is pictured as a field, and as a building as we see in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

The Church is also pictured as a "chaste virgin," and as the bride of Christ as in **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The marriage relationship is analogous to the relationship of Christ to His church as we read in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):22** Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.  
25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

The Church is to be subject to Christ. And speaking of this oneness in marriage, the Church is also portrayed as the body of Christ in **Ephesians 1 (KJV)**:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Believers are so intimately connected to their Lord that they are pictured as the members of His body, and are even performing specific functions such as the hands and feet as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

So the Church is the body of Christ, and we are individually members of it as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

It is important to understand what the Scripture says that the Church is, and what it is not. It is not an institution with offices holding knowledge and authority which can be received and dispensed simply by holding the office. The bishops and presbyters and all church leaders must be diligent to show themselves approved to God and handling the word of God accurately as Paul instructs in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV)**:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The words “rightly dividing” in the Greek are literally “cutting straight.” Wuest Words Studies says that this may refer to “the stone mason’s art of cutting stones fair and straight to fit into their places in a building.” **Words Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume II, page 135**. Paul’s exhortation to Timothy was to make haste or give diligence, that is, study to show himself approved to God so that he would be equipped for every good work in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV)**:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

We must be careful how we handle the word of God. This does not mean that we should not read it, but just to be careful how we hear it. If a “holy presbyter” is teaching false doctrine, we must not be afraid to call him or anyone else who teaches false doctrine in the Church to account. All believers are commanded to hear and do the word of God, and not just the presbyters, for all believers have the Holy Spirit and can discern the truth as the apostle John teaches in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

The presbyters should be equipping the Church so that its members are no longer children, but grow up into Him in all things.

## Commentary Summary: The Theory of Apostolic Succession

To summarize, Irenaeus is seeking to establish a stable government in the Church in his time. Since he believes the apostles handed their authority to the bishops, he sees a transition from apostolic government to government by bishops. He sees this government maintaining its validity when the bishop is appointed by a church that can show apostolic succession. Clearly, Irenaeus thinks it is an impossible task to try to validate every church's list of episcopal succession. Therefore, he sees the Church of Rome as the Church who should carry the authority of apostolic succession, since it has maintained a list of bishops from the beginning and was founded by the "two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul." Therefore, the Church of Rome is in a position to mediate and settle all questions of doctrine. Interestingly, Irenaeus does not mention Matthew 16:18 in all his writing. It is this Scripture that was misinterpreted by the early Church leaders that finally lead to the establishment of the Church of Rome's preeminent authority beyond all doubt. But this was not part of Irenaeus' teaching. It came at a later time.

So we see a development here in the thinking of Irenaeus and the early Church in how the church should be governed. He was earnestly trying to work this out in his zeal to defend the faith because of the winds of Gnostic doctrine blowing through the church which was subverting the saints. However, the problem, I feel, with apostolic succession is fivefold.

1. apostolic succession requires dependence on man
2. apostolic succession hinders accountability
3. apostolic succession keeps the Church divided
4. apostolic succession gives tacit apostolic authority to bishops
5. apostolic succession is not supported by the Scriptures

First of all, apostolic succession requires dependence on man in the following ways:

1. We must have faith in the apostle who made the appointment originally.
2. We must have faith in the Church, or a man somewhere, who is keeping a list of a succession of bishops.
3. We must have faith in the Church to appoint a faithful and blameless man.
4. We must have faith in the Church to exercise the proper discipline when a bishop or presbyter is unfaithful. Irenaeus discouraged even questioning the knowledge of a "holy presbyter."

Second, apostolic succession hinders accountability. How can someone be accountable if they have received a "certain gift of truth" because they are in an episcopal line of succession? This reasoning places them beyond the accountability of the body of Christ. To say that their knowledge may not be questioned because of their appointment by the Church is not Scriptural. No one can claim perfection until Jesus comes. And no one in the body of Christ is beyond accountability for what they teach. Not even Peter the apostle was beyond accountability as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV):11** But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

If the apostle Peter, or Cephas as he was also called, can be held accountable in this way to the truth of the gospel, then anyone in the Church, be he presbyter, bishop, overseer, elder, or a new convert, can be held accountable to the truth of the gospel.

Third, apostolic succession keeps the Church divided. In Irenaeus' teaching of apostolic succession, he made the churches who could trace their bishop back to an appointment by an apostle autonomous while appointing Rome as the Church they should all "agree" with. Diversity is good but division is not good as Paul

taught when he corrected the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV)**:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Is Paul just speaking just to the Corinthians? Is he not speaking to us as well, that is, to the whole Church? The only thing that should divide us is truth, but that is also what will eventually unite us. We must all be on a quest for truth. The point is this. To have faith in the apostle is to have faith in a man, and therefore, to be dependent on a man. The Scriptures say that the one who trusts in man is cursed as have read in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV)**:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

And in **Psalm 118 (KJV)**:8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

And in **Proverbs 3 (KJV)**:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

We are saved because we trust in the Lord, and have believed in the word of God about Jesus. We are not saved because that word was from an apostle, or any other man or woman, or church for that matter. We are saved because that word which the apostle spoke, or any other man or woman spoke, was the word of God about Jesus, spoken to us by the Holy Spirit. The word of God is what has been handed down, or passed on to us. This is what we believe, and it is what saves us as we read in **James 1 (NIV)**:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

And yes we are to correctly handle the word of truth as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (ESV)**:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

We are not to blindly accept just what the Church teaches. We must hold men accountable for what they teach in the Church. We are not to place our faith in men, but the word of God, for it is the truth and through belief in the truth we are saved as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (ESV)**:13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Our faith is not in man, nor is it in the Church. Our faith is in Jesus Christ and Him alone. We do not believe because it is the word of an apostle. We believe because we are convinced it is the word of God. And we don't believe because the apostle spoke a word to a bishop or presbyter, and that word has somehow been passed down through a line of successive bishops and presbyters. That is only tradition. We believe the message of the word of God in the twenty-seven books of the New Testament and the forty-nine books of the Old Testament. It is this word that leads us to Christ, the Son of the Living God, and it is He who saves us. It is this word that leads us to a real relationship with Him who is above all. He is my God, my Savior, and my Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourth, apostolic succession gives tacit apostolic authority to bishops. Irenaeus himself was a bishop. By asserting that the apostles delivered up their place of government to the bishops they committed the churches to, Irenaeus has implied, even without saying it directly, that the bishops who are in apostolic succession now have the same authority as the apostles. If this were true, then why did Paul teach as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

If God had set bishops to be first in the Church, why does he say that God set some in the church, first apostles? Being an apostle is not up to man, or any human organization or institution. It is a ministry gift given

by God alone as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):7** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Notice He gave each one grace according to the measure of Christ's gift to that individual. Again we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

The giving of these gifts occurred after He ascended on high and led the righteous dead into heaven. He gave the twelve to be apostles first as we read in **Luke 6 (KJV):13** And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

But after He ascended, he gave more gifts as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

These gifts are given until we all attain the unity of the faith, of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. We are not there yet. We still need these gifts to function in their place in the body of Christ.

When these ministry gifts are allowed their proper place in the Church, we will see the following results as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Fifth, apostolic succession is not supported by the Scriptures. There is no place in the Scriptures where it distinctly says that the apostles delivered their own place of government to the bishops they committed the churches to. Rather, the Scriptures support the individuality of every believer in Christ, and each believer's possession of a measure of grace to fulfill a specific function in the body of Christ. When believers are allowed to take their God given place in the body of Christ, according to the measure of grace God has given each one, the body will grow to the measure of the stature of Christ.

Because of Irenaeus' assertion that the bishops have received the apostles' place of government, he has given himself the authority of an apostle. Whether he intended this or not, and whether he actually had the apostolic gift, God only knows. He certainly has defended the Church against the Gnostic heresy. But because of his allegiance to the tradition of the Church in his day, and specifically to the tradition of apostolic succession, it is certain that he did not reach the full potential of his gifting. Irenaeus set the Church on a course that will not be corrected until the time of the Reformation in the 1500s. And even in our day, the Church must complete the recovery which the Reformation only started.

## Chapter 21: The Church

**Book 3: Chapter XXIV.—Recapitulation of the various arguments adduced against Gnostic impiety under all its aspects. The heretics, tossed about by every blast of doctrine, are opposed by the uniform teaching of the Church, which remains so always, and is consistent with itself.**

1. Thus, then, have all these men been exposed, who bring in impious doctrines regarding our Maker and Framer, who also formed this world, and above whom there is no other God; and those have been overthrown by their own arguments who teach falsehoods regarding the substance of our Lord, and the dispensation which He fulfilled for the sake of His own creature man. But [it has, on the other hand, been shown], that the preaching of the Church is everywhere consistent, and continues in an even course, and receives testimony from the prophets, the apostles, and all the disciples—as I have proved—through [those in] the beginning, the middle, and the end, 3781 Literally, “through the beginnings, the means, and the end.” These three terms refer to the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Church Catholic, and through the entire dispensation of God, and that well-grounded system which tends 3782 The Latin is “solidam operationem,” which we know not how to translate, in accordance with the context, except as above. to man’s salvation, namely, our faith; which, having been received from the Church, we do preserve, and which always, by the Spirit of God, renewing its youth, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causes the vessel itself containing it to renew its youth also. For this gift of God has been entrusted to the Church, as breath was to the first created man, 3783 This seems to be the meaning conveyed by the old Latin, “quemadmodum aspiratio plasmationi.” for this purpose, that all the members receiving it may be vivified; and the [means of] communion with Christ has been distributed throughout it, that is, the Holy Spirit, the earnest of incorruption, the means of confirming our faith, and the ladder of ascent to God. “For in the Church,” it is said, “God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers,” 3784 1 Cor. xii. 28. and all the other means through which the Spirit works; of which all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the Church, but defraud themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behaviour. For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth. Those, therefore, who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished into life from the mother’s breasts, nor do they enjoy that most limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves broken cisterns 3785 Jer. ii. 13. out of earthly trenches, and drink putrid water out of the mire, fleeing from the faith of the Church lest they be convicted; and rejecting the Spirit, that they may not be instructed.

2. Alienated thus from the truth, they do deservedly wallow in all error, tossed to and fro by it, thinking differently in regard to the same things at different times, and never attaining to a well-grounded knowledge, being more anxious to be sophists of words than disciples of the truth. For they have not been founded upon the one rock, but upon the sand, which has in itself a multitude of stones. Wherefore they also imagine many gods, and they always have the excuse of searching [after truth] (for they are blind), but never succeed in finding it. For they blaspheme the Creator, Him who is truly God, who also furnishes power to find [the truth]; imagining that they have discovered another god beyond God, or another Pleroma, or another dispensation. Wherefore also the light which is from God does not illumine them, because they have dishonoured and despised God, holding Him of small account, because, through His love and infinite benignity, He has come within reach of human knowledge (knowledge, however, not with regard to His greatness, or with regard to His essence—for that has no man measured or handled—but after this sort: that we should know that He who made, and formed, and breathed in them the breath of life, and nourishes us by means of the creation, establishing all things by His Word, and binding them together by His Wisdom 3786 i.e., the Spirit.—this is He who is the only true God); but they dream of a non-existent being above Him, that they may be regarded as having found out the great God, whom nobody, [they hold,] can recognize

holding communication with the human race, or as directing mundane matters: that is to say, they find out the god of Epicurus, who does nothing either for himself or others; that is, he exercises no providence at all.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies against the Gnostics as he says, “Thus, then, have all these men been exposed, who bring in impious doctrines regarding our Maker and Framer, who also formed this world, and above whom there is no other God; and those have been overthrown by their own arguments who teach falsehoods regarding the substance of our Lord, and the dispensation which He fulfilled for the sake of His own creature man.” Irenaeus then asserts, “But [it has, on the other hand, been shown], that the preaching of the church is everywhere consistent, and continues in an even course.” Irenaeus adds as he testifies, “and receives testimony from the prophets, the apostles, and all the disciples—as I have proved—through [those in] the beginning, the middle, and the end,” or literally “the beginnings, the means, and the end” as note 3781 says.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “and through the entire dispensation of God, and that well-grounded system which tends to man’s salvation, namely, our faith; which, having been received from the Church, we do preserve, and which always, by the Spirit of God, renewing its youth, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causes the vessel itself containing it to renew its youth also.” Irenaeus then continues and asserts, “For this gift of God has been entrusted to the Church, as breath was to the first created man, for this purpose, that all the members receiving it may be vivified; and the [means of] communion with Christ has been distributed throughout it, that is, the Holy Spirit, the earnest of incorruption, the means of confirming our faith, and the ladder of ascent to God.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For in the Church,” it is said, “God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers,” referring to 1 Corinthians 12:28, “and all the other means through which the Spirit works;” Irenaeus then judges, referring to the Gnostics, “of which all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the Church, but defraud themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behaviour.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth.” Irenaeus then judges, “Those, therefore, who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished into life from the mother’s breasts, nor do they enjoy that most limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves broken cisterns,” referring to Jeremiah 2:13, “out of earthly trenches, and drink putrid water out of the mire, fleeing from the faith of the Church lest they be convicted; and rejecting the Spirit, that they may not be instructed.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus describes the Gnostics as he testifies:

- “Alienated thus from the truth, they do deservedly wallow in all error, tossed to and fro by it, thinking differently in regard to the same things at different times, and never attaining to a well-grounded knowledge, being more anxious to be sophists of words than disciples of the truth.”
- “For they have not been founded upon the one rock, but upon the sand, which has in itself a multitude of stones.”
- “Wherefore they also imagine many gods, and they always have the excuse of searching [after truth] (for they are blind), but never succeed in finding it.”
- “For they blaspheme the Creator, Him who is truly God, who also furnishes power to find [the truth]; imagining that they have discovered another god beyond God, or another Pleroma, or another dispensation.”
- “Wherefore also the light which is from God does not illumine them, because they have dishonoured and despised God, holding Him of small account, because, through His love and infinite benignity, He has come within reach of human knowledge (knowledge, however, not with regard to His greatness, or with regard to His essence—for that has no man measured or handled—but after this sort: that we should know that He who made, and formed, and breathed in them the breath of life, and nourishes us by means of the creation, establishing all things by His Word, and binding them together by His Wisdom—this is He who is the only true God);”
- “but they dream of a non-existent being above Him, that they may be regarded as having found out the great God, whom nobody, [they hold,] can recognize holding communication with the human race, or as directing mundane matters.”

- “that is to say, they find out the god of Epicurus, who does nothing either for himself or others; that is, he exercises no providence at all.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies against the Gnostics as he says, “Thus, then, have all these men been exposed, who bring in impious doctrines regarding our Maker and Framer, who also formed this world, and above whom there is no other God; and those have been overthrown by their own arguments who teach falsehoods regarding the substance of our Lord, and the dispensation which He fulfilled for the sake of His own creature man.”

Irenaeus is to be commended for his consistent and potent defense of the Church against the Gnostics and their various false teachings. Here we could picture his back against the wall as he tries to defend the Church against their false teachings. In so doing, he reveals much about his perceptions of the early Church.

Irenaeus then asserts, “But [it has, on the other hand, been shown], that the preaching of the church is everywhere consistent, and continues in an even course.”

Irenaeus here is speaking of the Church in a corporate sense as a unified body. He differentiates the preaching of the Church, which he sees as consistent and continuing on an even course, with the preaching and teachings of the Gnostics which are often inconsistent, and disagree with each other.

Irenaeus adds as he testifies, “and receives testimony from the prophets, the apostles, and all the disciples—as I have proved—through [those in] the beginning, the middle, and the end,” or literally “the beginnings, the means, and the end” as note 3781 says.

In other words, the writings of the prophets, and the testimonies of the apostles, speak of the Church and give authority to it in a corporate sense. And the disciples were appointed by the apostles to continue their work through the entire dispensation of God up to the current day of Irenaeus’ writing. The disciples have been handed the government of the apostles as we saw already in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession** where we saw that Irenaeus said in **Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 1**, “For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.”

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “and through the entire dispensation of God, and that well-grounded system which tends to man’s salvation, namely, our faith; which, having been received from the Church, we do preserve, and which always, by the Spirit of God, renewing its youth, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causes the vessel itself containing it to renew its youth also.”

In Irenaeus’s view, our faith is a well-grounded system. In other words, it makes sense, and because of its consistency, it can be relied upon to secure man’s salvation. Because our faith is received through the preaching of the Church, Irenaeus concludes that it is through the Church that faith is received by its members. And we as members “do preserve” the faith of the Church. In other words, we as members of the Church continue the faith. Irenaeus here also pictures the Church as an excellent vessel with the precious deposit of faith inside it. This faith is renewed to its youth by the Spirit of God which causes the vessel itself, that is, the Church in a corporate sense, to be renewed.

Irenaeus then continues as he asserts, “For this gift of God has been entrusted to the Church, as breath was to the first created man, for this purpose, that all the members receiving it may be vivified;”

In other words our faith, which is received from the Church in a corporate sense, is life giving in just the same way as breath was to the first created man. Irenaeus portrays the Church as dispensing life giving faith just as breath was given to the first created man. I believe his idea is that the Church in a corporate sense maintains this life for all the members.

Irenaeus then continues, “and the [means of] communion with Christ has been distributed throughout it, that is, the Holy Spirit, the earnest of incorruption, the means of confirming our faith, and the ladder of ascent to God.”

Again, in Irenaeus' view, the Holy Spirit is distributed throughout the Church in a corporate sense, and is the means of relationship with Christ.

Irenaeus then testifies, "For in the Church," it is said, "God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers," referring in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Irenaeus then continues, "and all the other means through which the Spirit works;"

Irenaeus is saying that the fact that God has set apostles, prophets, and teachers in the Church gives the Church its authority in a corporate sense.

Irenaeus then judges, referring to the Gnostics, "of which all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the Church, but defraud themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behaviour."

Irenaeus believes that we must join ourselves to the Church in this corporate sense to share in the means by which the Spirit works and receive the benefits of the Spirit. Again, if we do not join ourselves to the Church in this corporate sense, we will not have the life the Church gives to its members through the Spirit.

Irenaeus then testifies, "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth."

In Irenaeus' view, where the Church is in this corporate sense is where the Spirit of God is. The Church in this corporate sense is then the dispenser of every kind of grace since the Church is where the Spirit of God is.

Irenaeus then judges, "Those, therefore, who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished into life from the mother's breasts, nor do they enjoy that most limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves broken cisterns," referring to **Jeremiah 2 (KJV):13** For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*

Irenaeus then continues, "out of earthly trenches, and drink putrid water out of the mire, fleeing from the faith of the Church lest they be convicted; and rejecting the Spirit, that they may not be instructed."

Since the Spirit is truth, and where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, the Church in this corporate sense is like a mother nourishing her children from her breasts into life. The Church, as a limpid fountain, gives life to her children in this way.

To summarize, in his zeal to defend the Church, Irenaeus saw the Church as a corporate entity greater than the sum of all its parts. This corporate entity, the Church, is everywhere consistent in comparison to the Gnostics who are inconsistent in their teachings, and teach one thing and then another. The Church, as a corporate entity, continues on an even course, just as it had begun when the apostles started preaching the Gospel. The prophets of old spoke of the Church in their prophecy, Irenaeus believed. And the disciples give testimony of the traditions of the apostles. The Church, as a corporate entity, was entrusted with a gift from God, that is, our faith, which gives life to all the members who receive it. Irenaeus perceived this corporate entity, the Church, to have received the authority of the apostles since they were the ones who founded it and appointed bishops in their place. The Holy Spirit has been distributed throughout this corporate entity, the Church, and is the means of communion with Christ, and the means of confirming our faith. The Holy Spirit is also "the earnest of incorruption," and "the ladder of ascent to God." It is through this corporate entity that we partake of the works of the Spirit of God. Where the Church is in this corporate sense, there is the Spirit of God. Therefore, if anyone does not join the Church, they defraud themselves of life, and "all the other means through which the Spirit works." The Church in this corporate sense is "that most limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ." That is, the Church is a mother whose breasts nourish her children into life. We will examine more of Irenaeus' comments about the Church before making a final summary commentary.

It is interesting to note that in paragraph two, Irenaeus says in speaking of the Gnostics, that "they have not been founded upon the one rock, but upon the sand, which has in itself a multitude of stones. Wherefore they also imagine many gods...." I believe Irenaeus means that the one true God is "the one rock" upon which they should be founded upon as in **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV):3** Because I will publish the name of the LORD:

ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Irenaeus is correct in saying that the “light which is from God does not illumine them” who reject the Lord’s salvation in Jesus Christ.

## **Book 4: Chapter XX.—That one God formed all things in the world, by means of the Word and the Holy Spirit: and that although He is to us in this life invisible and incomprehensible, nevertheless He is not unknown; inasmuch as His works do declare Him, and His Word has shown that in many modes He may be seen and known.**

...

12. However, it was not by means of visions alone which were seen, and words which were proclaimed, but also in actual works, that He was beheld by the prophets, in order that through them He might prefigure and show forth future events beforehand. For this reason did Hosea the prophet take “a wife of whoredoms,” prophesying by means of the action, “that in committing fornication the earth should fornicate from the Lord,” 4106 **Hos. i. 2, 3.** that is, the men who are upon the earth; and from men of this stamp it will be God’s good pleasure to take out 4107 **Acts xv. 14.** a Church which shall be sanctified by fellowship with His Son, just as that woman was sanctified by intercourse with the prophet. And for this reason, Paul declares that the “unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband.” 4108 **1 Cor. vii. 14.** [But Hosea himself says (**Hos. xii. 10**), “I have used similitudes;” and this history may be fairly referred to prophetic vision. Dr. Pusey, in his *Minor Prophets, in loc.*, argues against this view, however; and his reasons deserve consideration.] Then again, the prophet names his children, “Not having obtained mercy,” and “Not a people,” 4109 **Hos. i. 6–9.** in order that, as says the apostle, “what was not a people may become a people; and she who did not obtain mercy may obtain mercy. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said, This is not a people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.” 4110 **Rom. ix. 25, 26.** That which had been done typically through his actions by the prophet, the apostle proves to have been done truly by Christ in the Church. Thus, too, did Moses also take to wife an Ethiopian woman, whom he thus made an Israelitish one, showing by anticipation that the wild olive tree is grafted into the cultivated olive, and made to partake of its fatness. For as He who was born Christ according to the flesh, had indeed to be sought after by the people in order to be slain, but was to be set free in Egypt, that is, among the Gentiles, to sanctify those who were there in a state of infancy, from whom also He perfected His Church in that place (for Egypt was Gentile from the beginning, as was Ethiopia also); for this reason, by means of the marriage of Moses, was shown forth the marriage of the Word; 4111 **The text is here uncertain; and while the general meaning of the sentence is plain, its syntax is confused and obscure.** and by means of the Ethiopian bride, the Church taken from among the Gentiles was made manifest; and those who do detract from, accuse, and deride it, shall not be pure. For they shall be full of leprosy, and expelled from the camp of the righteous. Thus also did Rahab the harlot, while condemning herself, inasmuch as she was a Gentile, guilty of all sins, nevertheless receive the three spies, 4112 **Irenæus seems here to have written “three” for “two” from a lapse of memory.** who were spying out all the land, and hid them at her home; [which three were] doubtless [a type of] the Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit. And when the entire city in which she lived fell to ruins at the sounding of the seven trumpets, Rahab the harlot was preserved, when all was over [*in ultimis*], together with all her house, through faith of the scarlet sign; as the Lord also declared to those who did not receive His advent,—the Pharisees, no doubt, nullify the sign of the scarlet thread, which meant the passover, and the redemption and exodus of the people from Egypt,—when He said, “The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.” 4113 **Matt. xxi. 31.**

**Summary:** In paragraph twelve, Irenaeus affirms, "However, it was not by means of visions alone which were seen, and words which were proclaimed, but also in actual works, that He was beheld by the prophets, in order that through them He might prefigure and show forth future events beforehand." Irenaeus then affirms, "For this reason did Hosea the prophet take "a wife of whoredoms," prophesying by means of the action, "that in committing fornication the earth should fornicate from the Lord," referring to Hosea 1:2,3, "that is, the men who are upon the earth;" Irenaeus then continues as he again affirms, "and from men of this stamp it will be God's good pleasure to take out a Church which shall be sanctified by fellowship with His Son, just as that woman was sanctified by intercourse with the prophet." Irenaeus then continues as he reasons, "And for this reason, Paul declares that the "unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband," referring to 1 Corinthians 7:14. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "Then again, the prophet names his children, "Not having obtained mercy," and "Not a people," referring to Hosea 1:6-9, "in order that, as says the apostle, "what was not a people may become a people; and she who did not obtain mercy may obtain mercy. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said, This is not a people, there shall they be called the children of the living God," referring to Romans 9:25-26. Irenaeus then affirms, "That which had been done typically through his actions by the prophet, the apostle proves to have been done truly by Christ in the Church." Irenaeus then notes a type as he affirms, "Thus, too, did Moses also take to wife an Ethiopian woman, whom he thus made an Israelitish one, showing by anticipation that the wild olive tree is grafted into the cultivated olive, and made to partake of its fatness." Irenaeus then explains the analogy as he says, "For as He who was born Christ according to the flesh, had indeed to be sought after by the people in order to be slain, but was to be set free in Egypt, that is, among the Gentiles, to sanctify those who were there in a state of infancy, from whom also He perfected His Church in that place (for Egypt was Gentile from the beginning, as was Ethiopia also); for this reason, by means of the marriage of Moses, was shown forth the marriage of the Word; and by means of the Ethiopian bride, the Church taken from among the Gentiles was made manifest;" Irenaeus then judges, "and those who do detract from, accuse, and deride it, shall not be pure. For they shall be full of leprosy, and expelled from the camp of the righteous." Irenaeus then affirms, "Thus also did Rahab the harlot, while condemning herself, inasmuch as she was a Gentile, guilty of all sins, nevertheless receive the three spies, who were spying out all the land, and hid them at her home," referring to Joshua, chapter 2. Irenaeus then asserts, "[which three were] doubtless [a type of] the Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit." Irenaeus then affirms, "And when the entire city in which she lived fell to ruins at the sounding of the seven trumpets, Rahab the harlot was preserved, when all was over [*in ultimis*], together with all her house, through faith of the scarlet sign," referring to Joshua, chapter 6. Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, "as the Lord also declared to those who did not receive His advent,—the Pharisees, no doubt, nullify the sign of the scarlet thread, which meant the passover, and the redemption and exodus of the people from Egypt,—when He said, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you," referring to Matthew 21:31.

**Commentary:** In paragraph twelve, Irenaeus affirms, "However, it was not by means of visions alone which were seen, and words which were proclaimed, but also in actual works, that He was beheld by the prophets, in order that through them He might prefigure and show forth future events beforehand." That is, Irenaeus is saying that the actions, and not just the words of the prophet were also prophetic at times.

Irenaeus then affirms, "For this reason did Hosea the prophet take "a wife of whoredoms," prophesying by means of the action, "that in committing fornication the earth should fornicate from the Lord," referring to Hosea 1:2,3, "that is, the men who are upon the earth;"

What Irenaeus is trying to show us here in paragraph twelve is that the prophets, in their writings and actions, testified to the Church. He is doing this to prove that the God of the Old Covenant and the God of the New Covenant are one and the same. And so he points out that in the prophecy of Hosea, Hosea himself did take a wife of whoredoms referring to **Hosea 1 (NASB):2** The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

We note, however, that the primary application of the prophet's action in this Scripture is for the purpose of showing Israel that they were in a state of harlotry because of their idolatry. Irenaeus is alluding to a

secondary application of this Scripture as he again affirms, “and from men of this stamp it will be God’s good pleasure to take out a Church which shall be sanctified by fellowship with His Son, just as that woman was sanctified by intercourse with the prophet.” The secondary application to Hosea’s prophecy, which Irenaeus is alluding to, is that the Lord has taken out of the Gentiles a bride, the Church. This was indeed God’s plan as recorded in **Acts 15 (KJV):14** Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

An example of the word, “church,” is found in **1 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):1** Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians *which is* in God the Father and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word “Church” in Greek is ἐκκλησία (pronounced *ekklēsia*). Vine’s says that the word “Church” comes from two Greek words, ἐκ (pronounced *ek*) meaning out of, and καλέω (pronounced *kaleo*) meaning to call. The word “was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens gathered to discuss the affairs of State.”

**Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 83-84.** Here, Vine’s also points to Acts 19:39 where the word is translated “assembly” as another example as we read in **Acts 19 (KJV):39** But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

Irenaeus then continues as he reasons, “And for this reason, Paul declares that the “unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband,” referring in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

Irenaeus is possibly drawing a link from the prophets to the Church from **Hosea 12 (KJV):10** I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

However, in his application of the Scripture in Hosea to the Church here, Irenaeus takes 1 Corinthians 7:14 slightly out of context. Does Irenaeus mean that Jesus Christ is in the place of the husband, and that He sanctifies all the unbelievers in the Church? Jesus Christ does sanctify the unbelieving when they believe. But there are no unbelievers in the Church which is His body. The Gentiles in the Church are believers, and only believers, since the only way to become a member of the Church, which is His body, is to believe in Him. In the verses in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, Paul speaks to the believing wife or husband who has an unbelieving spouse. The believing one sanctifies the unbelieving one in the sense that their marriage bed is undefiled. But the unbelieving one is not saved, nor in the Church, until they believe. Paul says that if the unbelieving one departs, the believing spouse may marry again since they are not under bondage in such cases. Irenaeus takes the verse slightly out of context in 1 Corinthians 7:14.

Irenaeus’ analogy fits more closely to what Paul says about sanctification in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):22** Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “Then again, the prophet names his children, “Not having obtained mercy,” and “Not a people,” referring in context to **Hosea 1 (KJV):6** And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. 7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen. 8 Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. 9 Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. 10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place

where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. 11 Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Irenaeus then explains, “in order that, as says the apostle, “what was not a people may become a people; and she who did not obtain mercy may obtain mercy. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said, This is not a people, there shall they be called the children of the living God,” referring to **Romans 9 (NASB):25** As He says also in Hosea, “I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

Irenaeus then affirms, “That which had been done typically through his actions by the prophet, the apostle proves to have been done truly by Christ in the Church.”

Irenaeus states correctly that “the prophet names his children, “Not having obtained mercy,” and “Not a people,” for that is what the names means in Hebrew. And Irenaeus is correct as he reasons that this was done in order that, as the apostle says, “what was not a people may become a people; and she who did not obtain mercy may obtain mercy.”

Irenaeus then notes a type as he affirms, “Thus, too, did Moses also take to wife an Ethiopian woman, whom he thus made an Israelitish one, showing by anticipation that the wild olive tree is grafted into the cultivated olive, and made to partake of its fatness.” A type is an illustration of something in the Scriptures that prefigures something else. It is like an analogy, but an analogy of divine foreknowledge. Irenaeus is referring to the olive tree graft mentioned by Paul in **Romans 11 (KJV):17** And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Irenaeus then explains the analogy as he says, “For as He who was born Christ according to the flesh, had indeed to be sought after by the people in order to be slain, but was to be set free in Egypt,” speaking of the flight of Mary and Joseph with the child Jesus into Egypt referring in context to **Matthew 2 (KJV):13** And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. 14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Irenaeus continues, “that is, among the Gentiles, to sanctify those who were there in a state of infancy, from whom also He perfected His Church in that place (for Egypt was Gentile from the beginning, as was Ethiopia also); for this reason, by means of the marriage of Moses, was shown forth the marriage of the Word; and by means of the Ethiopian bride, the Church taken from among the Gentiles was made manifest;” Irenaeus must be referring to those in Egypt and Ethiopia who would eventually accept Christ and form the Church in those areas.

Irenaeus then issues an anathema as he statest that “those who do detract from, accuse, and deride it, shall not be pure. For they shall be full of leprosy, and expelled from the camp of the righteous.”

Irenaeus then affirms, “Thus also did Rahab the harlot, while condemning herself, inasmuch as she was a Gentile, guilty of all sins, nevertheless receive the three spies, who were spying out all the land, and hid them at her home,” referring to **Joshua 2 (KJV):1** And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. 2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. 3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. 4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

We need not be too hard on Irenaeus for forgetting that there were only two spies. Irenaeus certainly did not have the resources we have today, nor even chapters and verse numbers.

Irenaeus then asserts, “[which three were] doubtless [a type of] the Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit.” Since there were only two spies, it is obvious that this could not have been a type of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Irenaeus then affirms, “And when the entire city in which she lived fell to ruins at the sounding of the seven trumpets, Rahab the harlot was preserved, when all was over [*in ultimis*], together with all her house, through faith of the scarlet sign,” referring to Joshua, chapter 6. Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “as the Lord also declared to those who did not receive His advent,—the Pharisees, no doubt, nullify the sign of the scarlet thread, which meant the passover, and the redemption and exodus of the people from Egypt,—when He said, ‘The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you,’ referring to Matthew 21:31.

In regards to this event in Joshua, I believe Irenaeus means to show the similarity between Rahab’s “salvation” and the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. That is, Rahab, “together with all her house,” was given divine protection and preservation during the battle of Jericho, and ultimately salvation from sin, all “through faith of the scarlet sign.” Not faith in a red cord, but what that cord represented. That is, it meant “the passover, and the redemption and exodus of the people from Egypt,” as he says. This is also a type of Christ’s salvation he says. He is the scarlet sign to us, that is, His blood. And our salvation is through faith in His blood, the scarlet sign. And so Irenaeus alludes to this when he says that the Lord “also declared to those who did not receive His advent,” that is, the Pharisees, “who ‘no doubt, nullify the sign of the scarlet thread,’ that the ‘publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you,’ referring to **Matthew 21 (KJV):31** Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

This indicates very deep insight into the Scriptures by Irenaeus. Here is the rest of the story of Rahab in context as we read in **Joshua 2 (KJV):14** And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. 15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. 16 And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. 17 And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. 18 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. 19 And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. 20 And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. 21 And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

Joshua was as good as his word as we read in **Joshua 6 (KJV):21** And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. 22 But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. 23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. 24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Again, this is deep insight by Irenaeus. He got this one right. However, the primary application of the verses in Hosea is to Israel, as we read in Hosea 10:1, “Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered.” The secondary application is to the Church as Paul confirms in Romans. Israel has been set aside in the meantime because they stumbled at the stumbling stone as we read in **Romans 9 (KJV):30** What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because

they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Israel has been set aside temporarily until the fullness of the Gentiles is come into the Church. Then Israel will be gathered once more as Paul reveals in **Romans 11 (KJV):25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

And again there is a similarity between Moses and his wife, who was Ethiopian, and Christ and the Church, who are mostly Gentiles. Irenaeus says that all of this was prophetic of the Church, “showing by anticipation that the wild olive tree is grafted into the cultivated olive, and made to partake of its fatness.” And he is correct, though only strictly speaking in a secondary application, since the “marriage of the word” has not happened yet but is still future as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

## **Book 4: Chapter XXI.—Abraham’s faith was identical with ours; this faith was prefigured by the words and actions of the old patriarchs.**

1. But that our faith was also prefigured in Abraham, and that he was the patriarch of our faith, and, as it were, the prophet of it, the apostle has very fully taught, when he says in the Epistle to the Galatians: “He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, [doeth he it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, announced beforehand unto Abraham, that in him all nations should be blessed. So then they which be of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham.” **4114 Gal. iii. 5–9; Gen. xii. 3.** For which [reasons the apostle] declared that this man was not only the prophet of faith, but also the father of those who from among the Gentiles believe in Jesus Christ, because his faith and ours are one and the same: for he believed in things future, as if they were already accomplished, because of the promise of God; and in like manner do we also, because of the promise of God, behold through faith that inheritance [laid up for us] in the [future] kingdom.

2. The history of Isaac, too, is not without a symbolical character. For in the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle declares: “Moreover, when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac,” she received answer **4115 Massuet would cancel these words.** from the Word, “that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people are in thy body; and the one people shall overcome the other, and the elder shall serve the younger.” **4116 Rom. ix. 10–13; Gen. xxv. 23.** From which it is evident, that not only [were there] prophecies of the patriarchs, but also that the children brought forth by Rebecca were a prediction of the two nations; and that the one should be indeed the greater, but the other the less; that the one also should be under bondage, but the other free; but [that both should be] of one and the same father. Our God, one and the same, is also their God, who knows hidden things, who knoweth all things before they can come to pass; and for this reason has He said, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” **4117 Rom. ix. 13; Mal. i. 2.**

3. If any one, again, will look into Jacob’s actions, he shall find them not destitute of meaning,

but full of import with regard to the dispensations. Thus, in the first place, at his birth, since he laid hold on his brother's heel, 4118 Gen. xv. 26. he was called Jacob, that is, *the supplanter*—one who holds, but is not held; binding the feet, but not being bound; striving and conquering; grasping in his hand his adversary's heel, that is, victory. For to this end was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: "He went forth conquering, that He should conquer." 4119 Rev. vi. 2. In the next place, [Jacob] received the rights of the first-born, when his brother looked on them with contempt; even as also the younger nation received Him, Christ, the first-begotten, when the elder nation rejected Him, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar."

4120 John xix. 15. But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father, just as Jacob took away the blessing of this Esau. For which cause his brother suffered the plots and persecutions of a brother, just as the Church suffers this self-same thing from the Jews. In a foreign country were the twelve tribes born, the race of Israel, inasmuch as Christ was also, in a strange country, to generate the twelve-pillared foundation of the Church. Various coloured sheep were allotted to this Jacob as his wages; and the wages of Christ are human beings, who from various and diverse nations come together into one cohort of faith, as the Father promised Him, saying, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." 4121 Ps. ii. 8. And as from the multitude of his sons the prophets of the Lord [afterwards] arose, there was every necessity that Jacob should beget sons from the two sisters, even as Christ did from the two laws of one and the same Father; and in like manner also from the handmaids, indicating that Christ should raise up sons of God, both from freemen and from slaves after the flesh, bestowing upon all, in the same manner, the gift of the Spirit, who vivifies us. 4122 The text of this sentence is in great confusion, and we can give only a doubtful translation. But he (Jacob) did all things for the sake of the younger, she who had the handsome eyes, 4123 [Leah's eyes were weak, according to the LXX.; and Irenæus infers that Rachel's were "beautiful exceedingly." Canticles, i. 15.] Rachel, who prefigured the Church, for which Christ endured patiently; who at that time, indeed, by means of His patriarchs and prophets, was prefiguring and declaring beforehand future things, fulfilling His part by anticipation in the dispensations of God, and accustoming His inheritance to obey God, and to pass through the world as in a state of pilgrimage, to follow His word, and to indicate beforehand things to come. For with God there is nothing without purpose or due signification.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "But that our faith was also prefigured in Abraham, and that he was the patriarch of our faith, and, as it were, the prophet of it, the apostle has very fully taught, when he says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, [doeth he it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, announced beforehand unto Abraham, that in him all nations should be blessed. So then they which be of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham," referring to Galatians 3:5-9. Irenaeus then testifies, "For which [reasons the apostle] declared that this man was not only the prophet of faith, but also the father of those who from among the Gentiles believe in Jesus Christ, because his faith and ours are one and the same," referring to Romans 4:11. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "for he believed in things future, as if they were already accomplished, because of the promise of God; and in like manner do we also, because of the promise of God, behold through faith that inheritance [laid up for us] in the [future] kingdom."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "The history of Isaac, too, is not without a symbolical character. For in the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle declares: "Moreover, when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac," she received answer from the Word, "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people are in thy body; and the one people shall overcome the other, and the elder shall serve the younger," referring to Romans 9:10-13, Genesis 25:23. Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, "From which it is evident,

that not only [were there] prophecies of the patriarchs, but also that the children brought forth by Rebecca were a prediction of the two nations; and that the one should be indeed the greater, but the other the less; that the one also should be under bondage, but the other free; but [that both should be] of one and the same father.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms further, “Our God, one and the same, is also their God, who knows hidden things, who knoweth all things before they can come to pass; and for this reason has He said, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,” referring to Romans 9:13, Malachi 1:2.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, “If any one, again, will look into Jacob’s actions, he shall find them not destitute of meaning, but full of import with regard to the dispensations.” Irenaeus then proceeds to explain that Jacob is a type of Christ and also is a type of the Church as he says the following:

- **Type:** “Thus, in the first place, at his birth, since he laid hold on his brother’s heel, he was called Jacob, that is, the supplanter—one who holds, but is not held; binding the feet, but not being bound; striving and conquering; grasping in his hand his adversary’s heel, that is, victory,” referring to Genesis 25:26.  
**Antitype:** “For to this end was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: “He went forth conquering, that He should conquer,” referring to Revelation 6:2.
- **Type:** “In the next place, [Jacob] received the rights of the first-born, when his brother looked on them with contempt,” referring to Genesis 25:34.  
**Antitype:** “even as also the younger nation received Him, Christ, the first-begotten, when the elder nation rejected Him, saying, “We have no king but Cæsar,” referring to John 19:15. “But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father, just as Jacob took away the blessing of this Esau.”
- **Type:** “For which cause his brother suffered the plots and persecutions of a brother,”  
**Antitype:** “just as the Church suffers this self-same thing from the Jews.”
- **Type:** “In a foreign country were the twelve tribes born, the race of Israel,”  
**Antitype:** “inasmuch as Christ was also, in a strange country, to generate the twelve-pillared foundation of the Church,” possibly referring to Revelation 21:14.
- **Type:** “Various coloured sheep were allotted to this Jacob as his wages,” referring to Genesis 30:28-43,  
**Antitype:** “and the wages of Christ are human beings, who from various and diverse nations come together into one cohort of faith, as the Father promised Him, saying, “Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession,” referring to Psalm 2:8.
- **Type:** “And as from the multitude of his sons the prophets of the Lord [afterwards] arose, there was every necessity that Jacob should beget sons from the two sisters,” referring to Genesis 29:22-30,  
**Antitype:** “even as Christ did from the two laws of one and the same Father;” possibly referring to the two laws, the natural law of the Decalogue, and the Mosaic law (see **Chapter 24: The Law** under **Book 4: Chapter XV**), “and in like manner also from the handmaids,” referring to Genesis, chapter 30, “indicating that Christ should raise up sons of God, both from freemen and from slaves after the flesh, bestowing upon all, in the same manner, the gift of the Spirit, who vivifies us,” referring to John 6:63.
- **Type:** “But he (Jacob) did all things for the sake of the younger, she who had the handsome eyes,” referring to Genesis 29:17, “Rachel,”  
**Antitype:** “who prefigured the Church, for which Christ endured patiently; who at that time, indeed, by means of His patriarchs and prophets, was prefiguring and declaring beforehand future things, fulfilling His part by anticipation in the dispensations of God, and accustoming His inheritance to obey God, and to pass through the world as in a state of pilgrimage, to follow His word, and to indicate beforehand things to come.”

We will explain the meaning of type and antitype shortly.

Irenaeus concludes by saying, “For with God there is nothing without purpose or due signification.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “But that our faith was also prefigured in Abraham, and that he was the patriarch of our faith, and, as it were, the prophet of it, the apostle has very fully taught, when he says in the Epistle to the Galatians: ‘He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, [doeth he it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, announced beforehand unto Abraham, that in him all nations should be blessed. So then they which be of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham,’ referring to **Galatians 3 (KJV):5** He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? **6** Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. **7** Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. **8** And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. **9** So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Irenaeus here quotes Galatians 3:5-9 almost word for word, indicating his high reliance on the Scriptures. Irenaeus then testifies, “For which [reasons the apostle] declared that this man was not only the prophet of faith, but also the father of those who from among the Gentiles believe in Jesus Christ, because his faith and ours are one and the same,” referring in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):9** Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. **10** How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. **11** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: **12** And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. **13** For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “for he believed in things future, as if they were already accomplished, because of the promise of God; and in like manner do we also, because of the promise of God, behold through faith that inheritance [laid up for us] in the [future] kingdom.” Irenaeus is referring to **Genesis**

**15 (KJV):1** After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. **2** And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? **3** And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. **4** And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. **5** And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. **6** And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

The apostle Paul also refers to this in **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? **2** For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. **3** For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. **4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. **5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. **6** Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, **7** Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. **8** Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Now again, Irenaeus correctly interprets Paul in regards to Abraham as he says above “that this man was not only the prophet of faith, but also the father of those who from among the Gentiles believe in Jesus Christ, because his faith and ours are one and the same: for he believed in things future, as if they were already accomplished, because of the promise of God; and in like manner do we also, because of the promise of God, behold through faith that inheritance [laid up for us] in the [future] kingdom.”

And in paragraph two, it is true as Irenaeus continues and affirms that, “The history of Isaac, too, is not without a symbolical character.” Here is what Irenaeus states in paragraph two in outline form, with the same word order:

- 1) “For in the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle declares:”
  - i) “Moreover, when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac,” she received answer from the Word, “that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people are in thy body; and the one people shall overcome the other, and the elder shall serve the younger.”
    - (1) “From which it is evident, that not only [were there] prophecies of the patriarchs, but also that the children brought forth by Rebecca were a prediction of the two nations;”
      - (a) “and that the one should be indeed the greater, but the other the less;”
      - (b) “that the one also should be under bondage, but the other free; but [that both should be] of one and the same father.”
    - (c) “Our God, one and the same, is also their God, who knows hidden things, who knoweth all things before they can come to pass; and for this reason has He said, ‘Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.’”

Now notice first of all that what the apostle actually declares is as we read in **Romans 9 (KJV):10** And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; 11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

Irenaeus leads us to believe that Paul declared in Romans, chapter 9, that “Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people are in thy body; and the one people shall overcome the other.” However, Paul did not write these words in his epistle to the Romans. But this is stated in **Genesis 25 (KJV):23** And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

This is important because of the context in which Paul is speaking. Paul is explaining in Romans, chapter 9, verses 1 to 5, that he has unceasing grief in his heart for Israel who are his kinsmen according to the flesh, and from whom Christ came according to the flesh. And Paul continues as he says in **Romans 9 (KJV):6** Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 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. 9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

Paul reveals here that the word of God has not failed because it is not the children of the flesh, or children of natural descent, who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. God purposed, and He let Abraham know that he was going to have a son. This was a promise. Rebekah also was told by a promise, as it were, that the children, who were not yet born, would be two nations, that is, two peoples, and that one would be stronger than the other, and that the older would serve the younger. And all this was told to them by God’s sovereign choice.

Now, notice that Rebekah did not receive “answer from the Word, “that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth,” as Irenaeus asserts. Irenaeus combines the two passages in Romans and Genesis as if they were both spoken by God to Rebekah. This is a misinterpretation of both passages. What God said to Rebekah was as in **Genesis 25 (KJV):23** And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

It was not revealed to her that this was so “that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth.” It is important to understand the context of the Scripture that Irenaeus quotes. This becomes more important as Irenaeus continues. He then asserts that from the passage he has just

quoted that the apostle is saying, “it is evident, that not only [were there] prophecies of the patriarchs, but also that the children brought forth by Rebecca were a prediction of the two nations.” Irenaeus is laying a foundation for what he will conclude in paragraph three, that Jacob is a type of the Church. The Church is called a nation by Peter in 1 Peter 2:9, but making Jacob a type of the Church will make Esau by necessity a type of the nation of Israel. This cannot be as we will see.

Now it is true that there were prophecies concerning the patriarchs, but the patriarchs also gave prophecies for they were prophets themselves. Jacob and Esau as children of Isaac were not “a prediction of the two nations,” but rather the Scripture says that there was a prophecy about them that said that they would become two nations. The Scripture in Genesis 25:23 says, “The LORD said to her...” A prophecy is a prediction of future things. God demonstrates His signature when He foretells the future by prophecy. Irenaeus combines the verses in Genesis with Paul’s words in Romans in a way that exceeds what is actually written. In so doing, he makes Jacob both a type of Christ and a type of the Church at the same time, and in so doing forces Esau to be a type of Israel which simply cannot be as we shall soon see.

Irenaeus then points out in paragraph two that “the one should be indeed the greater, but the other the less, “ and that “the one also should be under bondage, but the other free,” corresponding to verse 23 of Genesis, chapter 25, which states, “And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.” Irenaeus uses the word “bondage,” which may be implied by servitude, but in the Biblical account in Genesis, it does not mention that Esau was in bondage to Jacob.

Irenaeus concludes this paragraph two by stating, “Our God, one and the same, is also their God, who knows hidden things, who knoweth all things before they can come to pass; and for this reason has He said, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,” as in **Romans 9 (KJV):13** As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

This is true of course. God knows all things before they come to pass, and nothing is hidden from Him. Now we note that Irenaeus never mentions the identity of the two nations that were in Rebekah’s womb. However, this is revealed in Malachi from which Paul also quotes. Malachi reveals the two nations to be Israel and Edom, as we read in **Malachi 1 (KJV):1** The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, 3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. 4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever. 5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.

It is clear from this passage that Jacob is Israel, and Esau is Edom.

Now, moving to paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, “If any one, again, will look into Jacob’s actions, he shall find them not destitute of meaning, but full of import with regard to the dispensations.” How Irenaeus looks at prophecy now becomes very important. Irenaeus now looks “into Jacob’s actions,” which he does not find “destitute of meaning, but full of import with regard to the dispensations.” Irenaeus then says, “Thus, in the first place, at his birth, since he laid hold on his brother’s heel,” referring to Genesis 25:26, “he was called Jacob, that is, *the supplanter*—one who holds, but is not held; binding the feet, but not being bound; striving and conquering; grasping in his hand his adversary’s heel, that is, victory,” referring to **Genesis 25 (KJV):26** And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

Jacob’s name means literally heel-catcher. **Strong’s Concordance** says that it comes from a word that means “to seize by the heel,” and figuratively “to circumvent (as if tripping up the heels); also to restrain (as if holding by the heel); to supplant.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, James Strong, 1890.** The word “supplant” according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary means “to supersede (another) especially by force or treachery,” or “to take the place of and serve as a substitute for especially by reason of superior excellence or power.”

The Scripture does not say that Esau was Jacob’s adversary at birth, though that is implied by the name, Jacob. However, they became adversaries when they were grown. Jacob received the blessing of the firstborn from his father Isaac after Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. Esau became angry with Jacob when he

saw that his father had given Jacob the blessing of the firstborn. They later made up according to Genesis, chapters 32 and 33.

Now Jacob was given the name “heel-catcher”, or supplanter, at birth, but this does not mean that this was something prophetic about Christ. This was prophetic about Jacob and his brother Esau, and how their relationship would play out during their lifetimes. Yet, Irenaeus then continues by asserting that Jacob’s birth was a type of Christ as he says, “For to this end was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: “He went forth conquering, that He should conquer,” referring to **Revelation 6 (KJV):1** And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

The verses here in Revelation, chapter 6, however, do not relate to Christ, but to the Antichrist who will ride forth conquering, and making war on the earth to establish his kingdom in the first half of the Great Tribulation. The reason this is so is because previously in Revelation, chapter five, we find out that the Lamb, who is the lion of the tribe of Judah, was worthy to open the book which was sealed with seven seals as in **Revelation 5 (KJV):5** And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

The language in Revelation is highly symbolic, but Scripture interprets its own symbols and types. The lion of the tribe of Judah is the Lord Jesus Christ who is also called the Lamb as we continue to read in **Revelation 5 (KJV):6** And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

The Lamb is pictured in heaven as slain, and the redeemer of the twenty-four elders. These elders represent the Church who was purchased for God with the blood of the Lamb from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. This reveals the Lamb’s identity as the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lamb takes the book from the Father who is symbolically seated on the throne. The book, or the scroll as it would have been called in the apostle John’s time, is opened by the Lamb who breaks its seals one by one. The book is understood to be the title deed of the whole earth since we see events unfold on earth as the Lamb opens the seals.

The opening of the first of the seven seals of the scroll of the Lamb is only the beginning of the judgments that will follow with the opening of the rest of the seven seals. The rider of the white horse of the first seal must be the antichrist since the Lamb is pictured in heaven at this time, and is opening the seals. It is the antichrist who is going out conquering and to conquer. As a result, war will take peace from the earth as we see happening with the opening of the second seal in **Revelation 6 (KJV):3** And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

The opening of the third seal will bring famine, the fourth seal will bring hunger and death to the fourth part of the earth, the fifth seal will bring persecution, the sixth seal will bring great physical changes in the earth in the form of earthquakes and stars falling from the heavens to earth, while the seventh seal will bring the three trumpet judgments, all recorded in Revelation, chapter 6 through chapter 11.

We must not confuse the white horse rider in Revelation, chapter 6, with the rider in **Revelation 19 (KJV):11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the

winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

The rider in Revelation 19:11 is the Lord Jesus Christ. All of the events leading up to this verse must happen first.

Now in order to have a clear understanding of what a type is, we will look at an example from Romans, chapter 5. The word “type” is used in the New Testament in **Romans 5 (KJV):14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Adam is said to be a type of Him who was to come, that is, Jesus Christ. Now every type has an antitype. The word “antitype” in Greek is ἀντίτυπος (pronounce antitupos) and is translated in the AV as “like-figure” in **1 Peter 3 (KJV):21** The like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

An in depth discussion of this verse has already been given in **Chapter 10: Baptismal Regeneration** under the heading, **Book 3: Chapter XVII.**

Now the **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** says that the word “type” is derived from the Greek word τύπος (pronounced tupos), “which occurs 16 times in the New Testament. It is variously translated in the AV, e.g. twice “print” (John 20:25); twice “figure” (Acts 7:43, Romans 5:14); twice “pattern” (Titus 2:7, Hebrews 8:5); once “fashion” (Acts 7:44); once “manner” (Acts 23:25); once “form” (Romans 6:17); and seven times “example” (1 Corinthians 10:6,11; Philippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3). It is clear from these texts that the NT writers used the word “type” with some degree of latitude; yet one general idea is common to all, namely, “likeness.” A person, event or thing is so fashioned or appointed as to resemble another; the one is made to answer to the other in some essential feature; in some particulars the one matches the other. The two are called type and antitype; and the link which binds them together is the correspondence, the similarity, of the one with the other.” **ISBN, Volume IV, page 3029.**

Ada R. Habershon in her book, **The Study of the Types**, offers this advice as he says, “We cannot state with certainty that anything is a type unless we have some warrant for doing so. If we can turn to no New Testament passage for our authority, or if there be no expression or analogy which indicates the antitype, it is safer and more correct to call it an illustration.” **The Study of the Types, Ada R. Habershon, page 12.**

A type will occur in the Old Testament, and the antitype will occur in the New Testament. We must understand that a type is something that God has designed, and has intentionally made as a foreshadowing of something He Himself has planned. In our example above in Romans 5:14, Adam is a type of Him who was to come, Jesus Christ. That is, Adam was a likeness of Jesus Christ in several ways. Paul explains in verse 15 as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):15** But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Through the offence, or sin, of Adam, many died as a result. This is the type. In the same way, by the one man, Jesus Christ, the gift by grace abounded to many. This is the antitype.

Paul continues in **Romans 5 (KJV):16** And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

Judgment arose from the one transgression of Adam resulting in condemnation. This is the type. The free gift results in justification through Jesus Christ. This is the antitype.

Again Paul says in **Romans 5 (KJV):17** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Through the one sin of the one man, Adam, death reigned. This is the type. In the same manner, those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through Jesus Christ. This is the antitype.

Paul continues and says in **Romans 5 (KJV):18** Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Through one sinful act, condemnation came upon all men. But through one act of righteousness,

justification of life comes to all who receive Him.

Again, Paul says in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Through the one act of disobedience by Adam, many were made sinners. This is the type. In the same fashion through the obedience of the One many are and will be made righteous. This is the antitype.

And Paul concludes in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Another example of a type in Scripture can be seen in Moses, who was a prophet, and God spoke to him in a cloud as we read in **Exodus 20 (KJV)**:21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. 22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.

Moses was a prophet, and he is a type of Christ. Moses himself pointed out that someone like him would come in the future as we read in **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV)**:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

Jesus Christ is seen to be the antitype in **Matthew 17 (KJV)**:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

In this verse, a voice spoke from heaven just as with Moses in Exodus, chapter 20, when God spoke the ten commandments in the hearing of all the people from the cloud.

Luke testifies to this as well in **Acts 3 (KJV)**:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Another well known type is that of Jonah, whom Jesus pointed to as a type of his death and resurrection in **Matthew 12 (KJV)**:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the "lamb of God" in **John 1 (KJV)**:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And virtually all of the Old Testament laws of the priesthood and sacrifice were foreshadowing Christ as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

The writer of Hebrews explains in **Hebrews 9 (KJV)**:6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

The things on earth are only shadows or symbols of good things to come. With this as background, we see that Irenaeus has some grounds for speaking of the prophets as foreshadowing and prefiguring Christ. And we can now begin to analyze Irenaeus' statements in paragraph three in relation to types and antitypes. Here are Irenaeus' types in paragraph three:

**Type:** "Thus, in the first place, at his birth, since he laid hold on his brother's heel, he was called Jacob, that is, the supplanter—one who holds, but is not held; binding the feet, but not being bound; striving and conquering; grasping in his hand his adversary's heel, that is, victory," referring to Genesis 25:26.

**Antitype:** “For to this end was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: “He went forth conquering, that He should conquer,” referring to Revelation 6:2.

Irenaeus asserts that Jacob’s birth is a type of Christ’s birth. However, Christ is nowhere said to be a supplanter. Neither was He a twin at birth. And Irenaeus, in his zeal, grossly misinterprets Revelation 6:1-2 by applying the symbol of the rider on the white horse to the Lord Jesus Christ. The white horse rider is the Antichrist as he rides forth to conquer as we read in **Revelation 6 (KJV):1** And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. **2** And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

This is the time of the Great Tribulation where peace is taken from the earth as we read in **Revelation 6 (KJV):3** And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. **4** And there went out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

This will be a time of famine death as we read in **Revelation 6 (KJV):5** And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. **6** And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine. **7** And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. **8** And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The Lord Jesus is pictured as a Lamb in heaven in Revelation, chapter 6, who is opening scrolls which trigger these events to happen on the earth. This type falls flat on its own. On the other hand, Jesus is also pictured in heaven in Revelation 19:6-11 as riding a white horse and conquering the nations who rose up with the Antichrist against Him.

**Type:** “In the next place, [Jacob] received the rights of the first-born, when his brother looked on them with contempt,” referring to Genesis 25:34,

**Antitype:** “even as also the younger nation received Him, Christ, the first-begotten, when the elder nation rejected Him, saying, “We have no king but Cæsar,” referring to John 19:15. “But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father, just as Jacob took away the blessing of this Esau.”

First of all, the Scripture in Genesis 25:34 is as in **Genesis 25 (KJV):34** Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Irenaeus makes Jacob to be a type of the younger nation who received Christ, the first-begotten, when the elder nation rejected him, saying “We have no king but Ceasars,” referring to **John 19 (KJV):15** But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

This would make Esau, the older brother, a type of Israel, the elder nation. If then in Irenaeus’ type the elder nation is Israel, and the younger nation is the Church, how then can Jacob, the younger brother of Esau, be a type of the younger nation who receives Christ and becomes the Church, when Jacob represents the nation of Israel and Esau the nation of Edom as we saw above in Malachi 1:1-5? Even Jacob’s name was changed to Israel as we read in **Genesis 32 (KJV):28** And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

And in **Genesis 35 (KJV):10** And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

And since Jacob received the rights of the firstborn, the nation of Israel, as his descendants, is later revealed to be God's first born son in **Exodus 4 (KJV):22** And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: 23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

An immediate conflict with the Scriptures is seen here in Irenaeus' thinking, for there is no way that Jacob can be a type of the Church when he represents, more than anyone else in history, the nation of Israel. Irenaeus' agenda appears to be to make the Church the supplanter of Israel's blessings as he says, "But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father, just as Jacob took away the blessing of this Esau."

Irenaeus also asserts that the nation of Israel had the rights of the first born, but looked on them with contempt as Esau did, and so the Church, the younger nation, receives the rights of the first born in Christ since the "elder nation rejected Him, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar," referring again to **John 19 (KJV):15** But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Again, a conflict with the Scriptures is seen here in Irenaeus' thinking. Christ is said to have received the rights of the first-begotten when the younger nation, the Church, received Him. As we saw above, Jacob cannot be Israel and also a type of the Church. And the Scripture has already given Christ the right of the firstborn for another reason. Jesus Christ is called the firstborn of all creation, and not just of Israel as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):15** Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

He is also called the firstborn from the dead as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

The idea is that He holds the preeminence in everything as we see in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):6** And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

The reason He has the preeminence in all things is because He is God as it is revealed in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):7** And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

It is true that Esau despised his birthright as recorded in **Genesis 25 (KJV):34** Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

And in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):16** Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

Evidently, Irenaeus is thinking that the nation of Israel assumes the role of Esau, and held the rights of the firstborn by the law of Moses. No other nation held these rights. Therefore, when they rejected Christ, Irenaeus reasons, they themselves were rejected by God, and Christ assumed the rights of the firstborn. However, as we saw above, Israel is represented by Jacob, and Esau cannot be made to represent Israel. There is no Scriptural support for such thinking. Christ holds the preeminence because He is the Son of God, and not because of any act of rejection of God on the part of Israel.

It is also true that Peter calls the Church a nation in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):9** But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

But the Church is not a nation in an earthly sense as Israel was, and is still. The Church is a spiritual body made up of believers saved by their faith in Jesus Christ.

All of these things point to Jacob being a type of Christ, but not in the way Irenaeus is asserting here. Christ had the right of the firstborn because He is the Son of God, and not because of the rejection of the people of Israel.

**Type:** "Jacob took away the blessing of this Esau"

**Antitype:** “But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father”

Jacob did take away the blessing of Esau because Esau despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob for stew. But since Jacob is Israel and Esau cannot be Israel, it is not correct to say that the “latter people” are the Church, and therefore that the Church has “snatched away” the blessings of the former, that is, Israel, from the Father. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile as Paul reveals in **Romans 1 (KJV):16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Paul also says there is no partiality with God as we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):9** Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

It is true as Paul says that in Christ we are blessed as see in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

But Paul also says that there is no distinction or difference between the Jew and the Gentile as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):12** For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Again Paul says the same in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Paul adds that the whole world is accountable to God as in **Romans 3 (KJV):19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Then again, he points out that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, and all are under sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

All who heed the Gospel and believe in Jesus Christ, the Jew first and then the Gentile, are blessed in Jesus Christ and receive every blessing.

**Type:** Because Jacob took his brother’s blessing, Jacob “suffered the plots and persecutions of a brother”

**Antitype:** “the Church suffers this self-same thing from the Jews”

Jacob did suffer persecution from Esau, his brother, after his father blessed him with his blessing. Esau wanted to kill Jacob more than once as read in **Genesis 27 (KJV):41** And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

But Esau’s anger subsided after several years as see in **Genesis 33 (KJV):4** And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

It is true that the Church has suffered persecution from the Jews as we see in **Acts 8 (KJV):1** And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

But the Church has suffered persecution from other nations as well, and most notably by many of the

Roman emperors of the first three centuries. One only has to look briefly at the history of Nero (64-68), Domitian (81-96), Trajan (98-117), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), Septimus Severus (202-210), Decius (250-251), Valerian (257-259), Aurelian (270-275), and Diocletian (303-324) to understand why this is so.

In the Church there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, but all are one in Christ Jesus as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

He Himself is our peace who has made both one as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):11** Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Where both have been reconciled, there is no room for enmity.

**Type:** “In a foreign country were the twelve tribes born, the race of Israel,”

**Antitype:** “inasmuch as Christ was also, in a strange country, to generate the twelve-pillared foundation of the Church.”

The twelve sons of Jacob were born in Canaan. They migrated to Egypt where they grew into a people well over a million strong. The land of Canaan was later given to Israel as their inheritance. And Christ also was not born in a strange country as is revealed in **Matthew 2 (KJV):1** Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

He came to His own as the apostle John says in **John 1 (KJV):11** He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

The twelve tribes also were born in the land of Canaan. They only moved to Egypt because of the famine. They did grow to be a great people in Egypt, a foreign country. But the twelve tribes were not born there. Mary and Joseph did take Jesus to Egypt when Herod tried to kill Him. But it cannot be said that “Christ was in a strange country, to generate the twelve-pillared foundation of the Church.” He grew up in Nazareth after they left Egypt when Herod died. He was still a boy when He left Egypt.

The Scripture does not mention “the twelve-pillared foundation of the Church,” but does refer to the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb on the wall of the New Jerusalem as in **Revelation 21 (KJV):14** And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The Scriptures also refer to the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on the gates of the New Jerusalem as we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):12** And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

There is no other foundation of the Church than Jesus Christ as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

**Type:** “Various coloured sheep were allotted to this Jacob as his wages;”

**Antitype:** “and the wages of Christ are human beings, who from various and diverse nations come together into one cohort of faith, as the Father promised Him, saying, “Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession,” referring to Psalm 2:8.

This is truly the strongest argument in Irenaeus' writing for a type of Christ in the life of Jacob. Jacob was a shepherd. The Lord Jesus is the antitype, the Good Shepherd, as He Himself states in **John 10 (KJV):**14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

As Jacob was a shepherd of a diverse flock, so the Lord Jesus is a shepherd of a diverse flock. This again speaks of the oneness of Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ. Jesus said there would be one fold, and one shepherd. The flock began with Jews, but the Gentiles were to be included in the fold as Jesus alludes to here.

And the nations are the Lord's inheritance as we read in **Psalm 2 (NASB):**8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession.

**Type:** "And as from the multitude of his sons the prophets of the Lord [afterwards] arose, there was every necessity that Jacob should beget sons from the two sisters,"

**Antitype:** "even as Christ did from the two laws of one and the same Father;"

Jacob did have sons and daughters by the two sisters, Leah, and Rachel, the daughters of Laban. The Scriptures do not say that it was a matter of necessity. Certainly with God all things are possible. Nevertheless, Irenaeus' assertion is logical. As for the antitype, Irenaeus believed that there were good laws and bad laws in the Old Testament. The good laws, or the natural laws, he names as the ten commandments, that is the Decalogue, and the two great commandments to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. The bad laws on the other hand were given because of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites according to Irenaeus. A full discussion of this is done in **Chapter 24: The Law**. However, because he does not name the two laws here, the type has little meaning and cannot really be defined with any certainty.

**Type:** "and in like manner also from the handmaids,"

**Antitype:** "indicating that Christ should raise up sons of God, both from freemen and from slaves after the flesh, bestowing upon all, in the same manner, the gift of the Spirit, who vivifies us."

There is some truth in this type. The handmaids were slaves though they were well kept. Jacob did have children by the handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah, as well as his wives, Leah and Rachel, as we read in **Genesis 35 (KJV):**22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: 23 The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: 24 The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: 25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: 26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram.

Christ did include both slave and free as equals in His body as we see in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

It is true that the Spirit gives us life as we read in **John 6 (KJV):**63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

And the gift of the Spirit is for every man, woman, and child who repents and believes in Jesus Christ as Peter reveals in **Acts 2 (KJV):**38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

**Type:** Jacob "did all things for the sake of the younger, she who had the handsome eyes, Rachel,"

**Antitype:** Rachel “prefigured the Church, for which Christ endured patiently;”

Irenaeus is saying that Jacob is a type of Christ who endured patiently for His bride, the Church, just as Jacob waited patiently for his bride, Rachel. Rachel's eyes are referred to in **Genesis 29 (NASB):17** And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face.

Jacob waited for Rachel, the beautiful bride, just as Christ waited for His beautiful bride, the Church as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):8** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

However, Paul notes that Christ chose the ignoble as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):26** For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Irenaeus concludes that Christ is He “who at that time, indeed, by means of His patriarchs and prophets, was prefiguring and declaring beforehand future things, fulfilling His part by anticipation in the dispensations of God, and accustoming His inheritance to obey God, and to pass through the world as in a state of pilgrimage, to follow His word, and to indicate beforehand things to come. For with God there is nothing without purpose or due signification.”

It is true that the Church has supplanted Israel at this present time as the people of God. But it is also true that both Jew and Gentile are made one in the Church. And the Scriptures indicate that God is not done with Israel. He will yet have mercy on Israel, for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, and all Israel will be saved as we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

God will again deal mercifully with Israel. We will look more at this in **Chapter 31: Future Events.**

## **Book 4: Chapter XXXIII.—Whosoever confesses that one God is the author of both Testaments, and diligently reads the Scriptures in company with the presbyters of the Church, is a true spiritual disciple; and he will rightly understand and interpret all that the prophets have declared respecting Christ and the liberty of the New Testament.**

...

8. True knowledge 4282 The following section is an important one, but very difficult to translate with undoubted accuracy. The editors differ considerably both as to the construction and the interpretation. We have done our best to represent the meaning in English, but may not have been altogether successful is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution 4283 The Greek is σύστημα: the Latin text has “status.” of the Church throughout all

the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body 4284 The Latin is, “character corporis.” of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved 4285 The text here is, “custodita sine fictione scripturarum;” some prefer joining “scripturarum” to the following words. without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system 4286 We follow Harvey’s text, “tractatione;” others read “tractatio.” According to Harvey, the creed of the Church is denoted by “tractatione;” but Massuet renders the clause thus: [“True knowledge consists in] a very complete tractatio of the Scriptures, which has come down to us by being preserved (‘custoditione’ being read instead of ‘custodita’) without falsification.” of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes]; and [it consists in] reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love, 4287 Comp. 2 Cor. viii. 1; 1 Cor. xiii, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God].

9. Wherefore the Church does in every place, because of that love which she cherishes towards God, send forward, throughout all time, a multitude of martyrs to the Father; while all others 4288 i.e., the heretics, not only have nothing of this kind to point to among themselves, but even maintain that such witness-bearing is not at all necessary, for that their system of doctrines is the true witness [for Christ], with the exception, perhaps, that one or two among them, during the whole time which has elapsed since the Lord appeared on earth, have occasionally, along with our martyrs, borne the reproach of the name (as if he too [the heretic] had obtained mercy), and have been led forth with them [to death], being, as it were, a sort of retinue granted unto them. For the Church alone sustains with purity the reproach of those who suffer persecution for righteousness’ sake, and endure all sorts of punishments, and are put to death because of the love which they bear to God, and their confession of His Son; often weakened indeed, yet immediately increasing her members, and becoming whole again, after the same manner as her type, 4289 Comp. above, xxxi. 2. Lot’s wife, who became a pillar of salt. Thus, too, [she passes through an experience] similar to that of the ancient prophets, as the Lord declares, “For so persecuted they the prophets who were before you;” 4290 Matt. v. 12. In as much as she does indeed, in a new fashion, suffer persecution from those who do not receive the word of God, while the self-same spirit rests upon her 4291 Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 14 [as upon these ancient prophets].

**Summary:** In paragraph 8, Irenaeus continues in Book 4: Chapter XXXIII on his topic of the spiritual man, which we will cover from the beginning of that chapter in **Chapter 25: The Spiritual Man**. However, I think his theme diverges here. It is for this reason that I discuss paragraphs 8 and 9 in this chapter about the Church. Now, Irenaeus says in paragraph 8 above, affirms that, True knowledge true knowledge is [that which consists in]” the following:

1. “the doctrine of the apostles.”
2. “and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout the world.”
3. “and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes];”
4. “and [it consists in] reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy;”
5. “and [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God].”

In paragraph nine, Irenaeus testifies, “Wherefore the Church does in every place, because of that love

which she cherishes towards God, send forward, throughout all time, a multitude of martyrs to the Father;” Irenaeus contrasts the Church with the Gnostic heretics as he then records, “while all others not only have nothing of this kind to point to among themselves, but even maintain that such witness-bearing is not at all necessary, for that their system of doctrines is the true witness [for Christ], with the exception, perhaps, that one or two among them, during the whole time which has elapsed since the Lord appeared on earth, have occasionally, along with our martyrs, borne the reproach of the name (as if he too [the heretic] had obtained mercy), and have been led forth with them [to death], being, as it were, a sort of retinue granted unto them.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For the Church alone sustains with purity the reproach of those who suffer persecution for righteousness’ sake, and endure all sorts of punishments, and are put to death because of the love which they bear to God, and their confession of His Son; often weakened indeed, yet immediately increasing her members, and becoming whole again, after the same manner as her type, Lot’s wife, who became a pillar of salt,” referring to Genesis 19:26. Irenaeus continues speaking of the Church as he records, “Thus, too, [she passes through an experience] similar to that of the ancient prophets, as the Lord declares, “For so persecuted they the prophets who were before you;” referring to Matthew 5:12. Irenaeus then concludes, “In as much as she does indeed, in a new fashion, suffer persecution from those who do not receive the word of God, while the self-same spirit rests upon her [as upon these ancient prophets],” referring to 1 Peter 4:14.

**Commentary:** In the preceding paragraphs of **Book 4: Chapter XXXIII**, which we will cover in **Chapter 25: The Spiritual Man**, Irenaeus speaks of the spiritual man who he says has the mind of God’s Spirit making him able to judge spiritual things. Worldly men on the other hand, he says at the beginning of paragraph seven, are “incompetent critics of Scripture and of Christian exposition.” And continuing in paragraph seven, Irenaeus teaches us that the spiritual man “has a full faith in one God Almighty, of whom are all things; and in the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things, and in the dispensations connected with Him, by means of which the Son of God became man; and a firm belief in the Spirit of God, who furnishes us with a knowledge of the truth, and has set forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, in virtue of which He dwells with every generation of men according to the will of the Father.” And so Irenaeus continues here in paragraph eight by stating what he believes is “true knowledge”, referring to “a knowledge of the truth” which the Spirit “furnishes us with,” as he said in paragraph seven. In so doing, paragraphs eight and nine reveal much about Irenaeus’ perception of the Church.

First of all, in paragraph eight, Irenaeus affirms that “True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles.” Or, if we left out the editors contribution, Irenaeus affirms that, “True knowledge is the doctrine of the apostles.” Few believers would disagree that true knowledge, or a knowledge of the truth with which the Spirit furnishes us, is the doctrine or teaching of the apostles as it is contained in the Scriptures, since the Scriptures are their writings. This is why they were included in the canon in the first place. The Scriptures are the testimony of those who were eyewitnesses of His majesty, or of those who personally knew eyewitnesses, and are therefore of greater import than mere hearsay, as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):16** For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

However, Irenaeus seems to want to give us some additional parameters for knowing what is true. True knowledge, he says, is the doctrine of the apostles, but he adds that true knowledge is also “the ancient constitution of the Church throughout the world.” Now, Irenaeus gives us a little more help in understanding what he means when he says that true knowledge is “the ancient constitution of the Church,” when we read **Book 5: Chapter XX, paragraph 1**, which we covered under the heading, **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**. There he compares the path of the heretics, whom he says are of a “much later date than the bishops,” and also “walk in various roads,” as compared to “the path of those belonging to the Church”

which he says, “circumscribes the whole world, as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles, and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same, since all receive one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit, and are conversant with the same commandments, and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution and expect the same advent of the Lord, and await the same salvation of the complete man, that is, of the soul and body.”

The Merriam Webster online dictionary says that a constitution is “an established law or custom; ordinance,” and “the structure, composition, physical makeup, or nature of something <the constitution of society.” So a constitution relates to how something is organized. Ecclesiastical constitution relates to how the Church is organized. In Irenaeus’ time, the authority lay in the hands of the bishops who had apostolic succession. These bishops presided over local churches in a given area. Irenaeus was bishop of Lyons in France. There was also a sacerdotal order that was sort of an adjunct clergy to the bishops and presbyters. We will look at this sacerdotal order in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood**.

Irenaeus is not only saying that true knowledge is consistent with the original formation of the Church that was planted by an apostle, but he is also defending the Church as it has come down to him in his time, as he continues by saying that true knowledge is the “distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes];”

In other words, the Church has been handed down to those in Irenaeus’ time by “the successions of the bishops,” and the distinctive manifestation of the Church in every place has been guarded “without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine” which was in place in his time, and which he was defending.

Not only so, but Irenaeus continues by adding that true knowledge is “reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy;” Irenaeus warns that anyone who reads the word of God and is not consistent with these parameters will be in danger of falsifying the word of God, and in danger of an unlawful exposition of the Scriptures, and ultimately of blasphemy.

Not only so, but Irenaeus concludes as he adds, “And [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God],” referring to **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):2** If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

And to **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

This also reminds us of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians in **Ephesians 3 (KJV):14** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Irenaeus sees a harmonious exposition of the Scriptures only if all of the parameters he lists above are adhered to.

Moving on to paragraph nine, Irenaeus testifies, “Wherefore the Church does in every place, because of that love which she cherishes towards God, send forward, throughout all time, a multitude of martyrs to the Father;” It is true that all who desire to live godly will suffer persecution, even death, as Paul warns Timothy in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):10** But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

The Lord Jesus by the apostle John encourages those in the Church at Smyrna to be faithful even to death as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):10** Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil

shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Irenaeus contrasts the Church with the Gnostic heretics as he then records, “while all others not only have nothing of this kind to point to among themselves, but even maintain that such witness-bearing is not at all necessary, for that their system of doctrines is the true witness [for Christ], with the exception, perhaps, that one or two among them, during the whole time which has elapsed since the Lord appeared on earth, have occasionally, along with our martyrs, borne the reproach of the name (as if he too [the heretic] had obtained mercy), and have been led forth with them [to death], being, as it were, a sort of retinue granted unto them.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For the Church alone sustains with purity the reproach of those who suffer persecution for righteousness’ sake, and endure all sorts of punishments, and are put to death because of the love which they bear to God, and their confession of His Son; often weakened indeed, yet immediately increasing her members, and becoming whole again, after the same manner as her type, Lot’s wife, who became a pillar of salt,” referring to Genesis 19:26. Irenaeus continues speaking of the Church as he records, “Thus, too, [she passes through an experience] similar to that of the ancient prophets, as the Lord declares, “For so persecuted they the prophets who were before you;” referring to **Matthew 5 (KJV):12** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Irenaeus explains his thinking regarding Lot’s wife in **Book 4: Chapter XXXI**, as he says in **paragraph 3**, “And while these things were taking place, his wife remained in [the territory of] Sodom, no longer corruptible flesh, but a pillar of salt which endures for ever; and by those natural processes which appertain to the human race, indicating that the Church also, which is the salt of the earth, has been left behind within the confines of the earth, and subject to human sufferings; and while entire members are often taken away from it, the pillar of salt still endures, thus typifying the foundation of the faith which maketh strong, and sends forward, children to their Father.”

With this understanding, we gain some insight into Irenaeus’ thinking here in **Book 4: Chapter XXXIII, paragraph 9**. However, in this chapter Irenaeus makes Lot’s wife a type of the Church when he says, “after the same manner as her type, Lot’s wife, who became a pillar of salt.” I do not see Lot’s wife as a type of the Church, since it was through her disobedience that she became a pillar of salt. Lot’s wife looked back at the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah when the Lord was reigning judgment on them and received God’s judgment on herself as well as we read in **Genesis 19 (KJV):26** But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

Previous to this, we see that the angels who brought them out of their house in the city of Sodom had warned them as we read in **Genesis 19 (KJV):15** And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. 16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. 17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

Lot’s wife disobeyed the word of the Lord by the angels and became a pillar of salt. Jesus did say that we are the salt of the earth and not to lose our saltiness, as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

But for Lot’s wife, becoming an actual pillar of salt was a judgment of God. She did not become whole again as Irenaeus seems to believe. And Jesus did not want us to actually become a pillar of salt. He has destined us for greater things.

Irenaeus concludes, “In as much as she does indeed, in a new fashion, suffer persecution from those who do not receive the word of God, while the self-same spirit rests upon her [as upon these ancient prophets],” referring to **1 Peter 4 (KJV):14** If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIII

Now Irenaeus started off by saying that, “True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles.” He contrasts true knowledge with knowledge which is not true just as Paul does in **1 Timothy 6 (KJV):20** O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

The word “science” in Greek is the word γνῶσις (pronounced *gnosis*) and “the word simply means “knowledge””. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 326.**

Now when Irenaeus says that true knowledge is “the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us,” it is clear that he is unquestioningly defending the Church as it existed in his time. To say this about the Church in apostolic succession is to say that everything they do presently in the time of Irenaeus has been handed down by the apostle’s teaching, and is therefore right and in accordance with true knowledge. Irenaeus believed that a “certain gift of truth” had been passed down through the succession of the bishops, as we saw in **Chapter 20: Apostolic Succession**, under the heading **Book 4: Chapter XXVI**. Apparently Irenaeus believed this to be true, regardless of the obedience of the bishops to the word of God. Irenaeus simply believed that apostolic succession is the mark of the true Church.

Irenaeus also maintains that the fidelity of each Church is “being guarded and preserved without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes],” as he says in paragraph 8.

In the context of his writing, which was against Gnostic doctrines, Irenaeus is overstating his case for the purpose of defending the Church. Irenaeus wishes to exclude any and all of the Gnostic writings, which were in fact error and heresy, just as he affirms. While it is true that the Church possessed all of the New Testament, which would encompass the entire teaching of the apostles, this did not mean that the bishops and presbyters understood everything it contained. In fact, it is quite evident by Irenaeus’ writing that the Church did not completely understand all of the truth that they possessed in the New Testament. The Church in Irenaeus’ time had fallen into legalism as we shall see in **Chapter 24: The Law**. There was also an adjunct order of priesthood which we will look at in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood**, which would soon take over the ministry of the Church until the time of the Reformation in the 1500s. It is quite evident that the early church did not retain a lot of the apostolic doctrine though they possessed all of their writings that God in His providence has given us as His word.

It is the adherence to the apostolic doctrine, that is, adherence to the word of God, that keeps one safe and in the will of the Lord, and not just the possession of it. Irenaeus does not make this clear in his writing. Israel possessed the oracles of God as Paul says in **Romans 3 (KJV):1** What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. 3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Just possessing the word of God, that is, the oracles of God, did not keep Israel from going astray. It was through keeping the word of God that they continued in God’s blessing. The Lord counseled Joshua to meditate on it day and night so that he would be careful to do all of it as in **Joshua 1 (KJV):8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua did not have a gift of truth handed down to him from Moses. Joshua had to do what we are all also encouraged to do, and that is to fill ourselves with the word of God as in **Colossians 3 (KJV):16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Jesus Himself said we must continue in His word to be His disciples as in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; **32** And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Irenaeus also says that true knowledge is “reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy.” In **Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures**, under the heading **Book 4: Chapter XXXII**, paragraph one, Irenaeus gives more meaning to these words as he says, “And then shall every word also seem consistent to him, if he for his part diligently read the Scriptures in company with those who are presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine, as I have pointed out.” It seems that Irenaeus felt it was unsafe for anyone who was not a presbyter to even read the word of God on their own without the company of those who were “presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine.”

Irenaeus makes the believer dependent on a presbyter for knowledge of the Scriptures. However, the apostle John wrote the following to all believers in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

This does not mean that we should not receive teaching from a teacher who had done the work and knows the Scriptures. This just means that all believers have the anointing of the Holy Spirit within them, and are able thereby to discern the truth from a lie. This takes practice as the writer of Hebrews says in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):14** But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil

Before we get the solid food we must have the milk. It is a good idea then to receive teaching from the Scriptures from a presbyter, or other mature believer, who can guide us until we are able to digest the meat of the Scriptures. But just reading the Scriptures, or hearing the Scripture read to us, is getting the milk and prepares us for the meat, and does not need to be done with a presbyter.

Irenaeus says finally that true knowledge is “the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God].” Irenaeus is referring to **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):8** I Love never fails; but if *there are* gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away.

And **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

This is why love exceeds knowledge as we read in **Ephesians 3 (KJV):19** And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

And it is true that without love, we are nothing as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

However, love is not knowledge. Love is a fruit of the Spirit, just as faith is as seen in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

In paragraph nine, Irenaeus says that “the Church does in every place, because of that love which she cherishes towards God, send forward, throughout all time, a multitude of martyrs to the Father.” Noted historian Philip P. Schaff says, “The persecutions of Christianity during the first three centuries appear like a long tragedy: first, foreboding signs; then a succession of bloody assaults of heathenism upon the religion of the cross; amidst the dark scenes of fiendish hatred and cruelty the bright exhibitions of suffering virtue; now and then a short pause; at last a fearful and desperate struggle of the old pagan empire for life and death, ending in the abiding victory of the Christian religion. Thus this bloody baptism of the church resulted in the birth of a Christian world. It was a repetition and prolongation of the crucifixion, but followed by a resurrection.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter II, page 32, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff summarizes as he says, “Finally, while the Christian religion has at all times suffered more or less persecution, bloody or unbloody, from the ungodly world, and always had its witnesses ready for any sacrifice; yet at no period since the first three centuries was the whole church denied the right of a peaceful legal existence, and the profession of Christianity itself universally declared and punished as a political crime. Before

Constantine the Christians were a helpless and proscribed minority in an essentially heathen world, and under a heathen government. Then they died not simply for particular doctrines, but for the facts of Christianity. Then it was a conflict, not for a denomination or sect, but for Christianity itself. The importance of ancient martyrdom does not rest so much on the number of victims and the cruelty of their sufferings as on the great antithesis and the ultimate result in saving the Christian religion for all time to come. Hence the first three centuries are the classical period of heathen persecution and of Christian martyrdom. The martyrs and confessors of the ante-Nicene age suffered for the common cause of all Christian denominations and sects, and hence are justly held in reverence and gratitude by all.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter II, page 80, Philip P. Schaff.**

Irenaeus himself was personally acquainted with persecution. Schaff states that there were “bloody persecutions under the Antonines, which raged in Asia Minor, and caused the death of Polycarp (155).” **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter X, page 418, Philip P. Schaff.** Schaff also states that, “The Gallic Christians, then severely tried by persecution, took a conciliatory posture, and sympathized at least with the moral earnestness, the enthusiasm for martyrdom, and the chiliastic hopes of the Montanists. They sent their presbyter (afterwards bishop) Irenaeus to Eleutherus in Rome to intercede in their behalf.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter X, page 419-20, Philip P. Schaff.** These events would have been during Irenaeus’ lifetime. So Irenaeus could speak from personal experience about martyrdom.

There is no doubt that the martyrdom of these Christians was of inestimable value to the Church. And all Christians are deeply indebted to them. Their martyrdom showed their integrity and their deep conviction of the truth, not only of the “facts of Christianity,” but also of the Gospel message itself.

## Commentary Summary: The Church

Irenaeus’ goal in his writing is to try to show the identity of the true Church in order to differentiate it from any other religious entity. Irenaeus was desperate in his effort to defend the Church against the Gnostic teachings which were threatening the very existence of the Church as Irenaeus knew it. He most probably grew up in the Church and received his faith from the Church. As no one else before him, he gives the Church a corporate identity. He exaggerates the unity of the Church in order to unite and strengthen the Church against the Gnostic peril which he saw as immanent. But Irenaeus idealizes the Church in order to unite the Church. For example, the “preaching of the Church” was not “everywhere consistent” as Irenaeus asserts in **Book 3:**

**Chapter XXIV, paragraph one.** One has only to refer to the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. to understand that there were disagreements, disputes, and debates between churches of different regions. These may not have been known to exist in Irenaeus’ time, but certainly they were brewing. The historian, Philip Schaff, says that the Council of Nicaea “was called by Constantine the Great, for the settlement of the Arian controversy.”

**History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter V, page 349, Philip P. Schaff.** Schaff also states that “in the year 325, the twentieth of his reign (therefore the festive vicennialia), the emperor summoned the bishops of the empire by a letter of invitation, putting at their service the public conveyances, and liberally defraying from the public treasury the expenses of their residence in Nicaea and of their return. Each bishop was to bring with him two presbyters and three servants. They travelled partly in the public post carriages, partly on horses, mules, or asses, partly on foot. Many came to bring their private disputes before the emperor, who caused all their papers, without reading them, to be burned, and exhorted the parties to reconciliation and harmony.”

**History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 623, Philip P. Schaff.**

Not only so, but Schaff also records the address of the emperor which is telling as to why the emperor called this council. Schaff states, “After a brief salutatory address from the bishop on the right of the emperor, by which we are most probably to understand Eusebius of Caesarea, the emperor himself delivered with a gentle voice in the official Latin tongue the opening address, which was immediately after translated into Greek, and runs thus:

“It was my highest wish, my friends, that I might be permitted to enjoy your assembly. I must thank God that, in addition to all other blessings, he has shown me this highest one of all: to see you all gathered here in harmony and with one mind. May no malicious enemy rob us of this happiness, and after the tyranny of the

enemy of Christ [Licinius and his army] is conquered by the help of the Redeemer, the wicked demon shall not persecute the divine law with new blasphemies. Discord in the church I consider more fearful and painful than any other war. As soon as I by the help of God had overcome my enemies, I believed that nothing more was now necessary than to give thanks to God in common joy with those whom I had liberated. But when I heard of your division, I was convinced that this matter should by no means be neglected, and in the desire to assist by my service, I have summoned you without delay. I shall, however, feel my desire fulfilled only when I see the minds of all united in that peaceful harmony which you, as the anointed of God, must preach to others. Delay not therefore, my friends, delay not, servants of God; put away all causes of strife, and loose all knots of discord by the laws of peace. Thus shall you accomplish the work most pleasing to God, and confer upon me, your fellow servant, an exceeding great joy."

After this address he gave way to the (ecclesiastical) presidents of the council and the business began. The emperor, however, constantly, took an active part, and exercised a considerable influence." **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 625-6, Philip P. Schaff.**

Constantine, in his address, noted that there was discord and division in the Church. The controversy was brought about because of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria after 313, who "taught that Christ, while he was indeed the creator of the world, was himself a creature of God, therefore not truly divine." **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 620, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff describes the discord as he states, "The contest between these two views broke out about the year 318 or 320. Arius and his followers, for their denial of the true deity of Christ, were deposed and excommunicated by a council of a hundred Egyptian and Libyan bishops at Alexandria in 321. In spite of this he continued to hold religious assemblies of his numerous adherents, and when driven from Alexandria, agitated his doctrine in Palestine and Nicomedia, and diffused it in an entertaining work, half poetry, half prose: *The Banquet* (*Θάλεια*), of which a few fragments are preserved in Athanasius. Several bishops, especially Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea, who either shared his view or at least considered it innocent, defended him. Alexander issued a number of circular letters to all the bishops against the apostates and Exukontians. Bishop rose against bishop, and province against province. The controversy soon involved, through the importance of the subject and the zeal of the parties, the entire church, and transformed the whole Christian East into a theological battle-field. **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 620-21, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff again states, "Arius himself traced his doctrine to Lucian of Antioch, who advocated the heretical views of Paul of Samosata on the Trinity, and was for a time excommunicated, but afterwards rose to great consideration, and died a martyr under Maximinus." **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 620, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff tells us that the antitrinitarian controversy "filled the whole third century. These Antitrinitarians are commonly called Monarchians from (*μοναρχία*) or Unitarians, on account of the stress they laid upon the numerical, personal unity of the Godhead."

Schaff adds, "But we must carefully distinguish among them two opposite classes: the rationalistic or dynamic Monarchians, who denied the divinity of Christ, or explained it as a mere "power" (*δύναμις*) and the patrilinear or modalistic Monarchians, who identified the Son with the Father, and admitted at most only a modal trinity, that is a threefold mode of revelation, but not a tripersonality." **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 572, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff then refers to 260 A.D. as he states that "Paul of Samosata, from 260 bishop of Antioch, and at the same time a high civil officer, is the most famous of these rationalistic Unitarians, and contaminated one of the first apostolic churches with his heresy. He denied the personality of the Logos and of the Holy Spirit, and considered them merely powers of God, like reason and mind in man; but granted that the Logos dwelt in Christ in larger measure than in any former messenger of God, and taught, like the Socinians in later times, a gradual elevation of Christ, determined by his own moral development, to divine dignity. He admitted that Christ remained free from sin, conquered the sin of our forefathers, and then became the Saviour of the race. To introduce his Christology into the mind of the people, he undertook to alter the church hymns, but was shrewd enough to accommodate himself to the orthodox formulas, calling Christ, for example, "God from the Virgin,"

and ascribing to him even homo-ousia with the Father, but of course in his own sense.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 575, Philip P. Schaff.**

Now, that the Church at Antioch had an established succession from the apostles is well documented by the Scriptures in **Acts 11 (KJV):**19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the LORD Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. 23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

And Paul the apostle was sent out by the Holy Spirit from the church at Antioch with Baranabas on their first missionary journey as we read in **Acts 13 (KJV):**1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Now Schaff continues in his narrative of Paul of Samosota as he says, “The bishops under him in Syria accused him not only of heresy but also of extreme vanity, arrogance, pompousness, avarice, and undue concern with secular business; and at a third synod held in Antioch A.D. 269 or 268, they pronounced his deposition. The number of bishops present is variously reported (70, 80, 180). Dominus was appointed successor. The result was communicated to the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and to all the churches. But as Paul was favored by the queen Zenobia of Palmyra, the deposition could not be executed till after her subjection by the emperor Aurelian in 272, and after consultation with the Italian bishops.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 576, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff concludes by saying, “His overthrow decided the fall of the Monarchians; though they still appear at the end of the fourth century as condemned heretics, under the name of Samosatians, Paulianists, and Sabellians.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 576, Philip P. Schaff.**

Being a bishop of a church planted by the apostles did not guarantee fidelity to the word of God as history proves in the case of Paul of Samosota, bishop of Antioch. This was about sixty years after Irenaeus death. In this case, Irenaeus’ prophecy, which we covered in **Chapter 20: Apostolic Succession**, when we discussed **Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph one**, has come true, as he said there that the apostles “were desirous” that the men they appointed as overseers “should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.”

Evidently a bishop could be deposed as was the case of Paul of Samosota. However, we note that his deposition did not become final until the queen Zenobia of Palmyra was brought under subjection by the emperor Aurelian in 272. And the council of Nicaea in 325 convened about 120 years after Irenaeus’ death over the heresy of Arius who is traced to Lucian of Antioch, and ultimately to Paul of Samosota. At the time of the council, the heresy was said to involve the whole Church. We may well ask why the “ancient constitution” of the Church didn’t protect Antioch from this heresy? Surely the Church at Antioch was a “distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ” at one time. And again, did the “very complete system of doctrine” not guard and preserve the Church at Antioch? If there was the “reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy,” why did the Church fall into heresy with the bishop, Paul of Samosota? None of these things

apparently kept the bishop in the church at Antioch, which the apostles had planted, from going astray into error.

History therefore shows us that apostolic succession guarantees the Church nothing. Neither the possession of apostolic doctrine, or the succession of the bishops guaranteed anything in regards to what was taught in a church planted by an apostle. Mere possession of the apostolic writings does not mean an understanding of them. Understanding the Scriptures does not come by laying on of hands. The understanding of the Scriptures comes when the Holy Spirit illuminates our mind as we are taught in the word, or simply read or study the Scriptures for ourselves. As we are obedient to what we have heard from the Lord, He reveals more through this same process. In this way, we grow in grace and knowledge. If we do not walk in the light in this way, we will remain spiritual babies.

## Chapter 22: Communion

### Book 4: Chapter XVII.—Proof that God did not appoint the Levitical dispensation for His own sake, or as requiring such service; for He does, in fact, need nothing from men.

1. Moreover, the prophets indicate in the fullest manner that God stood in no need of their slavish obedience, but that it was upon their own account that He enjoined certain observances in the law. And again, that God needed not their oblation, but [merely demanded it], on account of man himself who offers it, the Lord taught distinctly, as I have pointed out. For when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God, and imagining that God was to be propitiated by sacrifices and the other typical observances, Samuel did even thus speak to them: "God does not desire whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but He will have His voice to be hearkened to. Behold, a ready obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 4007 1

**Sam. xv. 22.** David also says: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire, but mine ears hast Thou perfected; 4008 Latin, "aures autem perfecisti mihi;" a reading agreeable to neither the Hebrew nor Septuagint version, as quoted by St. Paul in **Heb. x. 9.** Harvey, however, is of opinion that the text of the old Latin translation was originally "perforasti;" indicating thus an entire concurrence with the Hebrew, as now read in this passage. [Both readings illustrated by their apparent reference to **Ex. xxi. 6,** compared with **Heb. v. 7–9.**] burnt-offerings also for sin Thou hast not required." 4009 **Ps. xl. 6.**

He thus teaches them that God desires obedience, which renders them secure, rather than sacrifices and holocausts, which avail them nothing towards righteousness; and [by this declaration] he prophesies the new covenant at the same time. Still clearer, too, does he speak of these things in the fiftieth Psalm: "For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, then would I have given it: Thou wilt not delight in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise." 4010 **Ps. li. 17.** Because, therefore, God stands in need of nothing, He declares in the preceding Psalm: "I will take no calves out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy fold. For Mine are all the beasts of the earth, the herds and the oxen on the mountains: I know all the fowls of heaven, and the various tribes 4011 Or, "the beauty," species. of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" 4012 **Ps. l. 9.** Then, lest it might be supposed that He refused these things in His anger, He continues, giving him (man) counsel: "Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me;" 4013 **Ps. l. 14, 15,** rejecting, indeed, those things by which sinners imagined they could propitiate God, and showing that He does Himself stand in need of nothing; but He exhorts and advises them to those things by which man is justified and draws nigh to God. This same declaration does Esaias make: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full." 4014 **Isa. i. 11.** And when He had repudiated holocausts, and sacrifices, and oblations, as likewise the new moons, and the sabbaths, and the festivals, and all the rest of the services accompanying these, He continues, exhorting them to what pertained to salvation: "Wash you, make you clean, take away wickedness from your hearts from before mine eyes: cease from your evil ways, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord."

2. For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. As He elsewhere declares: "The sacrifice to God is an afflicted heart: a sweet savour to God is a heart glorifying Him who formed it." 4015 This passage is not now found in holy Scripture. Harvey conjectures that it may have been taken from the apocryphal Gospel according to the Egyptians. It is remarkable that we find the same words quoted also by Clement of Alexandria. [But he (possibly with

this place in view) merely quotes it as a saying, in close connection with Ps. li. 19, which is here partially cited. See Clement, *Pædagogue*, b. iii. cap. xii.] For if, when angry, He had repudiated these sacrifices of theirs, as if they were persons unworthy to obtain His compassion, He would not certainly have urged these same things upon them as those by which they might be saved. But inasmuch as God is merciful, He did not cut them off from good counsel. For after He had said by Jeremiah, "To what purpose bring ye Me incense from Saba, and cinnamon from a far country? Your whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices are not acceptable to Me;" 4016 Jer. vi. 20, He proceeds: "Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah. These things saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Make straight your ways and your doings, and I will establish you in this place. Put not your trust in lying words, for they will not at all profit you, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, it is [here]."

4017 Jer. vii. 2, 3.

3. And again, when He points out that it was not for this that He led them out of Egypt, that they might offer sacrifice to Him, but that, forgetting the idolatry of the Egyptians, they should be able to hear the voice of the Lord, which was to them salvation and glory, He declares by this same Jeremiah: "Thus saith the Lord; Collect together your burnt-offerings with your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this word I commanded them, saying, Hear My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk in all My ways whatsoever I have commanded you, that it may be well with you. But they obeyed not, nor hearkened; but walked in the imaginations of their own evil heart, and went backwards, and not forwards." 4018 Jer. vii. 21. And again, when He declares by the same man, "But let him that glorieth, glory in this, to understand and know that I am the Lord, who doth exercise loving-kindness, and righteousness, and judgment in the earth;" 4019 Jer. ix. 24. He adds, "For in these things I delight, says the Lord," but not in sacrifices, nor in holocausts, nor in oblations. For the people did not receive these precepts as of primary importance (*principaliter*), but as secondary, and for the reason already alleged, as Isaiah again says: "Thou hast not [brought to] Me the sheep of thy holocaust, nor in thy sacrifices hast thou glorified Me: thou hast not served Me in sacrifices, nor in [the matter of] frankincense hast thou done anything laboriously; neither hast thou bought for Me incense with money, nor have I desired the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast stood before Me in thy sins and in thine iniquities." 4020 Isa. xlivi. 23, 24. He says, therefore, "Upon this man will I look, even upon him that is humble, and meek, and who trembles at My words." 4021 Isa. lxvi. 2. "For the fat and the fat flesh shall not take away from thee thine unrighteousness." 4022 Jer. xi. 15. "This is the fast which I have chosen, saith the Lord. Loose every band of wickedness, dissolve the connections of violent agreements, give rest to those that are shaken, and cancel every unjust document. Deal thy bread to the hungry willingly, and lead into thy house the roofless stranger. If thou hast seen the naked, cover him, and thou shalt not despise those of thine own flesh and blood (*domesticos seminis tui*). Then shall thy morning light break forth, and thy health shall spring forth more speedily; and righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall surround thee: and whilst thou art yet speaking, I will say, Behold, here I am."

4023 Isa. Iviii. 6, etc. And Zechariah also, among the twelve prophets, pointing out to the people the will of God, says: "These things does the Lord Omnipotent declare: Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion each one to his brother. And oppress not the widow, and the orphan, and the proselyte, and the poor; and let none imagine evil against your brother in his heart." 4024 Zech. vii. 9, 10 And again, he says: "These are the words which ye shall utter. Speak ye the truth every man to his neighbour, and execute peaceful judgment in your gates, and let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his brother, and ye shall not love false swearing: for all these things I hate, saith the Lord Almighty." 4025 Zech. viii. 16, 17. Moreover, David also says in like manner: "What man is there who desireth life, and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Shun evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it." 4026 Ps. xxxiv. 13, 14.

4. From all these it is evident that God did not seek sacrifices and holocausts from them, but faith, and obedience, and righteousness, because of their salvation. As God, when teaching them His will in Hosea the prophet, said, "I desire mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more

than burnt-offerings." 4027 **Hos. vi. 6.** Besides, our Lord also exhorted them to the same effect, when He said, "But if ye had known what [this] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." 4028 **Matt. xii. 7.** Thus does He bear witness to the prophets, that they preached the truth; but accuses these men (His hearers) of being foolish through their own fault.

5. Again, giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits 4029 Grabe has a long and important note on this passage and what follows, which may be seen in Harvey, *in loc.* See, on the other side, and in connection with the whole of the following chapter, Massuet's third dissertation on the doctrine of Irenæus, art. vii., reprinted in Migne's edition. of His own, created things—not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful—He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, "This is My body." 4030 **Matt. xxvi. 26,** etc. And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Omnipotent, and I will not accept sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice; for great is My name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Omnipotent," 4031 **Mal. i. 10, 11.** —indicating in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former people [the Jews] shall indeed cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to Him, and that a pure one; and His name is glorified among the Gentiles. 4032 [One marvels that there should be any critical difficulty here as to our author's teaching. Creatures of bread and wine are the body and the blood; materially one thing, mystically another. See cap. xviii. 5 below.]

6. But what other name is there which is glorified among the Gentiles than that of our Lord, by whom the Father is glorified, and man also? And because it is [the name] of His own Son, who was made man by Him, He calls it His own. Just as a king, if he himself paints a likeness of his son, is right in calling this likeness his own, for both these reasons, because it is [the likeness] of his son, and because it is his own production; so also does the Father confess the name of Jesus Christ, which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be His own, both because it is that of His Son, and because He who thus describes it gave Him for the salvation of men. Since, therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds, "And in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice." Now John, in the Apocalypse, declares that the "incense" is "the prayers of the saints." 4033 **Rev. v. 8.** [Material incense seems to be always disclaimed by the primitive writers.]

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "Moreover, the prophets indicate in the fullest manner that God stood in no need of their slavish obedience, but that it was upon their own account that He enjoined certain observances in the law." Irenaeus then adds, "And again, that God needed not their oblation, but [merely demanded it], on account of man himself who offers it, the Lord taught distinctly, as I have pointed out." Irenaeus then argues:

- "For when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God, and imagining that God was to be propitiated by sacrifices and the other typical observances, Samuel did even thus speak to them: "God does not desire whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but He will have His voice to be hearkened to. Behold, a ready obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams," referring from 1 Samuel 15:22.
- "David also says: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire, but mine ears hast Thou perfected; burnt-offerings also for sin Thou hast not required," referring to Psalm 40:6.

Irenaeus then explains, “He thus teaches them that God desires obedience, which renders them secure, rather than sacrifices and holocausts, which avail them nothing towards righteousness; and [by this declaration] he prophesies the new covenant at the same time.” Irenaeus then again argues:

- “Still clearer, too, does he speak of these things in the fiftieth Psalm: “For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, then would I have given it: Thou wilt not delight in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise,” referring to Psalm 51:17. Because, therefore, God stands in need of nothing, He declares in the preceding Psalm: “I will take no calves out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy fold. For Mine are all the beasts of the earth, the herds and the oxen on the mountains: I know all the fowls of heaven, and the various tribes of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” referring to Psalm 50:9-13.
- “Then, lest it might be supposed that He refused these things in His anger, He continues, giving him (man) counsel: “Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me,” referring to Psalm 50:14,15, “rejecting, indeed, those things by which sinners imagined they could propitiate God, and showing that He does Himself stand in need of nothing; but He exhorts and advises them to those things by which man is justified and draws nigh to God.”
- “This same declaration does Esaias make: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full,” referring to Isaiah 1:11.
- “And when He had repudiated holocausts, and sacrifices, and oblations, as likewise the new moons, and the sabbaths, and the festivals, and all the rest of the services accompanying these, He continues, exhorting them to what pertained to salvation: “Wash you, make you clean, take away wickedness from your hearts from before mine eyes: cease from your evil ways, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord,” referring to Isaiah 1:16-17.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, “For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. As He elsewhere declares: “The sacrifice to God is an afflicted heart: a sweet savour to God is a heart glorifying Him who formed it,” referring most probably to Psalm 51:17. Irenaeus again asserts, “For if, when angry, He had repudiated these sacrifices of theirs, as if they were persons unworthy to obtain His compassion, He would not certainly have urged these same things upon them as those by which they might be saved.”

Irenaeus then argues:

- “But inasmuch as God is merciful, He did not cut them off from good counsel. For after He had said by Jeremiah, “To what purpose bring ye Me incense from Saba, and cinnamon from a far country? Your whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices are not acceptable to Me,” referring to Jeremiah 6:20.
- “He proceeds: “Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah. These things saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Make straight your ways and your doings, and I will establish you in this place. Put not your trust in lying words, for they will not at all profit you, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, it is [here],” referring to Jeremiah 7:2-4.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues his argument as he adds:

- “And again, when He points out that it was not for this that He led them out of Egypt, that they might offer sacrifice to Him, but that, forgetting the idolatry of the Egyptians, they should be able to hear the voice of the Lord, which was to them salvation and glory, He declares by this same Jeremiah: “Thus saith the Lord; Collect together your burnt-offerings with your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this word I commanded them, saying, Hear My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk in all My ways whatsoever I have commanded you, that it may be

well with you. But they obeyed not, nor hearkened; but walked in the imaginations of their own evil heart, and went backwards, and not forwards,” referring to Jeremiah 7:21-24.

- “And again, when He declares by the same man, “But let him that glorieth, glory in this, to understand and know that I am the Lord, who doth exercise loving-kindness, and righteousness, and judgment in the earth,” referring to Jeremiah 9:24.
- “He adds, “For in these things I delight, says the Lord,” but not in sacrifices, nor in holocausts, nor in oblations.”
- “For the people did not receive these precepts as of primary importance (*principaliter*), but as secondary, and for the reason already alleged, as Isaiah again says: “Thou hast not [brought to] Me the sheep of thy holocaust, nor in thy sacrifices hast thou glorified Me: thou hast not served Me in sacrifices, nor in [the matter of] frankincense hast thou done anything laboriously; neither hast thou bought for Me incense with money, nor have I desired the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast stood before Me in thy sins and in thine iniquities,” referring to Isaiah 43:23,24.
- “He says, therefore, “Upon this man will I look, even upon him that is humble, and meek, and who trembles at My words,” referring to Isaiah 66:2.
- “For the fat and the fat flesh shall not take away from thee thine unrighteousness,” referring to Jeremiah 11:15.
- “This is the fast which I have chosen, saith the Lord. Loose every band of wickedness, dissolve the connections of violent agreements, give rest to those that are shaken, and cancel every unjust document. Deal thy bread to the hungry willingly, and lead into thy house the roofless stranger. If thou hast seen the naked, cover him, and thou shalt not despise those of thine own flesh and blood (*domesticos seminis tui*). Then shall thy morning light break forth, and thy health shall spring forth more speedily; and righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall surround thee: and whilst thou art yet speaking, I will say, Behold, here I am,” referring to Iaiah 58:6-9.
- “And Zechariah also, among the twelve prophets, pointing out to the people the will of God, says: “These things does the Lord Omnipotent declare: Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion each one to his brother. And oppress not the widow, and the orphan, and the proselyte, and the poor; and let none imagine evil against your brother in his heart,” referring to Zechariah 7:9-10.
- “And again, he says: “These are the words which ye shall utter. Speak ye the truth every man to his neighbour, and execute peaceful judgment in your gates, and let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his brother, and ye shall not love false swearing: for all these things I hate, saith the Lord Almighty,” referring to Zechariah 8:16-17.
- “Moreover, David also says in like manner: “What man is there who desireth life, and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Shun evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it,” referring to Psalm 34:13-14.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus asserts that, “From all these it is evident that God did not seek sacrifices and holocausts from them, but faith, and obedience, and righteousness, because of their salvation.” Irenaeus then continues as he argues:

- “As God, when teaching them His will in Hosea the prophet, said, “I desire mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings,” referring to Hosea 6:6.
- “Besides, our Lord also exhorted them to the same effect, when He said, “But if ye had known what [this] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless,” referring to Matthew 12:7.

Irenaeus then concludes, “Thus does He bear witness to the prophets, that they preached the truth; but accuses these men (His hearers) of being foolish through their own fault.”

In paragraph five, Irenaeus continues as he argues further:

- “Again, giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own, created things—not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor

ungrateful—He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, “This is My body,” referring to Matthew 26:26.

- “And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant;” referring in part to Matthew 26:27-29.
- “which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand: “I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Omnipotent, and I will not accept sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice; for great is My name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Omnipotent,” referring to Malachi 1:10-11
- “—indicating in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former people [the Jews] shall indeed cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to Him, and that a pure one; and His name is glorified among the Gentiles.”

In paragraph six, Irenaeus continues his argument by asking rhetorically, “But what other name is there which is glorified among the Gentiles than that of our Lord, by whom the Father is glorified, and man also?” Irenaeus then testifies, “And because it is [the name] of His own Son, who was made man by Him, He calls it His own. Just as a king, if he himself paints a likeness of his son, is right in calling this likeness his own, for both these reasons, because it is [the likeness] of his son, and because it is his own production; so also does the Father confess the name of Jesus Christ, which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be His own, both because it is that of His Son, and because He who thus describes it gave Him for the salvation of men.” Irenaeus thus concludes that, “Since, therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds, “And in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice,” referring again to Malachi 1:11. Irenaeus explains that “John, in the Apocalypse, declares that the “incense” is “the prayers of the saints,” referring to Revelation 5:8.

**Commentary:** In this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus is laying the groundwork for his thinking about the Communion, or Eucharist, meal which was inaugurated for us by Jesus at the Last Supper. Irenaeus will say in paragraph five that Jesus “taught the new oblation of the new covenant.” All of his thinking in paragraphs one to four is leading up to this statement. Irenaeus will talk about what are acceptable offerings and sacrifices before God in paragraphs one to four, and he mentions that which is a “true sacrifice” in paragraph two. Certainly foremost in Irenaeus’ thoughts about sacrifice is that they do not benefit God but man.

And so, in paragraph one, Irenaeus begins his argument as he affirms, “Moreover, the prophets indicate in the fullest manner that God stood in no need of their slavish obedience, but that it was upon their own account that He enjoined certain observances in the law.” Irenaeus then adds, “And again, that God needed not their oblation, but [merely demanded it], on account of man himself who offers it, the Lord taught distinctly, as I have pointed out.” Irenaeus is referring to the previous chapter of his writing, **Book 4: Chapter XVI**, which we will discuss in **Chapter 24: The Law**.

Irenaeus then points out that “when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God, and imagining that God was to be propitiated by sacrifices and the other typical observances, Samuel did even thus speak to them,” as in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV):22** And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Actually, Samuel had given a command, not to the people of Israel, but to King Saul by the word of the Lord as we see in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV):1** Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. 2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when

he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and sucking, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

Saul then carried out this command, but not fully as we read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

When Samuel realized that Saul had not fully carried out the command of the Lord, the Lord spoke to him again as we read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, 11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. 12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. 13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. 14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. 16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

Samuel then told Saul what the Lord told him as we read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? 18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. 19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? 20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

This is the context of Samuel's words about sacrifice and burnt offering as we continue to read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Though Saul confessed his sin, because of his position as King of Israel, the Lord held him to a stricter judgment as we read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. 26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. 27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. 28 And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. 29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent. 30 Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. 31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

Samuel himself had to administer justice on Agag, king of the Amalekites, since Saul still did not obey the Lord as we read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:32 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. 33 And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to

his house to Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

We must understand that it is paramount in our Christian lives that we learn to know the voice of the Lord. This is why knowing His word is so important. We are not to be as Saul, doing most of what the Lord tells us. Many teach today that we must just believe the essentials, but there is liberty in nonessentials. The Lord Himself spoke to Israel as we read in **Deuteronomy 8 (KJV):3** And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

If we are to live by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD, how much of what the LORD says do you think is nonessential?

As we continue in paragraph one, Irenaeus then argues that, “David also says: “Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire, but mine ears hast Thou perfected; burnt-offerings also for sin Thou hast not required,” referring to **Psalm 40 (KJV):6** Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

Irenaeus then explains that, in other words, “He thus teaches them that God desires obedience, which renders them secure, rather than sacrifices and holocausts, which avail them nothing towards righteousness; and [by this declaration] he prophesies the new covenant at the same time.” Irenaeus then argues, “Still clearer, too, does he speak of these things in the fiftieth Psalm: “For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, then would I have given it: Thou wilt not delight in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise,” referring to **Psalm 51 (KJV):16** For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Note that the words “broken and contrite heart” in verse 17 in Hebrew are לְבַנְשָׁבֵר וּמִדְקָה (pronounced leb kneeshvar ve kneedkay) and are in the Niphal, passive verb form in Psalm 51:17. The Hebrew root for “broken,” shabar, means “to be broken.” The Hebrew word for “contrite,” dakah, means “to be broken, crushed.” The word contrite in English means a “feeling or showing sorrow and remorse for a sin or shortcoming <a *contrite* criminal> <a *contrite* apology> <*contrite* sighs>,” according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

Irenaeus again argues, “Because, therefore, God stands in need of nothing, He declares in the preceding Psalm: “I will take no calves out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy fold. For Mine are all the beasts of the earth, the herds and the oxen on the mountains: I know all the fowls of heaven, and the various tribes of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” referring to **Psalm 50 (KJV):9** I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. 10 For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. 11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

Irenaeus again argues, “Then, lest it might be supposed that He refused these things in His anger, He continues, giving him (man) counsel: “Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me,” referring to **Psalm 50 (KJV):14** Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: 15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Irenaeus then again argues, “This same declaration does Esaias make: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full,” referring in context to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):11** To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

Irenaeus then explains, “And when He had repudiated holocausts, and sacrifices, and oblations, as likewise the new moons, and the sabbaths, and the festivals, and all the rest of the services accompanying these, He continues, exhorting them to what pertained to salvation: “Wash you, make you clean, take away wickedness from your hearts from before mine eyes: cease from your evil ways, learn to do well, seek

judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord," referring to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):16** Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

And in part to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):18** Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, "For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. As He elsewhere declares: "The sacrifice to God is an afflicted heart: a sweet savour to God is a heart glorifying Him who formed it," referring most probably in context to **Psalm 51 (KJV):16** For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Irenaeus does not tell us the prophet who said this or the source he is referencing here. The exact wording is not found in the Scriptures in the Old or New Testament. Note that the English meaning of the word "afflicted" is "to distress so severely as to cause persistent suffering or anguish <*afflicted with arthritis*>," according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary. In other words, a disease is said to afflict people, for example.

However, the word afflicted is not an equivalent for broken or contrite. From the context, I would say that tradition rather than Scripture is in Irenaeus' thinking. God is not pleased when our heart is afflicted. He is not asking us to "afflict" our hearts, that is, to lay heavy burdens on ourselves. The word "afflict" in this sense is used to describe what the Egyptian taskmasters did to Israel in **Exodus 1 (KJV):11** Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

But in Psalm 51:16-17, God is telling us what is acceptable to Him. He is more concerned about our heart attitude than our sacrifices. A broken spirit, and a broken and contrite heart, speak of a disposition of one who is completely surrendered to God with nothing held back.

Now, Irenaeus is saying that the offering of the "true sacrifice" that "shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him," is what God wants from them. However, I think it has more to do with how we offer a sacrifice that is acceptable to God rather than relating to what we offer. And it is not our "sacrifice" that will save us or give us life. A heart yielded completely to Him will be led by the Spirit to accept the sacrifice His Son made, once and for all time. Irenaeus intimates here that he does not fully understand this.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "For if, when angry, He had repudiated these sacrifices of theirs, as if they were persons unworthy to obtain His compassion, He would not certainly have urged these same things upon them as those by which they might be saved." Again it is not a sacrifice that we offer that will any in way save us. But when our hearts are completely surrendered to Him, we are then ready to receive that sacrifice that He has made for us.

Irenaeus then adds, "But inasmuch as God is merciful, He did not cut them off from good counsel. For after He had said by Jeremiah, "To what purpose bring ye Me incense from Saba, and cinnamon from a far country? Your whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices are not acceptable to Me," referring to **Jeremiah 6 (KJV):20** To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

And Irenaeus continues as he adds "He proceeds: "Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah. These things saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Make straight your ways and your doings, and I will establish you in this place. Put not your trust in lying words, for they will not at all profit you, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, it is [here]," referring in context to **Jeremiah 7 (KJV):1** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. 3 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. 5 For if ye throughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye throughly execute judgment between a man

and his neighbour; 6 If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: 7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

These verses speak of God's reward for their obedience to His voice. If they were obedient to Him, He would establish them in the land. These verses are not speaking of salvation, but of their remaining in the land if they are obedient.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues his argument as he adds, "And again, when He points out that it was not for this that He led them out of Egypt, that they might offer sacrifice to Him, but that, forgetting the idolatry of the Egyptians, they should be able to hear the voice of the Lord, which was to them salvation and glory, He declares by this same Jeremiah: "Thus saith the Lord; Collect together your burnt-offerings with your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this word I commanded them, saying, Hear My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk in all My ways whatsoever I have commanded you, that it may be well with you. But they obeyed not, nor hearkened; but walked in the imaginations of their own evil heart, and went backwards, and not forwards," referring to **Jeremiah 7 (KJV):21** Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. 22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: 23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. 24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Irenaeus points out that it was not for sacrifice that the Lord led Israel out of Egypt but "that, forgetting the idolatry of the Egyptians, they should be able to hear the voice of the Lord, which was to them salvation and glory." Israel was not apostate in Egypt as Irenaeus seems to suggest when he says, "forgetting the idolatry of the Egyptians." Israel was led into Egypt when there was a famine in the land of Canaan that lasted for seven years. God prepared for Israel to have shelter in Egypt by sending Joseph before them who won favor with Pharaoh because of his wise and discerning heart. In course of time, Israel became a great nation, and Egypt began to oppress Israel. It was at this point that Israel cried to the Lord as we read in **Exodus 2 (KJV):23** And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

Irenaeus then seems to make the apostasy of Israel begin from the time they came out of Egypt. He refers to the book of Jeremiah as if Jeremiah were speaking to Israel in Egypt, and not to Israel in the promised land of Canaan who later became apostate and was exiled to Babylon. It is true that Israel later became apostate, and the seeds of their apostasy may have been resident in them from the time they came out of Egypt. But Israel had not yet come under the judgment of God, and at the exodus from Egypt they were about to enter the land of promise. It was many years later that they actually became apostate and were exiled to Babylon for that reason.

Irenaeus then adds, "And again, when He declares by the same man, "But let him that glorieth, glory in this, to understand and know that I am the Lord, who doth exercise loving-kindness, and righteousness, and judgment in the earth," referring to **Jeremiah 9 (KJV):23** Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

Irenaeus then explains, "He adds, "For in these things I delight, says the Lord," but not in sacrifices, nor in holocausts, nor in oblations." Irenaeus explains further, "For the people did not receive these precepts as of primary importance (*principaliter*), but as secondary, and for the reason already alleged, as Isaiah again says: "Thou hast not [brought to] Me the sheep of thy holocaust, nor in thy sacrifices hast thou glorified Me: thou hast not served Me in sacrifices, nor in [the matter of] frankincense hast thou done anything laboriously; neither hast thou bought for Me incense with money, nor have I desired the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast stood before Me in thy sins and in thine iniquities," referring to **Isaiah 43 (KJV):23** Thou hast not brought me the

small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. 24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

Irenaeus then adds, “He says, therefore, “Upon this man will I look, even upon him that is humble, and meek, and who trembles at My words,” referring in context to **Isaiah 66 (NASB):2** For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Irenaeus continues as he argues, “For the fat and the fat flesh shall not take away from thee thine unrighteousness,” referring most probably to **Jeremiah 11 (Septuagint):15** Why has my beloved wrought abomination in my house? will prayers and holy offerings take away thy wickedness from thee, or shalt thou escape by these things?

However, a more accurate rendering is **Jeremiah 11 (NASB):15** "What right has My beloved in My house When she has done many vile deeds? Can the sacrificial flesh take away from you your disaster, So that you can rejoice?"

Irenaeus then argues, “This is the fast which I have chosen, saith the Lord. Loose every band of wickedness, dissolve the connections of violent agreements, give rest to those that are shaken, and cancel every unjust document. Deal thy bread to the hungry willingly, and lead into thy house the roofless stranger. If thou hast seen the naked, cover him, and thou shalt not despise those of thine own flesh and blood (*domesticos seminis tui*). Then shall thy morning light break forth, and thy health shall spring forth more speedily; and righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall surround thee: and whilst thou art yet speaking, I will say, Behold, here I am,” referring to **Isaiah 58 (KJV):6** Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? 8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. 9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

Irenaeus then adds, “And Zechariah also, among the twelve prophets, pointing out to the people the will of God, says: “These things does the Lord Omnipotent declare: Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion each one to his brother. And oppress not the widow, and the orphan, and the proselyte, and the poor; and let none imagine evil against your brother in his heart,” referring to **Zechariah 7 (KJV):9** Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: 10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

And he then adds “And again, he says: “These are the words which ye shall utter. Speak ye the truth every man to his neighbour, and execute peaceful judgment in your gates, and let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his brother, and ye shall not love false swearing: for all these things I hate, saith the Lord Almighty,” referring to **Zechariah 8 (KJV):16** These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: 17 And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.

Irenaeus then adds, “Moreover, David also says in like manner: “What man is there who desireth life, and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Shun evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it,” referring to **Psalm 34 (KJV):12** What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? 13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus concludes that, “From all these it is evident that God did not seek sacrifices and holocausts from them, but faith, and obedience, and righteousness, because of their salvation.” All of this about sacrifice was, as I said, to lay groundwork for what follows, beginning in paragraph four and extending

into the next chapter. Irenaeus summarizes as he says that, from all these Scriptures from the Old Testament that he has just quoted in paragraphs one to three, “it is evident that God did not seek sacrifices and holocausts from them, but faith, and obedience, and righteousness, because of their salvation.” Now Irenaeus transitions from the Old Testament to the New Testament with a final quote from Hosea as he argues, “As God, when teaching them His will in Hosea the prophet, said, “I desire mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings,” referring to **Hosea 6 (Septuagint):7** “As God, when teaching them His will in Hosea the prophet, said, “I desire mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings,”

And also translated as in **Hosea 6 (NASB):6** For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Irenaeus then uses this verse to connect to Jesus’ thinking on sacrifice as argues, “Besides, our Lord also exhorted them to the same effect, when He said, “But if ye had known what [this] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless,” referring to **Matthew 12 (KJV):7** But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

Irenaeus continues his transition as he argues, “Thus does He bear witness to the prophets, that they preached the truth; but accuses these men (His hearers) of being foolish through their own fault.”

Now moving to paragraph five, Irenaeus continues as he argues, “Again, giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own, created things—not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful—He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, “This is My body.” And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant,” referring to Matthew 26:26-29 which we will look at shortly. By “first-fruits of His own created things,” Irenaeus refers to His body and His blood. The offering of the body and blood of Jesus Christ on the cross is the “new oblation of the new covenant” in Irenaeus’ thinking.

Irenaeus continues as he adds, “which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand: “I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Omnipotent, and I will not accept sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice; for great is My name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Omnipotent,” referring to **Malachi 1 (Septuagint):10** Because even among you the doors shall be shut, and one will not kindle the fire of mine altar for nothing, I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice at your hands. 11 For from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof my name has been glorified among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Almighty.

And also as in **Malachi 1 (NASB):10** “Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle *fire on* My altar! I am not pleased with you,” says the LORD of hosts, “nor will I accept an offering from you. 11 For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name *will be* great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering *that is* pure; for My name *will be* great among the nations,” says the LORD of hosts.

Irenaeus is saying that the Church received the teaching about “the new oblation of the new covenant” from the apostles. And now the Church “offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament,” His gifts referring to His body and His blood.

Irenaeus concludes by this Scripture that God through Malachi was “—indicating in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former people [the Jews] shall indeed cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to Him, and that a pure one; and His name is glorified among the Gentiles.”

In paragraph six, Irenaeus argues for the supplanting of Israel by the Church by asserting that God’s name among the Gentiles is the name of His Son, that is, Jesus Christ. He first asks rhetorically, “But what other name is there which is glorified among the Gentiles than that of our Lord, by whom the Father is glorified, and man also?” Irenaeus continues as he further argues, “And because it is [the name] of His own Son, who was made man by Him, He calls it His own. Just as a king, if he himself paints a likeness of his son, is right in

calling this likeness his own, for both these reasons, because it is [the likeness] of his son, and because it is his own production; so also does the Father confess the name of Jesus Christ, which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be His own, both because it is that of His Son, and because He who thus describes it gave Him for the salvation of men." It is on this basis that Irenaeus concludes, "Since, therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds, "And in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice." Now John, in the Apocalypse, declares that the "incense" is "the prayers of the saints," referring to **Revelation 5 (KJV):8** And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

While it is true that John does refer to the incense in the golden bowls as the prayers of the saints, it is also true that the setting in Revelation 5:8 is in heaven while the setting in Malachi is on earth. And while it is true that Jesus gave His body and blood as a sacrifice for our sins so that we could have life in Him, the term "subsistence" which Irenaeus uses in paragraph five is not used in the Scriptures with reference to spiritual life which is in Jesus. The most obvious reason for this omission is that the life that Jesus gave those who believe is eternal as Jesus Himself said in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XVII

Irenaeus seems to indicate in paragraph five that he believed that Jesus' body and blood were as spiritual food, that is, "subsistence," which maintains our spiritual life. What Jesus actually said at the Last Supper is recorded in **Matthew 26 (KJV):26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Notice that after Jesus took the cup and said, "This is my blood," He then referred to it as "this fruit of the vine." Evidently Jesus did not acknowledge any change in the wine from what it actually was, that is, "the fruit of the vine."

Irenaeus also asserts in paragraph five that "the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament."

By the term, "first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament," we understand Irenaeus to mean that the body and blood of our Lord were "His own gifts," and that this "new oblation of the new covenant" is what is referred to in Malachi 1:10-11 as the "pure sacrifice" or "pure offering" as we read in **Malachi 1 (KJV):10** Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

In addition, Irenaeus sees the Church as making these offerings through Jesus Christ. The reason he asserts this is, as far as we can tell by his writing, is because he believed the Lord did not want His disciples to be "unfruitful nor ungrateful," as he says in paragraph five. Irenaeus believes it is a necessity for the Church to have something to offer in order to maintain their spiritual life. In paragraph six, he testifies that the name of Jesus Christ is the name of God, and he then asserts that therefore this passage in Malachi is a prophetic word for the Church because Malachi prophesies, "My name will be great among the nations."

Now, if we read Malachi 1:11 in context with the rest of the chapter, we begin to understand why Irenaeus felt so strongly that this prophetic word applied to the Church. The first thing we notice in this passage is the word “altar” in verse 7, which is also called “the table of the Lord” in the same verse as we read in **Malachi 1 (KJV):6** A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. 10 Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

We see in this passage that the Jews, that is, Israel, are being rebuked for profaning the altar, the table of the Lord. In the prophet Malachi’s time, the table of the Lord was the altar where sacrifices and offerings were offered in the temple. Irenaeus sees this prophecy as being fulfilled in the Church age where, now, a pure offering, or sacrifice as he calls it, is being offered through Jesus Christ by the Church. This offering, or sacrifice, is spiritual in nature as Irenaeus says, “Now John, in the Apocalypse, declares that the “incense” is “the prayers of the saints,” referring to Revelation 5:8.

Now, if we were to read 1 Corinthians, chapter 10, we would find some basis for his thinking in the New Testament as well as we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):14** Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. 18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

In this passage the words “altar” and “table of the Lord” are both used, but in a different context than in Malachi. In the next chapter of Irenaeus’ writing, **Book 4: Chapter XVIII**, we will understand more of what Irenaeus was arguing for with regards to Communion, and how these words play a part.

## **Book 4: Chapter XVIII.—Concerning sacrifices and oblations, and those who truly offer them.**

1. The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted. For by the gift both honour and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: “Therefore, when thou offerest thy gift upon the altar, and shalt remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then return and offer thy gift.” **4034 Matt. v. 23, 24.** We are bound, therefore, to offer to God the first-fruits of His creation, as Moses also says, “Thou shalt not appear in the presence of the Lord thy God empty;” **4035 Deut. xvi. 16.** so that man, being accounted as grateful, by those things in which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honour which flows from Him. **4036 The text of this passage is doubtful in some words.**

2. And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations

there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen. For the Lord is [ever] one and the same; but the character of a servile oblation is peculiar [to itself], as is also that of freemen, in order that, by the very oblations, the indication of liberty may be set forth. For with Him there is nothing purposeless, nor without signification, nor without design. And for this reason they (the Jews) had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord's purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of better things [hereafter]; as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God. 4037 Luke xxi. 4. [The law of tithes abrogated; the law of Acts ii. 44, 45, morally binding. This seems to be our author's view.]

3. For at the beginning God had respect to the gifts of Abel, because he offered with single-mindedness and righteousness; but He had no respect unto the offering of Cain, because his heart was divided with envy and malice, which he cherished against his brother, as God says when reproving his hidden [thoughts], "Though thou offerest rightly, yet, if thou dost not divide rightly, hast thou not sinned? Be at rest;" 4038 Gen. iv. 7, LXX. since God is not appeased by sacrifice. For if any one shall endeavour to offer a sacrifice merely to outward appearance, unexceptionably, in due order, and according to appointment, while in his soul he does not assign to his neighbour that fellowship with him which is right and proper, nor is under the fear of God;— he who thus cherishes secret sin does not deceive God by that sacrifice which is offered correctly as to outward appearance; nor will such an oblation profit him anything, but [only] the giving up of that evil which has been conceived within him, so that sin may not the more, by means of the hypocritical action, render him the destroyer of himself. 4039 The Latin text is: "ne per assimulatam operationem, magis autem peccatum, ipsum sibi homicidam faciat hominem." Wherefore did the Lord also declare: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like whitened sepulchres. For the sepulchre appears beautiful outside, but within it is full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness; even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of wickedness and hypocrisy."

4040 Matt. xxiii. 27, 28 For while they were thought to offer correctly so far as outward appearance went, they had in themselves jealousy like to Cain; therefore they slew the Just One, slighting the counsel of the Word, as did also Cain. For [God] said to him, "Be at rest;" but he did not assent. Now what else is it to "be at rest" than to forego purposed violence? And saying similar things to these men, He declares: "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse that which is within the cup, that the outside may be clean also." 4041 Matt. xxiii. 26. And they did not listen to Him. For Jeremiah says, "Behold, neither thine eyes nor thy heart are good; but [they are turned] to thy covetousness, and to shed innocent blood, and for injustice, and for man-slaying, that thou mayest do it." 4042 Jer. xxii. 17 And again Isaiah saith, "Ye have taken counsel, but not of Me; and made covenants, [but] not by My Spirit."

4043 Isa. xxx. 1. In order, therefore, that their inner wish and thought, being brought to light, may show that God is without blame, and worketh no evil —that God who reveals what is hidden [in the heart], but who worketh not evil—when Cain was by no means at rest, He saith to him: "To thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." 4044 Gen. iv. 7 Thus did He in like manner speak to Pilate: "Thou shouldest have no power at all against Me, unless it were given thee from above;"

4045 John xix. 11. God always giving up the righteous one [in this life to suffering], that he, having been tested by what he suffered and endured, may [at last] be accepted; but that the evildoer, being judged by the actions he has performed, may be rejected. Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as from a friend. "But the sinner," says He, "who kills a calf [in sacrifice] to Me, is as if he slew a dog." 4046 Isa. lxvi. 3.

4. Inasmuch, then, as the Church offers with single-mindedness, her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God. As Paul also says to the Philippians, "I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things that were sent from you, the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, pleasing to God." 4047 Phil. iv. 18. For it behoves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to

be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things. And the Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks, [the things taken] from His creation. But the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, through whom it is offered to God. 4048 The text here fluctuates between *quod offertur Deo*, and *per quod offertur Deo*. Massuet adopts the former, and Harvey the latter. If the first reading be chosen, the translation will be, “the Word who is offered to God,” implying, according to Massuet, that the body of Christ is really offered as a sacrifice in the Eucharist; if the second reading be followed, the translation will be as above. [Massuet’s idea is no more to be found, even in his text, than Luther’s or Calvin’s. The crucial point is, *how offered?* One may answer “figuratively,” “corporally,” “mystically,” or otherwise. Irenæus gives no answer in this place. But see below.] Nor, again, do any of the conventicles (*synagogæ*) of the heretics [offer this]. For some, by maintaining that the Father is different from the Creator, do, when they offer to Him what belongs to this creation of ours, set Him forth as being covetous of another’s property, and desirous of what is not His own. Those, again, who maintain that the things around us originated from apostasy, ignorance, and passion, do, while offering unto Him the fruits of ignorance, passion, and apostasy, sin against their Father, rather subjecting Him to insult than giving Him thanks. But how can they be consistent with themselves, [when they say] that the bread over which thanks have been given is the body of their Lord. 4049 Comp. Massuet and Harvey respectively for the meaning to be attached to these words and the cup His blood, if they do not call Himself the Son of the Creator of the world, that is, His Word, through whom the wood fructifies, and the fountains gush forth, and the earth gives “first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” 4050 **Mark iv. 28.**

5. Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned. 4051 “Either let them acknowledge that *the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof*, or let them cease to offer to God those elements that they deny to be vouchsafed by Him.” —Harvey. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. 4052 That is, according to Harvey, “while we offer to Him His own creatures of bread and wine, we tell forth the fellowship of flesh with spirit; i.e., that the flesh of every child of man is receptive of the Spirit.” The words καὶ ὄμοιογοῦντες ... ἔγεσιν, which here occur in the Greek text, are rejected as an interpolation by Grabe and Harvey, but defended as genuine by Massuet. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, 4053 See Harvey’s long note on this passage, and what immediately follows. [But, note, we are only asking what Irenæus teaches. Could words be plainer,—“two realities,”—(i.) bread, (ii.) spiritual food? Bread—but not “common bread”; matter and grace, flesh and Spirit. In the Eucharist, an earthly and a heavenly part.] but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.

6. Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift, 4054 The text fluctuates between *dominationi* and *donationi*, and thus sanctifying what has been created. For even as God does not need our possessions, so do we need to offer something to God; as Solomon says: “He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord.” 4055 **Prov. xix. 17** For God, who stands in need of nothing, takes our good works to Himself for this purpose, that He may grant us a recompense of His own good things, as our Lord says: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me; sick, and ye visited Me; in prison, and ye came to Me.” 4056 **Matt. xxv. 34, etc.** As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [services], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of

oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission. The altar, then, is in heaven 4057 [The *Sursum Corda* seems here in mind. The object of Eucharistic adoration is the Creator, our “great High Priest, passed into the heavens,” and in bodily substance there enthroned, according to our author.] (for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed); the temple likewise [is there], as John says in the Apocalypse, “And the temple of God was opened:” 4058 Rev. xi. 19. the tabernacle also: “For, behold,” He says, “the tabernacle of God, in which He will dwell with men.”

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asserts that, “The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted.” Irenaeus then reasons, “For by the gift both honour and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: “Therefore, when thou offerest thy gift upon the altar, and shalt remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then return and offer thy gift,” referring to Matthew 5:23-24. Irenaeus again reasons, “We are bound, therefore, to offer to God the first-fruits of His creation, as Moses also says, “Thou shalt not appear in the presence of the Lord thy God empty;” referring to Deuteronomy 16:16. Irenaeus then concludes that this is “so that man, being accounted as grateful, by those things in which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honour which flows from Him.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts also, “And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside;” Irenaeus then argues:

- “for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians].”
- “Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church:”
- “but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen.”
- “For the Lord is [ever] one and the same; but the character of a servile oblation is peculiar [to itself], as is also that of freemen, in order that, by the very oblations, the indication of liberty may be set forth.”
- “For with Him there is nothing purposeless, nor without signification, nor without design.”
- “And for this reason they (the Jews) had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord’s purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of better things [hereafter]; as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God,” referring to Luke 21:4.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, “For at the beginning God had respect to the gifts of Abel, because he offered with single-mindedness and righteousness; but He had no respect unto the offering of Cain, because his heart was divided with envy and malice, which he cherished against his brother, as God says when reproving his hidden [thoughts], “Though thou offerest rightly, yet, if thou dost not divide rightly, hast thou not sinned? Be at rest;” referring to Genesis 4:7, “since God is not appeased by sacrifice.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For if any one shall endeavour to offer a sacrifice merely to outward appearance, unexceptionably, in due order, and according to appointment, while in his soul he does not assign to his neighbour that fellowship with him which is right and proper, nor is under the fear of God;— he who thus cherishes secret sin does not deceive God by that sacrifice which is offered correctly as to outward appearance; nor will such an oblation profit him anything, but [only] the giving up of that evil which has been conceived within him, so that sin may not the more, by means of the hypocritical action, render him the destroyer of himself.” Irenaeus then testifies as he argues, “Wherefore did the Lord also declare: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like whitened sepulchres. For the sepulchre appears beautiful outside, but within it is full of dead men’s bones, and all

uncleanness; even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of wickedness and hypocrisy," referring to Matthew 23:27-28. Irenaeus agains testifies, "For while they were thought to offer correctly so far as outward appearance went, they had in themselves jealousy like to Cain; therefore they slew the Just One, slighting the counsel of the Word, as did also Cain. For [God] said to him, "Be at rest;" but he did not assent. Now what else is it to "be at rest" than to forego purposed violence? And saying similar things to these men, He declares: "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse that which is within the cup, that the outside may be clean also," referring in context to Matthew 23:26. Irenaeus then affirms, "And they did not listen to Him. For Jeremiah says, "Behold, neither thine eyes nor thy heart are good; but [they are turned] to thy covetousness, and to shed innocent blood, and for injustice, and for man-slaying, that thou mayest do it," referring to Jeremiah 22:17. Again Irenaeus affirms, "And again Isaiah saith, "Ye have taken counsel, but not of Me; and made covenants, [but] not by My Spirit," referring to Isaiah 30:1. And Irenaeus affirms once more, "In order, therefore, that their inner wish and thought, being brought to light, may show that God is without blame, and worketh no evil —that God who reveals what is hidden [in the heart], but who worketh not evil—when Cain was by no means at rest, He saith to him: "To thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him," again referring to Genesis 4:7. Irenaeus then testifies as he argues, "Thus did He in like manner speak to Pilate: "Thou shouldest have no power at all against Me, unless it were given thee from above," referring to John 19:11. Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, "God always giving up the righteous one [in this life to suffering], that he, having been tested by what he suffered and endured, may [at last] be accepted; but that the evildoer, being judged by the actions he has performed, may be rejected. Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as from a friend. "But the sinner," says He, "who kills a calf [in sacrifice] to Me, is as if he slew a dog," referring to Isaiah 66:3.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus asserts that, "Inasmuch, then, as the Church offers with single-mindedness, her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God." Irenaeus then testifies, "As Paul also says to the Philippians, "I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things that were sent from you, the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, pleasing to God," referring to Philippians 4:18. Irenaeus then asserts, "For it behoves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things." Irenaeus then continues as he asserts, "And the Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks, [the things taken] from His creation. But the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, through whom it is offered to God." Irenaeus then affirms, "Nor, again, do any of the conventicles (*synagogæ*) of the heretics [offer this]. For some, by maintaining that the Father is different from the Creator, do, when they offer to Him what belongs to this creation of ours, set Him forth as being covetous of another's property, and desirous of what is not His own. Those, again, who maintain that the things around us originated from apostasy, ignorance, and passion, do, while offering unto Him the fruits of ignorance, passion, and apostasy, sin against their Father, rather subjecting Him to insult than giving Him thanks." Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, "But how can they be consistent with themselves, [when they say] that the bread over which thanks have been given is the body of their Lord, and the cup His blood, if they do not call Himself the Son of the Creator of the world, that is, His Word, through whom the wood fructifies, and the fountains gush forth, and the earth gives "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," referring to Mark 4:28.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus continues his argument against the Gnostic heretics as he asks, "Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life?" Irenaeus then encourages, "Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned." Irenaeus explains his belief about the Eucharist as he says, "But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity."

In paragraph six, Irenaeus asserts, "Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it,

but rendering thanks for His gift and thus sanctifying what has been created.” Irenaeus then reasons, “For even as God does not need our possessions, so do we need to offer something to God; as Solomon says: “He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord,” referring to Proverbs 19:17. Again, Irenaeus explains his thinking as he reasons, “For God, who stands in need of nothing, takes our good works to Himself for this purpose, that He may grant us a recompense of His own good things, as our Lord says: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me; sick, and ye visited Me; in prison, and ye came to Me,” referring to Matthew 25:34. Irenaeus then asserts, “As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [services], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God;” And Irenaeus then concludes, “thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission.” Irenaeus then affirms, “The altar, then, is in heaven (for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed); the temple likewise [is there], as John says in the Apocalypse, “And the temple of God was opened,” referring to Revelation 11:19. Irenaeus concludes as he adds, “the tabernacle also: “For, behold,” He says, “the tabernacle of God, in which He will dwell with men,” referring to Revelation 21:3.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asserts on the basis of what he said in the previous chapter, **Book 4: Chapter XVII**, that “The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted.” We might ask at this point why Irenaeus uses the word oblation. The ISBE states that the word “oblation” is used in Leviticus and Numbers occasionally by the AV as a translation of the Hebrew word קָרְבָּן (pronounced qorban), a general term for all kinds of offering, but used only in Ezekiel, Leviticus, and Numbers. **ISBE, Volume III, page 2177.**

Irenaeus then reasons, “For by the gift both honour and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: “Therefore, when thou offerest thy gift upon the altar, and shalt remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then return and offer thy gift,” referring to **Matthew 5 (KJV):23** Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Again Irenaeus reasons that, “We are bound, therefore, to offer to God the first-fruits of His creation, as Moses also says,” referring to **Deuteronomy 16 (NASB):16** Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

Irenaeus concludes that this is “so that man, being accounted as grateful, by those things in which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honour which flows from Him.” We see in Irenaeus’ thinking that God requires us to offer something to show our gratitude.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus actually asserts, “And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen.” To substantiate his assertion, Irenaeus reasons, “For the Lord is [ever] one and the same; but the character of a servile oblation is peculiar [to itself], as is also that of freemen, in order that, by the very oblations, the indication of liberty may be set forth.” Again, Irenaeus reasons that, “with Him there is nothing purposeless, nor without signification, nor without design.” Irenaeus then argues, “And for this reason they (the Jews) had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord’s purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of better

things [hereafter]; as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God,” referring to **Luke 21 (KJV):3** And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: 4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

Irenaeus probably also had in mind **Acts 2 (KJV):44** And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

Jesus also commanded as in **Luke 6 (KJV):38** Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

However, according to Scripture, the class of oblations most certainly has been set aside. Under the Old Covenant, sacrifices were offered for sin. Under the New Covenant, there is no more offering or sacrifice for sin. The writer of Hebrews explains in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):8** Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Continuing in Hebrews we read as in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):11** And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Under the New Covenant, there is no more offering for sin. Jesus Christ by His one offering has perfected for ever those who are sanctified.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, “For at the beginning God had respect to the gifts of Abel, because he offered with single-mindedness and righteousness; but He had no respect unto the offering of Cain, because his heart was divided with envy and malice, which he cherished against his brother, as God says when reproving his hidden [thoughts], “Though thou offerest rightly, yet, if thou dost not divide rightly, hast thou not sinned? Be at rest;” referring to **Genesis 4 (Septuagint):7** Hast thou not sinned if thou hast brought it rightly, but not rightly divided it? be still, to thee shall be his submission, and thou shalt rule over him.

This verse is translated more accurately in **Genesis 4 (NASB):7** “If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

Irenaeus continues his thought saying, “since God is not appeased by sacrifice.” Irenaeus points out that it is the attitude of the heart that God respects and not the sacrifice alone. The Scriptures teach us that Abel offered a better sacrifice by faith as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):4** By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

And the Scriptures teach that Cain was of the evil one as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):11** For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Jude also says as much in **Jude 1 (NASB):11** Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “For if any one shall endeavour to offer a sacrifice merely to outward appearance, unexceptionably, in due order, and according to appointment, while in his soul he does not assign to his neighbour that fellowship with him which is right and proper, nor is under the fear of God;— he who thus cherishes secret sin does not deceive God by that sacrifice which is offered correctly as to outward appearance; nor will such an oblation profit him anything, but [only] the giving up of that evil which has been

conceived within him, so that sin may not the more, by means of the hypocritical action, render him the destroyer of himself.” The Scriptures teach as much in **Proverbs 28 (KJV)**:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. 14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Irenaeus then testifies as he argues, “Wherefore did the Lord also declare: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like whitened sepulchres. For the sepulchre appears beautiful outside, but within it is full of dead men’s bones, and all uncleanness; even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of wickedness and hypocrisy,” referring to **Matthew 23 (KJV)**:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Irenaeus agains testifies, “For while they were thought to offer correctly so far as outward appearance went, they had in themselves jealousy like to Cain; therefore they slew the Just One, slighting the counsel of the Word, as did also Cain. For [God] said to him, “Be at rest;” but he did not assent. Now what else is it to “be at rest” than to forego purposed violence? And saying similar things to these men, He declares: “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse that which is within the cup, that the outside may be clean also,” referring in context to **Matthew 23 (KJV)**:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Irenaeus then affirms, “And they did not listen to Him. For Jeremiah says, “Behold, neither thine eyes nor thy heart are good; but [they are turned] to thy covetousness, and to shed innocent blood, and for injustice, and for man-slaying, that thou mayest do it,” referring to **Jeremiah 22 (KJV)**:17 But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.

Again Irenaeus affirms, “And again Isaiah saith, “Ye have taken counsel, but not of Me; and made covenants, [but] not by My Spirit,” referring to **Isaiah 30 (KJV)**:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

And Irenaeus affirms once more, “In order, therefore, that their inner wish and thought, being brought to light, may show that God is without blame, and worketh no evil—that God who reveals what is hidden [in the heart], but who worketh not evil—when Cain was by no means at rest, He saith to him: “To thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him,” again referring to **Genesis 4 (KJV)**:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Irenaeus then testifies as he argues, “Thus did He in like manner speak to Pilate: “Thou shouldest have no power at all against Me, unless it were given thee from above,” referring in context to **John 19 (KJV)**:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “God always giving up the righteous one [in this life to suffering], that he, having been tested by what he suffered and endured, may [at last] be accepted; but that the evildoer, being judged by the actions he has performed, may be rejected.”

In other words, the one who is righteous will be proven so by his endurance of testing, and so is accepted by God, but the evildoer is proven so by his actions and is rejected. However, I don’t think the word “always” is quite accurate here. God does test us, but not always. There are times of blessing as well. And when Irenaeus says, “may [at last] be accepted,” he makes it sound as if our suffering was a propitiation of some kind. Jesus Christ is the only propitiation for our sins as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that He made this propitiation once for all time as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right

hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Irenaeus continues his thought as he says, "Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as from a friend. "But the sinner," says He, "who kills a calf [in sacrifice] to Me, is as if he slew a dog," referring to **Isaiah 66 (Septuagint):3** But the transgressor that sacrifices a calf to me, is as he that kills a dog; and he that offers fine flour, as *one that offers* swine's blood; he that gives frankincense for a memorial, is as a blasphemer.

Another translation is as in **Isaiah 66 (NASB):3** "But he who kills an ox is *like* one who slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb is *like* the one who breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering is *like* one who *offers* swine's blood; He who burns incense is *like* the one who blesses an idol. As they have chosen their *own* ways, And their soul delights in their abominations.

However, it is not quite true that "Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man," as Irenaeus says. The sacrifices of bulls and goats under the first covenant, the law, were only pointing to the necessity of a final sacrifice that would take away all sins forever. The writer of Hebrews explains as we begin reading in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):1** Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. 3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

God planned that there would be a second covenant all along. The first was just preparation for the second which became obsolete when Jesus came as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):13** In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Under the first covenant, the high priest had to repeat the sacrifice every year as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):6** Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The gifts and sacrifices offered under the old covenant could never cleanse the conscience of the worshipper, even if they were offered with a pure heart. However, the shedding of blood is necessary for forgiveness as the Scriptures reveal in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

The writer of Hebrews explains why this is so as we continue reading in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

It was God's plan all along that Jesus would come and be the final sacrifice for sin. No other sacrifice is necessary since his sacrifice was for all sin for all time. So Irenaeus' statement that "Sacrifices, therefore, do not

sanctify a man,” is not entirely true. The Old Testament sacrifices did not sanctify anyone. They just pointed to the need for the one sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross.

Continuing in paragraph four, Irenaeus asserts that, “Inasmuch, then, as the Church offers with single-mindedness, her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God.” To support this assertion, Irenaeus says, “As Paul also says to the Philippians, “I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things that were sent from you, the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, pleasing to God,” referring to **Philippians 4 (NASB):18** But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

Irenaeus then asserts, “For it behoves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things.” And this is true, but not in the sense that Irenaeus asserts. The Scriptures urge us to make our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to Goe in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

When we encounter a “therefore” in a verse, it is good to ask, “What is it there for?” The reason for its occurrence in Romans 12:1 is found in the final verses of Romans, chapter 11, as we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):32** For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. 33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

We offer ourselves a living sacrifice because of His mercies. His mercies make such an offering as our bodies our only reasonable service of worship.

Irenaeus then asserts, “And the Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks, [the things taken] from His creation. But the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, through whom it is offered to God.” By oblation, Irenaeus is referring to the Communion meal. His judgment on the Jews seems harsh, for there are some Jews who have accepted Christ. The Gospel is for all, Jew and Gentile alike. Those who have accepted Christ, Jew or Gentile, have been forgiven of their sins through their faith in Christ. We must remember that we are both one in Christ, Jew and Gentile, as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):11** Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Irenaeus then rebukes the Gnostics as he says, “Nor, again, do any of the conventicles (synagogæ) of the heretics [offer this]. For some, by maintaining that the Father is different from the Creator, do, when they offer to Him what belongs to this creation of ours, set Him forth as being covetous of another’s property, and desirous of what is not His own. Those, again, who maintain that the things around us originated from apostasy, ignorance, and passion, do, while offering unto Him the fruits of ignorance, passion, and apostasy, sin against their Father, rather subjecting Him to insult than giving Him thanks.”

Irenaeus adds, “But how can they be consistent with themselves, [when they say] that the bread over which thanks have been given is the body of their Lord and the cup His blood, if they do not call Himself the Son of the Creator of the world, that is, His Word, through whom the wood fructifies, and the fountains gush forth, and the earth gives “first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear,” drawing from **Mark**

**4 (KJV):28** For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

By this statement we understand that the Gnostics came from within Christian circles of fellowship. They were present at the Eucharist or Communion meal. And Irenaeus reveals here what he believes happens when thanks are given over the bread at the Eucharist meal. That is, Irenaeus believes it to become “the body of their Lord and the cup His blood,” when “thanks have been given” over the bread and the wine.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus continues his argument against the Gnostic heretics as he asks, “Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned.”

Irenaeus here assumes it to be a truth that the bread and wine over which thanks have been given at the Eucharist, or Communion, meal becomes the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He therefore reasons that the flesh of the one who partakes of this meal will not see corruption but “partake of life.” Irenaeus then encourages, “Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned.” Irenaeus would not allow the Gnostics to have fellowship in this way unless they change their opinions.

Continuing Irenaeus explains his opinion as he says, “But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”

Irenaeus here asserts his own belief, and the belief of the Church in his time, that when the bread receives the “invocation of God,” it “is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly;” As a result of partaking of the Eucharist then, Irenaeus concludes that when our bodies receive the Eucharist, they “are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” However, we note that Jesus Himself said that the one who believes in Him has eternal life as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24**

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus asserts, “Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift and thus sanctifying what has been created.” Irenaeus then reasons, “For even as God does not need our possessions, so do we need to offer something to God; as Solomon says: “He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord,” referring to **Proverbs 19 (KJV):17** He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Again, Irenaeus explains his thinking as he reasons, “For God, who stands in need of nothing, takes our good works to Himself for this purpose, that He may grant us a recompense of His own good things, as our Lord says: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me; sick, and ye visited Me; in prison, and ye came to Me,” referring to **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Irenaeus here makes the reward of the kingdom dependent on our good works. However, this verse is preceded by the following as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

The judgment here spoken of is the judgment of the nations. That is, it is a judgment of which nations shall be allowed to go into the kingdom age, that is, the thousand year reign of Christ. In these verses, Jesus represents His people, the believing Jews, in the Tribulation period, which is just before the time when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory. Those nations who gave His people a drink when they were thirsty, or clothed

them when they were naked, or who visited them when they were sick, or who came to them when they were in prison, will be allowed to go into the kingdom age. Those who did not will be judged accordingly as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: **42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: **43** I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. **44** Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? **45** Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. **46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Irenaeus then continues as he asserts, “As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [services], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God;” And Irenaeus then concludes, “thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission.” Irenaeus is again referring to **Matthew 5 (KJV):23** Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; **24** Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

In these verses, we see that Jesus teaching was teaching His disciples who at that time were living under the law, that is, the Old Covenant. His desire was to fulfill all righteousness as He says when He allowed John the Baptist to baptize Him in **Matthew 3 (KJV):13** Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. **14** But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? **15** And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. **16** And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: **17** And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness while He lived on this earth under the law. When He then rose from the dead, He instituted a new covenant by His blood. Under the New Covenant, we are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God as Paul says in Romans 12:1. Therefore, Jesus is not instructing us here to offer our gift before the altar, but how we should offer ourselves as a living sacrifice. That is, we should not hold anything against our brother if the living sacrifice of our bodies is to be acceptable to our Lord. The living sacrifice of our bodies is not for our salvation from sin, but for our fellowship with our Lord. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is what is the propitiation for our sins, and not the living sacrifice of our bodies.

Note also that Irenaeus is saying here that the Lord God gave sacrifice to the people under the law so “that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission.” Irenaeus would make Communion, or the Eucharist meal, a legalistic thing to be performed “frequently and without intermission,” as a ritual. However the Lord Jesus did not make this a legalistic thing as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):23** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: **24** And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. **25** After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. **26** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Notice that Jesus did not specify how often we should do it, according to Paul. He only said that as often as we do it, to do it in remembrance of Him. Irenaeus then affirms, “The altar, then, is in heaven (for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed); the temple likewise [is there], as John says in the Apocalypse, “And the temple of God was opened,” referring in context to **Revelation 11 (KJV):19** And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Irenaeus concludes as he adds, “the tabernacle also: “For, behold,” He says, “the tabernacle of God, in which He will dwell with men,” referring to **Revelation 21 (KJV):3** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people,

and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

An altar is mentioned in heaven in **Revelation 8 (KJV):**1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

And the writer of Hebrews describes our altar in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):**10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

However, John refers to a future time when the first heaven and earth are passed away as he says in **Revelation 21 (KJV):**1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The tabernacle of God will be among men in the new heaven and the new earth and the new Jerusalem. In summary, we see that Irenaeus believed that the bread over which thanks had been given took on a heavenly reality and became the “Eucharist, consisting of two realities.” And the one who receives the Eucharist is no longer corruptible but has “the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” The one who receives the Eucharist “is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood,” he says, and is incorruptible. And Irenaeus asserts that, “thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission,” in order that we should not be unfruitful and that we would learn to serve God.” The altar, he says, “is in heaven, (for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed); the temple likewise [is there], as John says in the Apocalypse, “And the temple of God was opened.”

Now we note that Irenaeus refers to the Gospel of John, chapter 6, only about seven times in his writings, and none of the references relate here. However, the Gospel of John, chapter 6, is clearly the basis of his thinking here. We will discuss this in detail at the end of this section.

## **Book 5 Chapter II.—When Christ visited us in His grace, He did not come to what did not belong to Him: also, by shedding His true blood for us, and exhibiting to us His true flesh in the Eucharist, He conferred upon our flesh the capacity of salvation.**

1. And vain likewise are those who say that God came to those things which did not belong to Him, as if covetous of another’s property; in order that He might deliver up that man who had been created by another, to that God who had neither made nor formed anything, but who also was deprived from the beginning of His own proper formation of men. The advent, therefore, of Him whom these men represent as coming to the things of others, was not righteous; nor did He truly redeem us by His own blood, if He did not really become man, restoring to His own handiwork what was said [of it] in the beginning, that man was made after the image and likeness of God; not snatching away by stratagem the property of another, but taking possession of His own in a righteous and gracious manner. As far as concerned the apostasy, indeed, He redeems us righteously from it by His own blood; but as regards us who have been redeemed, [He does this] graciously. For we have given nothing to Him previously, nor does He desire anything from us, as if He stood in need of it; but we do stand in need of fellowship with Him. And for this reason it was that He graciously poured Himself out, that He might gather us into the bosom of the Father.

2. But vain in every respect are they who despise the entire dispensation of God, and disallow the salvation of the flesh, and treat with contempt its regeneration, maintaining that it is not capable of incorruption. But if this indeed do not attain salvation, then neither did the Lord redeem us with His blood, nor is the cup of the Eucharist the communion of His blood, nor the bread which we break the

communion of His body. 4458 1 Cor. x. 16. For blood can only come from veins and flesh, and whatsoever else makes up the substance of man, such as the Word of God was actually made. By His own blood he redeemed us, as also His apostle declares, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins." 4459 Col. i. 14. And as we are His members, we are also nourished by means of the creation (and He Himself grants the creation to us, for He causes His sun to rise, and sends rain when He wills 4460 Matt. v. 45.). He has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of the creation) as His own blood, from which He bedews our blood; and the bread (also a part of the creation) He has established as His own body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.

4461 [Again, the carefully asserts that the *bread* is the *body*, and the *wine* (cup) is the *blood*. The elements are sanctified, not changed materially.]

3. When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, 4462 The Greek text, of which a considerable portion remains here, would give, "and the Eucharist becomes the body of Christ." from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which [flesh] is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him?—even as the blessed Paul declares in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." 4463 Eph. v. 30. He does not speak these words of some spiritual and invisible man, for a spirit has not bones nor flesh; 4464 Luke xxiv. 39. but [he refers to] that dispensation [by which the Lord became] an actual man, consisting of flesh, and nerves, and bones,—that [flesh] which is nourished by the cup which is His blood, and receives increase from the bread which is His body. And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ; so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption, 4465 1 Cor. xv. 53. because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness, 4466 2 Cor. xii. 3. in order that we may never become puffed up, as if we had life from ourselves, and exalted against God, our minds becoming ungrateful; but learning by experience that we possess eternal duration from the excelling power of this Being, not from our own nature, we may neither undervalue that glory which surrounds God as He is, nor be ignorant of our own nature, but that we may know what God can effect, and what benefits man receives, and thus never wander from the true comprehension of things as they are, that is, both with regard to God and with regard to man. And might it not be the case, perhaps, as I have already observed, that for this purpose God permitted our resolution into the common dust of mortality, 4467 This is Harvey's free rendering of the passage, which is in the Greek (as preserved in the Catena of John of Damascus):καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἡνέσχετο ὁ Θεὸς τὴν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἥμῶν ἀνάλυσιν. In the Latin: Propter hoc passus est Deus fieri in nobis resolutionem. See Book iii. cap. xx. 2. that we, being instructed by every mode, may be accurate in all things for the future, being ignorant neither of God nor of ourselves?

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus rebukes the Gnostics as he says, "And vain likewise are those who say that God came to those things which did not belong to Him, as if covetous of another's property; in order that He might deliver up that man who had been created by another, to that God who had neither made nor formed anything, but who also was deprived from the beginning of His own proper formation of men." Irenaeus then concludes from their beliefs that, "The advent, therefore, of Him whom these men represent as coming to the things of others, was not righteous; nor did He truly redeem us by His own blood, if He did not really become man, restoring to His own handiwork what was said [of it] in the beginning, that man was made after the image and likeness of God; not snatching away by stratagem the property of another, but taking possession

of His own in a righteous and gracious manner.” Irenaeus then states that the truth is, “As far as concerned the apostasy, indeed, He redeems us righteously from it by His own blood; but as regards us who have been redeemed, [He does this] graciously.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For we have given nothing to Him previously, nor does He desire anything from us, as if He stood in need of it; but we do stand in need of fellowship with Him.” Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, “And for this reason it was that He graciously poured Himself out, that He might gather us into the bosom of the Father.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues as he rebukes the Gnostics saying, “But vain in every respect are they who despise the entire dispensation of God, and disallow the salvation of the flesh, and treat with contempt its regeneration, maintaining that it is not capable of incorruption.” Irenaeus then concludes from this, “But if this indeed do not attain salvation, then neither did the Lord redeem us with His blood, nor is the cup of the Eucharist the communion of His blood, nor the bread which we break the communion of His body,” drawing from 1 Corinthians 10:16. Irenaeus then points out, “For blood can only come from veins and flesh, and whatsoever else makes up the substance of man, such as the Word of God was actually made.” Irenaeus then testifies, “By His own blood he redeemed us, as also His apostle declares, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins,” referring to Colossians 1:14. Irenaeus continues his testimony as he reasons, “And as we are His members,” referring to Ephesians 5:28-30, “we are also nourished by means of the creation (and He Himself grants the creation to us, for He causes His sun to rise, and sends rain when He wills,” making reference to Matthew 5:45. Irenaeus concludes as he reasons, “He has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of the creation) as His own blood, from which He bedews our blood; and the bread (also a part of the creation) He has established as His own body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus reasons, “When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which [flesh] is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him?” Irenaeus continues as he notes, “—even as the blessed Paul declares in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,” referring to Ephesians 5:30. Irenaeus then testifies, “He does not speak these words of some spiritual and invisible man, for a spirit has not bones nor flesh,” referring to Luke 24:39, “but [he refers to] that dispensation [by which the Lord became] an actual man, consisting of flesh, and nerves, and bones,—that [flesh] which is nourished by the cup which is His blood, and receives increase from the bread which is His body.” Irenaeus then reasons, “And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ; so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:53, “because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness,” referring to 2 Corinthians 12:3, “in order that we may never become puffed up, as if we had life from ourselves, and exalted against God, our minds becoming ungrateful;” Irenaeus then testifies as he encourages, “but learning by experience that we possess eternal duration from the excelling power of this Being, not from our own nature, we may neither undervalue that glory which surrounds God as He is, nor be ignorant of our own nature, but that we may know what God can effect, and what benefits man receives, and thus never wander from the true comprehension of things as they are, that is, both with regard to God and with regard to man.” Irenaeus then concludes as he asks, “And might it not be the case, perhaps, as I have already observed, that for this purpose God permitted our resolution into the common dust of mortality, that we, being instructed by every mode, may be accurate in all things for the future, being ignorant neither of God nor of ourselves?”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus rebukes the Gnostics as he says, “And vain likewise are those who say that God came to those things which did not belong to Him, as if covetous of another’s property; in order that He might deliver up that man who had been created by another, to that God who had neither made nor

formed anything, but who also was deprived from the beginning of His own proper formation of men.” He refers to the god behind God theory of the Gnostics. The god who actually did not form anything because he is no real god, was the god Bythus, the unknown God, who was thought to have existed before the God of the Old Testament, according to the Gnostics. The God of the Old Testament, also known as the Demiurge, was also supposed to be a fallen aeon from the Pleroma who formed the world out of existing materials. Jesus Christ supposedly came from the Pleroma, according to Gnostic belief, in order to save those who were created by the Demiurge, that is, the God of the Old Testament, who was thought to be imperfect. He therefore was not the Son of the God of the Old Testament, the Demiurge, according to Gnostic belief. Irenaeus then concludes from their beliefs that, “The advent, therefore, of Him whom these men represent as coming to the things of others,” that is, the advent of Jesus Christ who supposedly came to the things of the Demiurge, “was not righteous; nor did He truly redeem us by His own blood, if He did not really become man, restoring to His own handiwork what was said [of it] in the beginning, that man was made after the image and likeness of God; not snatching away by stratagem the property of another, but taking possession of His own in a righteous and gracious manner.” That is, Jesus Christ would not be righteous if he came “snatching away by stratagem the property of another.” And “if He did not really become man, restoring to His own handiwork what was said [of it] in the beginning, that man was made after the image and likeness of God,” then He did not “truly redeem us by His own blood,” Irenaeus reasons. Irenaeus’ logic is compelling as he deduces here that if the Demiurge was the God of the Old Testament, who was the one who was offended by Adam’s sin, then how could the Gnostics say that the Christ came from the Pleroma, since then he could not redeem mankind by His own blood because he was not related to the Demiurge. Irenaeus affirms rather that He took “possession of His own in a righteous and gracious manner.” Irenaeus then states that the truth is, “As far as concerned the apostasy,” which was all mankind in Irenaeus’ thinking, “indeed, He redeems us righteously from it by His own blood; but as regards us who have been redeemed, [He does this] graciously.” Irenaeus affirms His grace towards us as he says, “For we have given nothing to Him previously, nor does He desire anything from us, as if He stood in need of it; but we do stand in need of fellowship with Him.” Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, “And for this reason it was that He graciously poured Himself out, that He might gather us into the bosom of the Father.”

Irenaeus points out that if Jesus Christ were not really a man of flesh and blood, He could not redeem us who are flesh and blood, and are of this creation, that is, of the formation of the Demiurge.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues as he rebukes the Gnostics saying, “But vain in every respect are they who despise the entire dispensation of God, and disallow the salvation of the flesh, and treat with contempt its regeneration, maintaining that it is not capable of incorruption.” Irenaeus then concludes from this, “But if this indeed do not attain salvation, then neither did the Lord redeem us with His blood, nor is the cup of the Eucharist the communion of His blood, nor the bread which we break the communion of His body,” drawing from **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

The Eucharist meal is then a sham if it is not based on real things, that is, the real flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Irenaeus then points out, “For blood can only come from veins and flesh, and whatsoever else makes up the substance of man, such as the Word of God was actually made.” Irenaeus then testifies, “By His own blood he redeemed us, as also His apostle declares, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins,” referring in context to **Colossians 1 (KJV):13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Irenaeus continues his testimony as he reasons, “And as we are His members,” referring in context to **Ephesians 5 (NASB):28** So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

And Irenaeus continues, “we are also nourished by means of the creation (and He Himself grants the creation to us, for He causes His sun to rise, and sends rain when He wills,” making reference in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):44** But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that

hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Irenaeus concludes as he reasons, “He has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of the creation) as His own blood, from which He bedews our blood;” The Merriam-Webster online dictionary says the word “bedew” means “to wet with dew.” Synonyms are “moisten, damp, dampen.” Irenaeus continues as he says, “and the bread (also a part of the creation) He has established as His own body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.” Irenaeus seems to imply here that partaking of the Eucharist gives life to our blood.

Then in paragraph three, Irenaeus reasons, “When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which [flesh] is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him?” Irenaeus continues as he notes, “—even as the blessed Paul declares in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,” referring to **Ephesians 5 (NASB):30** because we are members of His body.

An alternate version of the verse reads **Ephesians 5 (KJV):30** For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

However, the **Nestle’s Greek New Testament** does not contain the words, “of His flesh, and of His bones,” as in the King James Version. Nevertheless, Irenaeus believed that, just as the bread and wine are the things from which the “substance of our flesh is increased and supported,” and which nourish our physical body of flesh and blood, so our bodies receive the “gift of God, which is eternal life,” when they are “nourished from the body and blood of the Lord,” and are members “of Him,” that is, are members of His body.

Irenaeus then testifies, “He does not speak these words of some spiritual and invisible man, for a spirit has not bones nor flesh,” referring to **Luke 24 (NASB):39** See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

And in **Luke 24 (KJV):39** Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

This is a rather strange remark by Irenaeus, since when we speak of being members of the body of Christ, we understand that we are not members of a physical body but a spiritual body composed of all who have faith individually in Him. However, given that the Scriptures he is reading from use the words “of his flesh, and of his bones,” as in the King James Version, we must understand it in the context in which he is writing. Irenaeus tries to explain as he continues and says, “but [he refers to] that dispensation [by which the Lord became] an actual man, consisting of flesh, and nerves, and bones,—that [flesh] which is nourished by the cup which is His blood, and receives increase from the bread which is His body.”

In other words, the body of the Lord Jesus was like our body, being “flesh, and nerves, and bones.” However, to say our flesh is “nourished by the cup which is His blood,” and “receives increase from the bread which is His body,” exceeds what is written in the Scriptures.

To unpack his meaning, let us read further as Irenaeus then reasons, “And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ;”

It is true that God has so composed the plant life on earth to reproduce by falling into the earth and decomposing and then rising “with manifold increase by the Spirit of God,” and then to serve as food “for the use of men.” However, Irenaeus then exceeds what is written in the Scriptures when he says that the elements, the bread and the wine, “having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ.” With these words, Irenaeus indicates a change in the elements from simply earthly to earthly and heavenly, which is a continuation of his thinking in the previous section, in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the

resurrection to eternity."

What Jesus actually said is recorded in **Matthew 26 (KJV):26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Jesus did not acknowledge any change in the elements of bread and wine from earthly to heavenly. Instead, his words in verse 29 referred to "this fruit of the vine," and He says that He will drink this fruit of the vine new again with us in His Father's kingdom. He is referring to the time when we will be united with Him again at His second coming.

Irenaeus continues as he says, "so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption," referring to Paul's discussion of the resurrection which he begins in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):35** But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? 36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

Paul explains that there is a difference between the body that inhabits earth and the body that will inhabit the heavens as he says in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):38** But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

Paul is speaking about the resurrection and what type of body it will be that is raised. And when we are resurrected, our body will be like the body of Jesus, that is, a heavenly body as he says in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):42** So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Paul explains that our earthly body is perishable, that is, it is mortal and doomed to die. But the body that will be raised will be imperishable and live forever as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Irenaeus continues as he says, "because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness, referring in context to **2 Corinthians 12 (NASB):9** And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Irenaeus asserts that God did it this way "in order that we may never become puffed up, as if we had life from ourselves, and exalted against God, our minds becoming ungrateful; but learning by experience that we possess eternal duration from the excelling power of this Being, not from our own nature, we may neither undervalue that glory which surrounds God as He is, nor be ignorant of our own nature, but that we may know what God can effect, and what benefits man receives, and thus never wander from the true comprehension of things as they are, that is, both with regard to God and with regard to man."

And Irenaeus conjectures, "And might it not be the case, perhaps, as I have already observed, that for this purpose God permitted our resolution into the common dust of mortality, that we, being instructed by every

mode, may be accurate in all things for the future, being ignorant neither of God nor of ourselves?" To this I believe Scripture speaks plainly that the reason for death was sin as Paul concludes in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter II

Irenaeus seems to have three agendas in his writing here.

- 1) The first was to destroy the Gnostic argument that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh.
- 2) The second was to destroy the Gnostic argument that the flesh could not be raised in a resurrection.
- 3) The third was to uphold the teaching of the Church of his day.

The Lord Jesus did become "an actual man, consisting of flesh, and nerves, and bones," just as Irenaeus says. However, he seems to want to prove that the resurrection is true because of the invocation of the word of God on the bread and the wine which he believes makes the Eucharist spiritual nourishment that gives the eternal life of Christ to our bodies since we are members of His body. However, Paul does not make his argument in this way. When Paul argues for the resurrection, he explains what is of first importance as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):3** For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

Believing the Gospel is what saves as John reveals in **1 John 5 (KJV):1** Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

John explains further that the one who has faith in Jesus Christ overcomes the world as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):4** For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

John goes on to say that the one who has the Son has eternal life as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):9** If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

John tells us the reason he is writing in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We do not receive eternal life by ingesting the bread and wine of the Communion or Eucharist meal. We already have eternal life because of our faith in Jesus Christ. We do not sustain the eternal life, which we have by faith in Him, by partaking of the Eucharist. When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit. It is not a gradual thing or something we have to work up to, to be good enough to do. The moment we believe, we are saved. And that saving faith is the gift of God as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

This is what happened to Lydia in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. **15** And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

The Lord opens our hearts to believe. We may not know that this has happened until we receive teaching in the word of God. But our salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit from start to finish. Irenaeus confuses the work of the Spirit of God with the ritual practice of the Eucharist by implying that we are saved by ingesting the bread and wine into our physical bodies as if that is what gave our bodies eternal life and the hope of the resurrection. Irenaeus compares the “cutting from the vine planted in the ground” and the “corn of wheat falling into the earth,” both rising in their season “with manifold increase by the Spirit of God,” to “our bodies, being nourished by” the “Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ.” At death, he says that our bodies, after being “deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption.”

However, Paul is telling us what type of body will be raised by the analogy of the seed falling into the ground, and changing into the body of a beautiful plant. Irenaeus makes the Eucharist a kind of seed with eternal life in it. His goals, or agendas, are good and worthy. However, his argument takes the Scriptures slightly out of context. We must do as Paul encouraged Timothy in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):16** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Again we will summarize Irenaeus’ thinking about the Eucharist at the end of this section and also provide a final commentary.

## Fragment XIII.

For 4816 “This extract is found in *Œcumениus upon 1 Pet. c. iii. p. 198*; and the words used by him indicate, as Grabe has justly observed, that he only condensed a longer passage.”—Harvey.  
when the Greeks, having arrested the slaves of Christian catechumens, then used force against them, in order to learn from them some secret thing [practised] among Christians, these slaves, having nothing to say that would meet the wishes of their tormentors, except that they had heard from their masters that the divine communion was the body and blood of Christ, and imagining that it was actually flesh and blood, gave their inquisitors answer to that effect. Then these latter, assuming such to be the case with regard to the practices of Christians, gave information regarding it to other Greeks, and sought to compel the martyrs Sanctus and Blandina to confess, under the influence of torture, [that the allegation was correct]. To these men Blandina replied very admirably in these words: “How should those persons endure such [accusations], who, for the sake of the practice [of piety], did not avail themselves even of the flesh that was permitted [them to eat]?”

**Summary:** In this fragment Irenaeus is believed to say that the Greeks had captured some “slaves of Christian catechumens,” and then tortured them to learn something they could use against them. The slaves could only say that “they had heard from their masters that the divine communion was the body and blood of Christ, and imagining that it was actually flesh and blood, gave their inquisitors answer to that effect.” The inquisitors tried to “compel the martyrs Sanctus and Blandina to confess, under the influence of torture, [that the allegation was correct],” which they refused to do.

**Commentary:** By this fragment we understand that “the divine communion” was not literal flesh and blood but only spiritually so in Irenaeus’ thinking. We saw this also in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies,

when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” The earthly reality is the bread and wine which do not change outwardly. The heavenly reality is the change of the bread and wine by the invocation into the body and blood of Christ, spiritually speaking.

## Fragment XXXVII.

Those who have become acquainted with the secondary (i.e., under Christ) constitutions of the apostles, 4868 ταῖς δευτέραις τῶν ἀποστόλων διατάξεσι. Harvey thinks that these words imply, “the formal constitution, which the apostles, acting under the impulse of the Spirit, though still in a secondary capacity, gave to the Church.” are aware that the Lord instituted a new oblation in the new covenant, according to [the declaration of] Malachi the prophet. For, “from the rising of the sun even to the setting my name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice,” 4869 *Mal. i. 11.* as John also declares in the Apocalypse: “The incense is the prayers of the saints.” 4870 *Rev. v. 8.* The same view of the eucharistic oblation, etc., is found in book iv. chap. xvii.: as also in Justin Martyr; see *Trypho*, cap. xli. *supra* in this volume. Then again, Paul exhorts us “to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” 4871 *Rom. xii. 1.* And again, “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of the lips.” 4872 *Heb. xiii. 15.* Now those oblations are not according to the law, the handwriting of which the Lord took away from the midst by cancelling it; 4873 *Col. ii. 14.* but they are according to the Spirit, for we must worship God “in spirit and in truth.” 4874 *John iv. 24.* And therefore the oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but a spiritual; and in this respect it is pure. For we make an oblation to God of the bread and the cup of blessing, giving Him thanks in that He has commanded the earth to bring forth these fruits for our nourishment. And then, when we have perfected the oblation, we invoke the Holy Spirit, that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes 4875 Harvey explains this word ἀντίτύπων as meaning an “exact counterpart.” He refers to the word where it occurs in *Contra Hæreses*, lib. i. chap. xxiv. (p. 349, this vol.) as confirmatory of his view. may obtain remission of sins and life eternal. Those persons, then, who perform these oblations in remembrance of the Lord, do not fall in with Jewish views, but, performing the service after a spiritual manner, they shall be called sons of wisdom.

**Summary:** Irenaeus records, “Those who have become acquainted with the secondary (i.e., under Christ) constitutions of the apostles, are aware that the Lord instituted a new oblation in the new covenant, according to [the declaration of] Malachi the prophet.” Irenaeus then states this declaration as he says, “For, “from the rising of the sun even to the setting my name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice,” referring to Malachi 1:11. Irenaeus then testifies, “as John also declares in the Apocalypse: “The incense is the prayers of the saints,” referring to Revelation 5:8. Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “Then again, Paul exhorts us “to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service,” referring to Romans 12:1. Irenaeus continues as he adds, “And again, “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of the lips,” referring to Hebrews 13:15. Irenaeus then testifies, “Now those oblations are not according to the law, the handwriting of which the Lord took away from the midst by cancelling it,” referring to Colossians 2:14, “but they are according to the Spirit, for we must worship God “in spirit and in truth,” referring to John 4:24. Irenaeus thus concludes, “And therefore the oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but a spiritual; and in this respect it is pure.” Irenaeus then describes the oblation of the Eucharist, calling it a sacrifice, as he says, “For we make an oblation to God of the bread and the cup of blessing, giving Him thanks in that He has commanded the earth to bring forth these fruits for our nourishment. And then, when we have perfected the oblation, we invoke the Holy Spirit, that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal.” Irenaeus then concludes, “Those persons, then, who perform these oblations in remembrance of the Lord, do not fall in with Jewish views, but,

performing the service after a spiritual manner, they shall be called sons of wisdom."

**Commentary:** With the words, "Those who have become acquainted with the secondary (i.e., under Christ) constitutions of the apostles, are aware that the Lord instituted a new oblation in the new covenant, according to [the declaration of] Malachi the prophet," Irenaeus is referring to a tradition that started very early in the Church. That tradition is that the prophecy of Malachi concerns the "new oblation in the new covenant." Irenaeus then states this declaration as he says, "For, "from the rising of the sun even to the setting my name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice," referring to **Malachi 1 (KJV):11** For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

Irenaeus interprets this passage in Malachi to be referring to the new oblation in the new covenant because it refers to the offering of incense and a pure sacrifice in every place by the Gentiles.

Irenaeus then equates this passage in Malachi with the words of the apostle John as he testifies, "as John also declares in the Apocalypse: "The incense is the prayers of the saints," referring to **Revelation 5 (KJV):8** And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, "Then again, Paul exhorts us "to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," referring to **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Irenaeus continues as he adds, "And again, "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of the lips," referring to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):15** By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Irenaeus then testifies, "Now those oblations not according to the law, the handwriting of which the Lord took away from the midst by cancelling it," referring to **Colossians 2 (KJV):14** Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Irenaeus continues as he explains, "but they are according to the Spirit, for we must worship God "in spirit and in truth," referring to **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Irenaeus thus concludes, "And therefore the oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but a spiritual; and in this respect it is pure." Irenaeus then describes the oblation of the Eucharist, calling it a sacrifice, as he says, "For we make an oblation to God of the bread and the cup of blessing, giving Him thanks in that He has commanded the earth to bring forth these fruits for our nourishment. And then, when we have perfected the oblation, we invoke the Holy Spirit, that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal." Irenaeus then concludes, "Those persons, then, who perform these oblations in remembrance of the Lord, do not fall in with Jewish views, but, performing the service after a spiritual manner, they shall be called sons of wisdom."

Irenaeus here calls the bread and the wine the "antitypes" of the body and blood of Christ, and connects the receiving of these antitypes with obtaining "remission of sins and life eternal." It is quite evident that Irenaeus believed a change had occurred when the Holy Spirit had been "invoked," and that the elements were no longer just bread and wine, but were now the antitypes of the actual body and blood of Christ in some sort of spiritual manner.

And we note that Irenaeus asserts that his views are not at all to be mixed up with the Old Covenant views of the Jews. Rather, he asserts that, under the New Covenant, these are the new spiritual sacrifices to be offered to obtain acceptance with God, that is, remission of sins and life eternal.

This fragment is important in that it summarizes very succinctly what Irenaeus believed about Communion, that is, the Eucharist. He says that “the oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but a spiritual.” And all the sacrifices of the New Testament are said to be spiritual sacrifices “not according to the law” but “according to the Spirit.” In the Eucharist oblation he says that the Holy Spirit is invoked “in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal.” Lastly, these oblations are performed “in remembrance of the Lord.”

## Commentary Summary: Communion

If we were to summarize Irenaeus’ thoughts on Communion, or the Eucharist as he called it, we could list the following points:

1. Irenaeus believed that sacrifice was secondary to obeying the voice of the Lord as we read in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 1.** where he says, ‘For when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God, and imagining that God was to be propitiated by sacrifices and the other typical observances, Samuel did even thus speak to them: “God does not desire whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but He will have His voice to be hearkened to. Behold, a ready obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” He is referring to **1 Samuel 15 (KJV):22** And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. In addition, Irenaeus quotes David whose ears the Lord opened to hear His voice as in **Psalm 40 (KJV):6** Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

**Comment:** Yes, obeying the voice of the Lord is primary. When God says to do sacrifice, as He did by the law, then we sacrifice accordingly, in obedience to His voice. But His delight is in a ready obedience as Irenaeus says.

2. Irenaeus quotes the Psalms in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 1,** to show that the Lord was not pleased with a sacrifice alone, but with a broken and contrite heart as he quotes **Psalm 51 (KJV):16** For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

**Comment:** Yes, God does delight in a broken spirit and a contrite heart. But again, He does not require sacrifice for sin from us anymore. We will see why this is so after these points.

3. Irenaeus believed that the sacrifice alone did not justify a man or woman, nor did it bring him or her nigh to God. A sacrifice must be offered purely, without sin in the heart of the one who offers it, for it to propitiate God and be accepted by Him and thus justify the one who offers it as we read in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 1,** where he says, “Then, lest it might be supposed that He refused these things in His anger, He continues, giving him (man) counsel: “Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me;” rejecting, indeed, those things by which sinners imagined they could propitiate God, and showing that He does Himself stand in need of nothing; but He exhorts and advises them to those things by which man is justified and draws nigh to God.” He is referring to **Psalm 50 (KJV):14** Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: 15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

**Comment:** Irenaeus does not understand that our sacrifices don’t justify us at all, either under the Old Covenant, or under the New Covenant. They only remind us of the one sacrifice Christ made on the

cross, which is the only sacrifice that can justify us. And the Scriptures say that we are justified when we place our faith in His sacrifice as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

4. Again Irenaeus believed that what pertained to salvation were acts of compassion done from a sinless life as he says in the same paragraph, **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 1**, “And when He had repudiated holocausts, and sacrifices, and oblations, as likewise the new moons, and the sabbaths, and the festivals, and all the rest of the services accompanying these, He continues, exhorting them to what pertained to salvation: “Wash you, make you clean, take away wickedness from your hearts from before mine eyes: cease from your evil ways, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord.”

**Comment:** Irenaeus does not see that there is no more need for a sacrifice for sin. Under the law, the sacrifices pointed to the need for an atonement, but they did not actually atone for anything. They only covered sins. The purpose of the law was to make us aware of sin, and the need for an atonement that would not just cover sin but take it away. Our focus must be on Christ and what He has done for us. We cannot atone for anything.

5. Then Irenaeus also believed that only by true sacrifices was God appeased, and by offering them, He gave them life as a consequence as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 2**, “For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. As He elsewhere declares: “The sacrifice to God is an afflicted heart: a sweet savour to God is a heart glorifying Him who formed it.”

**Comment:** We don't appease God with our sacrifices, no matter how pure. There is nothing we can do to fix our sin problem except to receive what Christ has done for us. We receive life when we accept His sacrifice for sin for us which, again, was once and for all time.

6. Irenaeus called the Eucharist the “new oblation of the new covenant” which the Church received from the apostles as we read in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “Again, giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own, created things—not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful—He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, “This is My body.” And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand.” Irenaeus is referring to the prophecy in Malachi that says that a pure sacrifice would be offered by the Gentiles as in **Malachi 1 (KJV):11** “For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice for great is My name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Omnipotent.”

Irenaeus believed that the Eucharist fulfilled this prophecy.

**Comment:** We note that Irenaeus was not the first to refer to this passage in Malachi as we shall soon see.

7. Irenaeus believed that there were sacrifices to be made by the people under the first covenant and so in the Church there are sacrifices. The class of oblations has not changed. Only the type or species of

sacrifice has changed as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 2**, “And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen.”

**Comment:** The class of oblations most certainly has changed. God does not require sacrifices for sin from us anymore because He has provided the one sacrifice for us that was for all time.

8. Irenaeus believed that the one offering a sacrifice with a pure conscience cleansed or sanctified the offering and moved God to accept his sacrifice as we read in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 3**, where he says, “Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as from a friend.”

**Comment:** We are not saved by sanctifying ourselves, whether by making sacrifice with a pure conscience or making a sacrifice at all. We are saved by faith in Christ’s one sacrifice which sanctifies us, and is final as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

We cannot add to what God has already done for us through Christ, His Son.

9. Irenaeus believed that the Church alone offered a pure oblation or sacrifice as opposed to any other group such as the Jews or the heretics as we read in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 4**, where he says, “Inasmuch, then, as the Church offers with single-mindedness, her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God. As Paul also says to the Philippians, “I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things that were sent from you, the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, pleasing to God.” For it behoves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things. And the Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks, [the things taken] from His creation. But the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, through whom it is offered to God.”

**Comment:** Inasmuch as we are members of His body, we can offer up spiritual sacrifices that are pleasing to God because of our faith in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. These sacrifices do not atone for sin. We do not rely on our own purity to be acceptable to God, but upon His sacrifice that makes us holy. These sacrifices are only our reasonable service because of His mercy.

10. Irenaeus states that it is the invocation of God which changes the bread and wine into a heavenly reality as we read in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”

**Comment:** Irenaeus seems to believe that it is by receiving the Eucharist that we receive eternal life. Partaking of the Eucharist is only an evidence of our faith. It does not save us or give us eternal life or remission of sins. The Eucharist is only a remembrance of what we could not do for ourselves, but what God has done for us through Jesus.

11. Irenaeus believed that receiving the Eucharist gives us spiritual life, again referring to **Book 4: Chapter**

**XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “...so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” And also in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 2**, “For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. And in **Fragment XXXVII**, where he says, “And then, when we have perfected the oblation, we invoke the Holy Spirit, that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal.”

**Comment:** If this were true, what would be the purpose of the new birth? It is the Spirit that gives us life. The flesh profits nothing. Once we are born again, we have eternal life. We are born again when we believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we confess Him as our Lord.

12. Irenaeus believed that the Eucharist should be offered frequently and without intermission as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 6**, “As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [services], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission.

**Comment:** This statement can only lead the Church into legalism and ritualistic practices. Jesus only said to do this in remembrance of Him. He did not specify when this should happen, or how often.

13. Irenaeus believed that the wine and bread becomes the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, when they receive the word of God as we read in **Book 5 Chapter II, paragraph 3**, where he says “When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made....” And again in the same paragraph he states that the Eucharist is “the body and blood of Christ” when he says, “And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ.”

**Comment:** The bread and the wine do not become the body and blood of Christ at the invocation of the Holy Spirit, or when they receive the word of God, or at any other time. The bread and wine also do not take on a spiritual reality at the invocation of the Holy Spirit, or when they receive the word of God. Jesus Christ offered His body and blood as a sacrifice for our sins once and for all. There is no need to repeat this sacrifice. His was a perfect sacrifice as Peter says in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):17** And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: **18** Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; **19** But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: **20** Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, **21** Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

The lamb was unblemished and spotless, that is, without sin. His was a perfect sacrifice.

14. Irenaeus believed that the oblation of the Eucharist was not a carnal one but spiritual as we read in **Fragment XXXVII** where he says, “And therefore the oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but

a spiritual; and in this respect it is pure.” By spiritual and not carnal Irenaeus meant that the Eucharist is not a sacrifice of an animal with blood dripping from the altar. It is a sacrifice according to the Spirit for we worship God in Spirit and in truth as in **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Much like the living sacrifice of our bodies and the sacrifice of the praise of our lips that we are to offer, Irenaeus believes the Eucharist is a sacrifice of this genre, that is, a spiritual sacrifice.

**Comment:** Irenaeus did also acknowledge in **Fragment XXXVII** that there were other sacrifices under the new covenant such as the incense of the prayers of the saints as in **Revelation 5 (KJV):8** And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

He also refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And **Hebrews 13 (KJV):15** By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

But he did so only to support his contention that the Eucharist was such a sacrifice, that is, an example of worship in spirit and in truth.

In summary, Irenaeus believed that God does not need our sacrifices but enjoined the observance of them for man’s sake. Man must have the opportunity to be fruitful and grateful to God. Also, sacrifice is secondary to obeying the voice of the Lord. And sacrifices when they are made must be done with a broken heart and a contrite spirit to please the Lord. A pure conscience and a clean heart is required for the offering to be sanctified and thus for God to accept the offering. And obedience in the matters of relieving the oppressed, and caring for the fatherless and the widow is also required for God to be propitiated and appeased and the offerer to be justified and able to draw nigh to God, according to Irenaeus.

With this understanding about sacrifice, Irenaeus prepares us for his belief that the Church has received from the apostles the new oblation, “For it behoves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things,” as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 4**. The Eucharist meal was then a fulfillment of the prophecy in Malachi 1:11. Therefore, he says, it is the “new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world,” in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 5**. Irenaeus speaks of the Eucharist meal as a sacrifice on this basis. And he says it is a sacrifice of the same class as those in the Old Testament, though not of the same species. The only difference, he says, is that the Eucharist is offered by freemen as opposed to those who offered under the law in the Old Testament. The elements of this new oblation are the bread and the wine which, when the invocation of the word of God is made, become the body and blood of Christ, according to Irenaeus. The bread is therefore no longer common bread but consists “of two realities, earthly and heavenly.” Since then the bread and wine consist of a heavenly reality in the Eucharist, they are the “means of subsistence” of our bodies which are then incorruptible “when they receive the Eucharist.” Irenaeus believed that the “flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood,” partakes of life and has “the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” Irenaeus says also that the oblations of the New Testament “are not according to the law, the handwriting of which the Lord took away from the midst by cancelling it,” as he quotes from **Colossians 2 (KJV):13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

The oblations of the New Testament are spiritual sacrifices and not carnal ones according to Irenaeus. Therefore nothing is physically killed in sacrifice. Irenaeus taught that those who receive the Eucharist receive eternal life and remission of sins. This is in accordance with his thinking about sacrifice which he believes the

Eucharist meal to be. When it is offered with a clean heart and purely, the offering, or oblation or sacrifice, of the Eucharist justifies the one who receives it. This is the gist of Irenaeus' teaching on the Eucharist.

There is some justification for Irenaeus' thinking that the Eucharist meal is a sacrifice for Malachi 1:11 does mention the word Gentiles and the word sacrifice together. The other less obvious reason, which Irenaeus does not mention, is that it mentions the table of the Lord as we read in **Malachi 1 (KJV):6** A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. 10 Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

It is particularly the last verse that caught Irenaeus' attention, and not only the attention of Irenaeus but Justin Martyr, who lived between 110 and 165 AD and wrote before Irenaeus. Here is Justin's forty-first chapter in his book, **Dialogue with Trypho**.

#### **Chapter XLI.—The oblation of fine flour was a figure of the Eucharist.**

"And the offering of fine flour, sirs," I said, "which was prescribed to be presented on behalf of those purified from leprosy, was a type of the bread of the Eucharist, the celebration of which our Lord Jesus Christ prescribed, in remembrance of the suffering which He endured on behalf of those who are purified in soul from all iniquity, in order that we may at the same time thank God for having created the world, with all things therein, for the sake of man, and for delivering us from the evil in which we were, and for utterly overthrowing **2058** Literally, "overthrowing with a perfect overthrow." principalities and powers by Him who suffered according to His will. Hence God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve [prophets], as I said before, **2059 Chap. xviii.** about the sacrifices at that time presented by you: 'I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord; and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands: for, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, My name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure offering: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord: but ye profane it.' **2060 Mal. i.**

**10–12.** [So] He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, i.e., the bread of the Eucharist, and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify His name, and that you profane [it]. The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first **2061** Or, "being the first." of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all the days of the cycle, and [yet] remains the first.

So we see then that this belief that the Eucharist was a sacrifice did not start with Irenaeus. Now, in Malachi's prophecy the Jews, that is Israel, are being rebuked for profaning the table of the Lord. At that time, the altar, also called the table of the Lord, was where sacrifices and offerings were offered. Irenaeus, and Justin, saw this prophecy's fulfillment in the Church. The expression, "the table of the Lord," is also found in the New Testament and it is in reference to the Eucharist meal as we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):14** Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one

bread. 18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Irenaeus mentions the word altar in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 1**. Irenaeus begins this paragraph by writing, “The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him.” Irenaeus then states, “For by the gift both honour and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: “Therefore, when thou offerest thy gift upon the altar, and shalt remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then return and offer thy gift,” referring to Matthew 5:23-24. Irenaeus reflects on the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:23-24 as if they were direct instructions from Him about how to offer the Eucharist meal, or rather as he says, the “sacrifice” of the Eucharist. Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):23** Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Jesus was speaking to the Jews who lived under the law as He Himself did. He is simply teaching us that reconciliation with our brother was necessary in order for any sacrifices and offerings to be accepted by God. In other words, if we are to have fellowship with our Heavenly Father, we must first be reconciled to our brother. Jesus did not mention the Eucharist here, and He is addressing Jews who were still under the Old Covenant. The Jews in Jesus' time had a temple as well as an altar. Jesus does not ask us to build a temple and an altar again. We are now to present ourselves as a temple where we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice.

Irenaeus and Justin seem to have connected these two passages, Malachi 1:1-11 and 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, and concluded that there is one table of the Lord and one altar, and so the idea of sacrifice became fundamental in Irenaeus' thinking about the Eucharist meal.

Also, Irenaeus says that we must have something to offer so that we might be “neither unfruitful nor ungrateful.” This is the basis of his statement in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 5**, where he says that Jesus “taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world.” This is the crux of his teaching on the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a new oblation, that is, a new offering fulfilling the requirement that we not come empty handed but have something to offer to the Lord. According to Irenaeus, our offering is different from the Old Testament offerings only in that free men perform it, while those under the law were slaves to the law. And in Irenaeus' teaching, the Eucharist meal is a spiritual sacrifice, and thus a pure sacrifice, offered by the Church through Jesus Christ to God. We might well ask what else could the offering of the body and blood of Jesus Christ be but a pure sacrifice?

The Scriptures do say that the Church is composed of living stones which are all who believe in Jesus Christ. We are said to be a spiritual house for a royal priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices as we read in **1 Peter 2 (NASB):5** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Peter notes that Jesus Christ is the precious corner stone of this spiritual house, and that we believers are a royal priesthood who offer up spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What these spiritual sacrifices are, Peter does not say, but we know from the other Scriptures in the New Testament previously mentioned that they include the offering of our bodies as a living sacrifice, the sacrifice of praise which is the fruit of our lips, doing good and sharing with others, and our prayers as in Romans 12:1,2, Hebrews 13:15,16, and Revelation 5:8. However, the Eucharist meal is never spoken of as a sacrifice, or an offering, or a new oblation in the New Testament. The offering of our bodies as a living sacrifice as Paul exhorts in Romans 12:1,2, could just as easily by itself fit the prophecy in Malachi 1:11. The way Irenaeus speaks of the Eucharist meal, Jesus is being sacrificed all over again every time it is celebrated, albeit in a spiritual sense. And we are being born again, and justified from our sins every time we receive it, according to Irenaeus' teaching. The

bread is “no longer common bread” but has a heavenly reality after the invocation and the Eucharist is made, presumably by the words “This is my body,” as Jesus spoke in Matthew 26:26. The bread and wine become the Eucharist, which is “the body and blood of Christ,” Irenaeus says. And so, according to Irenaeus, we offer the sacrifice of Jesus’ body and blood to the Father in purity of heart and conscience, and the Father accepts our offering and gives us eternal life and remission of sins every time we remember Him in this way. And he says that this offering must be done in the Church for the Church alone offers a pure offering through Jesus Christ to God in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 4**. So Irenaeus believed.

The New Testament teaches us that the Eucharist or Communion meal is not a sacrifice, but a remembrance of the greatest sacrifice of all time which Jesus Christ offered upon the cross for our sins. That this was a once for all sacrifice is stated by the writer of Hebrews in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):26** For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

He has now accomplished eternal redemption for us once for all as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):11** But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Jesus only suffered once for our sins as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

God does desire us to worship Him in Spirit and in truth just as Irenaeus testifies, referring to the apostle John in John 4:23. And as Irenaeus also said above, “God did not seek sacrifices and holocausts from them, but faith, and obedience, and righteousness, because of their salvation,” so also He does not now seek offerings or sacrifices from us for sin for He has already offered His own body once and for all as read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):8** Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

We see by this Scripture that the class of oblations has indeed changed under the New Covenant. Jesus paid it all. Our redemption has been paid for by the only sacrifice that could accomplish our redemption. There is no work that we could do that would be good enough to do what Jesus already did for us. He died for our sins once and for all. Irenaeus only refers to the book of Hebrews about six times in all his writings, and none of the references relate to this subject. The case that is made in Hebrews is that God does not require any more offerings or sacrifices for sin. Our debt of sin has been paid. We now owe Him a debt of love. This will require sacrifice on our part. But our sacrifices do not pay any of our debt of sin. That has been paid by Jesus in full once and for all. Our sacrifices only remember, honor, and thank Him for what He did for us. And the Greek word εὐχαριστέω, pronounced eucharisteo, itself means to be grateful, feel thankful, or give thanks.

The fact is that the class of oblations in general has most certainly been set aside, for Jesus has fulfilled the law of sacrifice for sin forever. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a sacrifice that we could offer, or a work that we could do, that could atone for even one sin. That is why Jesus came. He did what we could not do for ourselves as it clearly says in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):11** And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with

them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

And so there is no more offering for sins under the New Covenant. Jesus is now sitting down at the right hand of God waiting for His enemies to be made a footstool for His feet. He is not suffering any more, or being sacrificed again and again. The Old Testament sacrifices looked forward to what God would do when Jesus came. We now look back at what He has done for us. There is no longer any offering for sin.

So God has changed the method of dealing with sin. We are no longer to offer sacrifice to be cleansed of our sin, or for remission of sins, or to be justified as they were to do under the law. Now in the Church age we who have believed in Jesus Christ are already justified and have peace with God as we read in **Romans**

**5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It is through Him that we are justified when we believe as we read in **Acts 13 (KJV):38** Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Our justification has to do with our standing before God. It is in this sense also that we are sanctified as we see in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):11** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Jesus Christ's death on the cross was the true sacrifice for all time. Jesus dealt with sin as an issue. The remedy for sin is His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. The one who believes this has crossed over from death to life as Jesus said in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Partaking of the Eucharist does not do this for us. We partake of the Eucharist in order to celebrate what has already been done for us. Once we believe in Jesus Christ, we who were dead in sin are now born again and become children of God as John reveals in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The fact that, after we believe, we are now children of God is also pointed out by John again in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

It does not yet appear what we shall be. We are not perfect yet, and we still have the old Adamic nature in our flesh like our father Adam. But after we accept Christ and we are born again, we are born of the Spirit and have a new nature in our spirit that is sinless. In our flesh we still have the old Adamic nature but in our spirits when we are born again, we are created in righteousness and true holiness as we read again in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):20** But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This is why we can say with Paul that we are a new creature in Christ as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Since we are a new creature in Christ, and since He has already offered the one and only sacrifice that is necessary for sin, we do not need to deal with our sin by offering up bulls and goats to gain acceptance with God. We simply confess our sins, on the basis of His shed blood, and as we do so He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus Christ the righteous, who is our advocate with the Father, is always there to make intercession for us as we see in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: **2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Notice John wrote to the children of God, as he says, my little children. We, as children of God, possess a new nature as we see in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Though we have escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust in our spirits, we still are in possession of the old Adamic nature in our flesh, and we still may sin. This is why we are told to put off the old man, and put on the new man as we saw previously in Ephesians 4:20-24. The way we put off the old man is to confess our sins. Then the Lord is faithful to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In this way, He empowers us to live the new life He has placed inside us.

Irenaeus does not seem to know where to put this new life that God has given us when we have faith in His Son. He did not understand that we have a spirit of our own, as well as a soul, and that it was our spirit that was dead in sin and needed rebirth to have fellowship with God. Irenaeus seemed to think that man is only body and soul, and that therefore the Holy Spirit was born in us when we believed, and could leave us if we lieved frivolously.

Jesus was teaching Jews who were under the law, and therefore told them to be obedient to God and keep the law. He had not died for sin yet, and so, while He was on earth, nothing had changed in regards to keeping the law. Everyone was still under the Old Covenant. But all of that was done away with after Jesus died on the cross. Jesus' priesthood is permanent as the writer of Hebrews tells us in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):23** And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: **24** But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. **25** Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

As to Irenaeus' assertion that, when the bread and wine receive the word of God, they become the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, he is surely basing this claim on two passages in the Scriptures, though I cannot find reference to them in his writings. Nevertheless, the first passage is in chapter 6 of the Gospel of John. In this chapter, Jesus has just fed about 5000 men, not counting women and children, with five barley loaves and two fish. As Jesus perceives they are going to come and take Him by force and make Him King, He withdraws to a mountain alone. At evening the disciples got into a boat and left for Capernum. Jesus then walks on the water to where their boat was being held by a strong wind. He enters the boat and they arrive safely at the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The people who had eaten of His feast of barley loaves and fish came looking for Him wanting more loaves and fish. So Jesus speaks to them as we begin reading in **John 6 (KJV):26** Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. **27** Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

In response to their question what they should do, Jesus tells them that the work of God is to believe in Him whom He has sent in **John 6 (NASB):28** Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? **29** Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

The people then wanted a sign while totally missing the greatness of the miracle Jesus had just performed in feeding over 5000 men, women, and children. They wanted the manna from heaven like Moses gave their forefathers. But Jesus points them to the Father as the one who gave them the manna and who also gives the true bread from heaven for the life of the world. The people want this bread and are now panting for it. So Jesus tells them the way to get this bread. They must believe in Him, and they will have eternal life. Jesus tells them plainly that He is the bread of life as we read in **John 6 (KJV):48** I am that bread of life. **49** Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. **50** This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. **51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat

of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The people don't understand that Jesus worked a miracle in front of over 5000 people by the Holy Spirit. So Jesus slaps them in the face to wake them up. He tells them that He is the bread of heaven, and that it is His flesh which is the bread they must eat. The Jews grumble at this, but Jesus slaps them again as we read in **John 6 (KJV):52** The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? **53** Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. **54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. **55** For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. **56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. **57** As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. **58** This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

The Jews who did not believe did not get it. They didn't want Spirit. They wanted flesh. So Jesus gave them what they wanted. And many of them choked on this statement, and no longer followed Him. But Jesus explained everything to His disciples as we read in **John 6 (KJV):60** Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? **61** When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? **62** What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? **63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. **64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. **65** And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Jesus explained that His words were spirit and life, and that the flesh profits nothing. In other words, it's not about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, but about receiving the Spirit and life. Peter understood this as he says in **John 6 (KJV):66** From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. **67** Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? **68** Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. **69** And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. **70** Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? **71** He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

It was Jesus' words that struck Peter. He heard the Spirit, and he knew Jesus was talking about life. And not just any old life, but eternal life. What does it take to get people's attention? Even one of the twelve was a devil. So Jesus was using figurative language of the kind used in His parables to get people's attention. But it is true that His body was given as a sacrifice for the sin of the world as Isaiah prophesied over six hundred years before in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? **2** For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. **3** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. **4** Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. **5** But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. **6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. **7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. **8** He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. **9** And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. **10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. **11** He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. **12** Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The other passage that Irenaeus could be referring to in his writing is **1 Corinthians 11 (NASB):27**  
Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body  
and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.  
29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the  
Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge  
ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should  
not be condemned with the world.

The words “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” must have struck Irenaeus with a more literal  
meaning. Paul had just finished giving us what he received from the Lord. That is, the instructions about the  
Eucharist meal as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):23** For I have received of the Lord that which also I  
delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he  
had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in  
remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the  
new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this  
bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this  
bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a  
man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh  
unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Who then is the one who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, but the one  
who has unconfessed sin in his or her life, and is pretending to be in fellowship with the Lord. When we flaunt  
our sin in this way, we do not judge rightly the cost of our redemption which is the body and blood of Christ.  
And we place other members of the body of Christ in jeopardy of becoming entangled with our sin. This is why  
the judgment may be so severe resulting in sickness and sometimes in death for the one who was guilty of this  
as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):30** For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.  
31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of  
the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

We are to examine ourselves, and confess our sins to the Lord before we eat the Lord's Supper. This  
examination is like the washing of our feet that Jesus referred to in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He  
that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

We are washed when we believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confess Him as  
Lord. After this step of faith, we only need to wash our feet and we are clean. That is, we do not need to take a  
bath all over again. This is what Jesus was saying.

As to Irenaeus' assertion in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, that the bread is no longer common  
bread, but it now has both earthly and heavenly qualities when it becomes the Eucharist by the invocation of  
God, the idea here is that the Eucharist now contains spiritual life which is imparted to the receiver. And we  
note that Irenaeus uses the word “invocation” which refers to the pronouncement that “this is My body” and  
“this cup is the new covenant in My blood.” Irenaeus describes this process as like the change in a seed planted  
in the ground, and that, when it has “decomposed,” it then “rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God.”  
So also then the bread and the wine are like the seed, that, when these elements receive the word of God, they  
become “the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ,” by the Spirit of God. And so we are led to  
believe that the Eucharist gives us spiritual life when we receive it. Irenaeus believed that the Eucharist gave  
spiritual life to our mortal bodies, and therefore made it possible for us to be resurrected. Again, Irenaeus did  
not understand that man has a spirit. Before we come to Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. This is a  
result of the fall of Adam, as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):15** And the LORD God took the man, and put him into  
the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree  
of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of  
it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The day Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he died spiritually, and eventually  
physically as well. After we have faith in Christ, we are born again, and we have new life in our spirit. That is,  
we have been made alive in our spirit, and now we have relationship with God, our Father, as we read in **John  
1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that

believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This happens to those who believe in His name. Irenaeus leads us to believe that the Eucharist is somehow the sustenance of this new life we received when we were born again. We will discuss this in a moment.

As to Irenaeus' assertion that the ones who receive the Eucharist receive spiritual life so that their bodies are "no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity," the Scripture says that the one who believes in Jesus Christ is born again. It is the Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, that gives us life as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

As Paul taught the Colossians, we were dead in our transgressions, but when we accepted Christ we were made alive, or born again, as in **Colossians 2 (KJV):13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

And John tells us in his Gospel that even to those who believe in His name He gives power to be children of God in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Again John says **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The one who believes in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confesses with their mouth Jesus as Lord is born again. This is what it means to be saved as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

From this point on we have been raised up with Christ in a spiritual birth, and Christ is said to be our life as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):27** To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Since Christ is in us, we do not gradually get more and more life by sharing in the Eucharist meal as we see in **1 John 5 (KJV):12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

It's one or the other. You either have life, or you need to come to Jesus that you might have life as we read in **John 6 (KJV):37** All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

And in **John 5 (KJV):39** Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

It is the Spirit who gives us birth so that we are born of the Spirit. As a result, the Spirit is the life principle of our spirit as Jesus spoke in **John 6 (KJV):63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

And the Spirit is eternal as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):13** For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

This is why, when we are born of the Spirit, the life Jesus gives us is eternal life, because it is of the Spirit of God. So there is no sustenance necessary for the life the Spirit of God gives us. You either have it by accepting Christ as Savior, or you do not and must accept Christ or forever be apart from Him. And in regards to invoking the Holy Spirit "that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup

the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal,” the receivers have already received eternal life and remission of sins when they had faith in Christ. The Gospel message is not “receive the Eucharist and be saved.” The Gospel message is “believe in Me” and you will have everlasting life. This is the message that Paul preached at Philippi when he was in jail, and the Lord set him free with an earthquake as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):25** And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. **26** And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. **27** And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. **28** But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. **29** Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, **30** And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? **31** And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. **32** And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. **33** And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. **34** And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Notice that there was no waiting period to be baptized. The Philippian jailer and his whole household were baptized immediately after they believed in the Lord Jesus.

As to Irenaeus' assertion that “it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as a friend,” we must understand that the Eucharist meal is not a sacrifice, but is a remembrance of a sacrifice. It is a proclaiming of the Lord’s death until He comes as in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):23** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: **24** And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. **25** After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament In my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. **26** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

When we share in the Eucharist meal, we do so because we have already been forgiven of our sins, and have eternal life by faith in Jesus Christ. We have already been accepted by God into His household as sons and daughters. We need make no more offerings for sin. Jesus Christ paid the price of sin. And so we, being justified by faith, have peace with God as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: **2** By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The word “peace” in the Greek is εἰρήνη (pronounced eirēnē) and comes from the Greek verb eiro meaning “to bind together that which has been separated.” **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume 1, Page 77.** Thus, the word “peace” in the Greek means “to be set at one with, to be at peace.”

The Scripture does say to examine ourselves, and then partake of the Eucharist meal as we read again in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. **29** For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. **30** For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. **31** For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. **32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Our profession should match our confession. It is not that we lose our salvation for God treats us as sons and daughters, and he chastens, or disciplines everyone whom He receives as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

However, the discipline described here in 1Corinthians 11:30 includes sickness and death. We should be careful to examine ourselves and live a holy life, for this is the will of God for us as we read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):3** For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: **4** That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; **5** Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: **6** That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in

any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

Now Irenaeus also quotes Philippians 4:18 in support of his statement that the Church alone offers a pure oblation as in **Philippians 4 (KJV):18** But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

The Church is what God is building in our day and age. There is no other purpose of God at this time. As members of the Church we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. We offer our monetary support as the Philippians did to help with the work of the ministry. We offer the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, and we are encouraged to be thankful in everything as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):16** Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

The Eucharist meal is another way for us to give thanks to God for His indescribable gift. The Eucharist is neither a spiritual, or carnal offering, nor is it a sacrifice. It is not an offering at all. It is simply a celebration of what Jesus has done for us. It is a remembrance of His one sacrifice that paid the debt of our sin forever. No other sacrifice could do that. Jesus offered Himself without blemish as we read again in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):14** How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

We are to offer ourselves as Jesus did. This is why Paul exhorts us as in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We don't offer Jesus' body and blood back to God to be accepted by Him. This has already been done by Jesus Himself when He entered heaven itself to represent us as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

We offer ourselves as living sacrifices, not for our sins, but because it is our reasonable spiritual service in view of God's mercy. The words "our spiritual service" in the Greek are τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν (pronounced ten logiken latreian hoomon), and which mean literally "your logical service." In the King James Version it reads "your reasonable service." In other words, because of what He has done for us, it is reasonable and logical for us to return to Him our very lives in thanksgiving. But we offer ourselves, our own bodies, as Jesus did, a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ's once and for all sacrifice.

## Chapter 23: The Priesthood

### Book 4: Chapter VIII.—Vain attempts of Marcion and his followers, who exclude Abraham from the salvation bestowed by Christ, who liberated not only Abraham, but the seed of Abraham, by fulfilling and not destroying the law when He healed on the Sabbath-day.

1. Vain, too, is [the effort of] Marcion and his followers when they [seek to] exclude Abraham from the inheritance, to whom the Spirit through many men, and now by Paul, bears witness, that “he believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” 3881 Rom. iv. 3. And the Lord [also bears witness to him,] in the first place, indeed, by raising up children to him from the stones, and making his seed as the stars of heaven, saying, “They shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;” 3882 Matt. viii. 11. and then again by saying to the Jews, “When ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, but you yourselves cast out.” 3883 Luke xiii. 28. This, then, is a clear point, that those who disallow his salvation, and frame the idea of another God besides Him who made the promise to Abraham, are outside the kingdom of God, and are disinherited from [the gift of] incorruption, setting at naught and blaspheming God, who introduces, through Jesus Christ, Abraham to the kingdom of heaven, and his seed, that is, the Church, upon which also is conferred the adoption and the inheritance promised to Abraham.

2. For the Lord vindicated Abraham’s posterity by loosing them from bondage and calling them to salvation, as He did in the case of the woman whom He healed, saying openly to those who had not faith like Abraham, “Ye hypocrites, 3884 Harvey prefers the singular—“hypocrite.” doth not each one of you on the Sabbath-days loose his ox or his ass, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-days?” 3885 Luke xiii. 15, 16. It is clear therefore, that He loosed and vivified those who believe in Him as Abraham did, doing nothing contrary to the law when He healed upon the Sabbath-day. For the law did not prohibit men from being healed upon the Sabbaths; [on the contrary,] it even circumcised them upon that day, and gave command that the offices should be performed by the priests for the people; yea, it did not disallow the healing even of dumb animals. Both at Siloam and on frequent subsequent 3886 The text here is rather uncertain. Harvey’s conjectural reading of *et jam* for *etiam* has been followed. occasions, did He perform cures upon the Sabbath; and for this reason many used to resort to Him on the Sabbath-days. For the law commanded them to abstain from every servile work, that is, from all grasping after wealth which is procured by trading and by other worldly business; but it exhorted them to attend to the exercises of the soul, which consist in reflection, and to addresses of a beneficial kind for their neighbours’ benefit. And therefore the Lord reproved those who unjustly blamed Him for having healed upon the Sabbath-days. For He did not make void, but fulfilled the law, by performing the offices of the high priest, propitiating God for men, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick, and Himself suffering death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance.

3. And again, the law did not forbid those who were hungry on the Sabbath-days to take food lying ready at hand: it did, however, forbid them to reap and to gather into the barn. And therefore did the Lord say to those who were blaming His disciples because they plucked and ate the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, “Have ye not read this, what David did, when himself was an hungered; how he went into the house of God, and ate the shew-bread, and gave to those who were with him; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone?” 3887 Luke vi. 3, 4. justifying His disciples by the words of the law, and pointing out that it was lawful for the priests to act freely. For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank. 3888 This clause is differently quoted by Antonius Melissa and John Damascenus, thus: Πᾶς βασιλεὺς δίκαιος ἔρατικήν ἔχει τάξιν, i.e., Every righteous king possesses a priestly

order. Comp. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. [And with St. Peter's testimony to the priesthood of the laity, compare the same under the law. Ex. xix. 6. The Western Church has recognized the "Episcopate ab extra" of sovereigns; while, in the East, it has grown into *Cæsaropapism*.] And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually. Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant." 3889 Deut. xxxiii. 9. But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance." 3890 Num. xviii. 20.

And again, "The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (*fructifications*) of the Lord: these shall they eat." 3891 Deut. xviii. 1. Wherefore also Paul says, "I do not seek after a gift, but I seek after fruit." 3892 Phil. iv. 17.

To His disciples He said, who had a priesthood of the Lord, 3893 Literally, "the Lord's Levitical substance"—*Domini Leviticam substantiam*. to whom it was lawful when hungry to eat the ears of corn, 3894 Literally, "to take food from seeds." "For the workman is worthy of his meat."

3895 Matt. x. 10. And the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath, and were blameless. Wherefore, then, were they blameless? Because when in the temple they were not engaged in secular affairs, but in the service of the Lord, fulfilling the law, but not going beyond it, as that man did, who of his own accord carried dry wood into the camp of God, and was justly stoned to death. 3896 Num. xv. 32, etc. "For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire;" 3897 Matt. iii. 10. and "whosoever shall defile the temple of God, him shall God defile." 3898 1 Cor. iii. 17.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "Vain, too, is [the effort of] Marcion and his followers when they [seek to] exclude Abraham from the inheritance, to whom the Spirit through many men, and now by Paul, bears witness, that "he believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," referring to Romans 4:3. Irenaeus then testifies, "And the Lord [also bears witness to him,] in the first place, indeed, by raising up children to him from the stones, and making his seed as the stars of heaven, saying, "They shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," referring to Genesis 15:5, Matthew 3:9, Matthew 8:11. Irenaeus continues as he adds, "and then again by saying to the Jews, "When ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, but you yourselves cast out," referring to Luke 13:28. Irenaeus then concludes, "This, then, is a clear point, that those who disallow his salvation, and frame the idea of another God besides Him who made the promise to Abraham, are outside the kingdom of God, and are disinherited from [the gift of] incorruption, setting at naught and blaspheming God, who introduces, through Jesus Christ, Abraham to the kingdom of heaven, and his seed, that is, the Church, upon which also is conferred the adoption and the inheritance promised to Abraham."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "For the Lord vindicated Abraham's posterity by loosing them from bondage and calling them to salvation, as He did in the case of the woman whom He healed saying openly to those who had not faith like Abraham, "Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath-days loose his ox or his ass, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-days?", referring to Luke 13:15-16. Irenaeus then explains that, "It is clear therefore, that He loosed and vivified those who believe in Him as Abraham did, doing nothing contrary to the law when He healed upon the Sabbath-day." Irenaeus then affirms, "For the law did not prohibit men from being healed upon the Sabbaths; [on the contrary,] it even circumcised them upon that day, and gave command that the offices should be performed by the priests for the people; yea, it did not disallow the healing even of dumb animals." Irenaeus then testifies that, "Both at Siloam and on frequent subsequent occasions, did He perform cures upon the Sabbath," referring to the story of the blind man in John 9:1-14. "And for this reason many used to resort to Him on the Sabbath-days," Irenaeus affirms. Irenaeus continues as he explains, "For the law commanded them to abstain from every servile work,

that is, from all grasping after wealth which is procured by trading and by other worldly business; but it exhorted them to attend to the exercises of the soul, which consist in reflection, and to addresses of a beneficial kind for their neighbours' benefit." Irenaeus then concludes, "And therefore the Lord reproved those who unjustly blamed Him for having healed upon the Sabbath-days. For He did not make void, but fulfilled the law, by performing the offices of the high priest, propitiating God for men, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick, and Himself suffering death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, "And again, the law did not forbid those who were hungry on the Sabbath-days to take food lying ready at hand: it did, however, forbid them to reap and to gather into the barn." Irenaeus then testifies as He explains , "And therefore did the Lord say to those who were blaming His disciples because they plucked and ate the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, "Have ye not read this, what David did, when himself was an hungered; how he went into the house of God, and ate the shew-bread, and gave to those who were with him; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone?," referring to Luke 6:3-4. Irenaeus continues as he points out that the Lord in this way was "justifying His disciples by the words of the law, and pointing out that it was lawful for the priests to act freely." Irenaeus then asserts, "For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank," referring to Exodus 19:6, and 1 Peter 2:5-9. Irenaeus then asserts, "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually." And concerning these same apostles, Irenaeus adds, "Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant," referring to Deuteronomy 33:9. Irenaeus then reasons, "But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to Numbers 18:20. Irenaeus continues his argument as he says, "And again, "The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (fructifications) of the Lord: these shall they eat," referring to Deuteronomy 18:1. Irenaeus then adds, "Wherefore also Paul says, "I do not seek after a gift, but I seek after fruit," referring to Philippians 4:17. Irenaeus then concludes, "To His disciples He said, who had a priesthood of the Lord, to whom it was lawful when hungry to eat the ears of corn, "For the workman is worthy of his meat," referring to Matthew 10:10. Irenaeus then affirms as he adds, "And the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath, and were blameless. Wherefore, then, were they blameless? Because when in the temple they were not engaged in secular affairs, but in the service of the Lord, fulfilling the law, but not going beyond it, as that man did, who of his own accord carried dry wood into the camp of God, and was justly stoned to death," referring to Numbers 15:32. Irenaeus then concludes, "For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire," referring to Matthew 3:10. And finally he adds, "and "whosoever shall defile the temple of God, him shall God defile," referring to 1 Corinthians 3:17.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus records that Marcion tried to exclude Abraham from the inheritance as he says, "Vain, too, is [the effort of] Marcion and his followers when they [seek to] exclude Abraham from the inheritance, to whom the Spirit through many men, and now by Paul, bears witness, that "he believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," referring to **Romans 4 (KJV):3** For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Irenaeus then testifies, "And the Lord [also bears witness to him,] in the first place, indeed, by raising up children to him from the stones, and making his seed as the stars of heaven, saying, "They shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," referring to **Matthew 8 (KJV):11** And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

God's promise to Abraham is revealed in **Genesis 15 (KJV):2** And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own

bowels shall be thine heir. 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

And Jesus Himself testifies to Abraham as we read in **Matthew 3 (KJV)**:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Irenaeus continues as he adds, “and then again by saying to the Jews, “When ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, but you yourselves cast out,” referring to **Luke 13 (KJV)**:28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

Irenaeus concludes that, “This, then, is a clear point, that those who disallow his salvation,” that is, Irenaeus is speaking of Abraham’s salvation, “and frame the idea of another God besides Him who made the promise to Abraham, are outside the kingdom of God, and are disinherited from [the gift of] incorruption, setting at naught and blaspheming God, who introduces, through Jesus Christ, Abraham to the kingdom of heaven, and his seed, that is, the Church, upon which also is conferred the adoption and the inheritance promised to Abraham.”

Irenaeus is correct in his statement that God introduces Abraham to the kingdom of heaven through Jesus Christ for all are in the kingdom by faith in Jesus Christ and that includes Abraham. We know that Abraham believed God, and it was then reckoned to him as righteousness as we read also in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

And truly the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

The seed, as Paul explains, is Christ, and not the Church, as Irenaeus indicates. However, Paul tells us that those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

And we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

And therefore we belong to Christ. And being in Christ makes us sons of the seed of Abraham, the seed being Christ. Being then in Christ ultimately makes us descendants of Abraham. So we are Abraham’s offspring and heirs according to promise as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:29 And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

And God redeemed us that we might no longer be slaves under the law but that we might receive adoptions as sons as we read in **Galatians 4 (KJV)**:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “For the Lord vindicated Abraham’s posterity by loosing them from bondage and calling them to salvation, as He did in the case of the woman whom He healed saying openly to those who had not faith like Abraham, “Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath-days loose his ox or his ass, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-days?,” referring to **Luke 13 (KJV)**:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

Irenaeus then explains that, “It is clear therefore, that He loosed and vivified those who believe in Him as Abraham did, doing nothing contrary to the law when He healed upon the Sabbath-day.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For the law did not prohibit men from being healed upon the Sabbaths; [on the contrary,] it even circumcised them upon that day, and gave command that the offices should be performed by the priests for the people; yea, it did not disallow the healing even of dumb animals.”

Irenaeus is speaking of the law of circumcision in **Leviticus 12 (KJV):1** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. 3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

A child was to be circumcised on the eighth day from birth, whether it was a Sabbath or not, according to the law. And Jesus did not rebuke them for leading their ox or their ass away to watering. Irenaeus' point is well taken that Abraham most certainly was righteous, and will be in the kingdom of heaven with us.

Irenaeus then testifies that, "Both at Siloam and on frequent subsequent occasions, did He perform cures upon the Sabbath," referring to the story of the blind man in **John 9 (KJV):1** And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. 8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. 10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. 13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Irenaeus then affirms, "And for this reason many used to resort to Him on the Sabbath-days;" Irenaeus continues as he explains that "the law commanded them to abstain from every servile work, that is, from all grasping after wealth which is procured by trading and by other worldly business; but it exhorted them to attend to the exercises of the soul, which consist in reflection, and to addresses of a beneficial kind for their neighbours' benefit." Irenaeus then concludes, "And therefore the Lord reproved those who unjustly blamed Him for having healed upon the Sabbath-days." And Irenaeus continues to defend his Lord as he says, "For He did not make void, but fulfilled the law, by performing the offices of the high priest, propitiating God for men, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick, and Himself suffering death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance."

However, the Lord did not function as our great High Priest until he made the sacrifice on the cross with His own blood. And He did not "propitiate God for men" with good works as Irenaeus intimates. It was His death on the cross that inaugurated the New Covenant. When the New Covenant went into effect, it was then that He became our great High Priest. But He did suffer "death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance." For this statement we can say, Bravo Irenaeus!

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, "And again, the law did not forbid those who were hungry on the Sabbath-days to take food lying ready at hand: it did, however, forbid them to reap and to gather into the barn." Irenaeus then testifies as He explains , "And therefore did the Lord say to those who were blaming His disciples because they plucked and ate the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, "Have ye not read this, what David did, when himself was an hungered; how he went into the house of God, and ate the shew-bread, and gave to those who were with him; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone?," referring to **Luke 6 (KJV):3** And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungry, and they which were with him; 4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

Irenaeus then continues as he points out that the Lord in this way was "justifying His disciples by the words of the law, and pointing out that it was lawful for the priests to act freely." Irenaeus then asserts, "For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank," referring to **Exodus 19 (KJV):5** Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall

be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

And to **1 Peter 2 (KJV)**:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Irenaeus then asserts, "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually." And concerning these same apostles, Irenaeus adds, "Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant," referring to **Deuteronomy 33 (Septuagint)**:8 And to Levi he said, Give to Levi his manifestations, and his truth to the holy man, whom they tempted in the temptation; they reviled him at the water of strife. 9 Who says to his father and mother, I have not seen thee; and he knew not his brethren, and he refused to know his sons: he kept thine oracles, and observed thy covenant. 10 They shall declare thine ordinances to Jacob, and thy law to Israel: they shall place incense in the time of thy wrath continually upon thine altar.

Irenaeus then reasons, "But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to **Numbers 18 (KJV)**:20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Irenaeus continues his argument as he says, "And again, "The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (fructifications) of the Lord: these shall they eat," referring in context to **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV)**:1 The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. 2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

Irenaeus then adds, "Wherefore also Paul says, "I do not seek after a gift, but I seek after fruit," referring to **Philippians 4 (KJV)**:17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

Irenaeus then concludes, "To His disciples He said, who had a priesthood of the Lord, to whom it was lawful when hungry to eat the ears of corn, "For the workman is worthy of his meat," referring in context to **Matthew 10 (KJV)**:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. 9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, 10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. 11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an house, salute it. 13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Irenaeus then affirms as he adds, "And the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath, and were blameless. Wherefore, then, were they blameless? Because when in the temple they were not engaged in secular affairs, but in the service of the Lord, fulfilling the law, but not going beyond it, as that man did, who of his own accord carried dry wood into the camp of God, and was justly stoned to death," referring in context to **Numbers 15 (KJV)**:32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. 33 And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. 34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to

him. 35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. 36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Irenaeus concludes by saying, “For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire,” referring to **Matthew 3 (KJV):10** And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

And finally he adds, “and “whosoever shall defile the temple of God, him shall God defile,” referring in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

## Commentary Summary: The Priesthood

To summarize Irenaeus’ arguments in this chapter, Irenaeus begins by defending the Church against the doctrine of Marcion, which taught that Abraham was excluded from the inheritance of the kingdom of God because he believed in the God of the Old Testament. Irenaeus testifies that “those who disallow his salvation, and frame the idea of another God besides Him who made the promise to Abraham,” are themselves “outside the kingdom of God.”

Irenaeus then proceeds to show that the righteousness of Abraham was attested by the Lord Jesus Himself who set a “daughter of Abraham” free from Satan who had bound her eighteen years. Jesus also validated the goodness of the law by showing that “the law did not prohibit men from being healed upon the Sabbaths; [on the contrary,] it even circumcised them upon that day, and gave command that the offices should be performed by the priests for the people.” And “the law commanded them to abstain from every servile work, that is, from all grasping after wealth which is procured by trading and by other worldly business; but it exhorted them to attend to the exercises of the soul, which consist in reflection, and to addresses of a beneficial kind for their neighbours’ benefit.” Irenaeus is trying to show the unity of the Old Testament with what Jesus was preaching and doing.

Just as Abraham believed in Him, so Jesus “loosed and vivified those who believe in Him,” that is, the God of Abraham. Irenaeus says that Jesus did “nothing contrary to the law when He healed upon the Sabbath-day,” which means He was in agreement with the law, and was not acting in opposition to it. Irenaeus then clarifies the meaning of the law, asserting as Jesus did that it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, and even to perform circumcision and other priestly duties. And Irenaeus says at the end of paragraph two, “And therefore the Lord reproved those who unjustly blamed Him for having healed upon the Sabbath-days. For He did not make void, but fulfilled the law, by performing the offices of High Priest, propitiating God for men, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick, and Himself suffering death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance.”

Now in this last sentence Irenaeus asserts that Jesus was fulfilling the law by performing the offices of the High Priest and propitiating God for men while He was on earth, and before He suffered death on the cross. Irenaeus asserts here that it was partly by His good works of cleansing the lepers and healing the sick that He propitiated God. Also, we note that Irenaeus seems to see Jesus as High Priest before He died on the cross. However, Jesus came as a man to fulfill the law and to be our redeemer. His works identified Him as the one who was prophesied to come as our redeemer as we read in **Matthew 8 (KJV):16** When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

His good works were gracious acts of God, and did in no way atone for sin although they showed the benefits of faith in Him. His works were the signature of God on His ministry as He Himself said in **John 10 (KJV):25** Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.

Again Jesus said in **John 10 (KJV):37** If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

God predicted through Isaiah the prophet, hundreds of years before He actually came, that Jesus would come. There are many specific prophecies concerning Him through Isaiah and the other prophets that have been fulfilled to the letter, and these identify Him as the one and the only Son of God. In order to fulfill all that was written about Him, Jesus had to be obedient to the law in all respects. And so Jesus argued with the ruler of the synagogue in Luke 13:14-17 concerning the daughter of Abraham that healing was permitted by the law on the Sabbath days, and was actually fulfilling the law. Jesus was not yet the High Priest that He was to become because the Old Covenant was still in effect. And it would remain in effect until Jesus died on the cross and fulfilled the Old Covenant law of sacrifice. By dying on the cross, Jesus was able to enter heaven itself by His own blood on our behalf after being raised from the dead. This event inaugurated the New Covenant and the High Priestly ministry of Jesus. We will examine the book of Hebrews shortly to prove this is so.

But to Irenaeus' point, Jesus was not acting in behalf of a different god, but in behalf of the one and only God, the God of Abraham.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues his argument in order to show the unity between the Old and the New Covenants, and that there is only one God of both. He tries to show here in this paragraph that the unity between the Old and New Covenants also exists because the apostles had a priesthood of the Lord of the same substance as the Levitical priesthood. He means to say that there is therefore ultimately a continuation of the Levitical priesthood in substance in the Church. Irenaeus begins his argument with the statement, "And again, the law did not forbid those who were hungry on the Sabbath-days to take food lying ready at hand." The words, "And again," refer to his thought in the previous paragraph that it was lawful for Jesus to heal on the Sabbath day. And not only was it lawful, but it was actually a fulfillment of the law. Here in paragraph three, Irenaeus will attempt to continue his thinking that Jesus did everything according to the law and taught His disciples to do the same. Even though Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of being a Sabbath breaker by allowing His disciples to pick grain and to eat it on the Sabbath day, Irenaeus shows how Jesus justified His disciples by the words of the law, and in so doing He thus reveals that the God of the Old Covenant is the same as the God of the New Covenant. But he also has a secondary agenda, and that is to show that the disciples had a "priesthood of the Lord."

Now, let us examine his argument for this "priesthood of the Lord", that is, literally, of "the Lord's Levitical substance."

Irenaeus begins in paragraph three as he asserts, "And again, the law did not forbid those who were hungry on the Sabbath-days to take food lying ready at hand: it did, however, forbid them to reap and to gather into the barn. And therefore did the Lord say to those who were blaming His disciples because they plucked and ate the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, "Have ye not read this, what David did, when himself was an hungered; how he went into the house of God, and ate the shew-bread, and gave to those who were with him; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone?," referring in context to **Luke 6 (KJV):3** And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him; 4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? 5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Irenaeus refers to this event and asserts that the Lord Jesus was "justifying His disciples by the words of the law, and pointing out that it was lawful for the priests to act freely."

Irenaeus continues as he then asserts in his very next sentence that David acted freely as a priest appointed by God, and that David's priesthood was justified as he argues, "For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank."

Continuing in paragraph three, Irenaeus then asserts:

- "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually."
- "Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own

- sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant,” referring to Deuteronomy 33:8-10.
- “But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, “They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance,” referring to Numbers 18:10.
- “And again, “The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (*fructifications*) of the Lord: these shall they eat,” referring to Deuteronomy 18:1-2;
- Wherefore also Paul says, “I do not seek after a gift, but I seek after fruit,” referring to Philippians 4:17.
- To His disciples He said, who had a priesthood of the Lord, **3893** Literally, “the Lord’s Levitical substance”—*Domini Leviticam substantiam*, to whom it was lawful when hungry to eat the ears of corn, “For the workman is worthy of his meat,” referring to Matthew 10:9-10.
- And the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath, and were blameless. Wherefore, then, were they blameless? Because when in the temple they were not engaged in secular affairs, but in the service of the Lord, fulfilling the law, but not going beyond it, as that man did, who of his own accord carried dry wood into the camp of God, and was justly stoned to death,” referring to Numbers 15:32-36.
- ““For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire,” referring to Matthew 3:10.
- and “whosoever shall defile the temple of God, him shall God defile,” referring to 1 Corinthians 3:17.

Now we will examine the merit of each of the points of Irenaeus’ argument in paragraph three in turn.

First of all, let us look at the other passage which records the event of Jesus’ disciples plucking the ears of corn and eating them on the Sabbath day. This event is also recorded in **Matthew 12 (KJV):1** At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. 3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; 4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? 6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. 7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

In this passage, Jesus compares Himself and His disciples to David and his men. Jesus’ argument with the Pharisees is whether it is lawful to pick grain and eat it on the Sabbath. Jesus’ rebuttal is five-fold.

- i. When David and his men were hungry, they entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread which was not lawful for David or his men to eat but only the priests.
- ii. The priests on the Sabbath profane, or break the Sabbath and are innocent meaning they perform their duties yet are blameless.
- iii. One greater than the temple is here in their presence.
- iv. The Pharisees did not know what this means, “I desire compassion and not a sacrifice” since they had condemned the innocent.
- v. The Pharisees did not recognize that Jesus was the Son of Man and Lord of the Sabbath. That is, they did not recognize that the Sabbath was His day.

In Jesus’ rebuttal to the Pharisees here in Matthew 12:1-8, He first justifies His disciples by the words of the law, that is, by the words of the Old Testament in **1 Samuel 21 (KJV):1** Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? 2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I

have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. 3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. 4 And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. 5 And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. 6 So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. 7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul. 8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. 9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.

Using the story of David and his men eating the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him or his men to eat but only the priests, Jesus refutes the accusation of the Pharisees that His disciples were breaking the Sabbath day. Jesus then presses His point by mentioning that the priests break or profane the Sabbath, meaning they do their duties of offering sacrifices on the Sabbath day as commanded by the law, yet they are blameless. Jesus is saying that there are some things done on the Sabbath day that would be classified as work, yet the performance of them is permitted on the Sabbath day by the law. Jesus is pointing out that the disciples were serving their Lord, and travelling with Him and ministering the Gospel. This would mean that they were many times far from home. This would also mean that their food would not be readily available to them. Jesus in effect was explaining to the Pharisees that such service is similar to the priestly service. On this basis, His disciples should be considered innocent. They were not innocent because they were priests, for they were not of the sons of Aaron, which was a requirement under the law. They were innocent because God is merciful. Jesus then tells them with absolute clarity that He speaks with the authority of the one who is greater than the temple. The issue as Jesus sees it is that God desires compassion and not sacrifice. To say it another way, God simply wants relationship and not ritual. Jesus proclaims the innocence of His disciples to the Pharisees, and takes ownership of the Sabbath day. It is His day. He is Lord of the Sabbath.

So Jesus pointed out in this passage that God does not value ritual over human life. The disciples were hungry, and needed food to survive. They were called by Jesus to minister by His side. Jesus was to become the great High Priest of the New Covenant according to God's predetermined plan. They would need food to sustain them. This is similar to David and his men needing food on their journey, since David was going to be king in Saul's place, again, according to God's predetermined plan. David needed food to sustain him and his men. In God's eyes, it was more important to preserve human life, that is, to have mercy, than to keep the ritual part of the law. This is what Jesus was saying.

So, as Irenaeus points out, the first thing that Jesus did in this passage was to justify His disciples by the words of the law.

Now Irenaeus also argues that Jesus was "pointing out that it was lawful for the priests to act freely" on the Sabbath day. Irenaeus is referring to Jesus' statement in **Matthew 12 (KJV):5** Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

When Jesus said that the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, He is referring to the Sabbath offerings as stated in **Numbers 28 (KJV):9** And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: 10 This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

Their priestly duties required them to do the work of offering sacrifice on the Sabbath day. And so Jesus is again pointing out that ritual is not as important as human life. Ritual does not take away sin, nor has it ever taken away sin. David knew this for he says that he was conceived in sin in **Psalm 51 (KJV):5** Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

And David knew he was sinful as he states in **Psalm 51 (KJV):9** Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

But David also knew God as his Savior as we read in **Psalm 51 (KJV):14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

God was the God of his salvation. David knew that the only thing he could give back to God was the praise from his heart as we read in **Psalm 51 (KJV):15** O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

David knew that God looked at the heart. And David trusted in the Lord as his redeemer as he says in **Psalm 19 (KJV):14** Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

The priests were offering ritual sacrifice, according to the law. There was nothing in their duties that would save them from their sin. They, just as David, had to trust in the Lord as their redeemer.

Now Irenaeus continues as he then asserts in his very next sentence in paragraph three that David acted freely as a priest appointed by God, and that David's priesthood was justified as he argues, "For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank."

However, there is no place in the Scriptures where this appointment of David is mentioned. David did ask for the ephod to be brought to him when he had to make life and death decisions for Israel. The ephod was a garment made especially for the Levitical priests as we read in **Exodus 28 (KJV):1** And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. 2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. 3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 4 And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

The ephod was to be made of gold, blue, and purple and scarlet material as in **Exodus 28 (KJV):6** And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.

Two stones with the names of the sons of Israel were to be set on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as we read in **Exodus 28 (KJV):11** With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. 12 And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial.

The breastpiece, which also had four rows of three precious stones representing each of the twelve tribes of Israel, was attached to the ephod as we see in **Exodus 28 (KJV):28** And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. 29 And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

The breastpiece was for judgment or for helping in making decisions as we read in **Exodus 28 (KJV):15** And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.

And so the ephod was used by David to inquire of the Lord as we read in **1 Samuel 23 (KJV):9** And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. 10 Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. 11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. 12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

The thought here is that David would call for the priest to come wearing the ephod. David would then pray and the Lord would answer by the priest or speak a word in David's ear. This did not mean that David was a Levitical priest with the right to wear the ephod. But David was said to be a prophet as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):29** Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and

buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

In his speck, Peter, just before he said these words, refers to Psalm 16, a Psalm of David, and a prophecy of the Holy One, the Redeemer, in **Acts 2 (KJV):25** For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

So we see that David truly was a prophet, but not a priest appointed by God in the same sense as the Levitical priests were appointed, for he himself and those with him were not allowed by the law to eat the consecrated bread as stated in **Matthew 12 (KJV):3** How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

Also, David was not a priest in the Levitical sense since he was not of the right tribe and family. The law gave the Levitical priesthood to Aaron and his sons exclusively as we see in **Numbers 18 (KJV):1** And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. 2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. 3 And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. 4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. 5 And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. 6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

If those Levites who were not sons of Aaron, but of the tribe of Levi, came near to "the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar," both they and Aaron and his sons would die. Aaron and his sons were to "bear the guilt in connection with" their priesthood. The Levitical priesthood was therefore not given to all the Levites but only to the sons of Aaron. This was a perpetual statute as stated in **Exodus 29 (KJV):4** And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. 5 And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: 6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. 7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. 8 And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. 9 And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

The fact that the priesthood was exclusively Aaron and his son's and not the other Levites is proven also by the rebellion of Korah who was a Levite but not a son of Aaron. The account of Korah's rebellion begins in **Numbers 16 (KJV):1** Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Korah and his followers were sons of Levi but they were not sons of Aaron. They wanted the priesthood as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):8** And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

Moses commanded Korah and all his company to take censors and to put fire and incense in them and appear before the Lord. There were 250 men with censors offering incense. Aaron was present as well. They stood in front of Moses when Moses pronounced judgment on them as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):26** And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

Fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men offering incense as we see in **Numbers 16 (KJV):35** And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

The censors of these men were gathered up and hammered out as a covering for the altar so that the people of Israel would not forget that the priesthood belonged to the sons of Aaron exclusively as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):39** And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: 40 To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

Again the Levites were to assist the sons of Aaron as in **1 Chronicles 23 (KJV):27** For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above: 28 Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God; 29 Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size; 30 And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even: 31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD: 32 And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

The division of the priests was strictly within the families of the sons of Aaron as recorded in **1 Chronicles 24 (KJV):1** Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. 3 And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service.

In regards to Irenaeus' statement that all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank, thereby justifying David's priesthood, this is true as stated in the book of Exodus when Moses speaks of Israel and says that they will be a kingdom of priests if they are fully obedient and keep the covenant as we read in **Exodus 19 (KJV):3** And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye

shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

This was said to all Israel, and so there is some justification for Irenaeus to say that all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank, and that therefore David was also a priest in this sense. However, it is certain that David was not a Levitical priest because he was not a son of Aaron, and therefore, as Jesus Himself stated in Matthew 12:5, it was not lawful for him or his men to eat of the shew-bread but only the priests.

There is one other passage in the Scriptures that supports Irenaeus' assertion that David was a priest appointed by God. In 2 Samuel, chapter 24, and 1 Chronicles, chapter 21, an account is recorded of David being incited by Satan to number the fighting men of Israel as we read in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):1** And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. **2** And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

This displeased the Lord and when David knew it, he confessed in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):7** And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. **8** And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

The Lord spoke to Gad the seer, or prophet as they were later called, to go tell David he has three options as we read in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):9** And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying, **10** Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. **11** So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee **12** Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

David feared the Lord more than man as we read in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):13** And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man. **14** So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. **15** And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

The Lord revealed to David that an angel had a sword stretched out over Jerusalem as we see in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):16** And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

At this point David interceded for Israel, something a priest would do, as we see in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):17** And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

David was then told by prophecy to build an altar as we read in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):18** Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. **19** And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

David paid Ornan 600 shekels of silver for his threshing floor and built an altar and offered sacrifice as the Lord told him to do through the prophet Gad as in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):25** So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. **26** And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. **27** And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. **28** At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. **29** For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon. **30** But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

After this event, David decided to build the temple on this exact spot as we read in **1 Chronicles 22 (KJV)**:1 Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel. 2 And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

However, this did not make David a Levitical priest, much less, did it make the disciples of the Lord to have “the Lord’s Levitical substance.”

Now Irenaeus then asserts, “And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually.” All the apostles were believer priests because they were righteous, but they could not be Levitical priests, nor could they have the “Lord’s Levitical substance,” since they were not the sons of Aaron. All the apostles were priests just as all believers. That is, all the righteous, according to the faith of Abraham, possess the sacerdotal rank as stated in **1 Peter 2 (KJV)**:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

All the righteous are priests and offer sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What are these sacrifices? In the New Testament, they are the following:

1. The sacrifice of praise to God, the fruit of lips that give thanks to his name as in **Hebrews 13 (KJV)**:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.
2. To do good and to share as in **Hebrews 13 (NASB)**:16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
3. The presentation of our bodies as living sacrifices as in **Romans 12 (KJV)**:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This offering of sacrifice is in the same manner as our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, offered Himself without spot to God to take away our sins once and for all time. This is what makes us His disciples for we are His followers and do as He did. Jesus did good and shared, offered praise to God, and gave His body as a sacrifice for us. So we are to do the same. He is our model of priesthood. He sacrificed Himself for us. We offer ourselves back to Him for His glory.

Irenaeus then argues in paragraph three, “Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, “Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant,” referring to **Deuteronomy 33 (KJV)**:8 And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; 9 Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. 10 They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.

Irenaeus continues as he argues, “But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of

whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to **Numbwers 18 (KJV):20** And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

However, the law of inheritance was valid under the Old Covenant, but was not carried forward under the New Covenant. The law of inheritance under the Old Covenant related to the tribes of Israel. The land of Canaan was originally promised by God to Abraham, and was to be given to his descendants as we read in **Genesis 12 (KJV):5** And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. **6** And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. **7** And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

It was this same land that the Lord brought Israel to, and gave instructions to Moses about the boundaries of this promised land which was to be Israel's inheritance as a nation. This was the land of Canaan as stated in **Numbers 34 (KJV):1** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **2** Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof):

The borders of this land are stated very specifically in Numbers 34:3-12. The boundaries stated in this passage were for the nine and one half tribes as stated in **Numbers 34 (KJV):13** And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe:

The other two and one half tribes received their inheritance as in **Numbers 34 (KJV):14** For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance; and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance: **15** The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan near Jericho eastward, toward the sunrising.

The law of inheritance of the Old Covenant stated that the inheritance of the people of Israel should not be transferred from one tribe to another as we read in **Numbers 36 (KJV):7** So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. **8** And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. **9** Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

The inheritance of the two and one half tribes east of the Jordan is described in Joshua 13:8-33. And the nine and one half tribes had their inheritance in the land of Canaan. But to the tribe of Levi was given no inheritance but only cities to dwell in as in **Joshua 14 (KJV):4** For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance. **5** As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

The land was divided by lot and the division of the land is described in the book of Joshua, chapters 14 through 20. The cities and pasturelands allotted to Levi are described in the book of Joshua, chapter 21.

In the New Covenant there is no law of inheritance for lands. Inheritance under the New Covenant relates to the blessings of faith in Jesus Christ. In the Old Covenant it was revealed that Abraham was not only promised that the land of Canaan was to be given and possessed by his descendants, but also that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed as we read in **Genesis 12 (KJV):1** Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: **2** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: **3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The reason that Abraham was blessed in this way was because he believed God as we read in **Genesis 15 (KJV):4** And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. **5** And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look

now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

And so in the New Covenant this blessing of faith comes to all who are children of Abraham as we see in **Galatians 3 (KJV):6** Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

How we become children of Abraham is explained by Paul in **Galatians 3 (KJV):22** But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Paul tells us that the law, that is the Old Covenant, was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):23** But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

And so when we have faith, we become children of God and we are no longer under a tutor as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):25** But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

This faith in Jesus Christ makes us all one in Christ Jesus as we see in **Galatians 3 (KJV):27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

It is in this way that we become children of God and heirs as we see in **Galatians 3 (KJV):29** And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Since we have been redeemed by Christ, we receive the adoption of sons and become heirs of God through Christ as we read in **Galatians 4 (KJV):4** But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Spirit Himself bears witness that we are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

What are we heirs to?

- I. Eternal life life as in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
- II. The Kingdom of God as in **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
- III. A heavenly inheritance as in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- IV. The world as in **Romans 4 (KJV):13** For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us

- all, 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.
- V. Salvation as in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):13** But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?
  - VI. An incorruptible body at the resurrection of the dead as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
  - VII. Victory over sin and death as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - VIII. God Himself as in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The inheritance spoken of in the New Testament does not include the inheritance of lands since no provision is made for that anywhere in the Scriptures. A promise that the righteous, that is the meek, will inherit the world, or the earth, in the future has been given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):5** Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

As for Irenaeus' assertion that the apostles "serve God and the altar continually," it is without doubt that the apostles served God continually doing the work of the ministry for they devoted themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word as in **Acts 6 (KJV):1** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

The first deacons were appointed at this time as well as we read in **Acts 6 (KJV):5** And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

The apostles were devoted to prayer and to preaching the word, and as a result of their ministry, great numbers were becoming obedient to the faith as we see in **Acts 6 (NASB):7** The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

No mention is made of serving at the altar. If this were being done, at least some passing reference would have been made by the apostles, but this is not found anywhere in the New Testament. In Irenaeus' thinking, as we saw in the section on Communion, the altar is the table of the Lord. Irenaeus views the Eucharist meal as the sacrifice offered by the Gentiles, which he believes is referred to in the prophecy in Malachi 1:6-11. However, as we saw in that section, the Eucharist meal is not a sacrifice but a remembrance or commemoration of the one sacrifice which dealt with sin once and for all time that Jesus made for us on the cross.

The use of the word "altar" by Irenaeus speaks of ritual or lawful practice of some sort. The Church in Irenaeus' time was accumulating many legalistic practices or rituals of which the Eucharist, or the Lord's supper as Paul called it in 1 Corinthians 11:20, is the most prominent. From these practices, we see the need in Irenaeus' thinking for a priest, that is, a holy man, to perform the ritual.

Now as to Irenaeus' reference to Moses in his blessing of Levi in Deuteronomy 33:8-10, Irenaeus asserts in context, "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually. Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinheriteth his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant," referring to Deuteronomy 33:9.

Irenaeus here concludes that Aaron disinheriteth his sons. But Irenaeus interpolates rather than interprets the Scripture here. That is, he inserts a meaning in this passage that is not there. This is in part due to the Septuagint version of the text from which he is reading. Here are two versions to compare.

**Deuteronomy 33 (Septuagint):8** And to Levi he said, Give to Levi his manifestations, and his truth to the holy man, whom they tempted in the temptation; they reviled him at the water of strife. 9 Who says to his father and mother, I have not seen thee; and he knew not his brethren, and he refused to know his sons: he kept thine oracles, and observed thy covenant. 10 They shall declare thine ordinances to Jacob, and thy law to Israel: they shall place incense in the time of thy wrath continually upon thine altar.

**Deuteronomy 33 (NASB):8** Of Levi he said, "Let Your Thummim and Your Urim belong to Your godly man, Whom You proved at Massah, With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah; 9 Who said of his father and his mother, 'I did not consider them'; And he did not acknowledge his brothers, Nor did he regard his own sons, For they observed Your word, And kept Your covenant.

Moses is here seen blessing all the sons of Jacob in Deuteronomy, chapter 33, before his death, and as he comes to Levi, he speaks of the time in Exodus, chapter 17, when the Israelites grumbled against Moses because they had no water and the Lord told him to strike the rock. When he did so, water came pouring out for the Israelites to drink. Moses was blessing the tribe of Levi whom he, as a son of Levi, represented at Massah, which means testing, and Meribah which means quarrel. Moses did not consider his sons or brothers in this matter but contended for the Lord, and apparently so did all the sons of Levi. In so doing, they did not have regard for sons or brothers, but they put God first, and observed the word of God and kept His covenant. So Moses did not disinherit his sons nor did Aaron, but he taught the Israelites to place God first in their lives, even above father and mother, brother or sister, son or daughter.

Now, again, Irenaeus argues, "But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Irenaeus is arguing that the disciples of the Lord are priests since, like Levi, they "have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant."

In context, he says, "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually. Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinheriteth his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant." But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to Deuteronomy 33:9.

Irenaeus continues as he says, "Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to Numbers 18:20. And he adds, "And again, "The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (fructifications) of the Lord: these shall they eat," referring to Deuteronomy 18:1.

So after quoting Deuteronomy 33:9 regarding the Levites, Irenaeus, in his very next sentence in paragraph three, is asking us to compare the Levites, who upheld the covenant, and the word of God, and served God and the altar continually, with the disciples of the Lord, as he asks, "But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord?"

Irenaeus here points out three similarities between the disciples of the Lord and the Levites, which are as follows:

- a. They left father and mother
- b. They have no inheritance for the Lord is their inheritance
- c. They have their food from the offerings of the people

However, in his comparison, we note that the Levites did not actually leave mother and father. Irenaeus points out in Deuteronomy 33:9 that the Levites did stand up for God and His covenant, and placed Him first above all things, even above father and mother, and son and daughter. Nothing is said in the Scriptures however about the Levites leaving father or mother. And strictly speaking, leaving father or mother, or even placing God first in our lives above all others, were not qualifications to be a Levite, or a Levitical priest. These things were simply a duty as it is the duty of every believer because of God's mercy. On the other hand, for those who would serve the Lord, doing the work of the Lord, it is incumbent upon them especially to place God first in their lives, even above father and mother and sons and daughters. James says teachers incur a stricter judgment as we read in **James 3 (NASB):1** Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

Also, under the Old Covenant, there was a law of inheritance such that all the tribes but Levi did inherit lands based upon the tribe of their fathers. However, under the New Covenant, there is no such law of inheritance for lands or houses to anyone who believes. The Lord may be said to be the inheritance of every believer under the New Covenant. It is possible that those who serve the Lord, and who are doing the work of the Lord, will experience more of the Lord's presence in their lives under the New Covenant. This could be what Jesus meant when He said that those who left father and mother would receive many times as much in this lifetime as we read in **Luke 18 (KJV):28** Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. 29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, 30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

However, under the New Covenant, the opportunity to serve the Lord exists for every believer, since all are members of His body, and as such have a function to serve, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

God has placed each member in the body as He desired. The word translated "placed" in the Greek is εθέτο (pronounced etheto) which is the third person singular, second aorist, indicative middle of the verb tithemi (pronounced titheime) meaning "to place, put, stand or set."

This is the same word translated "set" in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Not all the members have the same place or function. This function or ability is according to the measure of Christ's gift as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):7** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the

body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

As for living off the offerings of the believers, the Lord has provided that those who preach and teach the word of God may enter into full time ministry, and so “the workman is worthy of his meat,” as we will discuss shortly. The Lord did provide this for the Levites as we saw in **Numbers 18 (KJV):20** And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And in **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):1** The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance.

2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

Now in reference Irenaeus assertion that Paul received offerings as well, referring to **Philippians 4:17** where he says “I do not seek after a gift, but I seek after fruit,” Paul explains that this was his right as he defends his apostleship in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):1** Am I am not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? 2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. 3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, 4 Have we not power to eat and to drink? 5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? 7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

Paul also states this again, as he also refers to Deuteronomy 18:1 and Numbers 18:20, in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):13** Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? 14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Paul did not say that, because he was a priest, he should have his support from the offerings of the people. He said that in the same way as those who did the work of the ministry under the Old Covenant received support from the offerings of the people, so also those who proclaim the gospel should get their living from the gospel.

This right is also given to those who work hard at teaching and preaching as stated in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

And again in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):3** Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

Not once did Paul say that it was because he was a priest, or because the disciples have the substance of priests, that they should receive their living from the support of the believers. The ministry of the New Covenant is not in ritual but in reality. Christ has come and made a way for us, a new and living way. Paul lived under the New Covenant, and said that, in a like manner, those who preach the Gospel should get their living from the Gospel, as he did at times himself. This did not mean that Paul was a priest. He never referred to himself as such in all his writings.

Now in regards Irenaeus’ assertion that the disciples of the Lord had “a priesthood of the Lord, literally “the Lord’s Levitical substance,” and that the Lord Jesus stated as much when He said, “For the workman is worthy of his meat,” referring to Matthew 10:10, the Scriptures make it plain that the law of the Levitical priesthood is not carried forward into the New Testament.

Again, when the New Covenant was inaugurated, there was a change in the law, and a change in the priesthood as well, as we shall soon see in the book of Hebrews. Jesus was stating that, in a similar way, those

who proclaim the Gospel were worthy to get their living from their converts just as the priests and Levites were worthy in their service of the Lord to live off the offerings of the people. Paul was explaining in more detail what Jesus taught. The Lord Jesus was preparing His disciples, His workers in the Kingdom who would proclaim the good news of the Gospel message of salvation for all who believe in Him, that they would get their living from their preaching just as the priests and Levites got their living from their service of the Tabernacle and later their service in the temple.

As to Irenaeus' argument that, because the priests serving in the temple profaned the Sabbath and were blameless since they were serving the Lord, and fulfilling the law, but not going beyond it, which would entail judgment as the man who gathered wood on the Sabbath day and was justly stoned to death, referring to Numbers 15:32-36, he was arguing that therefore, the disciples of the Lord were blameless when they picked grain on the Sabbath day and ate it since they were priests also. Again, the Lord was not saying that this meant that His disciples were priests also. The Lord was only stating that He desired mercy and not sacrifice, and that He valued life over ritual.

And lastly, when Irenaeus justifies in paragraph three the stoning of the man who picked grain on the Sabbath in Numbers 15:32-36 by stating, "For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire," referring to Matthew 3:10, and that "whosoever shall defile the temple of God, him shall God defile," referring to 1 Corinthians 3:17, to show that the apostles must have been priests since they were not judged, we see that this only proves that the Lord's words were correct. The disciples, just as David, were innocent as the Lord declared in **Matthew 12 (KJV):7** But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

In summary, Irenaeus is here trying to lay a foundation from the Scriptures for another priesthood to be carried forward following the Levitical priesthood, and having the same substance as the Levitical priesthood. This priesthood he believes has been given the responsibility of the work and service of the Lord in the Church. This new priesthood, which has been given the substance of the Levitical priesthood by the Lord when He said, "the workman is worthy of his meat," Irenaeus believes to be over and above the priesthood of all believers in the New Testament, just as the Levitical priesthood was over and above the priesthood of all believers in the Old Testament.

Irenaeus also mentions an altar in paragraph three, for he says that the disciples "do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually." The Scriptures do not mention a physical earthly altar in the New Testament. As we shall see, all of the laws of sacrifice relating to bulls and goats have been fulfilled by the sacrifice that Jesus made when He offered Himself on the cross. Again we note that Irenaeus is defending the Church of his time which would include the traditions of the Church in his time. These traditions were thought to be handed down by the Apostles and were therefore a form of truth as we saw in **Chapter 21: The Church**, under the heading **Book 4: Chapter XXIII, paragraph 8**.

However there are differences between God's requirements of obedience in the Old Testament and the requirements of obedience to God in the New Testament. In the Old Testament and under the Old Covenant, we see a progressive revelation of the righteousness of God represented by His word. All that is in His word is a requirement of His righteousness. To leave out even one word is to misrepresent His righteousness for He is perfect in holiness. In fact, He is perfect in all His attributes as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):48** Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

And in **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV):3** Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Under the Old Covenant, God revealed that His offerings had to be perfect to be accepted by Him as in **Leviticus 22 (KJV):20** But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. 21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. 22 Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD.

This requirement of a perfect offering we understand to have been fulfilled by Jesus in the New Testament. The offering of Jesus on the cross, as a lamb without blemish, fulfills all requirements for offerings for sin and forms the basis of the New Covenant. Irenaeus does not seem to understand this.

Jesus was merely pointing out to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law that they had misinterpreted the law, and had greatly misunderstood the requirements of the law. He taught them that there is no law against doing good on the Sabbath. He taught them that He valued mercy more than sacrifice, and reality more than ritual.

Irenaeus is trying to establish a Scriptural basis for the priesthood that was already in the Church in his time, and growing in prominence alongside the bishops and presbytery as a sort of adjunct ministry. This is a sort of secondary agenda to his writing, the first and of primary importance being the defense of the Church against heresy. Irenaeus seems to try to show a Scriptural basis for all that is happening in the Church of his time, which would include the tradition that he perceived to have been handed down from the apostles themselves.

Philip Schaff states, “The idea and institution of a special priesthood, distinct from the body of the people, with the accompanying notion of sacrifice and altar, passed imperceptibly from Jewish and heathen reminiscences and analogies into the Christian church. The majority of Jewish converts adhered tenaciously to the Mosaic institutions and rites, and a considerable part never fully attained to the height of spiritual freedom proclaimed by Paul, or soon fell away from it. He opposed legalistic and ceremonial tendencies in Galatia and Corinth; and although sacerdotalism does not appear among the errors of his Judaizing opponents, the Levitical priesthood, with its three ranks of high priest, priest, and Levite, naturally furnished an analogy for the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and came to be regarded as typical of it. Still less could the Gentile Christians, as a body, at once emancipate themselves from their traditional notions of priesthood, altar, and sacrifice, on which their former religion was based. Whether we regard the change as an apostasy from a higher position attained, or as a reaction of old ideas never fully abandoned, the change is undeniable, and can be traced to the second century. The church could not long occupy the ideal height of the apostolic age, and as the pentecostal illumination passed away with the death of the apostles, the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves.” **History of the Church, Volume II, Clergy and Laity, page 123, Philip Schaff.**

In the passage in Luke 6 above where Jesus says He is Lord of the Sabbath, He also asked, “which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?” He was pointing them to the change that He knew was coming, and would be fulfilled in the Church, and which was about to be inaugurated through His sacrifice on the cross. We see this in **John 16 (KJV):12** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

This change had to do with the New Covenant that would be in effect after Jesus died on the cross. Jesus explained to His disciples that there would be much more that He would say to them but they were not ready when He was speaking with them.

As we read the book of Hebrews, we discover in part what this change was all about. Jesus is speaking by the Holy Spirit through the writer of Hebrews and is explaining the change. He tells us that after His death, He became our great high priest as it says in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):17** Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

And again in **Hebrews 3 (KJV):1** Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

And in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Even Jesus did not take this honor upon Himself, but God called Him to be our high priest as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):**1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. 5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Jesus, because of His perfect obedience, has become the source of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):**7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Now it is important to understand that this was God's set purpose all along as we read in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):**13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

We who believe in Jesus Christ are the heirs of His promises to Abraham, that He would bless him and multiply his descendants. Now this Melchizedek had no recorded genealogy, and so he is a type of the Son of God as we see in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Only the sons of Levi who are sons of Aaron receive the priest's office as we saw previously in **Exodus 28 (NASB):**1 "Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me—Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

Melchizedek's genealogy however did not trace back to Aaron as we see in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

And perfection was not through the Levitical priesthood as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. 11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

Our Lord Jesus has become a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and so there has been a change in the priesthood as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec

there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

The law, which required the Levitical priesthood, could not make anything or anyone perfect, and it has been set aside as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV)**:18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Because Jesus has become a priest by an oath, and because He was raised from the dead and holds His priesthood permanently, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV)**:23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Jesus has offered up Himself once for all for sins, and does not need to do so daily as the Levitical priests did under the law as in **Hebrews 7 (KJV)**:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant, and obtained a more excellent ministry than the Levitical priests under the law of the first covenant. Jesus ministers in the true tabernacle, the sanctuary in heaven as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV)**:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. 3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Jesus' work on the cross has made the first covenant obsolete as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV)**:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

The first covenant showed the need for a greater sacrifice, and one that would grant access for all through the veil into heaven itself as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV)**:1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first

tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

Jesus came to make a way into the Holy Place once for all, and by His own blood to cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the Living God as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV)**:11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Jesus is then the mediator of a New Covenant. By His one great sacrifice, offering Himself, He has made a way into the presence of God for us as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV)**:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. 18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Jesus has offered one perfect sacrifice to put away sin for us as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV)**:25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

The Old Covenant, the law, could not perfect those who draw near for the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

By His will, the will of God, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

On the basis of Jesus' one sacrifice, we have remission of sins, and therefore confidence to enter heaven itself by His blood as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Therefore, the Levitical priesthood has not been carried forward under the New Covenant by the disciples of the Lord. Jesus inaugurated a new priesthood after the order of Melchizedek that never changes the high priest since He will never die. Jesus our great High Priest offered one sacrifice for sin that did away with sin once and for all time. There is no longer any need for a sacrifice or for Jesus to be sacrificed again and again. This He did once on the cross. Now we celebrate what He has done for us on the cross. If we sin, He is our advocate with the Father. He does not have to be sacrificed all over again to atone for our sins. His sacrifice is good for all sin for all time.

In the same way, if we sin, we do not have to be born again, again. Once we are born again, God deals with us as sons as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

The remission of sin has been accomplished by Jesus' one sacrifice on the cross. There is therefore no more offering for sin. We receive forgiveness for our sins when we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we confess Him as Lord. This one act of faith causes us to be washed, sanctified, and justified. We then need only to wash our feet as we walk in this world, and we are totally clean.

## Chapter 24: The Law

**Book 4: Chapter XII.—It clearly appears that there was but one author of both the old and the new law, from the fact that Christ condemned traditions and customs repugnant to the former, while He confirmed its most important precepts, and taught that He was Himself the end of the Mosaic law.**

1. For the tradition of the elders themselves, which they pretended to observe from the law, was contrary to the law given by Moses. Wherefore also Esaias declares: “*Your dealers mix the wine with water,*” **Isaiah 1:22** showing that the elders were in the habit of mingling a watered tradition with the simple command of God; that is, they set up a spurious law, and one contrary to the [true] law; as also the Lord made plain, when He said to them, “*Why do you transgress the commandment of God, for the sake of your tradition?*” **Matthew 15:3** For not only by actual transgression did they set the law of God at nought, mingling the wine with water; but they also set up their own law in opposition to it, which is termed, even to the present day, the pharisaical. In this [law] they suppress certain things, add others, and interpret others, again, as they think proper, which their teachers use, each one in particular; and desiring to uphold these traditions, they were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which prepares them for the coming of Christ. But they did even blame the Lord for healing on the Sabbath-days, which, as I have already observed, the law did not prohibit. For they did themselves, in one sense, perform acts of healing upon the Sabbath day, when they circumcised a man [on that day]; but they did not blame themselves for transgressing the command of God through tradition and the aforesaid pharisaical law, and for not keeping the commandment of the law, which is the love of God.

2. But that this is the first and greatest commandment, and that the next [has respect to love] towards our neighbour, the Lord has taught, when He says that the entire law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments. Moreover, He did not Himself bring down [from heaven] any other commandment greater than this one, but renewed this very same one to His disciples, when He enjoined them to love God with all their heart, and others as themselves. But if He had descended from another Father, He never would have made use of the first and greatest commandment of the law; but He would undoubtedly have endeavoured by all means to bring down a greater one than this from the perfect Father, so as not to make use of that which had been given by the God of the law. And Paul in like manner declares, “*Love is the fulfilling of the law:*” **Romans 13:10** and [he declares] that when all other things have been destroyed, there shall remain “*faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of all is love;*” **1 Corinthians 13:13** and that apart from the love of God, neither knowledge avails anything, **1 Corinthians 13:2** nor the understanding of mysteries, nor faith, nor prophecy, but that without love all are hollow and vain; moreover, that love makes man perfect; and that he who loves God is perfect, both in this world and in that which is to come. For we do never cease from loving God; but in proportion as we continue to contemplate Him, so much the more do we love Him.

3. As in the law, therefore, and in the Gospel [likewise], the first and greatest commandment is, to love the Lord God with the whole heart, and then there follows a commandment like to it, to love one’s neighbour as one’s self; the author of the law and the Gospel is shown to be one and the same. For the precepts of an absolutely perfect life, since they are the same in each Testament, have pointed out [to us] the same God, who certainly has promulgated particular laws adapted for each; but the more prominent and the greatest [commandments], without which salvation cannot [be attained], He has exhorted [us to observe] the same in both.

4. The Lord, too, does not do away with this [God], when He shows that the law was not derived from another God, expressing Himself as follows to those who were being instructed by Him, to the multitude and to His disciples: “*The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. All, therefore,*

*whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens, and lay them upon men's shoulders; but they themselves will not so much as move them with a finger.*" **Matthew 23:2-4** He therefore did not throw blame upon that law which was given by Moses, when He exhorted it to be observed, Jerusalem being as yet in safety; but He *did* throw blame upon those persons, because they repeated indeed the words of the law, yet were without love. And for this reason were they held as being unrighteous as respects God, and as respects their neighbours. As also Isaiah says: "*This people honours Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me: howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching the doctrines and the commandments of men.*" **Isaiah 29:13** He does not call the law given by Moses commandments of men, but the traditions of the elders themselves which they had invented, and in upholding which they made the law of God of none effect, and were on this account also not subject to His Word. For this is what Paul says concerning these men: "*For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes.*" **Romans 10:3-4** And how is Christ the end of the law, if He be not also the final cause of it? For He who has brought in the end has Himself also wrought the beginning; and it is He who does Himself say to Moses, "*I have surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them;*" **Exodus 3:7-8** it being customary from the beginning with the Word of God to ascend and descend for the purpose of saving those who were in affliction.

5. Now, that the law did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ, He does Himself make manifest, when He replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: "*If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.*" **Matthew 19:17-18, etc.** But upon the other asking "*Which?*" again the Lord replies: "*Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself,*"— setting as an ascending series (*velut gradus*) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law, as the entrance into life; and what He then said to one He said to all. But when the former said, "*All these have I done*" (and most likely he had not kept them, for in that case the Lord would not have said to him, "*Keep the commandments*"), the Lord, exposing his covetousness, said to him, "*If you will be perfect, go, sell all that you have, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me;*" promising to those who would act thus, the portion belonging to the apostles (*apostolorum partem*). And He did not preach to His followers another God the Father, besides Him who was proclaimed by the law from the beginning; nor another Son; nor the Mother, the enthymesis of the *Æon*, who existed in suffering and apostasy; nor the Pleroma of the thirty *Æons*, which has been proved vain, and incapable of being believed in; nor that fable invented by the other heretics. But He taught that they should obey the commandments which God enjoined from the beginning, and do away with their former covetousness by good works, and follow after Christ. But that possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness, Zaccheus made evident, when he said, "*Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one, I restore fourfold.*" **Luke 19:8**

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "For the tradition of the elders themselves, which they pretended to observe from the law, was contrary to the law given by Moses. Wherefore also Esaias declares: "Your dealers mix the wine with water," referring to Isaiah 1:22, "showing that the elders were in the habit of mingling a watered tradition with the simple command of God; that is, they set up a spurious law, and one contrary to the [true] law; as also the Lord made plain, when He said to them, "Why do you transgress the commandment of God, for the sake of your tradition?" referring to Matthew 15:3. Irenaeus then testifies, "For not only by actual transgression did they set the law of God at nought, mingling the wine with water; but they also set up their own law in opposition to it, which is termed, even to the present day, the pharisaical." Irenaeus then affirms as he explains, "In this [law] they suppress certain things, add others, and interpret others, again, as they think proper, which their teachers use, each one in particular; and desiring to uphold these traditions, they were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which prepares them for the coming of Christ." Irenaeus then

adds as he testifies, “But they did even blame the Lord for healing on the Sabbath-days, which, as I have already observed, the law did not prohibit,” referring to Matthew 12:1-8. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “For they did themselves, in one sense, perform acts of healing upon the Sabbath day, when they circumcised a man [on that day]; but they did not blame themselves for transgressing the command of God through tradition and the aforesaid pharisaical law, and for not keeping the commandment of the law, which is the love of God,” drawing from Mark 7:1-13, Luke 11:37-42.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “But that this is the first and greatest commandment, and that the next [has respect to love] towards our neighbour, the Lord has taught, when He says that the entire law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments,” referring to Matthew 22:34-40. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Moreover, He did not Himself bring down [from heaven] any other commandment greater than this one, but renewed this very same one to His disciples, when He enjoined them to love God with all their heart, and others as themselves.” Irenaeus then argues against the Gnostics as he affirms, “But if He had descended from another Father, He never would have made use of the first and greatest commandment of the law; but He would undoubtedly have endeavoured by all means to bring down a greater one than this from the perfect Father, so as not to make use of that which had been given by the God of the law.” Irenaeus then testifies, “And Paul in like manner declares, “Love is the fulfilling of the law:” referring to Romans 13:10, “and [he declares] that when all other things have been destroyed, there shall remain “faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of all is love;” referring to 1 Corinthians 13:13, “and that apart from the love of God, neither knowledge avails anything, nor the understanding of mysteries, nor faith, nor prophecy, but that without love all are hollow and vain;” referring to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Irenaeus then adds, “moreover, that love makes man perfect; and that he who loves God is perfect, both in this world and in that which is to come.” And Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “For we do never cease from loving God; but in proportion as we continue to contemplate Him, so much the more do we love Him.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus then affirms, “As in the law, therefore, and in the Gospel [likewise], the first and greatest commandment is, to love the Lord God with the whole heart, and then there follows a commandment like to it, to love one’s neighbour as one’s self; the author of the law and the Gospel is shown to be one and the same.” Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “For the precepts of an absolutely perfect life, since they are the same in each Testament, have pointed out [to us] the same God, who certainly has promulgated particular laws adapted for each; but the more prominent and the greatest [commandments], without which salvation cannot [be attained], He has exhorted [us to observe] the same in both.”

And in paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies that, “The Lord, too, does not do away with this [God], when He shows that the law was not derived from another God, expressing Himself as follows to those who were being instructed by Him, to the multitude and to His disciples: “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens, and lay them upon men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not so much as move them with a finger.” referring to Matthew 23:2-4. Irenaeus then affirms, “He therefore did not throw blame upon that law which was given by Moses, when He exhorted it to be observed, Jerusalem being as yet in safety; but He did throw blame upon those persons, because they repeated indeed the words of the law, yet were without love. And for this reason were they held as being unrighteous as respects God, and as respects their neighbours. As also Isaiah says: “This people honours Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me: howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching the doctrines and the commandments of men,” referring to Isaiah 29:13. Irenaeus then explains as he affirms, “He does not call the law given by Moses commandments of men, but the traditions of the elders themselves which they had invented, and in upholding which they made the law of God of none effect, and were on this account also not subject to His Word.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For this is what Paul says concerning these men: “For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes,” referring to Romans 10:3-4. Irenaeus then asks, “And how is Christ the end of the law, if He be not also the final cause of it?” Irenaeus then points out as he affirms, “For He who has brought in the end has Himself also wrought the beginning; and it is He who does Himself say to Moses, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have come down

to deliver them;" referring to Exodus 3:7-8. Irenaeus continues as he adds, "it being customary from the beginning with the Word of God to ascend and descend for the purpose of saving those who were in affliction."

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, "Now, that the law did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ, He does Himself make manifest, when He replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." But upon the other asking "Which?" again the Lord replies: "Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself," referring to Matthew 19:16-19. Irenaeus continues as he adds, "— setting as an ascending series (velut gradus) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law, as the entrance into life; and what He then said to one He said to all." Irenaeus then asserts, "But when the former said, "All these have I done" (and most likely he had not kept them, for in that case the Lord would not have said to him, "Keep the commandments"), the Lord, exposing his covetousness, said to him, "If you will be perfect, go, sell all that you have, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me;" referring to Matthew 19:20-21. Irenaeus continues as he affirms that the Lord was "promising to those who would act thus, the portion belonging to the apostles (apostolorum partem)." Irenaeus then rebukes the Gnostics as he affirms, "And He did not preach to His followers another God the Father, besides Him who was proclaimed by the law from the beginning; nor another Son; nor the Mother, the enthymesis of the *Æon*, who existed in suffering and apostasy; nor the Pleroma of the thirty *Æons*, which has been proved vain, and incapable of being believed in; nor that fable invented by the other heretics." Irenaeus then testifies, "But He taught that they should obey the commandments which God enjoined from the beginning, and do away with their former covetousness by good works, and follow after Christ." Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, "But that possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness, Zacchaeus made evident, when he said, "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one, I restore fourfold," referring to Luke 19:8.

**Commentary:** In this section, Irenaeus continues his argument from the previous section, **Book 4: Chapter XI, paragraph 4**, where he states that "the Father also is Himself the same who was proclaimed by the prophets, and that the Son, on His coming, did not spread the knowledge of another Father, but of the same who was preached from the beginning; from whom also He has brought down liberty to those who, in a lawful manner, and with a willing mind, and with all the heart, do Him service." Irenaeus says that "to scoffers, and to those not subject to God, but who follow outward purifications for the praise of men (which observances had been given as a type of future things—the law typifying, as it were, certain things in a shadow, and delineating eternal things by temporal, celestial by terrestrial), and to those who pretend that they do themselves observe more than what has been prescribed, as if preferring their own zeal to God Himself, while within they are full of hypocrisy, and covetousness, and all wickedness—[to such] has He assigned everlasting perdition by cutting them off from life."

In this section, **Book 4: Chapter XII**, Irenaeus will describe what he feels is necessary to observe for the entrance into life. He will intimate here that we must observe the law.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "For the tradition of the elders themselves, which they pretended to observe from the law, was contrary to the law given by Moses. Wherefore also Esaias declares: "Your dealers mix the wine with water," referring to **Isaiah 1 (Septuagint):22** Your silver is worthless, thy wine merchants mix the wine with water.

Another version has **Isaiah 1 (NASB):22** Your silver has become dross, Your drink diluted with water.

Irenaeus explains that this was "showing that the elders were in the habit of mingling a watered tradition with the simple command of God; that is, they set up a spurious law, and one contrary to the [true] law; as also the Lord made plain, when He said to them, "Why do you transgress the commandment of God, for the sake of your tradition?" referring to **Matthew 15 (KJV):3** But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Irenaeus then testifies, "For not only by actual transgression did they set the law of God at nought, mingling the wine with water; but they also set up their own law in opposition to it, which is termed, even to the present day, the pharisaical." Irenaeus then affirms as he explains, "In this [law] they suppress certain things, add others, and interpret others, again, as they think proper, which their teachers use, each one in particular; and

desiring to uphold these traditions, they were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which prepares them for the coming of Christ.” Yes, as the writer of Hebrews puts it, the law was a shadow of good things to come as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

Irenaeus then adds as he testifies, “But they did even blame the Lord for healing on the Sabbath-days, which, as I have already observed, the law did not prohibit,” referring to our previous discussion of Matthew 12:1-8 in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood**. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “For they did themselves, in one sense, perform acts of healing upon the Sabbath day, when they circumcised a man [on that day]; but they did not blame themselves for transgressing the command of God through tradition and the aforesaid pharisaical law, and for not keeping the commandment of the law, which is the love of God,” drawing from **Mark**

**7 (KJV):1** Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. 2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

And to **Luke 11 (KJV):37** And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. 38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. 42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, “But that this is the first and greatest commandment, and that the next [has respect to love] towards our neighbour, the Lord has taught, when He says that the entire law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments,” referring to **Matthew 22 (KJV):34** But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. 35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

In the Old Testament this is stated in **Deuteronomy 6 (KJV):4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

And in **Leviticus 19 (KJV):18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

Irenaeus points out here that the Lord taught that the “entire law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments.” The word for “hang” or “depend” in the Greek is κρεμαται (pronounced krematai). Vine’s Expository Dictionary says that this word means hang, “as a door hangs on a hinge, or as articles hang on a nail.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 193.**

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Moreover, He did not Himself bring down [from heaven] any other commandment greater than this one, but renewed this very same one to His disciples, when He enjoined them to love God with all their heart, and others as themselves.” Irenaeus then argues against the Gnostics as he affirms, “But if He had descended from another Father, He never would have made use of the first and greatest commandment of the law; but He would undoubtedly have endeavoured by all means to bring down a greater one than this from the perfect Father, so as not to make use of that which had been given by the God of the law.” Irenaeus then testifies, “And Paul in like manner declares, “Love is the fulfilling of the law:” referring to **Romans 13 (KJV):10** Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and [he declares] that when all other things have been destroyed, there shall remain “faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of all is love;” referring to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Irenaeus then adds, “and that apart from the love of God, neither knowledge avails anything, nor the understanding of mysteries, nor faith, nor prophecy, but that without love all are hollow and vain;” referring to **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):1** If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Irenaeus then adds, “moreover, that love makes man perfect; and that he who loves God is perfect, both in this world and in that which is to come.”

When Irenaeus says that “love makes man perfect,” he is probably summarizing what Paul says in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):4** Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, **5** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, **6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; **7** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

However, when Irenaeus adds, “and that he who loves God is perfect, both in this world and in that which is to come,” he exceeds what is written by Paul. We do not attain perfection in this world, that is, this life. The apostle John says that even though we are the children of God now, it does not yet appear what we shall be as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. **2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. **3** And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

We become pure as we have this hope in us. Also, love is a fruit of the Spirit. It is something that grows in us as we walk in the light of His word. When John says that “when he shall appear, we shall be like him,’ for we shall see him as he is,” in verse 2 above, he is referring to the resurrection. That is when He will appear, and we will see Him as He is and be made like Him. This event is explained by Paul in **Philippians 3 (KJV):20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: **21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The reason the body needs to be transformed is because it is mortal, that is, doomed to die. The reason it is doomed to die is because we still have the old Adamic nature of sin in our flesh as Paul explains in **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. **19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. **20** Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

This is why we die as Paul says in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

And in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Paul makes it clear that in this life, we still have the old nature of sin in our flesh. This old nature wars against the new nature of our inner man as in **Romans 7 (KJV):21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. **22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: **23** But I see another law

in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

We don't joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man until the inner man, our spirit, is born again. And it is then that we receive the Spirit. That is, when we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord of our lives, the Spirit then becomes the life of our spirit, that is, our inner man. This is what sets us free from the law of sin and death as Paul reveals us in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The Spirit, being the new life of our spirit, sets us free from the law of sin and of death. This is the reason we have victory over our flesh, and we no longer have to fulfill the desires of our flesh. The presence of the Spirit of God in us gives us victory over our flesh, and the sin nature of our flesh, as Paul explains in **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Our body is dead because of sin. It is because of sin that our bodies now are called mortal as Paul says in Romans 8:11 above. However, the Spirit of God will give life to our mortal bodies, and raise us up from the dead at the resurrection, just as He raised Christ Jesus from the dead.

While we have the victory now over our flesh, and do not have to fulfill the desires of the flesh because of the Spirit of God in us, we will not be rid of this sin nature in our flesh until our flesh is changed to be like His glorious body at the resurrection.

And Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, "For we do never cease from loving God; but in proportion as we continue to contemplate Him, so much the more do we love Him."

The one who is born again has the love of God poured out in their heart as Paul reveals in **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

It is then true, that the one who is born again will not cease to love God. The love of God is an attribute of God, and as such, it is an attribute of the new nature in us as a result of being born again by the Spirit of God. It is also true that the more we "contemplate Him, so much the more do we love Him," because God is love as the apostle John reveals in **1 John 4 (KJV):8** He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

And in **1 John 4 (KJV):16** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

But again, it is not true that the one who loves God is perfect in this world. In the world to come, there will be perfection. But in this world, the whole creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God. We ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan as well, waiting for the redemption of our body as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

What Paul actually said about love, in context, is in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):8** Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child;

when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Paul did not say that love “makes man perfect,” nor that “he who loves God is perfect, both in this world and in that which is to come.” Paul compares this life with the next. In this life, we are as children, and we know in part and we prophesy in part. We speak, as it were, like a child, and think and reason like a child. We see in a mirror dimly. We have faith, hope, and love, but we are not perfect.

In the next life, we will put away childish things as it were. Just as a child grows up, so we will reach the full potential of our being in perfection. We thus become men and women so to speak. We will see face to face. We will know fully as we have been fully known. And our love will never end. The perfect will have come, and the partial will be done away.

Again, when Ireneus says, “For we do never cease from loving God; but in proportion as we continue to contemplate Him, so much the more do we love Him,” he is in agreement with the Scriptures. When we are born again, the love of God is in our spirit since we are born of the Spirit. Just as the life of the Spirit in our spirits is eternal, so the love of God in our spirit will never cease. As Paul says in verse 8, “Love never fails.” The Greek word for “fails” here is πιπτό (pronounced piptō). **Strong’s Concordance** says that this word means to fall (lit. or fig.): fail, fall (down), light on. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, James Strong, 1890.** Love is the path of excellence or the excellent way as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):31** But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Paul tells us what love is in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):4** Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

We do not always do these things but it is what we strive for. Love is truly the fulfillment of the law as Ireneus also says, referring to Romans 13:10. And after we are born again we do not cease to love God for we have His nature inside of us as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It is our nature as a child of God, that is, born of God, to love Him. And it is true that the more we know Him, and of Him, the more we will love Him for God is love as in **1 John 4 (KJV):7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

The apostle John says that we love Him because He first loved us in **1 John 4 (KJV):19** We love him, because he first loved us.

God’s love is made perfect in us as we love one another as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):9** In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Again, John says that we know we are in Him because of the Spirit He has given to us as in **1 John 4 (KJV):13** Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

It is by faith in the love God has for us that our love is made perfect as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):16** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

As our love grows, we cast out our fears as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Just because we have love does not make us perfect. God’s love is made perfect in us as we love one another and do what He tells us. Love is a fruit of the Spirit as we see in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of

the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

He is the vine and we are the branches. We have to abide in Him to bear fruit as we read in **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

We must obey His commands to bear this fruit as we read in **John 15 (KJV):9** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Love is not a law that we keep, and then attain the righteousness of God. Love is the fruit of obedience to His commands. Love is also said to edify or built up the Church as we read in **1 Corinthians 8 (NASB):1** Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus then affirms, “As in the law, therefore, and in the Gospel [likewise], the first and greatest commandment is, to love the Lord God with the whole heart, and then there follows a commandment like to it, to love one’s neighbour as one’s self; the author of the law and the Gospel is shown to be one and the same.” Irenaeus does say correctly that the two greatest commandments, “to love the Lord God with the whole heart,” and “to love one’s neighbor as one’s self,” show that “the author of the law and the Gospel” are one and the same.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “For the precepts of an absolutely perfect life, since they are the same in each Testament, have pointed out [to us] the same God, who certainly has promulgated particular laws adapted for each; but the more prominent and the greatest [commandments], without which salvation cannot [be attained], He has exhorted [us to observe] the same in both.”

Irenaeus has rightly recognized in paragraph two that these two commandments or precepts summarize the law, or they fulfill the law. And as Irenaeus also notes, Jesus said that the entire law and the prophets depend or hang on these two commandments. Irenaeus calls these two commandments “the precepts of an absolutely perfect life.” He says that these two precepts are the same in each Testament. But do we have to live a perfect life to be saved? For Irenaeus says above that without observing “the more prominent and the greatest [commandments],” meaning the commandment to love God and the commandment to love our neighbor at the very least, “salvation cannot be attained.” And he says that this is the same in both testaments. We will answer this question shortly.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus then testifies that, “The Lord, too, does not do away with this [God], when He shows that the law was not derived from another God, expressing Himself as follows to those who were being instructed by Him, to the multitude and to His disciples: “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens, and lay them upon men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not so much as move them with a finger,” referring to **Matthew 23 (KJV):1** Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Ireneus rightly says again that the Lord Jesus does not do away with the God who gave us the two greatest commandments in the Old Testament. Rather, Jesus upheld this very same law, but spoke against the incorrect observance of this law.

Irenaeus then affirms, “He therefore did not throw blame upon that law which was given by Moses, when He exhorted it to be observed, Jerusalem being as yet in safety; but He *did* throw blame upon those

persons, because they repeated indeed the words of the law, yet were without love. And for this reason were they held as being unrighteous as respects God, and as respects their neighbours. As also Isaiah says: "This people honours Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me: howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching the doctrines and the commandments of men," referring to **Isaiah 29 (KJV):13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Irenaeus then explains as he affirms, "He does not call the law given by Moses commandments of men, but the traditions of the elders themselves which they had invented, and in upholding which they made the law of God of none effect, and were on this account also not subject to His Word." Irenaeus then testifies, "For this is what Paul says concerning these men: "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes," referring to **Romans 10 (KJV):3** For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Irenaeus then asks, "And how is Christ the end of the law, if He be not also the final cause of it?" Irenaeus then points out as he affirms, "For He who has brought in the end has Himself also wrought the beginning; and it is He who does Himself say to Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them;" referring in context to **Exodus 3 (KJV):7** And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Irenaeus continues as he adds, "it being customary from the beginning with the Word of God to ascend and descend for the purpose of saving those who were in affliction."

In paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, "Now, that the law did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ, He does Himself make manifest, when He replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments," referring in context to **Matthew 19 (KJV):16** And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Irenaeus then continues, "But upon the other asking "Which?" again the Lord replies: "Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself," referring to **Matthew 19 (KJV):18** He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Irenaeus then adds, "— setting as an ascending series (velut gradus) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law, as the entrance into life; and what He then said to one He said to all." Irenaeus here asserts that Jesus made the entrance into life an "ascending series" of "precepts of the law" for all "those who wished to follow Him."

Irenaeus then asserts, "But when the former said, "All these have I done" (and most likely he had not kept them, for in that case the Lord would not have said to him, "Keep the commandments"), the Lord, exposing his covetousness, said to him, "If you will be perfect, go, sell all that you have, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me;" referring to **Matthew 19 (KJV):20** The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms that the Lord was "promising to those who would act thus, the portion belonging to the apostles (apostolorum partem)." Irenaeus then rebukes the Gnostics as he affirms, "And He did not preach to His followers another God the Father, besides Him who was proclaimed by the law from the

beginning; nor another Son; nor the Mother, the enthymesis of the Æon, who existed in suffering and apostasy; nor the Pleroma of the thirty Æons, which has been proved vain, and incapable of being believed in; nor that fable invented by the other heretics.” Irenaeus then testifies, “But He taught that they should obey the commandments which God enjoined from the beginning, and do away with their former covetousness by good works, and follow after Christ.” Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “But that possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness, Zaccheus made evident, when he said, “Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one, I restore fourfold,” referring to **Luke 19 (KJV):8** And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XII

To summarize, we could say that the driving force of Irenaeus’ arguments about the law in this chapter of his writing are his efforts to show that the God of the Old Testament, the Father, is the God and Father spoken of in the New Testament. But he has a secondary agenda, and that is to show that the law was given in the Old Testament, and that the greater commandments of the law were reaffirmed by Jesus Christ in the New Testament, that without observing these laws, “salvation cannot [be attained.]”

So Irenaeus begins in paragraph one to show that the Pharisees had “set up a spurious law, and one contrary to the [true] law; as also the Lord made plain, when He said to them, “Why do you transgress the commandment of God, for the sake of your tradition?” The Pharisees had “set up their own law in opposition” to the law of God.” The Pharisees “were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which prepares them for the coming of Christ.” The “commandment of the law” is “the love of God,” Irenaeus says.

Irenaeus continues in paragraph two to show that the Lord “renewed this very same one,” that is, the greatest commandment, “to His disciples, when He enjoined them to love God with all their heart, and others as themselves.” And Irenaeus notes that “Paul in like manner declares, “Love is the fulfilling of the law,” to show that the keeping of the law to love was also enjoined by Paul.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus again points out that, “As in the law, therefore, and in the Gospel [likewise], the first and greatest commandment is, to love the Lord God with the whole heart, and then there follows a commandment like to it, to love one’s neighbour as one’s self.” Therefore “the precepts of an absolutely perfect life, since they are the same in each Testament, have pointed out [to us] the same God.” Irenaeus does well to unite the two Testaments, and to point out that the God who gave the law in the Old Testament is the same God and Father who gave us the New Testament. However, he continues as he says that this same God, “has promulgated particular laws adapted for each; but the more prominent and the greatest [commandments], without which salvation cannot [be attained], He has exhorted [us to observe] the same in both.” Irenaeus did not think that the whole law was binding in the New Testament. As we shall see in the next chapters of his writing, he believed that the Decalogue, the ten commandments, must be observed or there is no salvation. Irenaeus also calls these commandments the natural laws, and he includes the laws of love with these as well.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus clearly points out that, “The Lord, too, does not do away with this [God], when He shows that the law was not derived from another God.” Irenaeus also points out that the Lord “therefore did not throw blame upon that law which was given by Moses, when He exhorted it to be observed,” but He did throw “blame upon those persons, because they repeated indeed the words of the law, yet were without love.” That is, they did not love God according to the commandment. They were thus without love, and “for this reason were they held as being unrighteous as respects God, and as respects their neighbours.” Again, Irenaeus points out that the Lord “does not call the law given by Moses commandments of men, but the traditions of the elders themselves which they had invented, and in upholding which they made the law of God of none effect, and were on this account also not subject to His Word.” Irenaeus then notes that Paul says the same thing in Romans 10:3-4 “concerning these men” who “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes.” Irenaeus then concludes from this as

he asks, “And how is Christ the end of the law, if He be not also the final cause of it?” Irenaeus then tries to show the unity of God’s purpose by asserting that “He who has brought in the end has Himself also wrought the beginning; and it is He who does Himself say to Moses, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them;” it being customary from the beginning with the Word of God to ascend and descend for the purpose of saving those who were in affliction.” That is, just as the Lord descended to save Israel in Exodus 3:7-8, and ascended again, so He has again descended to save us, by giving us the greater laws one final time, and ascended once more.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus points out, “Now that the law did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ, He does Himself make manifest, when He replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: “If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.” Irenaeus asserts that when the Lord replied to the man who asked which commandments he should keep to inherit eternal life, the Lord was “setting as an ascending series (*velut gradus*) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law,” that is, “Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour *as yourself*,” as “the entrance into life;” in other words, you must observe the law to be saved. Irenaeus concludes as he shows that the Lord “did not preach to His followers another God the Father, besides Him who was proclaimed by the law from the beginning;” Rather, Irenaeus asserts, the Lord “taught that they should obey the commandments which God enjoined from the beginning, and do away with their former covetousness by good works, and follow after Christ.” Irenaeus explains that Zaccheus made evident “that possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness,” when “he said, “Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one, I restore fourfold,” as Luke 19:8 records.

To summarize once more, Irenaeus is saying that Jesus was the “final cause of the law,” for “He who has brought in the end has Himself also wrought the beginning.” He points out that, as Jesus came down to save His people by giving them the law through Moses, so He has come down again as the Son of God to save His people by reaffirming the law, or as it were, to give it finally once more. And the law, he says, “did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ,” as Jesus Himself did say in Matthew 19:17, “If you will enter into life, keep the commandments,” when the man asked what he should do to inherit eternal life. Irenaeus continues as he says, “But upon the other asking “Which?” again the Lord replies: “Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour *as yourself*,” thus making murder and adultery the least of the commandments while honoring father and mother and loving your neighbor are the greatest. Irenaeus asserts that the Lord was “setting as an ascending series (*velut gradus*) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law, as the entrance into life; and what He then said to one He said to all.” And Irenaeus in his writing did not believe that the whole law was binding in the New Testament but only the laws of the Decalogue, the ten commandments that is, and the laws of love, which comprise the natural laws.

Now Irenaeus believes that, in this passage in Matthew 19:16-22, Jesus is connecting the entrance into life with keeping the law. What Irenaeus does not understand is that Jesus was speaking to those who were under the law. He Himself had not made atonement yet for our sins by dying on the cross. If this were all that was revealed about the entrance into life, Irenaeus would be justified in his assertion that we must follow Jesus by keeping the law in order to enter into eternal life. However, Jesus also said that the one who hears His word and believes in Him will not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

There is much more that Jesus wanted to tell the apostles and the disciples, but they could not bear it at the time He was with them. However, He has continued speaking to us after He rose from the dead through the words that He has given by these same apostles who spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them. It is through their writings that we have a more complete understanding of the place of the law in God’s plan of salvation. That is, Jesus has continued speaking to us by the Holy Spirit through the writings of the apostles. It is these same writings, such as the book of Romans, that we must turn to in order to have a more complete understanding of the purpose of the law.

Now we will see going forward that there is more to Irenaeus' thinking on the law. Clearly however, Irenaeus is making salvation an uphill climb by forcing us to keep the law as an ascending series of commandments, the greatest being love, and this in order to enter eternal life, that is, to attain salvation. And he also says that this was the same requirement for those in the Old Testament as those in the New Testament. However, as we shall see shortly, keeping the law cannot save us. It only points us to Christ. Paul explains this in part in **Galatians 3 (KJV):23** But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Now, in Irenaeus' effort to combat the heresy of the Gnostics, he has tried to show that the God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament. This is a noble goal. However, either the Church in Irenaeus' time, which he had been brought up in and had been made a bishop, had gone off track, or Irenaeus himself simply misunderstood Paul's letter to the Romans. Specifically, Irenaeus misses the point that Paul is making in Romans 10:4. In this Scripture Paul is saying that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Paul is not saying that Christ is the final cause of the law, and that in order to enter life, we must follow Christ by keeping the law. This may not be immediately apparent as we read verse 4 of Romans, Chapter 10, as in **Romans 10 (KJV):1** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Clearly Paul is speaking of Israel here. However, to see the context of Paul's writing in Romans, chapter 10, we must look at how Paul explains the place of the law in our lives now. That is, we must begin by finding the start of Paul's argument in Romans. To find the Biblical truth about the law, we begin by reading in Romans, chapter 2, that there is no one in a place to judge in regards to the law since we are all guilty as we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):11** For there is no respect of persons with God. 12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Paul points out here that it is the doers of the law who will be justified. Paul then tells us that circumcision is of no value if we break the law as we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):25** For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

Paul points out that circumcision is of no value if you break the Law. Circumcision is really of the heart, by the Spirit, and not by the letter, Paul will say in the next verses. Now God is the only one who knows the heart of everyone, and our praise is not of men but from God as we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):28** For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Solomon also spoke in his dedication of the temple of this same knowledge of God in **1 Kings 8 (NASB):39** Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

So Paul is saying that we must be circumcised in our heart in order to please God. Now the Jews were entrusted with the word of God under the Old Covenant as Paul continues in **Romans 3 (KJV):1** What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

However, then Paul points out that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together

become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Since we are all, both Jews and Greeks, under sin, we are all under the condemnation of the Law. The Law holds the whole world accountable to God as Paul continues in **Romans 3 (KJV):19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

And Paul again speaks for both Jews and Gentiles, those of the Old Covenant and those of the New, and says that they will not be justified by the works of the law, that is, by keeping the law, as we see in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Paul says that through the Law comes only the knowledge of sin, and not justification. When Jesus extended the law, as Irenaeus tells us in the next section, He increased our awareness of sin. Jesus showed us where our sin was, that is, in our hearts and in our minds. But this knowledge or awareness does not save us or justify us. Keeping the law does not atone for the sin we already have, as Irenaeus suggests when he says “that possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness,” in his reference to Zacheus in Luke 19:8.

As we continue in Romans, Paul then says that a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from the Law. We saw in **Chapter 12: Teaching on the Atonement**, that John Piper has given us a working definition of God’s righteousness, as he says, “God’s righteousness is His unwavering allegiance to do what is right, that is, most ultimately, to uphold the infinite worth of His glory.” **The Future of Justification, A Response to N. T. Wright, by John Piper, page 78.**

We must remember that when Paul speaks of God’s righteousness, he speaks of the righteousness of no other. This righteousness, which is of God, is apart from the law, and is for all who through faith in Jesus Christ believe as we continue to read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

We are justified freely by His grace as a gift. The means of receiving this gift of justification, this redemption which is in Christ Jesus, this propitiation in His blood, is through faith in Jesus Christ. He has not only passed over our former sins, but also all sin for all time as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):26** To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

As Paul says, this is the law of faith, not the law of works. Our justification, which is a declaration by God that we who believe are righteousness, is by faith apart from the works of the law as we continue in **Romans 3 (KJV):28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Paul explains that the law is not overthrown or nullified by faith as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):31** Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Paul continues in chapter 4 of Romans as he states that Abraham was not justified by works in **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

The word “counted” is the Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logidzomai). Vine’s says that this word “is properly used (a) of numerical calculation, e.g. Luke 22:37; (b) metaphorically, by a reckoning of characteristics or reasons, to take into account, Rom. 2:26, “shall ...be reckoned.” R.V. (A.V., “counted”), of reckoning uncircumcision for circumcision by God’s estimate in contrast to that of the Jew regarding his own condition (ver. 3); in 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 22, 23, 24, of reckoning faith for righteousness, or reckoning righteousness to persons, in all of which the R.V. uses the verb to reckon instead of the A.V. to count or to impute.”

**Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 258.**

We can understand more clearly that this word means numerical calculation when we actually read the verse in **Luke 22 (KJV):37** For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

And the metaphorical meaning of reckoning is understood more clearly when we read the verse in **Romans 2 (KJV):26** Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

The word translated “counted” here is in fact the Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logidzomai), just as the word translated “counted” in Romans 4:3 above is also the Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logizomai). When the Scripture then says that righteousness was counted to Abraham, it is saying that righteousness was put down to Abraham’s account. We must understand that the righteousness that God puts down to our account is His righteousness. There is no other righteousness that will satisfy the holiness of God.

As Paul continues, he says that when we do work, we receive wages which are due to us and therefore it is not a gift as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

The works that Paul is talking about are those that make us godly or ungodly. They are righteous deeds we do by keeping the law, or sinful deeds we do which go against what the law says. Keeping the law then is considered doing good works. Breaking the law is sin. In other words, if we keep the law we do good, but when we break the law we do bad, that is, we sin. Paul is saying that we have already done bad, and we are all under sin, and so we are the ungodly before we have faith in Christ. We are all under sin. It is not because we do good, or keep the law, that God justifies us because we are already under sin, and as such, we are the ungodly. God justifies us when we believe in Him, just as He did Abraham, as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

The Greek word translated “counted” here in verse 5 and “imputeth” in verse 6 and “impute” in verse 8 above are also the same Greek word, λογίζομαι (pronounced logizomai).

When we believe in Jesus, our lawless deeds have been forgiven, and God does not take our sin into account. And as Abraham trusted in God’s promise, and his faith was counted as righteousness, so it is to us when we believe, as we continue to read in **Romans 4 (KJV):20** He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

The Greek word translated “imputed” here in verse 22, 23, and 24, above is also the same Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logizomai).

Now we might well ask when does this justification happen? We can answer confidently that this justification happens the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. Thereafter we have peace with God as Paul reveals in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The Greek word translated justified is δικαιόω (pronounced dikaioō). Vine’s says that this word means “to deem to be right,” “to declare to be righteous, to pronounce righteous.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 285.**

Justification is a sovereign act of God as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):33** Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

This justification occurs when we believe God, just as Abraham did. And it is by faith that we have obtained access into the grace in which we now stand as we read in verse 2 above. This is the faith which we had when we believed in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we confessed Him as Lord. God’s love was then poured out into our hearts as we continue to read in **Romans 5 (KJV):3** And not only so, but we

glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Having been justified in this way, we have received the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, and we reign in life through Jesus Christ as we then continue to read in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Now because we have this free gift of the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, we are not to consider ourselves free to sin for we have been baptized into Christ Jesus, and so we are united with Him in His death and in His resurrection. We are therefore to consider ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Him, and we must not let sin reign in our mortal body as we continue to read in **Romans 6 (KJV)**:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

We have been brought from death to life, and we are no longer under sin or under the law, but under grace as we continue in **Romans 6 (KJV)**:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

We have been set free from sin and become slaves of righteousness as Paul reveals in **Romans 6 (KJV)**:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

The wages of sin is death, but God's free gift is eternal life as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV)**:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul continues in Romans, chapter 7, explaining that we have died to the law and been married to another, Jesus Christ, as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

We have been joined to Him who was raised from the dead. That is, He is our life. Paul then says that we have been released from the law as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Paul tells us that the law is not sin, but shows us what sin is as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

The law Paul is talking about here is not the law that makes a Jew a Jew as, say the law of circumcision or the law of the sacrifices for sin. Paul refers here to one of the ten commandments, "You shall not covet." We see that Paul affirms that the law is good in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Paul then explains that sin dwells in our flesh in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul then describes his present state as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Paul is saying that he joyfully concurs with the law of God in the inner man, that is, his spirit. This is where we are born again. But Paul sees a different law in the members of his body, that is, his flesh, which is waging war against the law of his mind to become a prisoner of the law of sin in his members, his flesh. Paul continues in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Paul here reveals that the believer still has sin in his members, his flesh, but he thanks God who has set him, and us who believe as well, free from the body of this death. Paul then says that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is what has set us free from the law of sin and death in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

That is, when we believe and we are born again, the Spirit becomes the life of our spirits. Since He is the life of our spirit, that is our inner man, we do not have to obey the law of sin in our flesh, our outer man. And Paul speaks of this in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV)**:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

As we continue in Romans, we see that, though our spirits are alive with the life of the Spirit, we must not walk according to the flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

So God has condemned sin in the flesh and made it possible for the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in us who are alive in our spirits. And the keeping of the law, being weak through the flesh, could not give our spirits life, because we were already dead in sin. When the Spirit gives birth to our spirit, He is then the life of our spirit. This is why Paul says that it is the law of the Spirit of life that has set us free from the law of sin and death in our members. Our job then is not to keep the law, but to put off the old life of sin, and put on the new life in the Spirit. The new life in the Spirit is Christ in us as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

And in Romans, chapter 9, Paul explains that the Jews tried to attain the righteousness of the law by works without faith, and that they failed as in **Romans 9 (KJV)**:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

So even for Israel, the keeping of the law did not profit them if they had no faith. The scribes and Pharisees also were pursuing a law of righteousness, but did not arrive at that law, that is, the righteousness of faith, because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They were climbing up another way as Jesus says in **John 10 (KJV)**:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

Jesus is the door as He says in **John 10 (KJV)**:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

It is by believing in Jesus that we enter the door and become one of His sheep. And when we enter the door by believing in Jesus, that is when we are justified. It is then that our faith, like Abraham, is credited to us as righteousness.

As Paul continues in Romans, chapter 10, he says that the Jews did not have knowledge about God's righteousness. Paul is not saying that Christ is the final cause of the law, but that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness so that the one who believes in Him may receive the free gift of Christ's righteousness apart from keeping the law as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The scribes and the Pharisees were like thieves and robbers climbing up another way to get into the sheepfold. Jesus is the way, and the only way as we read in **John 14 (KJV)**:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes in Jesus. Paul then explains to us that the righteousness of faith is different from the righteousness based on the law as we continue to read in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

That is, the righteousness of faith is not based on something that we can do, but it is based on who we believe in. If we confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved Paul says in verse 9.

Now Paul also testifies that the righteousness of faith which he had was not his own, which came from keeping the law, but the righteousness of faith which he had was that which comes from God on the basis of faith as he reveals in **Philippians 3 (KJV)**:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Paul did not want a righteousness of his own, derived from keeping the Law. Rather, he would only have the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith in Christ. It is not what we do, but who we know. Do you know Mr. Jesus? Have you met Him?

Now, in paragraph five, Irenaeus points out that, when one asked Him "what he should do that he might inherit eternal life," Jesus "replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.'" This response, Irenaeus says, shows that the necessity of following Christ was taught by the law beforehand, that is, before Christ came. Actually, Paul says that the law was our trainer or tutor to bring us to Christ as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The idea is that the law revealed sin in the life, and therefore the need for Christ as our Savior. The primary purpose of the law was to lead us to faith in Christ. The promise of the law and the prophets was that Christ would come, as Jesus says in **John 5 (KJV)**:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. 46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. 47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

Jesus is the promise of the Old Testament that is fulfilled in the New Testament. Again, Irenaeus refers to Matthew 19:16-22 when Jesus was asked by a man what good thing he should do to obtain eternal life, and notes that Jesus responded that he should keep the commandments if he wished to enter into life as we read in **Matthew 19 (KJV)**:16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is,

God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Jesus did not tell the man in this case that he had to believe in Him to be saved, as He plainly told the Jews in **John 8 (KJV)**:22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

The young man in Matthew 19:22 had to first become aware of his sin. The Jews in John 8:22 were Pharisees who were arguing with Jesus about the law as we read in **John 8 (KJV)**:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

These Pharisees knew the law, but would not accept the testimony of the law, and did not even know God the Father. It is evident that they were in denial of their sin as we read in **John 8 (KJV)**:17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. 20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

The Jewish Pharisees would not accept the testimony of the law. There was only one option left for them. They must believe in Jesus or perish in their sins as Jesus tells them in **John 8 (KJV)**:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

We must put the Scripture in Matthew, chapter 19, in context with this one in John, chapter 8, in order to understand what Jesus is saying. Jesus was telling the man in Matthew, chapter 19, that he should keep the commandments for they will teach him about his sin, and his need for a Savior, and will lead him to faith in Christ. When he comes to the knowledge of sin in his life through the commandments, he will then be lead to have faith in Jesus. So Jesus didn't always bowl people over with the truth. As Irenaeus says, Jesus saw this man's covetousness, and gave him what he needed, in the place where he was, at that time in his life. This man needed faith, and to get the faith he needed, Jesus told him to keep the commandments for they would teach him about his sin, and lead him to believe that he needed a Savior, Jesus Christ. This man had not yet entered the "door," and was therefore not one of the sheep yet.

This event in Jesus' life is also recorded in **Mark 10 (KJV)**:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. 19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

This same passage is found in Luke as well as we read in **Luke 18 (KJV)**:18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

In this passage the man calls Jesus a good teacher. Jesus knew right away that the man did not recognize Him as the Son of God, and so he questions the man directly by saying, "Why do you call me good?" He evidently didn't know Jesus from any other rabbi. This man evidently needed to be made aware of his sin, which is the reason why Jesus pointed him to the law.

In another Scripture parallel to this, Jesus asks a lawyer what is written in the law as in **Luke 10 (KJV)**:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

Jesus told this lawyer that he had answered correctly, and that he should do this and he would live. The lawyer was on the right track. Jesus came and lived in perfect obedience under the law. The Old Covenant was still in force until His death on the cross. So when the Jews asked him about what to do to inherit eternal life, He told them what they should do under the Old Covenant since it was still in force. This is not to say that obedience to the law saved them. But obedience to the law would lead them to faith in Christ and thus be saved. Jesus said, “do this and you will live.” Under the law, there were certain sins that were punishable by death such as the following:

1. Premeditated murder as in **Exodus 21 (KJV)**:12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. 13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. 14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.
2. Striking father or mother as in **Exodus 21 (KJV)**:15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.
3. Stealing and selling a man, or possessing such a stolen man, as in **Exodus 21 (KJV)**:16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.
4. Cursing father or mother as in **Exodus 21 (KJV)**:17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.
5. Doing work on the Sabbath as in **Exodus 35 (KJV)**:2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.
6. Idolatry and child sacrifice as in **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.
7. Adultery as in **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
8. Incest as in **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:11 And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 12 And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them.
9. Homosexuality as in **Leviticus 20 (NASB)**:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.
10. Taking both a woman and her mother to wife as in **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you.
11. Lying sexually with an animal as in **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. 16 And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.
12. A medium or spiritist as in **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:27 A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

13. Blaspheming the Name as in **Leviticus 24 (KJV)**:10 And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp; 11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:) 12 And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them. 13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 14 Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. 15 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. 16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.

If you kept the law you would live as in **Leviticus 18 (KJV)**:5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

Under the law it was an eye for an eye as in **Leviticus 24 (KJV)**:17 And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. 18 And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast. 19 And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; 20 Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again. 21 And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death. 22 Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God. 23 And Moses spake to the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones. And the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

You still had to have faith in the promise, that is Christ, to enter into eternal life. Evidently the man who was asking Jesus about what to do to inherit eternal life didn't know about his sin. Otherwise he would have known who was standing right in front of him, that is, Jesus, and that all he had to do to inherit eternal life was believe in Him as Jesus says in **John 5 (KJV)**:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The apostles and disciples were faced with questions about the law after Jesus' resurrection. If they kept the law in force, they would be faced with these injunctions for capital punishment or the injunctions for injuries to one's neighbor, that is, an eye for an eye, and so forth. Fortunately it was not up to them. The Holy Spirit tells us through Paul's writings that we are not under the law, but that we are not without law to God. We are under the law of Christ as we read in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV)**:20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

Under the law of Christ, we are not to sin, but we are completely free and able to reach anyone with the Gospel. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV)**:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

As to the end of paragraph five where Irenaeus says that Jesus did not preach another God the Father, certainly this is true. Irenaeus was and is very effective in demolishing Gnostic beliefs. However, his last statement, that "possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness," is without Scriptural basis. Irenaeus says that Zaccheus made this "evident, when he said, "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one, I restore fourfold." However, the word "annul" has the idea of cancellation which could lead us to believe that good works atone for sins like covetousness. Our good works cannot cancel or atone for sin as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV)**:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Our salvation is not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. The word regeneration refers to being born again. Paul is saying that a cleansing or washing happens when we are born again. We are born again of the Spirit of God when He renews our spirit to life as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NKJV):4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We can make amends as Zacheus the tax collector did as a an act of repentance and a token of our thanks as we read in **Luke 19 (KJV):8** And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

But making amends is only a fruit of someone who has truly repented and been born again. It does not save us. Zacheus's faith in Christ saved him. And he demonstrated the faith which he had by his making amends.

## **Book 4: Chapter XIII.—Christ did not abrogate the natural precepts of the law, but rather fulfilled and extended them. He removed the yoke and bondage of the old law, so that mankind, being now set free, might serve God with that trustful piety which becometh sons.**

1. And that the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man<sup>3948</sup> That is, as Harvey observes, *the natural man*, as described in Rom. ii. 27. is justified, which also those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, did observe previous to the giving of the law, but that He extended and fulfilled them, is shown from His words. "For," He remarks, "it has been said to them of old time, Do not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That every one who hath looked upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." <sup>3949</sup> Matt. v. 27, 28. And again: "It has been said, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, Every one who is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." <sup>3950</sup> Matt. v. 21, 22. And, "It hath been said, Thou shalt not forswear thyself. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; but let your conversation be, Yea, yea, and Nay, nay."<sup>3951</sup> Matt. v. 33, etc. And other statements of a like nature. For all these do not contain or imply an opposition to and an overturning of the [precepts] of the past, as Marcion's followers do strenuously maintain; but [they exhibit] a fulfilling and an extension of them, as He does Himself declare: "Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." <sup>3952</sup> Matt. v. 20. For what meant the excess referred to? In the first place, [we must] believe not only in the Father, but also in His Son now revealed; for He it is who leads man into fellowship and unity with God. In the next place, [we must] not only say, but we must do; for they said, but did not. And [we must] not only abstain from evil deeds, but even from the desires after them. Now He did not teach us these things as being opposed to the law, but as fulfilling the law, and implanting in us the varied righteousness of the law. That would have been contrary to the law, if He had commanded His disciples to do anything which the law had prohibited. But this which He did command—namely, not only to abstain from things forbidden by the law, but even from longing after them—is not contrary to [the law], as I have remarked, neither is it the utterance of one destroying the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and affording greater scope to it.

2. For the law, since it was laid down for those in bondage, used to instruct the soul by means of those corporeal objects which were of an external nature, drawing it, as by a bond, to obey its

commandments, that man might learn to serve God. But the Word set free the soul, and taught that through it the body should be willingly purified. Which having been accomplished, it followed as of course, that the bonds of slavery should be removed, to which man had now become accustomed, and that he should follow God without fetters: moreover, that the laws of liberty should be extended, and subjection to the king increased, so that no one who is converted should appear unworthy to Him who set him free, but that the piety and obedience due to the Master of the household should be equally rendered both by servants and children; while the children possess greater confidence [than the servants], inasmuch as the working of liberty is greater and more glorious than that obedience which is rendered in [a state of] slavery.

3. And for this reason did the Lord, instead of that [commandment], "Thou shalt not commit adultery," forbid even concupiscence; and instead of that which runs thus, "Thou shalt not kill," He prohibited anger; and instead of the law enjoining the giving of tithes, [He told us] to share

**3953 Matt. xix. 21**, all our possessions with the poor; and not to love our neighbours only, but even our enemies; and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods. For "to him that taketh away thy coat," He says, "give to him thy cloak also; and from him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again; and as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye unto them:" **3954 Luke vi. 29–31**, so that we may not grieve as those who are unwilling to be defrauded, but may rejoice as those who have given willingly, and as rather conferring a favour upon our neighbours than yielding to necessity. "And if any one," He says, "shall compel thee [to go] a mile, go with him twain;" **3955 Matt. v. 41**, so that thou mayest not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing thyself in all things kindly disposed and useful to thy neighbour, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing thy kind offices, assimilating thyself to the Father, "who maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust." **3956 Matt. v. 45**. Now all these [precepts], as I have already observed, were not [the injunctions] of one doing away with the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and widening it among us; just as if one should say, that the more extensive operation of liberty implies that a more complete subjection and affection towards our Liberator had been implanted within us. For He did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him (no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord's benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation), but that the more we receive His grace, the more we should love Him. Now the more we have loved Him, the more glory shall we receive from Him, when we are continually in the presence of the Father.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus begins as he affirms, "And that the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man is justified, which also those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, did observe previous to the giving of the law, but that He extended and fulfilled them, is shown from His words." Irenaeus continues as he testifies , "For," He remarks, "it has been said to them of old time, Do not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That every one who hath looked upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," referring to Matthew 5:27-28. Irenaeus then adds, "And again: "It has been said, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, Every one who is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment," referring to Matthew 5:21-22. Irenaeus continues and adds, "And, "It hath been said, Thou shalt not forswear thyself. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; but let your conversation be, Yea, yea, and Nay, nay," referring to Matthew 5:33. Irenaeus continues as he argues, "And other statements of a like nature. For all these do not contain or imply an opposition to and an overturning of the [precepts] of the past, as Marcion's followers do strenuously maintain; but [they exhibit] a fulfilling and an extension of them, as He does Himself declare: "Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," referring to Matthew 5:20. Irenaeus then asks, "For what meant the excess referred to?" Irenaeus then answers as he asserts the following:

- "In the first place, [we must] believe not only in the Father, but also in His Son now revealed; for He it is who leads man into fellowship and unity with God."
- "In the next place, [we must] not only say, but we must do; for they said, but did not."

- “And [we must] not only abstain from evil deeds, but even from the desires after them.”

Irenaeus then affirms, “Now He did not teach us these things as being opposed to the law, but as fulfilling the law, and implanting in us the varied righteousness of the law.” Irenaeus then argues, “That would have been contrary to the law, if He had commanded His disciples to do anything which the law had prohibited. But this which He did command—namely, not only to abstain from things forbidden by the law, but even from longing after them—is not contrary to [the law], as I have remarked, neither is it the utterance of one destroying the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and affording greater scope to it.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus explains, “For the law, since it was laid down for those in bondage, used to instruct the soul by means of those corporeal objects which were of an external nature, drawing it, as by a bond, to obey its commandments, that man might learn to serve God.” Irenaeus then affirms, “But the Word set free the soul, and taught that through it the body should be willingly purified.” Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “Which having been accomplished, it followed as of course, that the bonds of slavery should be removed, to which man had now become accustomed, and that he should follow God without fetters: moreover, that the laws of liberty should be extended, and subjection to the king increased, so that no one who is converted should appear unworthy to Him who set him free, but that the piety and obedience due to the Master of the household should be equally rendered both by servants and children; while the children possess greater confidence [than the servants], inasmuch as the working of liberty is greater and more glorious than that obedience which is rendered in [a state of] slavery.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “And for this reason did the Lord, instead of that [commandment], “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” forbid even concupiscence,” referring to Matthew 5:27-28, “and instead of that which runs thus, “Thou shalt not kill,” He prohibited anger,” referring to Matthew 5:21-22, “and instead of the law enjoining the giving of tithes, [He told us] to share all our possessions with the poor,” referring to Matthew 19:21, “and not to love our neighbours only, but even our enemies,” referring to Matthew 5:43-48, “and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods. For “to him that taketh away thy coat,” He says, “give to him thy cloak also; and from him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again; and as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye unto them,” referring to Luke 6:29-31. Irenaeus then asserts that this was “so that we may not grieve as those who are unwilling to be defrauded, but may rejoice as those who have given willingly, and as rather conferring a favour upon our neighbours than yielding to necessity.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And if any one,” He says, “shall compel thee [to go] a mile, go with him twain,” referring to Matthew 5:41, “so that thou mayest not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing thyself in all things kindly disposed and useful to thy neighbour, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing thy kind offices, assimilating thyself to the Father, “who maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust,” referring to Matthew 5:45. Irenaeus then affirms, “Now all these [precepts], as I have already observed, were not [the injunctions] of one doing away with the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and widening it among us; just as if one should say, that the more extensive operation of liberty implies that a more complete subjection and affection towards our Liberator had been implanted within us.” Irenaeus then argues, “For He did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him (no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord’s benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation), but that the more we receive His grace, the more we should love Him.” Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “Now the more we have loved Him, the more glory shall we receive from Him, when we are continually in the presence of the Father.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus begins as he affirms, “And that the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man is justified, which also those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, did observe previous to the giving of the law, but that He extended and fulfilled them, is shown from His words. “For,” He remarks, “it has been said to them of old time, Do not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That every one who hath looked upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart,” referring to **Matthew 5 (KJV):27** Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,

Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

The word “abrogate” has the following meaning listed in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary:

1. to abolish by authoritative action : annul
2. to treat as nonexistent *<abrogating their responsibilities>*

And the word “extend” has the the following meaning listed in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary:

1. to spread or stretch forth : unbend *<extended both her arms>*
  - a. to stretch out to fullest length
  - b. to cause (as a horse) to move at full stride
  - c. to exert (oneself) to full capacity *<could work long and hard without seeming to extend himself>*

It is true that the Lord did not abrogate or treat as nonexistent the “natural precepts of the law”.

However, neither did He abrogate any part of the law. He did extend the law to its fullest length and capacity by clarifying its true intent.

By this statement, Irenaeus also asserts that man is justified by keeping what he terms “the natural precepts of the law,” for he says, “And that the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man is justified.”

Irenaeus bases his argument on the Lord’s words in Matthew 5, as he continues, “And again: “It has been said, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, Every one who is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment,” referring to **Matthew 5 (KJV):21** Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Again Irenaeus continues as he adds, “And, “It hath been said, Thou shalt not swear thyself. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; but let your conversation be, Yea, yea, and Nay, nay,” referring in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):33** Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not swear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Irenaeus continues as he argues, “And other statements of a like nature. For all these do not contain or imply an opposition to and an overturning of the [precepts] of the past, as Marcion’s followers do strenuously maintain; but [they exhibit] a fulfilling and an extension of them, as He does Himself declare: “Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,” referring to **Matthew 5 (KJV):20** For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Irenaeus has quoted these verses correctly. However, note that just before this verse, Jesus spoke concerning the law as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The word “abolish” in the Greek is καταλύω (pronounced kataluō). Vine’s says that this word comes from two Greek words, “kata,” meaning “down, intensive,” and “luo, to loose, dissolve, sever, break, demolish,” that is, “to destroy utterly, to overthrow completely.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 303.**

This word is the same Greek word translated “torn down” in **Luke 21 (KJV):5** And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Jesus did not come to abolish, or destroy, or tear down the Law or the Prophets. He came to fulfill. The word “fulfill” in the Greek is πληρόω (pronounced plēroō). Vine’s says that this word signifies to fill, to fulfill, complete, as of time. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E.Vine, Vol. I, page 135.** This word is also translated fulfilled in **Mark 1 (KJV):15** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

We see this same usage also in **Luke 21 (KJV):24** And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

We also see the idea of completion in **Matthew 1 (KJV):22** Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

That is, what was spoken by the prophet came to pass, just as he foretold. It does not need to happen again, speaking of completion. The prophecy has then been fulfilled.

Jesus came to fulfill the law, that is, to keep it in every part, and to fulfill all its requirements. He also came to fulfill what was spoken by the prophets, that is, to accomplish all that was written of Him, and that He should do according to what we read in **Luke 4 (KJV):16** And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

That is, today what the prophet Isaiah foretold in Isaiah 61:1,2 has come to pass. The word of prophecy which Isaiah had spoken has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. It does not need to happen again, speaking of completion.

Now, looking at Matthew 5:19, the verse before Matthew 5:20 which Irenaeus quotes, Jesus says, “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven;” The word “annul” in the Greek is λύω (pronounced lyō). The Greek word luo means “to loose, dissolve, sever, break, demolish.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 303.**

Jesus is saying that he did not come to abolish, or dissolve, or destroy, or overthrow, subvert, or deprive of force the law or the prophets. He did come to fulfill, or consummate, or make complete in every particular, perform, ratify, and accomplish the things contained in the law and the prophets. Jesus did not here make our salvation dependent on the keeping of the law, but He said that those who annul any part of the law will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, while those who teach and keep the law will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Irenaeus then asks, “For what meant the excess referred to?” And Irenaeus then answers as he asserts the following:

- “In the first place, [we must] believe not only in the Father, but also in His Son now revealed; for He it is who leads man into fellowship and unity with God.”
- “In the next place, [we must] not only say, but we must do; for they said, but did not.”
- “And [we must] not only abstain from evil deeds, but even from the desires after them.”

Irenaeus here interprets Jesus as extending the law by adding further requirements. To Irenaeus, Jesus is not just stretching the Law out to its fullest length or capacity. Jesus is broadening the scope of the Law to include these things as well.

However, Jesus is not saying we need more righteousness, that is, righteousness in excess of what the scribes and Pharisees had, as Irenaeus suggests, for the scribes and Pharisees had no righteousness as Jesus plainly tells us in **Matthew 23 (KJV):15** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Calling someone a child of hell is the same as saying that they have no righteousness. So Jesus is saying that we need righteousness of a different kind. The scribes and Pharisees needed the righteousness that comes by faith in Jesus Christ. This is the righteousness that all who enter the kingdom of heaven must have. The Pharisees did not have this righteousness because they did not believe in Him as we read in **John 8 (KJV):24** I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

And Irenaeus knew this on some level as he says in the previous chapter of his writing, **Book 4:**

**Chapter XII,** “The Lord, too, does not do away with this [God], when He shows that the law was not derived from another God, expressing Himself as follows to those who were being instructed by Him, to the multitude and to His disciples: “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens, and lay them upon men's shoulders; but they themselves will not so much as move them with a finger,” referring to Matthew 23:2-4. He therefore did not throw blame upon that law which was given by Moses, when He exhorted it to be observed, Jerusalem being as yet in safety; but He *did* throw blame upon those persons, because they repeated indeed the words of the law, yet were without love. And for this reason were they held as being unrighteous as respects God, and as respects their neighbours.

Irenaeus says here that the Pharisees were “unrighteous as respects God,” which is the same as saying that they had no righteousness. So Jesus is not saying that we need more righteousness, that is, righteousness in excess of what the scribes and Pharisees had. Rather, Jesus is saying that we need righteousness of a different kind. All must have the righteousness that comes by faith in Jesus Christ, or die in their sins. The Pharisees did not have this righteousness, and also would not allow others to have it as we read in **Matthew 23 (KJV):13** But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

The righteousness that we must have to enter the kingdom of heaven comes by faith in Jesus Christ as Paul says in **Philippians 3 (KJV):7** But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

This is the righteousness that all who enter the kingdom of heaven must have. It is in this sense that Jesus says to the Jews, and all who would enter the kingdom of heaven, that their righteousness must surpass or exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. This righteousness of faith is the same righteousness by which those who lived before the law gained approval as the writer of Hebrews says in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “Now He did not teach us these things as being opposed to the law, but as fulfilling the law, and implanting in us the varied righteousness of the law.” Jesus was definitely not opposed to the law. But righteousness is never spoken of as being implanted in anyone in the Scriptures. Righteousness is credited, imputed, counted, reckoned, or put down to the account of those who have faith, but it is never said to be implanted in us in the Scriptures.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “That would have been contrary to the law, if He had commanded His disciples to do anything which the law had prohibited. But this which He did command—namely, not only to

abstain from things forbidden by the law, but even from longing after them—is not contrary to [the law], as I have remarked, neither is it the utterance of one destroying the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and affording greater scope to it.”

It is true that Jesus upheld the law. And He did not change the law or annul any part of it. Jesus did also reveal more truth about the law as one who knew the Father intimately. But Jesus was not adding something that was not in the law already. Rather, He was clarifying the law. He is telling us what every righteous person already knows, and that is, that sin is utterly sinful. Jesus was bringing us into closer relationship with the Father.

In paragraph two, it is helpful to look closely at what Irenaeus writes. He asserts the following:

- “For the law, since it was laid down for those in bondage, used to instruct the soul by means of those corporeal objects which were of an external nature, drawing it, as by a bond, to obey its commandments, that man might learn to serve God.”
- “But the Word set free the soul, and taught that through it the body should be willingly purified.”
- “Which having been accomplished, it followed as of course, that the bonds of slavery should be removed, to which man had now become accustomed, and that he should follow God without fetters.”
  - “moreover, that the laws of liberty should be extended, and subjection to the king increased, so that no one who is converted should appear unworthy to Him who set him free, but that the piety and obedience due to the Master of the household should be equally rendered both by servants and children;”
  - “while the children possess greater confidence [than the servants], inasmuch as the working of liberty is greater and more glorious than that obedience which is rendered in [a state of] slavery.”

Again it is helpful to have some working definitions of Irenaeus’ terms. When Irenaeus says that the law was laid down for those in bondage, he is referring to the bondage of sin as in **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

And Irenaeus himself states in **Book 3: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 7 ...** “Those, therefore, who assert that He appeared putatively, and was neither born in the flesh nor truly made man, are as yet under the old condemnation, holding out patronage to sin; for, by their showing, death has not been vanquished, which “reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” But the law coming, which was given by Moses, and testifying of sin that it is a sinner, did truly take away his (death’s) kingdom, showing that he was no king, but a robber; and it revealed him as a murderer. It laid, however, a weighty burden upon man, who had sin in himself, showing that he was liable to death. For as the law was spiritual, it merely made sin to stand out in relief, but did not destroy it. For sin had no dominion over the spirit, but over man. For it behooved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death. For as by the disobedience of the one man who was originally molded from virgin soil, the many were made sinners, and forfeited life; so was it necessary that, by the obedience of one man, who was originally born from a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation.”

Irenaeus is saying here in **Book 3: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 7** that Jesus Christ really appeared in the flesh and was truly man, and that those who say otherwise are still under sin, that is, “under the old condemnation, holding out patronage to sin.” And he is saying that many were made sinners by Adam, but “by the obedience of one man,” that is Jesus Christ, the many are “justified and receive salvation.” And Irenaeus speaks the truth when he says that the law is spiritual and merely showed sin to be what it really is but did not destroy it. Man was therefore in bondage because of sin and because of sin man was held by death.

Again Irenaeus says in **Book 3: Chapter XIX, paragraph 1.** “But again, those who assert that He was simply a mere man, begotten by Joseph, remaining in the bondage of the old disobedience, are in a state of death having been not as yet joined to the Word of God the Father, nor receiving liberty through the Son, as He does Himself declare: “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.””

So the “bondage” that Irenaeus is referring to here in paragraph two is the bondage of sin which man inherited from Adam. It is the “old disobedience,” the sin which drew man into bondage, and held all men by death.

Now when Irenaeus asserts that the law “used to instruct the soul by means of those corporeal objects which were of an external nature”, he is referring to the ritual laws which the Lord “imposed upon the [Jewish] people” for “the construction of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, the election of the Levites, sacrifices also, and oblations, legal monitions, and all the other service of the law,” as we will see shortly when we comment on **Book 4: Chapter XIV, paragraph 3.**

Irenaeus then asserts that the law drew “the soul as by a bond, to obey its commandments.” By referring to the law as a “bond,” Irenaeus begins his argument for his belief that there are two types of laws in the Scriptures. First there are the natural precepts of the law, and seconde, there are those of an external nature. It is the laws of an external nature that Irenaeus considers to be a bond to obey the natural precepts of the law.

“But the Word set free the soul,” Irenaeus asserts, and the Word taught “that through it the body should be willingly purified.” The freedom of the soul he is talking about could be referring to Jesus’ words in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

Jesus also refers to the sinful bondage man is in as He says that everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

Irenaeus then argues that the Word “set free the soul,” and this “having been accomplished, it followed as of course, that the bonds of slavery should be removed, to which man had now become accustomed.” The “bonds of slavery” he is now talking about are the bonds of slavery of the laws of an external nature.

Irenaeus continues his argument as he adds that the Word “set free the soul,” and this “having been accomplished, it followed as of course” that man “should follow God without fetters.” Again, the fetters he is talking about are the bonds of slavery of the laws of an external nature.

Irenaeus then concludes that the Word “set free the soul,” and this “having been accomplished, it followed as of course” that “the laws of liberty should be extended.” The laws of liberty again are the natural precepts of the law.

Irenaeus then adds that the Word “set free the soul,” and this “having been accomplished, it followed as of course” that “subjection to the king” be “increased.” The king of course is the Lord Almighty, Jesus Christ. Irenaeus now states that the purpose of the Word having freed the soul and extending the laws of liberty and increasing subjection to the King was “so that no one who is converted should appear unworthy to Him who set him free.”

Irenaeus then adds that the purpose of the Word having freed the soul and extending the laws of liberty and increasing subjection to the King was so that “the piety and obedience due to the Master of the household should be equally rendered both by servants and children.” The servants are those who were faithful to the law before Christ’s advent. The children are those who are faithful to the Word and the extended laws of liberty, that is, the natural precepts of the law, at Christ’s advent and afterwards.

Irenaeus concludes that the purpose of the Word having freed the soul and extending the laws of liberty and increasing subjection to the King was to make children who “possess greater confidence [than the servants], inasmuch as the working of liberty is greater and more glorious than that obedience which is rendered in [a state of] slavery.”

Irenaeus chartarizes the time of Israel under the Law as a state of slavery. The apostles themselves had to deal with the issue of the ritual part of the law, such as circumcision, which we might call a law of slavery, very early on in the building of the Church. In Acts, chapter 15, the apostles and elders at Jerusalem came together to hear the testimony of Paul and Barnabas who had been sent there to settle the great dissension and

debate that arose in the Church at Antioch because of certain men who came down from Judea as we read in **Acts 15 (NASB):1** Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

We see here that the real issue was not circumcision but salvation. So Paul and Barnabas were sent by Antioch to Jerusalem concerning this matter as we continue in **Acts 15 (KJV):2** When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

The apostles and elders then discussed the matter as we continue in **15 (KJV):6** And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Peter here describes his experience in Acts, chapter 10, at the house of Cornelius. The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles who were there while he was preaching. This is why Peter said that God "made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith." The Gentiles, who didn't even know the Law, were cleansed by faith Peter says. The yoke Peter mentions, that neither the fathers nor those present were able to bear, was the entire Law of the Old Covenant, for the issue was not about ceremony but about salvation. This is why Peter says in verse 11, "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

Now we resume in paragraph three, where Irenaeus explains just how Jesus extended the "laws of liberty" as he says, "And for this reason did the Lord, instead of that [commandment], "Thou shalt not commit adultery," forbid even concupiscence; and instead of that which runs thus, "Thou shalt not kill," He prohibited anger; and instead of the law enjoining the giving of tithes, [He told us] to share all our possessions with the poor; and not to love our neighbours only, but even our enemies," referring to Jesus' words in the Gospel of Matthew in **Matthew 5 (KJV):27** Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

And again in **Matthew 5 (KJV):21** Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

And again in **Matthew 5 (KJV):33** But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. 33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

And again in **Matthew 5 (KJV):43** Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on

the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Irenaeus continues his explanation of how Jesus extended the “laws of liberty,” as he says, “and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods. For “to him that taketh away thy coat,” He says, “give to him thy cloak also; and from him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again; and as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye unto them,” referring to **Luke 6 (KJV):29** And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Irenaeus then explains the benefits of Jesus’ extension of the “laws of liberty” as he says, “so that we may not grieve as those who are unwilling to be defrauded, but may rejoice as those who have given willingly, and as rather conferring a favour upon our neighbours than yielding to necessity. “And if any one,” He says, “shall compel thee [to go] a mile, go with him twain,” referring in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):40** And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Irenaeus then continues his explanation of the benefits of Jesus’ extension of the “laws of liberty” as he says, “so that thou mayest not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing thyself in all things kindly disposed and useful to thy neighbour, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing thy kind offices, assimilating thyself to the Father, “who maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust,” referring in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):43** Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Irenaeus concludes that Jesus was not doing away with the law by giving us freedom, but was, as he says, “fulfilling, extending, and widening it among us; just as if one should say, that the more extensive operation of liberty implies that a more complete subjection and affection towards our Liberator had been implanted within us.”

In other words, the “fulfilling, extending, and widening” of the “laws of liberty” among us was really giving us more freedom. And this “more extensive operation of liberty” therefore “implies that a more complete subjection and affection towards our Liberator had been implanted within us.” This is true in this sense, that those who have been born again have been made new in their spirit and, as a result, joyfully concur with the law of God as Paul says in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

We joyfully concur with the law of God in our inner man, our spirit, because that is the born again part of us. This is where we have been made alive to God. It is not that anything has been implanted in us, but rather that we have been born again, that is, we have been made alive to God in our spirit as Paul says in **Colossians 2 (NASB):13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

This is the new man as Paul says in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

It is the new self, or inner self, or spirit of man, that has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Irenaeus then concludes as he says, “For He did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him (no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord’s benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation), but that the more we receive His grace, the more we should love Him.” This statement

implies that we are with Him when we are within reach of the Lord's benefits, and therefore have the power to procure for ourselves the means of salvation. At this point, we might ask when are we within reach of the Lord's benefits, according to Irenaeus? I believe Irenaeus answers this question for us in several segments of his writing. First of all, in **Book 3: Chapter XXIV, paragraph 1**, he says, "But [it has, on the other hand, been shown], that the preaching of the Church is everywhere consistent, and continues in an even course, and receives testimony from the prophets, the apostles, and all the disciples—as I have proved—through [those in] the beginning, the middle, and the end, and through the entire dispensation of God, and that well-grounded system which tends to man's salvation, namely, our faith; which, having been received from the Church, we do preserve, and which always, by the Spirit of God, renewing its youth, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causes the vessel itself containing it to renew its youth also. For this gift of God has been entrusted to the Church, as breath was to the first created man, for this purpose, that all the members receiving it may be vivified; and the [means of] communion with Christ has been distributed throughout it, that is, the Holy Spirit, the earnest of incorruption, the means of confirming our faith, and the ladder of ascent to God. "For in the Church," it is said, "God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers," and all the other means through which the Spirit works; of which all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the Church, but defraud themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behaviour. For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth. Those, therefore, who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished into life from the mother's breasts, nor do they enjoy that most limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves broken cisterns out of earthly trenches, and drink putrid water out of the mire, fleeing from the faith of the Church lest they be convicted; and rejecting the Spirit, that they may not be instructed."

We have already discussed this segment of his writing in **Chapter 21: The Church**. It is sufficient to say that, as Irenaeus says, "all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the Church, but defraud themselves of life through their perverse opinions and infamous behaviour." By the Church, Irenaeus meant all the churches who could show apostolic succession, but especially Rome because of its preeminent position.

And Irenaeus also says in **Book 4: Chapter XXXIII, paragraph 8**, which we also discussed in **Chapter 21: The Church**, that, "True knowledge is that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes]; and [it consists in] reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God]."

And in addition, Irenaeus says in **Book 4: Chapter XXVI, paragraph 2**, which we discussed in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**, that "it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God—namely, strange doctrines—shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud. But such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, [shall] remain among those in hell (apud inferos), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron. But those who cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church, [shall] receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did."

And Irenaeus also says in **Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 2**, that those who "assemble in unauthorized meetings," that is, those meetings which are not under the auspices of a church which can show their apostolic succession, are heretics. So Irenaeus most probably believed that those "out of reach of the Lord's benefits"

were those outside of the Churches which could show their apostolic succession.

To restate then, Irenaeus concludes, “For He did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him (no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord’s benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation), but that the more we receive His grace, the more we should love Him.”

And Irenaeus ends with, “Now the more we have loved Him, the more glory shall we receive from Him, when we are continually in the presence of the Father.” This makes sense.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XIII

In this chapter, and paragraph one, Irenaeus is saying “that the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man is justified,” and that the natural precepts of the law were extended and fulfilled by Jesus, as is shown by Jesus’ words in Matthew, chapter 5. Jesus did not oppose or overturn the precepts of the past. Rather, according to Irenaeus, Jesus’ words show that He was extending and fulfilling them, “as He does Himself declare: “Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus also commanded “not only to abstain from things forbidden by the law, but even from longing after them.” With these words, Jesus was “affording greater scope to” the law, according to Irenaeus.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus states, “For the law, since it was laid down for those in bondage, used to instruct the soul by means of those corporeal objects which were of an external nature.” It is difficult to know exactly what Irenaeus means by his statement that the law “was laid down for those in bondage,” for the law was not laid down when Israel was in bondage in Egypt. The law was given by Moses after Israel was out of Egypt, and delivered from their taskmasters. However, as we shall see, in **Book 4: Chapter XV**, Irenaeus says, “But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage; as Ezekiel the prophet, when stating the reasons for the giving of such a law, declares: “And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live.” Irenaeus believed that Israel was placed “in a state of servitude,” a state of slavery or bondage if you will, when they made the golden calf had gone back to Egypt in their hearts to Egypt, when they were in the wilderness. It was for this reason that God laid down the ritual laws of sacrifice, and the other laws concerning the feasts so that their souls might be instructed “by means of those corporeal objects which were of an external nature.”

That is, the soul was instructed by the ritual laws, The bondage Irenaeus refers to is sin, and the laws of an “external nature” are those which draw the soul “as by a bond, to obey its commandments, that man might learn to serve God.” Irenaeus believed that the “Word set free the soul and taught that through it the body should be willingly purified.” That is, when the Word, Jesus, came and died for us on the cross, He set the soul free, and there was no more need for the laws of an “external nature,” which were “bonds of slavery.” Thus the laws of an “external nature” have been removed. Man is now to “follow God without fetters.” And “the laws of liberty,” that is, the “natural precepts of the law,” have been “extended, and subjection to the king increased.” This is “so that no one who is converted should appear unworthy to Him who set him free, but that the piety and obedience due to the Master of the household should be equally rendered both by servants and children; while the children possess greater confidence [than the servants], inasmuch as the working of liberty is greater and more glorious than that obedience which is rendered in [a state of] slavery.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus believed that the Lord was extending the natural laws when He forbade “even concupiscence,” and when He “prohibited anger,” and when He told us “to share all our possessions with the poor; and not to love our neighbours only, but even our enemies; and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods.” The Lord gave these commands “so that thou mayest not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing thyself in all things kindly disposed and useful to thy neighbour, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing thy kind offices, assimilating thyself to the Father, “who maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust.” All of these commands of the Lord were “fulfilling,

extending, and widening" the law among us. But the Lord "did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him," but that we should love Him more, "the more we receive His grace." Irenaeus believed that "no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord's benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation." By this statement he seems to believe that no one who is not submitted to a church in apostolic succession can be saved. Irenaeus concludes, "Now the more we have loved Him, the more glory shall we receive from Him, when we are continually in the presence of the Father."

In this chapter, Irenaeus makes man's justification dependent on his obeying the natural precepts of the law. Although he has not really defined these precepts yet, we understand from what he has said in this chapter that they are not the ritual laws of sacrifice and temple service. And these natural precepts he says were observed even by those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, previous to the giving of the law. We will understand more about what these natural laws are in the next chapter of his writing.

What we have tried to show in this chapter is that man is not saved or justified by doing the works of the law. That is, man's salvation is not dependent on his obedience to the law in any way. While Jesus did give greater scope to the law, He did not add, as it were, more precepts to the law. He only clarified the intent of the law, and thereby made sin utterly sinful. The prophet Samuel spoke to Saul after Saul had disobeyed the word of the Lord who told him not to offer the sacrifice until after Samuel had returned as we read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV):22** And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. **23** For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Samuel here says that rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Did Samuel extend the law here by saying that we must obey the very voice of the Lord, and not just do sacrifice? Rather, Samuel clarified the law. God wants our hearts, not our sacrifices. We must listen for His voice and obey it in whatever He tells us. In just the same way as Samuel clarified the true intent of the law to Saul, the Lord Jesus clarified the law to the Jews. In so doing, He made the law an even better tutor to bring us to faith in Christ by which we are saved.

As for Irenaeus' making the Church the procurer of the Lord's benefits for us, we know from the Scriptures that we are not saved by the Church, but the members of the Church are saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. It is our faith in Jesus Christ that makes us each individually a member of the Church. It is our relationship to Him that makes us a member of His body. The Church is composed of all those who have such a faith. The Church does not give this faith to the members. Our faith is a gift of God to each member individually. It does not matter if we heard the word of the Gospel through members of a church who can show their succession from an apostle, or if it was from a church who simply confessed Jesus as Lord and believed in their hearts that God raised Him from the dead.

The Scriptures do teach that man is sinful, and that, without Christ, he is in bondage to sin, and that he is held by death as a result. But the Scriptures also teach us that the purpose of the law was not to save us, but to convict us of our sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. **20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

And the law does instruct the soul by means of corporeal objects of an external nature as Irenaeus says. In the book of Leviticus, chapter 23, the Feasts of the Lord are described as we read in **Leviticus 23 (KJV):39** Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day [shall be] a Sabbath, and on the eighth day [shall be] a sabbath. **40** And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. **41** And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. [It shall be] a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. **42** Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: **43** That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I [am] the LORD your God. **44** And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

In this way we could think of the law as a bond which draws the soul to obey its commandments as Irenaeus says. The law prescribes remembrance of the times when God delivered Israel in miraculous ways as when He made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. But the law did not make them righteous. It only gave them knowledge of sin as Paul reveals in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. 21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

The law cannot impart life. This is why keeping the law, no matter how blameless we are in its commands, will not save us. This is why Jesus had to come and die for our sins, so that He could do what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus does set the soul free as it is sanctified by faith in Him, since our sanctification in this life occurs in our souls. But the body is not purified and free from sin until the resurrection. That is, the body still has sin as a nature and is death doomed. But our spirits are made alive to God, and we do not have to yield to the sin in our members as Paul says in **Romans 6 (KJV)**:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

We are freed from sin in our spirits, but not in our bodies for Paul tells us that nothing good dwells in our flesh as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

This is why we must put off and put on as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

On one final note, when Irenaeus says in paragraph three, “and instead of that which runs thus, “Thou shalt not kill,” He prohibited anger,” referring to Matthew 5:21-22, we note that it is not a sin to be angry for God Himself is angry as we read in **Isaiah 47 (NASB)**:6 “I was angry with My people, I profaned My heritage And gave them into your hand. You did not show mercy to them, On the aged you made your yoke very heavy.

Again we read Moses’ confession in **Deuteronomy 4 (KJV)**:21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance:

To say that God has sin is against the Scripture as we read in **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV)**:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

The Lord’s instructions to us through Paul are as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.

We will learn more about the ritual precepts of the law in the next chapter. In the chapter after that, we will learn more about the natural precepts of the law.

## **Book 4: Chapter XIV.—If God demands obedience from man, if He formed man, called him and placed him under laws, it was merely for man’s welfare; not that God stood in need of man, but that He graciously conferred upon man His favours in every possible manner.**

1. In the beginning, therefore, did God form Adam, not as if He stood in need of man, but that He might have [some one] upon whom to confer His benefits. For not alone antecedently to Adam, but also before all creation, the Word glorified His Father, remaining in Him; and was Himself glorified by the Father, as He did Himself declare, “Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” **3960 John xvii. 5.** Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered

us to follow Him; but He thus bestowed salvation upon ourselves. For to follow the Saviour is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light. But those who are in light do not themselves illumine the light, but are illumined and revealed by it: they do certainly contribute nothing to it, but, receiving the benefit, they are illumined by the light. Thus, also, service [rendered] to God does indeed profit God nothing, nor has God need of human obedience; but He grants to those who follow and serve Him life and incorruption and eternal glory, bestowing benefit upon those who serve [Him], because they do serve Him, and on His followers, because they do follow Him; but does not receive any benefit from them: for He is rich, perfect, and in need of nothing. But for this reason does God demand service from men, in order that, since He is good and merciful, He may benefit those who continue in His service. For, as much as God is in want of nothing, so much does man stand in need of fellowship with God. For this is the glory of man, to continue and remain permanently in God's service. Wherefore also did the Lord say to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you;" 3961 **John xv. 16**, indicating that they did not glorify Him when they followed Him; but that, in following the Son of God, they were glorified by Him. And again, "I will, that where I am, there they also may be, that they may behold My glory;" 3962 **John xvii. 24**. not vainly boasting because of this, but desiring that His disciples should share in His glory: of whom Esaias also says, "I will bring thy seed from the east, and will gather thee from the west; and I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; all, as many as have been called in My name: for in My glory I have prepared, and formed, and made him." 3963 **Isa. xliii. 5**. Inasmuch as then, "wheresoever the carcase is, there shall also the eagles be gathered together," 3964 **Matt. xxiv. 28**. we do participate in the glory of the Lord, who has both formed us, and prepared us for this, that, when we are with Him, we may partake of His glory.

2. Thus it was, too, that God formed man at the first, because of His munificence; but chose the patriarchs for the sake of their salvation; and prepared a people beforehand, teaching the headstrong to follow God; and raised up prophets upon earth, accustoming man to bear His Spirit [within him], and to hold communion with God: He Himself, indeed, having need of nothing, but granting communion with Himself to those who stood in need of it, and sketching out, like an architect, the plan of salvation to those that pleased Him. And He did Himself furnish guidance to those who beheld Him not in Egypt, while to those who became unruly in the desert He promulgated a law very suitable [to their condition]. Then, on the people who entered into the good land He bestowed a noble inheritance; and He killed the fatted calf for those converted to the Father, and presented them with the finest robe. 3965 **Luke xv. 22, 23**. Thus, in a variety of ways, He adjusted the human race to an agreement with salvation. On this account also does John declare in the Apocalypse, "And His voice as the sound of many waters." 3966 **Rev. i. 15**. For the Spirit [of God] is truly [like] many waters, since the Father is both rich and great. And the Word, passing through all those [men], did liberally confer benefits upon His subjects, by drawing up in writing a law adapted and applicable to every class [among them].

3. Thus, too, He imposed upon the [Jewish] people the construction of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, the election of the Levites, sacrifices also, and oblations, legal monitions, and all the other service of the law. He does Himself truly want none of these things, for He is always full of all good, and had in Himself all the odour of kindness, and every perfume of sweet-smelling savours, even before Moses existed. Moreover, He instructed the people, who were prone to turn to idols, instructing them by repeated appeals to persevere and to serve God, calling them to the things of primary importance by means of those which were secondary; that is, to things that are real, by means of those that are typical; and by things temporal, to eternal; and by the carnal to the spiritual; and by the earthly to the heavenly; as was also said to Moses, "Thou shalt make all things after the pattern of those things which thou sawest in the mount." 3967 **Ex. xxv. 40**. For during forty days He was learning to keep [in his memory] the words of God, and the celestial patterns, and the spiritual images, and the types of things to come; as also Paul says: "For they drank of the rock which followed them: and the rock was Christ." 3968 **1 Cor. x. 11**. And again, having first mentioned what are contained in the law, he goes on to say: "Now all these things happened to them in a figure; but

they were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages is come." For by means of types they learned to fear God, and to continue devoted to His service.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "In the beginning, therefore, did God form Adam, not as if He stood in need of man, but that He might have [some one] upon whom to confer His benefits." Irenaeus then testifies, "For not alone antecedently to Adam, but also before all creation, the Word glorified His Father, remaining in Him; and was Himself glorified by the Father, as He did Himself declare, "Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was," referring to John 17:5. Irenaeus then affirms, "Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him; but He thus bestowed salvation upon ourselves. For to follow the Saviour is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light." Irenaeus then explains, "But those who are in light do not themselves illumine the light, but are illumined and revealed by it: they do certainly contribute nothing to it, but, receiving the benefit, they are illumined by the light." Irenaeus continues as he then affirms, "Thus, also, service [rendered] to God does indeed profit God nothing, nor has God need of human obedience; but He grants to those who follow and serve Him life and incorruption and eternal glory, bestowing benefit upon those who serve [Him], because they do serve Him, and on His followers, because they do follow Him; but does not receive any benefit from them: for He is rich, perfect, and in need of nothing." Irenaeus then affirms, "But for this reason does God demand service from men, in order that, since He is good and merciful, He may benefit those who continue in His service. For, as much as God is in want of nothing, so much does man stand in need of fellowship with God. For this is the glory of man, to continue and remain permanently in God's service." Irenaeus then testifies, "Wherefore also did the Lord say to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," referring to John 15:16. Irenaeus continues as he explains, "indicating that they did not glorify Him when they followed Him; but that, in following the Son of God, they were glorified by Him." Irenaeus then testifies, "And again, "I will, that where I am, there they also may be, that they may behold My glory," referring to John 17:24. Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, "not vainly boasting because of this, but desiring that His disciples should share in His glory: of whom Esaias also says, "I will bring thy seed from the east, and will gather thee from the west; and I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; all, as many as have been called in My name: for in My glory I have prepared, and formed, and made him," referring to Isaiah 43:5-7. Irenaeus then testifies, "Inasmuch as then, "wheresoever the carcase is, there shall also the eagles be gathered together," referring to Matthew 24:28, "we do participate in the glory of the Lord, who has both formed us, and prepared us for this, that, when we are with Him, we may partake of His glory."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms that, "Thus it was, too, that God formed man at the first, because of His munificence; but chose the patriarchs for the sake of their salvation; and prepared a people beforehand, teaching the headstrong to follow God; and raised up prophets upon earth, accustoming man to bear His Spirit [within him], and to hold communion with God: He Himself, indeed, having need of nothing, but granting communion with Himself to those who stood in need of it, and sketching out, like an architect, the plan of salvation to those that pleased Him." Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, "And He did Himself furnish guidance to those who beheld Him not in Egypt, while to those who became unruly in the desert He promulgated a law very suitable [to their condition]. Then, on the people who entered into the good land He bestowed a noble inheritance;" Irenaeus then testifies, "and He killed the fatted calf for those converted to the Father, and presented them with the finest robe," referring to Luke 15:22-23. Irenaeus concludes, "Thus, in a variety of ways, He adjusted the human race to an agreement with salvation. On this account also does John declare in the Apocalypse, "And His voice as the sound of many waters," referring to Revelations 1:15. Irenaeus then affirms, "For the Spirit [of God] is truly [like] many waters, since the Father is both rich and great. And the Word, passing through all those [men], did liberally confer benefits upon His subjects, by drawing up in writing a law adapted and applicable to every class [among them]."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, "Thus, too, He imposed upon the [Jewish] people the construction of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, the election of the Levites, sacrifices also, and oblations, legal monitions, and all the other service of the law." Irenaeus then adds, "He does Himself truly want none of these things, for He is always full of all good, and had in Himself all the odour of kindness, and every perfume of

sweet-smelling savours, even before Moses existed.” And Irenaeus then affirms, “Moreover, He instructed the people, who were prone to turn to idols, instructing them by repeated appeals to persevere and to serve God, calling them to the things of primary importance by means of those which were secondary; that is, to things that are real, by means of those that are typical; and by things temporal, to eternal; and by the carnal to the spiritual; and by the earthly to the heavenly; as was also said to Moses, “Thou shalt make all things after the pattern of those things which thou sawest in the mount,” referring to Exodus 25:40. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For during forty days He was learning to keep [in his memory] the words of God, and the celestial patterns, and the spiritual images, and the types of things to come; as also Paul says: “For they drank of the rock which followed them: and the rock was Christ,” referring to 1 Corinthians 10:4. Irenaeus concludes as he again testifies, “And again, having first mentioned what are contained in the law, he goes on to say: “Now all these things happened to them in a figure; but they were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages is come,” referring to 1 Corinthians 10:11. Irenaeus then explains, “For by means of types they learned to fear God, and to continue devoted to His service.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “In the beginning, therefore, did God form Adam, not as if He stood in need of man, but that He might have [some one] upon whom to confer His benefits.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For not alone antecedently to Adam, but also before all creation, the Word glorified His Father, remaining in Him; and was Himself glorified by the Father, as He did Himself declare, “Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was,” referring to **John 17 (KJV):5** And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

This is very keen insight by Irenaeus. Irenaeus then affirms, “Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him; but He thus bestowed salvation upon ourselves. For to follow the Saviour is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light.” Irenaeus then explains, “But those who are in light do not themselves illumine the light, but are illumined and revealed by it: they do certainly contribute nothing to it, but, receiving the benefit, they are illumined by the light.” Irenaeus continues as he then affirms, “Thus, also, service [rendered] to God does indeed profit God nothing, nor has God need of human obedience; but He grants to those who follow and serve Him life and incorruption and eternal glory, bestowing benefit upon those who serve [Him], because they do serve Him, and on His followers, because they do follow Him; but does not receive any benefit from them: for He is rich, perfect, and in need of nothing.”

Irenaeus subtly implies here that we must follow the Lord to obtain salvation. At first glance, this would seem logical. However, in view of Irenaeus’ apparent belief that man is justified by keeping the natural precepts of the law, Irenaeus here implies that we must follow the Lord by keeping His commands, which he says “is to be a partaker of salvation.” What Irenaeus does not understand is that we have eternal life when we believe in Jesus Christ. It is our faith in Jesus Christ that saves us, and not our keeping the law, whether its natural or external precepts.

Jesus did say that He is the light of the world as we read in **John 8 (KJV):12** Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Again Jesus spoke as in **John 9 (KJV):5** As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

The apostle John tells us that in Him is life and the life was the light of men as we read in **John 1 (KJV):4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Again, the apostle John states that John the baptist was not the light, but bore witness of the light as we read in **John 1 (KJV):6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

Again, the apostle John tells us that Jesus is the true light which enlightens every man as we read in **John 1 (KJV):9** That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to

them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

It is those who believe in His name who are born of God. It is these born again ones whom He has enlightened. These have the light of His life in them. This is why the Scriptures say that man's spirit is the lamp of the Lord, or candle of the Lord in the King James version, as we read in **Proverbs 20 (NASB):27** The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the innermost parts of his being.

This is why Jesus said that His disciples are the light of the world as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):14** Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Jesus spoke of the disciples as lamps which had been lit by the light of life. Irenaeus does not completely understand the teaching of regeneration in the word of God. When we are born again, the Holy Spirit is the life of our spirit. We are as a lamp that He lights. This is why the Scripture says that man's spirit is the lamp of the Lord. It is not in our following Him that our lamps are lit. The lighting of our lamps happens when we repent and surrender our lives to Him, and He then gives us life in the new birth. When we confess Him as our Lord and Savior, our lamps are lit for the very first time. We are made alive in our spirits, being born of the Spirit, and He is now our life. It is then that we have an obligation to follow Him, and walk in the light as John says in **1 John 1 (KJV):6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

This has to do with our fellowship with Him. As we walk with Him, His Spirit will reveal sin in our lives. We must confess our sins in order to be cleansed and have fellowship with Him and other believers. God feels distant when we have unconfessed sin in our lives. When we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgives us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Once our lights have been lit, they do not have to be relit as it were. This is what Jesus was explaining to Peter when he was about to wash Peter's feet. Peter would not let the Lord wash his feet, but Jesus explained to Him that if He didn't wash him, he would have no part with Him as in **John 13 (KJV):8** Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Peter then wanted to go the whole way as we read in **John 13 (KJV):9** Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

But Jesus explained to him that once you have had a bath, you only need to wash your feet and you are completely clean as in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

When we are born again, it is as if we have had a bath, and we are completely clean. We are washed clean and given a standing as sons and daughters before God as we see in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):11** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

God then deals with us as His sons and daughters. We are His children, and He disciplines us accordingly. If we sin, we do not cease to be His sons and daughters. We do not need to be born again all over again. We simply must confess our sins in order to restore our fellowship with Him. Jesus' sacrifice for sin was the propitiation for our sins, as John reveals in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

When we confess our sin, we feel close to God again. We feel His presence. Walking in the light has to do with staying in fellowship with our Father. There may be much in our lives that is not pleasing to the Lord. As our Father, God does not hold us responsible to be mature in our knowledge of His word right away. We must be taught in the word so that we grow up into Him in all things. As we receive teaching in His word, we receive new light. The Lord will now hold us responsible for this new light. We must walk in the light or be disciplined by the Lord. He is a good Father and chastens every son and daughter He receives as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

This is the Spirit's work of progressive sanctification in our lives after we believe. We are not perfect when we believe. When we see Him we will be like Him. So it is the born again experience that is the beginning of our discipleship with the Lord. Without this experience, we cannot see or enter the kingdom of God as Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

And in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

This is absolutely essential in order to follow Jesus. We are not saved because we serve and follow Him. Neither does He grant us "life and incorruption and eternal glory" because we "follow and serve Him." We are saved when we believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confess Him as our Lord as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **11** For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Irenaeus then affirms, "But for this reason does God demand service from men, in order that, since He is good and merciful, He may benefit those who continue in His service. For, as much as God is in want of nothing, so much does man stand in need of fellowship with God. For this is the glory of man, to continue and remain permanently in God's service."

Certainly man stands in need of fellowship with God. And it is certain that to continue and remain permanently in God's service is the glory of man. Man could have no higher goal.

Irenaeus then testifies, "Wherfore also did the Lord say to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," referring to **John 15 (KJV):16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Irenaeus continues as he explains, "indicating that they did not glorify Him when they followed Him; but that, in following the Son of God, they were glorified by Him." Irenaeus then testifies, "And again, "I will, that where I am, there they also may be, that they may behold My glory," referring to **John 17 (KJV):24** Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Irenaeus then affirms, "not vainly boasting because of this, but desiring that His disciples should share in His glory: of whom Esaias also says, "I will bring thy seed from the east, and will gather thee from the west; and I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; all, as many as have been called in My name: for in My glory I have prepared, and formed, and made him," referring to **Isaiah 43 (KJV):5** Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; **6** I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; **7** Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Irenaeus then testifies, "Inasmuch as then, "wheresoever the carcase is, there shall also the eagles be gathered together," referring to **Matthew 24 (KJV):28** For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Irenaeus then concludes, "we do participate in the glory of the Lord, who has both formed us, and prepared us for this, that, when we are with Him, we may partake of His glory."

However, the eagles in verse 28 of Matthew 24 are symbolic of angels as is explained when we read further in **Matthew 24 (KJV):31** And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Irenaeus is apparently trying to apply Isaiah 43:5-7 to the Church, which he believes is the carcase over which the eagles are gathered. However, in Isaiah, chapter 43, God is speaking to Israel as we see in **Isaiah 43 (KJV):1** But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not:

for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

And Matthew 24:28 is preceded by **Matthew 24 (KJV):27** For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

So we see that Matthew 24 is speaking of the second coming of Christ, while Isaiah 43 speaks of the regathering of Israel, which will also occur near this time as we see in **Isaiah 11 (KJV):10** And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Israel will be regathered and saved in one day as we read in **Isaiah 66 (KJV):8** Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

This will happen in the middle of the tribulation as we see in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):6** Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

It is still true, however, that, as Irenaeus says, the Lord was “desiring that His disciples should share in His glory.” Inasmuch as Isaiah 43 relates to that, his reference is valid. The primary reference however is about the regathering of Israel towards the second coming of Christ.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms that, “Thus it was, too, that God formed man at the first, because of His munificence; but chose the patriarchs for the sake of their salvation; and prepared a people beforehand, teaching the headstrong to follow God; and raised up prophets upon earth, accustoming man to bear His Spirit [within him], and to hold communion with God: He Himself, indeed, having need of nothing, but granting communion with Himself to those who stood in need of it, and sketching out, like an architect, the plan of salvation to those that pleased Him.” It is true that God has unfolded His plan of salvation gradually through His prophets.

Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “And He did Himself furnish guidance to those who beheld Him not in Egypt, while to those who became unruly in the desert He promulgated a law very suitable [to their condition].”

Irenaeus then tries to summarize Exodus, but by asserting that there were none in Israel who beheld Him in Egypt, that is, who had faith in Him, he misunderstands what is written in the Scriptures. It was God’s plan all along that Israel would dwell in a land that was not theirs as God’s promise to Abraham revealed in **Genesis 15 (KJV):13** And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

This was also revealed to Jacob on his way to Egypt by God Himself in **Genesis 46 (KJV):1** And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. 3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: 4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. 5 And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. 6 And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and

all his seed with him: 7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

Israel did not lose faith in God in Egypt, but cried out to the Lord for deliverance because of their bondage as we read in **Exodus 2 (KJV)**:23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

Certainly there was a believing remnant in Egypt, such as Moses's mother, who hid the child Moses and nursed him despite the command of Pharaoh to kill every male child. This is mentioned in Hebrews as an act of faith as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV)**:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

Irenaeus is here trying to lay the groundwork for his belief that there were two types of laws given in the Old Testament. The first is the natural precepts of the law. The second is the Mosaic law, which he believes was a law "promulgated" for those "who became unruly in the desert" which was "very suitable [to their condition]," he says.

Irenaeus then continues his narrative as he skips forward to Deuteronomy when the people of Israel, who had been in the desert for forty years after coming out of Egypt, now entered the land promised them by God as he affirms, "Then, on the people who entered into the good land He bestowed a noble inheritance; and He killed the fatted calf for those converted to the Father, and presented them with the finest robe," referring to **Luke 15 (KJV)**:22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son in Luke, chapter 15, in response to the complaint of the scribes and Pharisees that He associated with sinners as we read in **Luke 15 (KJV)**:1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Jesus made no reference to Israel specifically in this parable. The parable is about the Father's love for the lost. Israel was not lost in Egypt. God had them there for a season while He grew them into a people. Irenaeus then concludes, "Thus, in a variety of ways, He adjusted the human race to an agreement with salvation. On this account also does John declare in the Apocalypse, "And His voice as the sound of many waters," referring to **Revelation 1 (KJV)**:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

Irenaeus then explains his thinking as he affirms, "For the Spirit [of God] is truly [like] many waters, since the Father is both rich and great. And the Word, passing through all those [men], did liberally confer benefits upon His subjects, by drawing up in writing a law adapted and applicable to every class [among them]."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus affirms, "Thus, too, He imposed upon the [Jewish] people the construction of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, the election of the Levites, sacrifices also, and oblations, legal monitions, and all the other service of the law." Irenaeus then adds, "He does Himself truly want none of these things, for He is always full of all good, and had in Himself all the odour of kindness, and every perfume of sweet-smelling savours, even before Moses existed." And Irenaeus then affirms, "Moreover, He instructed the people, who were prone to turn to idols, instructing them by repeated appeals to persevere and to serve God, calling them to the things of primary importance by means of those which were secondary; that is, to things that are real, by means of those that are typical; and by things temporal, to eternal; and by the carnal to the spiritual; and by the earthly to the heavenly; as was also said to Moses, "Thou shalt make all things after the pattern of those things which thou sawest in the mount," **Exodus 25 (NASB)**:40 See that you make *them* after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.

Irenaeus undoubtedly is drawing from Hebrews here, which also mentions this passage in Exodus as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV)**:4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was

admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

The word here translated “pattern” in the Greek is τύπος (pronounced topos). Vine’s says that this word means “a type, figure, pattern.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 95.** This same Greek word is also translated “images” in **Acts 7 (KJV):43** Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

The verse in Exodus 25:40 and the verse in Hebrews 8:5 teach us about God’s purpose in redemption. God had Moses make everything relating to the tabernacle exactly as he saw it in heaven. This is why these things are called figures of the true as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

In our commentary in **Chapter 21: The Church**, under the heading, **Book 4: Chapter XXI**, we saw that “the NT writers used the word “type” with some degree of latitude; yet one general idea is common to all, namely, “likeness.” A person, event or thing is so fashioned or appointed as to resemble another; the one is made to answer to the other in some essential feature; in some particulars the one matches the other. The two are called type and antitype; and the link which binds them together is the correspondence, the similarity, of the one with the other.” **ISBN, Volume IV, page 3029.**

The word for ἀντίτυπος (pronounced antitupos) is used in 1 Peter 3:21 and means antitype or “like figure” as the AV translates it. We looked at this word also in **Chapter 21: The Church**, under the heading, **Book 4: Chapter XXI.** As we saw in that chapter’s discussion, a type will occur in the Old Testament, and the antitype will occur in the New Testament. We must understand that a type is something that God has designed, and has intentionally made as a foreshadowing of something He has planned.

Since we are in the New Testament, we now can see the antitype more clearly than the Israelites. We understand that God was explaining through these things that there was a need for a redeemer who was perfect and without sin. The purpose of the tabernacle and the laws of sacrifice and the priesthood showed them, as well as us, the need for an atonement for sin. The tabernacle and the priesthood and the sacrifices were only types, or figures, of the real things in heaven as we read in Hebrews 9:24 above.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “For during forty days He was learning to keep [in his memory] the words of God, and the celestial patterns, and the spiritual images, and the types of things to come; as also Paul says: “For they drank of the rock which followed them: and the rock was Christ,” referring to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Irenaeus concludes as he again testifies, “And again, having first mentioned what are contained in the law, he goes on to say: “Now all these things happened to them in a figure; but they were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages is come,” referring to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):11** Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

The wording Irenaeus uses to translate verse 11 is “in a figure.” The word in the Greek is τυπικῶς (pronounced twopikos), here translated “example” in the KJV. This word is the adjective form of the noun τύπος (pronounced tupos). When Irenaeus says, “Now all these things happened to them in a figure,” the better translation is “example” here because they were written for our instruction. God’s purpose was to record these events for our instruction. Paul tells us of Israel’s history in the preceding verses, which, as Irenaeus says, is “contained in the law”, as in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):1** Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

The word here translated “examples” in verse 6 in the Greek is again τύπος (pronounced tupos). The word does not mean “types” in the sense that they have an “antitype”. The reason they were recorded was for

our instruction so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.

To see further what Paul is saying, we continue reading in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):7** Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. **8** Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. **9** Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. **10** Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Paul uses the words “as some of them were,” and “as some of them did,” to warn us not to follow their bad example, and as a result, suffer much pain. Paul is saying that these things were written so that we would know the result of sinful behaviors, and not do them. The key to the meaning of the passage is in verse 6 which states **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):6** Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

And so we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):11** Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

And finally, Irenaeus concludes, “For by means of types they learned to fear God, and to continue devoted to His service.”

With this statement, Irenaeus has summarized here the truth contained in the book of Hebrews. The things on earth are only a copy of heavenly things, and Christ our High Priest has come to serve in the things that are real, eternal, spiritual, and heavenly as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):1** Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; **2** A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. **3** For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. **4** For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: **5** Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

It is true that the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the laws of sacrifice were all types of the heavenly things. And Israel did learn from these things what God requires in relationship with Him.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XIV

To summarize, in this chapter of Irenaeus’ writing he uses the word “serve” four times, and the word “service” seven times. Irenaeus also used the words “follow”, “followers”, “followed”, “following” a total of ten times. This seems to be related to his underlying theme in these three paragraphs. Irenaeus states very early on in paragraph one that God formed Adam, not because He needed his service, “but that He might have [some one] upon whom to confer His benefits.” Irenaeus also states, “Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him;” To follow and to serve is Irenaeus’ message in these paragraphs. But Irenaeus is not just encouraging us to follow and to serve here. Irenaeus has a deeper message. He is encouraging us to be saved by our serving and following as he continues and says, “Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him; but He thus bestowed salvation upon ourselves. For to follow the Saviour is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light.” That is, Irenaeus is saying that “He ordered us to follow Him” in order that we would in this way have salvation bestowed upon ourselves. That this is so is confirmed by his very next statement, “For to follow the Saviour is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light.”

Irenaeus also mentions the word “law” four times. The first two instances are in paragraph two as follows:

- 1) “And He did Himself furnish guidance to those who beheld Him not in Egypt, while to those who became unruly in the desert He promulgated a law very suitable [to their condition].”
- 2) “And the Word, passing through all those [men], did liberally confer benefits upon His subjects, by drawing up in writing a law adapted and applicable to every class [among them].”

The second two instances are in paragraph three as follows:

- 3) "Thus, too, He imposed upon the [Jewish] people the construction of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, the election of the Levites, sacrifices also, and oblations, legal monitions, and all the other service of the law."
- 4) "And again, having first mentioned what are contained in the law, he goes on to say: "Now all these things happened to them in a figure; but they were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages is come," referring to 1 Corinthians 10:11.

We will see in the very next chapter of Irenaeus' writing the importance of these words.

## **Book 4: Chapter XV.—At first God deemed it sufficient to inscribe the natural law, or the Decalogue, upon the hearts of men; but afterwards He found it necessary to bridle, with the yoke of the Mosaic law, the desires of the Jews, who were abusing their liberty; and even to add some special commands, because of the hardness of their hearts.**

1. They (the Jews) had therefore a law, a course of discipline, and a prophecy of future things. For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them. As Moses says in Deuteronomy, "These are all the words which the Lord spake to the whole assembly of the sons of Israel on the mount, and He added no more; and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me." 3969 **Deut. v.**  
**22** For this reason [He did so], that they who are willing to follow Him might keep these commandments. But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage; as Ezekiel the prophet, when stating the reasons for the giving of such a law, declares: "And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live." 3970 **Ezek. xx. 24.** Luke also has recorded that Stephen, who was the first elected into the diaconate by the apostles, 3971 **[Acts vi. 3-7.]** It is evident that the laity **elected**, and the apostles **ordained**.] and who was the first slain for the testimony of Christ, spoke regarding Moses as follows: "This man did indeed receive the commandments of the living God to give to us, whom your fathers would not obey, but thrust [Him from them], and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for we do not know what has happened to [this] Moses, who led us from the land of Egypt. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their own hands. But God turned, and gave them up to worship the hosts of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets: 3972 **Amos v. 25, 26.** O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to Me sacrifices and oblations for forty years in the wilderness? And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Remphan, 3973 **In accordance with the Codex Bezæ.** figures which ye made to worship them;" 3974 **Acts vii. 38,** etc. pointing out plainly, that the law being such, was not given to them by another God, but that, adapted to their condition of servitude, [it originated] from the very same [God as we worship]. Wherefore also He says to Moses in Exodus: "I will send forth My angel before thee; for I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff-necked people." 3975 **Ex. xxxiii. 2, 3.**

2. And not only so, but the Lord also showed that certain precepts were enacted for them by Moses, on account of their hardness [of heart], and because of their unwillingness to be obedient, when, on their saying to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorce, and to

send away a wife?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he permitted these things to you; but from the beginning it was not so;" 3976 Matt. xix. 7, 8. thus exculpating Moses as a faithful servant, but acknowledging one God, who from the beginning made male and female, and reproving them as hard-hearted and disobedient. And therefore it was that they received from Moses this law of divorce, adapted to their hard nature. But why say I these things concerning the Old Testament? For in the New also are the apostles found doing this very thing, on the ground which has been mentioned, Paul plainly declaring, "But these things I say, not the Lord." 3977 1 Cor. vii. 12. And again: "But this I speak by permission, not by commandment." 3978 1 Cor. vii. 6. And again: "Now, as concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." 3979 1 Cor. vii. 25. But further, in another place he says: "That Satan tempt you not for your incontinence." 3980 1 Cor. vii. 5. If, therefore, even in the New Testament, the apostles are found granting certain precepts in consideration of human infirmity, because of the incontinence of some, lest such persons, having grown obdurate, and despairing altogether of their salvation, should become apostates from God,—it ought not to be wondered at, if also in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart. And if certain persons, because of the disobedient and ruined Israelites, do assert that the giver (*doctor*) of the law was limited in power, they will find in our dispensation, that "many are called, but few chosen;" 3981 Matt. xx. 16, and that there are those who inwardly are wolves, yet wear sheep's clothing in the eyes of the world (*foris*); and that God has always preserved freedom, and the power of self-government in man, 3982 [Note this stout assertion of the freedom of human actions.] while at the same time He issued His own exhortations, in order that those who do not obey Him should be righteously judged (condemned) because they have not obeyed Him; and that those who have obeyed and believed on Him should be honoured with immortality.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that, "They (the Jews) had therefore a law, a course of discipline, and a prophecy of future things." Irenaeus then asserts, "For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them." Irenaeus then affirms, "As Moses says in Deuteronomy, "These are all the words which the Lord spake to the whole assembly of the sons of Israel on the mount, and He added no more; and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me," referring to Deuteronomy 5:22. Irenaeus then asserts, "For this reason [He did so], that they who are willing to follow Him might keep these commandments." Irenaeus continues as he explains, "But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage;" Irenaeus then affirms, "as Ezekiel the prophet, when stating the reasons for the giving of such a law, declares: "And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live," referring to Ezekiel 20:24. Irenaeus then argues as he testifies that "Luke also has recorded that Stephen, who was the first elected into the diaconate by the apostles," referring to Acts 6:3-7, "and who was the first slain for the testimony of Christ," referring to Acts 7:59, "spoke regarding Moses as follows: "This man did indeed receive the commandments of the living God to give to us, whom your fathers would not obey, but thrust [Him from them], and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for we do not know what has happened to [this] Moses, who led us from the land of Egypt. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their own hands. But God turned, and gave them up to worship the hosts of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets: O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to Me sacrifices and oblations for forty years in the wilderness? And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them," referring to Acts 7:38-43. Irenaeus then affirms that Luke was "pointing out plainly, that the law being such,

was not given to them by another God, but that, adapted to their condition of servitude, [it originated] from the very same [God as we worship]. Wherefore also He says to Moses in Exodus: "I will send forth My angel before thee; for I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff-necked people," referring to Exodus 33:2-3.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies that "And not only so, but the Lord also showed that certain precepts were enacted for them by Moses, on account of their hardness [of heart], and because of their unwillingness to be obedient, when, on their saying to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorce, and to send away a wife?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he permitted these things to you; but from the beginning it was not so," referring to Matthew 19:7-8. Irenaeus then affirms that the Lord, in saying this, was "thus exculpating Moses as a faithful servant, but acknowledging one God, who from the beginning made male and female, and reproving them as hard-hearted and disobedient." Irenaeus then concludes, "And therefore it was that they received from Moses this law of divorce, adapted to their hard nature." Irenaeus then argues, "But why say I these things concerning the Old Testament? For in the New also are the apostles found doing this very thing, on the ground which has been mentioned, Paul plainly declaring, "But these things I say, not the Lord," referring to 1 Corinthians 7:12. Irenaeus continues as he argues, "And again: "But this I speak by permission, not by commandment," referring to 1 Corinthians 7:6. Irenaeus then adds, "And again: "Now, as concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful," referring to 1 Corinthians 7:25. Irenaeus then argues, "But further, in another place he says: "That Satan tempt you not for your incontinence," referring to 1 Corinthians 7:5. On the basis of these Scriptures, Irenaeus then concludes, "If, therefore, even in the New Testament, the apostles are found granting certain precepts in consideration of human infirmity, because of the incontinence of some, lest such persons, having grown obdurate, and despairing altogether of their salvation, should become apostates from God,—it ought not to be wondered at, if also in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart." Irenaeus then argues, "And if certain persons, because of the disobedient and ruined Israelites, do assert that the giver (doctor) of the law was limited in power, they will find in our dispensation, that "many are called, but few chosen," referring to Matthew 22:14, "and that there are those who inwardly are wolves, yet wear sheep's clothing in the eyes of the world (foris)," referring to Matthew 7:15. Irenaeus concludes as he argues, "and that God has always preserved freedom, and the power of self-government in man, while at the same time He issued His own exhortations, in order that those who do not obey Him should be righteously judged (condemned) because they have not obeyed Him; and that those who have obeyed and believed on Him should be honoured with immortality."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that, "They (the Jews) had therefore a law, a course of discipline, and a prophecy of future things." What he means by the law, he explains in his very next sentence as he says, "For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them."

So the "law" he is referring to is the Decalogue. By "course of discipline," Irenaeus means, for the most part, the rest of the Mosaic law. By "a prophecy of future things," he refers to the prophetic writings in the Old Testament. By the words "implanted in mankind," Irenaeus is probably drawing from Romans, chapter 2, where Paul says that the law is written on the hearts of all men and women as we read in **Romans 2 (NASB):14** For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

So what was implanted in mankind was the Decalogue which, according to Irenaeus, "if any one does not observe, he has no salvation." And Irenaeus then adds that God "did then demand nothing more of them." That is, God did not demand anything more for salvation of those before Moses' time than the keeping of the Decalogue.

Irenaeus then affirms, “As Moses says in Deuteronomy, “These are all the words which the Lord spake to the whole assembly of the sons of Israel on the mount, and He added no more; and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me,” referring to Deuteronomy 5:22. Here is what the passage actually reads, which is very close to Irenaeus’ quote, as we read in **Deuteronomy 5 (KJV):22** These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

The Septuagint also says “He added no more.” Irenaeus’ adds to this that God “did then demand nothing more of them,” as if this were all that God required for salvation. The word “added” in the Hebrew is יָסַף (pronounced yasaph) and Gesenius says that this word means “to add.” **Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D., page 354.**

The word “demand” is not found in the Hebrew. The passage simply reads that God did not speak any more than the ten commandments at that time in their hearing, which He then wrote on two tablets of stone. God also did not say that if you don’t keep these commandments, there is no salvation. It is true that the ten commandments, the Decalogue, are the standard of His righteousness. But they are not the totality of His righteousness as we shall see.

Moses here in Deuteronomy, chapter five, verse 22 is summarizing Exodus, chapter 19 through 31, where God spoke the ten commandments in the hearing of all the people on Mount Sinai, and then, after a period of forty days, gave Moses the two tablets of stone as we read in **Exodus 31 (NASB):18** And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Irenaeus’ thinking sounds very logical at first, but in order to understand what Moses meant by the words, “and He added no more” in Deuteronomy 5:22, we must we read his words in context with the rest of the Scriptures. The Scriptures state that God spoke to the people in their hearing, and then, out of their hearing, He spoke the rest of the law directly to Moses. The Scriptures narrate that the people asked Moses that he would hear God for them, for they were afraid when they heard God’s voice from heaven as we read in **Deuteronomy 5 (KJV):23** And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; 24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.

As we continue reading, we see that Moses listened to the people, and God granted their request that Moses would be His spokesman, as it were, in **Deuteronomy 5 (KJV):28** And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! 30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. 31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it. 32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

Notice that the Lord says in verse 31 that Moses was to stand by Him, and He would then speak to him “all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I give them to possess.” There were more commandments and statutes and judgments that the Lord would teach them than what He had revealed in the hearing of the people. The Lord would require them to observe all the way which He had commanded Moses in the land He was giving them to possess. Now Irenaeus then asserts, “For this reason [He did so], that they who are willing to follow Him might keep these commandments.” Here we see that Irenaeus uses the word “follow” again. Irenaeus laid down the basis of

his thinking in the previous chapter, that is, that we should follow and serve Him in order to obtain salvation. Irenaeus is gradually revealing his thinking about the path of salvation. According to Irenaeus, we must have faith, and follow and serve Him by observing the commandments in the Decalogue, or there is no salvation. Irenaeus continues as he explains, “But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage;”

Irenaeus apparently did not understand that God told Moses to stand by Him just after He had spoken the Decalogue in the hearing of all the Israelites. God then called Moses up to Mount Sinai where he stayed for forty days, and received the rest of the “commandments and the statutes and the judgments.” It was during this time that the rebellious Israelites made the golden calf. We will look at this timeline in detail shortly.

Note that Irenaeus asserts that God “subjected them to the yoke of bondage,” a “state of servitude suited to their wish.” This would correspond to the “course of discipline” Irenaeus mentioned in his second sentence in paragraph one. However, this description of the law is not valid according to the context of the Scriptures. We will see why shortly.

Irenaeus then affirms, “as Ezekiel the prophet, when stating the reasons for the giving of such a law, declares: “And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live,” referring in context to **Ezekiel 20 (KJV)**:23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. 24 An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. 25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. 26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

The fallacy of Irenaeus’ assertion is immediately apparent when we read in verse 23 that Israel has been dispersed “among the nations” and scattered “through the countries” when God “gave” them “other statutes that were not good and laws through which they could not live” in verse 25. The time when God “gave” them these other statutes and laws was when they were dispersed among the nations, and not when He gave them the law at the first in Exodus. In addition, in verse 26, the prophet speaks for the Lord saying, “I defiled them through their gifts—the sacrifice of every firstborn—that I might fill them with horror so they would know that I am the LORD.” The Lord never gave them a law to sacrifice every firstborn. Neither did it even enter his mind. But he gave them over to their lust for other gods, and the laws of the nations in which they were held captive, and in their idolatry they did this.

Irenaeus then argues that “Luke also has recorded that Stephen, who was the first elected into the diaconate by the apostles,” referring in context to **Acts 6 (KJV)**:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

It must have slipped Irenaeus’ mind that it was not the apostles who elected the first deacons, but it was the disciples who chose them, for in verse 3, we find the apostles telling the disciples to “select from among you seven men of good reputation.” Again in verse 5, Luke tells us that, “The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.” Luke then says in verse 6 that the apostles then prayed and laid their hands on them.

Irenaeus continues as he says that Stephen “was the first slain for the testimony of Christ,” referring in context to **Acts 7 (KJV)**:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a

young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Now to repeat, Irenaeus says that "Luke also has recorded that Stephen, who was the first elected into the diaconate by the apostles, and who was the first slain for the testimony of Christ, spoke regarding Moses as follows: "This man did indeed receive the commandments of the living God to give to us, whom your fathers would not obey, but thrust [Him from them], and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for we do not know what has happened to [this] Moses, who led us from the land of Egypt. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their own hands. But God turned, and gave them up to worship the hosts of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets: O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to Me sacrifices and oblations for forty years in the wilderness? And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them," referring in context to **Acts 7 (KJV):37** This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: 39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, 40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? 43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

In the record of Luke in Acts, chapter 7, Luke summarizes what Stephen said. And Stephen did not take them through the whole history of the Jewish people, but he showed them that they had a history of idolatry that went all the way back to the time of Moses who brought them out of Egypt to become the nation of Israel. Between the time when the rebellious Israelites made a calf and the time when God finally turned away from them, almost a thousand years had passed if we estimate that the time of the sacrifice of the golden calf in the wilderness to be about 1440 BC, and the time of the fall of Jerusalem to be 586 BC. In Luke's account, Stephen was being martyred, and he only wanted to show the Jews that they had a history of idolatry and needed to repent.

Irenaeus then affirms that Luke was "pointing out plainly, that the law being such, was not given to them by another God, but that, adapted to their condition of servitude, [it originated] from the very same [God as we worship]. Wherefore also He says to Moses in Exodus: "I will send forth My angel before thee; for I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff-necked people," referring to **Exodus 33 (Septuagint Bible):2** And I will send at the same time my angel before thy face, and he shall cast out the Amorite and the Chettite, and the Pherezite and Gergesite, and Evite, and Jebusite, and Chanane. 3 And I will bring thee into a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee by the way.

However, the Lord also spoke to Joshua after Moses died as in **Joshua 1 (KJV):1** Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper wheresoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt

meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

The Lord says here in verse 5 above that, as He was with Moses, so He would be with Joshua. And here the Lord tells Joshua to be careful to do all the law which Moses commanded him. The Lord promised to be with Joshua wherever he went.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies that “And not only so, but the Lord also showed that certain precepts were enacted for them by Moses, on account of their hardness [of heart], and because of their unwillingness to be obedient, when, on their saying to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorce, and to send away a wife?” He said to them, “Because of the hardness of your hearts he permitted these things to you; but from the beginning it was not so,” referring to **Matthew 19 (KJV):7** They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Irenaeus then affirms that the Lord, in saying this, was “thus exculpating Moses as a faithful servant, but acknowledging one God, who from the beginning made male and female, and reprobating them as hard-hearted and disobedient.” Irenaeus then concludes from this, “And therefore it was that they received from Moses this law of divorce, adapted to their hard nature.”

Moses did permit divorce as we read in **Deuteronomy 24 (KJV):1** When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorce, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. The word in Hebrew for “indecency” is תְּנַצֵּע (pronounced ervat). Gesenius says that this word means “nakedness,” and metaphorically “the nakedness of the land; i.e. a part of the land unfortified, easy of access.”

**Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D., page 653.**

Irenaeus is trying to show that in Moses’ time the Lord gave them “statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live.” It was these bad laws, as it were, that became the “yoke of bondage,” the “course of discipline,” and a “state of servitude suited to their wish,” according to Irenaeus.

Irenaeus then asks, “But why say I these things concerning the Old Testament? For in the New also are the apostles found doing this very thing, on the ground which has been mentioned, Paul plainly declaring, “But these things I say, not the Lord,” referring to 1 Corinthians 7:12. “And again: “But this I speak by permission, not by commandment,” referring to 1 Corinthians 7:6. “And again: “Now, as concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful,” referring to 1 Corinthians 7:25 “But further, in another place he says: “That Satan tempt you not for your incontinence,” referring to 1 Corinthians 7:5.

However, when we look back now at 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, we see a different interpretation than the assertions in Irenaeus’ argument lead us to believe. Here are Paul’s declarations, which Irenaeus refers to, and in the order that Irenaeus quotes them:

**1 Corinthians 7 (NASB):12** But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.

**1 Corinthians 7 (NASB):6** But this I say by way of concession, not of command.

**1 Corinthians 7 (NASB):25** Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.

**1 Corinthians 7 (NASB):5** Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

As we read 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, it is quite evident that Irenaeus quotes Paul's declarations out of order and out of context. The first section of 1 Corinthians, chapter seven, deals with marriage as we read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

Paul is saying here in verse two that "each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband." And then in verse six he says, "But this I say as a concession and not a command." In other words, he is not commanding every man and woman to be married, but he is allowing it. This is the concession he is making. Paul really wishes "all men were even as I myself am," he says. That is, he wishes all remained single as he says in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I.

Paul acknowledges that each person has his or her own particular gift from God. Paul says it is better to marry than to burn with passion, as we will read in verse 9 shortly. If you cannot exercise self-control you should marry. And if you marry, don't live as if you were single. Fulfill your obligation to your wife. Nothing is said regarding hardness of heart here by Paul. That was not the issue. The issue was, what is your gift from God? Is it to be single or to be married?

The next section of Paul's writing in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, deals with married people and divorce as we read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. 10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. 12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

Paul says that the Lord commands that believers who are married should stay married. If they separate, they should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to each other. Paul then recommends to married people who have unbelievers as partners that they should stay married if their partner consents to live with them. However, this is not a command of the Lord, Paul says, but a recommendation he himself is making. Paul says that if the unbeliever separates, the believing partner is free to remarry whoever they wish, but only in the Lord as we read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

Again, nothing is said of hardness of heart. Paul is giving his opinion only, and not a command of the Lord. And in the next section, Paul tells us to remain in whatever condition we were called as in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. 18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. 21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. 22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

Finally, Paul gives instructions to singles and to widowed ones in 1 Corinthians 7:25-40. Paul's intent here is to impart wisdom to the unmarried. He says that the Lord does not command us to be married or unmarried. He simply says he is giving his thoughts on the subject. Paul says he has been faithful in the condition he was called, that is single, though he was married at one time. This is true because he belonged to the strictest sect of the Pharisees, and it was a requirement of this sect to be married. We don't know what happened to his wife, and he doesn't say. Paul warns us here of the distractions of being married, and encourages us to live the undistracted single life of which the focus is to please the Lord. Paul's goal for us is undivided devotion to the Lord as we read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):35** And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

Paul says it is simply a higher calling if you are called to be single in **1 Corinthians 7 (NASB):38** So then both he who gives his own virgin *daughter* in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.

So Paul is not making a concession here in allowing people to marry because of the hardness of the hearts of the Corinthians, as Moses did with the Israelites under the law and the certificate of divorce. In fact, Paul stands up for marriage and commands that the married should stay married. He allows unbelievers to leave, and the freedom of remarriage of the believer is implied in this case. There is no sin involved here as could be the case with the certificate of divorce if the marriage ended and there was no immorality involved. Also, Paul is not making laws of marriage and divorce, but rather restating and rightly interpreting God's word and will about marriage. Paul encourages married people to fulfill their vows to each other, and not to withhold conjugal rights from each other "so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." There is no thought of hardness of heart here, but faithfulness to your vows. It is not about becoming apostate from God and "despairing altogether of their salvation," but about using wisdom so that you don't fall into sexual sin and so give the devil a foothold.

Again, there is absolutely no correspondence between Moses' granting a certificate of divorce and Paul's comments on marriage in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, there is no sin involved whether you marry or don't marry. Jesus Himself points out that marriage has been ordained by God from the beginning as we read again in **Matthew 19 (KJV):7** They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

There is absolutely no sin in marriage for it was ordained by God for the very first man and woman that He created. It was not good that man should be alone so God created a helper for him. Marriage is ordained by God.

Now, on the basis of these Scriptures, Irenaeus draws the following conclusion, as he continues and says, "If, therefore, even in the New Testament, the apostles are found granting certain precepts in consideration of human infirmity, because of the incontinence of some, lest such persons, having grown obdurate, and despairing altogether of their salvation, should become apostates from God,—it ought not to be wondered at, if also in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart."

In Irenaeus' thinking, "obeying the Decalogue" was the means of obtaining salvation, for in doing so one learned "to love God with the whole heart." The other ritual laws, besides the natural laws of the Decalogue and the two greatest commandments, were just a restraint so that they "should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart."

Irenaeus then argues, "And if certain persons, because of the disobedient and ruined Israelites, do assert that the giver (doctor) of the law was limited in power, they will find in our dispensation, that "many are called, but few chosen," referring to **Matthew 22 (KJV):14** For many are called, but few are chosen.

Irenaeus continues as he says, 'and that there are those who inwardly are wolves, yet wear sheep's

clothing in the eyes of the world (foris)," referring to **Matthew 7 (KJV):15** Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Irenaeus concludes, "and that God has always preserved freedom, and the power of self-government in man, while at the same time He issued His own exhortations, in order that those who do not obey Him should be righteously judged (condemned) because they have not obeyed Him; and that those who have obeyed and believed on Him should be honoured with immortality."

Man has the power to choose to obey God and be saved or not, Irenaeus says. In other words, Irenaeus is saying that man has free will to obey or disobey God, and it is through man's obedience to God and belief in Him that man is saved, that is, he obtains immortality. We will look more at Irenaeus' thoughts on free will in **Chapter 30: Free Will.**

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XV

Now to summarize, in Irenaeus' thinking, one had to have faith in God and keep the Decalogue, that is, the natural precepts of the law, in order to obtain salvation. In addition, Irenaeus would include the two greatest commandments in the natural precepts of the law, to love God and to love our neighbor, as well. Irenaeus points out in **Book 4: Chapter XII, paragraph 1**, that "the commandment of the law", is "the love of God." And again in paragraph 2, he says, "But that this is the first and greatest commandment, and that the next [has respect to love] towards our neighbour, the Lord has taught, when He says that the entire law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments," referring to **Matthew 22 (HCSB):34** When the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. 35 And one of them, an expert in the law, asked a question to test Him: 36 "Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?" 37 He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the greatest and most important command. 39 The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. 40 All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands."

To Irenaeus, keeping the natural precepts of the law was how you followed Christ, and were thereby justified and obtained salvation. Again in the same book in paragraph 5, Irenaeus states, "Now, that the law did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ, He does Himself make manifest, when He replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." Irenaeus quotes the Lord Jesus responding to the man who had asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life as he continues in this paragraph 5, "again the Lord replies: "Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself,"— setting as an ascending series (velut gradus) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law, as the entrance into life; and what He then said to one He said to all." Again Irenaeus tells us in the same paragraph 5 in **Book 4: Chapter XII**, "But He taught that they should obey the commandments which God enjoined from the beginning, and do away with their former covetousness by good works, and follow after Christ."

The "commandments which God enjoined from the beginning" in Irenaeus' thinking are the Decalogue and the love of God and of our neighbor. And though Irenaeus does not quote it, there is another passage in Luke, chapter 10, that Irenaeus probably was familiar with, and which seems to be a source of his belief that one must observe the law to be saved as we read in **Luke 10 (HCSB):25** Just then an expert in the law stood up to test Him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the law?" He asked him. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. 28 "You've answered correctly," He told him. "Do this and you will live." 29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

So we are to understand that Irenaeus included the two greatest laws among the natural laws, in addition to the Decalogue, "which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation," he says in **Book 4: Chapter XV**. I believe that Irenaeus would refer to the rest of the law as the "course of discipline," the "yoke of bondage," which is "a state of servitude suited to their wish."

Now in this chapter, **Book 4: Chapter XV**, Irenaeus is very firm in his division of the law into natural precepts, such as the Decalogue, which one is required to observe, he says, or there is no salvation. And he then quotes Moses in Deuteronomy 5:22 to support his contention that the Lord did not require anything more for salvation than these ten commandments, or literally, “words”. Again, here is what Irenaeus says in paragraph one, “For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them. As Moses says in Deuteronomy, “These are all the words which the Lord spake to the whole assembly of the sons of Israel on the mount, and He added no more; and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me.” For this reason [He did so], that they who are willing to follow Him might keep these commandments.”

However, Irenaeus is in error here, first of all because, as we noted above, the passage in Deuteronomy 5:22 does not use the word “demand,” but simply says He “added no more.” Not only so, but the Lord requires all of His statutes and ordinances to be kept, and not just the Decalogue, as we find in **Leviticus 19 (NASB):37** ‘You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am the LORD.’”

Second, we find no reference to the term, “natural precepts,” anywhere in the Scriptures. The work of the law is said to be written in the hearts of all men in Romans 2:15. But there is simply no division of the law in this way recorded in the Scriptures, nor is it implied. And the two greatest commandments, which Irenaeus would include in the natural precepts of the law, are not in the Decalogue “which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation,” according to Irenaeus.

Third, the law is referred to by the apostles, Paul, and Peter, as a yoke of bondage. The term “yoke of bondage” is used in the New Testament in **Galatians 5 (KJV):1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

This verse is also translated in another version as a “yoke of slavery” as in **Galatians 5 (NASB):1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

It is also referred to as a yoke by the apostle Peter, who said that neither he nor the fathers were able to bear as we read in **Acts 15 (NASB):10** “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?”

However, the law is not divided up by the apostles into the “natural precepts” of the law, and “a course of discipline,” which is a “yoke of bondage” as Irenaeus asserts. The apostles refer to the law as a yoke of bondage because of the difficulty of living under the law. Until Christ came, the people of Israel were under the law because Christ had not come yet. That is, the law told them that they had sin, and they looked forward to the coming of their Messiah, the Redeemer, the Christ, in the hope that He would redeem them from their sin and make all things right. This was the focus of the law, that is, to teach people about their sin and their need for a Savior, who is Christ. Irenaeus does not understand the freedom that is in Christ Jesus. Jesus didn’t just set us free from the laws of sacrifice and the ordinances. Jesus set us free from sin as a nature, and thereby set us free from being under the condemnation of the law.

Now, as we study the Scriptures, we find that the law naturally falls into three main divisions. The first is the Decalogue, relating to the standard of God’s righteousness, which we find in Exodus 20:1-17. Next are the ordinances, relating to the civil law, which we find in Exodus 21:1 to 23:33. And finally there is the ritual law, relating to the priesthood, or the liturgical law, in Exodus 25:1 to 30:38. But observing any part of the law has never been what saved us or the Israelites or those before Moses’ time. We will see why shortly.

The problem begins in this chapter for Irenaeus when he quotes Deuteronomy 5:22 out of context. Here is the sequence of events as Irenaeus describes them in this chapter of his writing:

- First, Moses says in Deuteronomy, “These are all the words which the Lord spake to the whole assembly of the sons of Israel on the mount, and He added no more;”
- Second, “and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me.” That is, God gave them to Moses.
- Third, “But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude

suit to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage;” In other words, God gave them the rest of the law which was the “yoke of bondage” when they made the calf and turned back in their minds to Egypt.

If Irenaeus would have taken into account chapters 19 to 34 of Exodus, he would have seen that what actually transpired was quite different than what he has summarized. The actual timeline and sequence of events is recorded in Scripture as follows:

- 1.) The sons of Israel camped in front of Mount Sinai as we read in Exodus **19 (KJV):1** In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. **2** For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.
- 2.) Moses went up to God and the Lord spoke to him and told him that if they would obey His voice and keep his covenant that they would be His own possession as we read in **Exodus 19 (KJV):3** And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; **4** Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. **5** Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: **6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.
- 3.) Moses told the people all the words that the Lord had spoken and they responded as in **Exodus 19 (KJV):8** And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.
- 4.) The Lord told Moses that He would speak with him in the hearing of the people as we read in **Exodus 19 (KJV):9** And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.
- 5.) Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.
- 6.) The Lord then spoke in the hearing of the people on the third day of the third month after they had gone out of the land of Egypt as we read in **Exodus 19 (KJV):16** And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. **17** And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.
- 7.) The Lord told Moses to go down and warn the people again, and then to come up to Him on the top of Mount Sinai as we read in **Exodus 19 (KJV):24** And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. **25** So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.
- 8.) Then God spoke the ten commandments to Moses in the hearing of all the people, and began as in **Exodus 20 (KJV):1** And God spake all these words, saying, **2** I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **3** Thou shalt have no other gods before me. **4** Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. **5** Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; **6** And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. **7** Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. **8** Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. **9** Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: **10** But the seventh day is the

sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. 12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 13 Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

- 9.) After hearing God speak all the words of the Decalogue, the people spoke to Moses as we read in **Exodus 20 (KJV)**:18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.
- 10.) Moses told the people that God wanted to test them, and put the fear of Him in them so they would not sin as we read in **Exodus 20 (KJV)**:20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.
- 11.) Moses then approached the cloud again in **Exodus 20 (KJV)**:21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.
- 12.) Then the Lord spoke to Moses again and began to give him more commands as we read in **Exodus 20 (HCSB)**:22 Then the LORD told Moses, “This is what you are to say to the Israelites: You have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven. 23 You must not make gods of silver to rival Me; you must not make gods of gold for yourselves. 24 “You must make an earthen altar for Me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats, as well as your cattle. I will come to you and bless you in every place where I cause My name to be remembered. 25 If you make a stone altar for Me, you must not build it out of cut stones. If you use your chisel on it, you will defile it. 26 You must not go up to My altar on steps, so that your nakedness is not exposed on it.
- 13.) Then the Lord began to give the ordinances to Moses as we read in **Exodus 21 (KJV)**:1 Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them.
- 14.) The Lord gave them ordinances about Hebrew servants in Exodus 21:2-11 as in **Exodus 21 (KJV)**:2 If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.
- 15.) The Lord gave Moses ordinances about personal injuries in verses Exodus 21:12-36 as in **Exodus 21 (KJV)**:12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. 13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.
- 16.) The Lord gave Moses ordinances about property rights in Exodus 22:1-15 as in **Exodus 22 (KJV)**:1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. 2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. 3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.
- 17.) The Lord also gave Moses ordinances for various social responsibilites in Exodus 22:16-31 and Exodus 23:1-9 as in **Exodus 22 (KJV)**:16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.
- 18.) The Lord also gave Moses ordinances about Sabbaths and the national festival in Exodus 23:10-19 as in **Exodus 23 (KJV)**:10 And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: 11 But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor

of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.

- 19.) The Lord gave Moses encouragement about obeying His voice in Exodus 23:20-33 as in **Exodus 23 (KJV)**:20 Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. 22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

Evidently the Lord finished speaking to Moses all of these words, and at some later time the Lord spoke to Moses again and told him to come up to Him with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel as we read in **Exodus 24 (KJV)**:1 And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. 2 And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

The next events in sequence are as follows:

- 20.) Moses recounts to the people all the words of the Lord, and the ordinances to the people as we read in **Exodus 24 (KJV)**:3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.
- 21.) Moses then writes down all the words of the Lord in a book as we read in **Exodus 24 (KJV)**:4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.
- 22.) Moses then offers sacrifice on the altar he has built in **Exodus 24 (KJV)**:5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. 6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.
- 23.) Moses then reads to the people the book of the covenant he wrote the night before in **Exodus 24 (KJV)**:7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. 8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.
- 24.) Then the Lord spoke to Moses as in **Exodus 24 (KJV)**:9 Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: 10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. 11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.
- 25.) Moses then went up alone to be with God on the mountain and stayed there 40 days and 40 nights as we read in **Exodus 24 (KJV)**:12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. 13 And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. 14 And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. 15 And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. 16 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.
- 26.) During this time the Lord spoke to Moses about building the tabernacle, a sanctuary where the

Lord could dwell among them as we read in **Exodus 25 (KJV):1** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. 3 And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, 4 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 5 And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, 6 Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, 7 Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. 8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

- 27.) God gave Moses instructions during this forty day period about the Ark of the Covenant, the Showbread, the Golden Lampstand, and the priesthood, and all the priestly garments and tabernacle walls in Exodus, chapters 25 through 31.
- 28.) It was during this forty day period that Israel grew restless and made the golden calf as we read in **Exodus 32 (KJV):1** And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. 3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. 4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. 6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.
- 29.) It was at this point that the Lord broke off His instructions to Moses regarding the ordinances and the law of the priesthood, and told him to go down because the people had rebelled against Him and sinned as we read in **Exodus 32 (KJV):7** And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.
- 30.) Moses then interceded for the people as we read in **Exodus 32 (KJV):11** And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 2 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. 15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. 16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. 17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. 18 And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.

- 31.) When Moses saw what the people had done, he threw the stone tables on the ground, shattering them as we read in **Exodus 32 (KJV)**:19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. 20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. 21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? 22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. 23 For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.
- 32.) Moses commanded the Levites to strap on the swords and administer discipline to the unrepentant in **Exodus 32 (KJV)**:25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. 29 For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.
- 33.) The golden calf was a great sin, and the Lord chastened Israel for it as we read in **Exodus 32 (KJV)**:30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33 And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. 35 And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.
- 34.) Sometime later the Lord spoke again to Moses and told him to make two more stone tablets like the first as we read in **Exodus 34 (KJV)**:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. 2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. 3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. 4 And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.
- 35.) Then the Lord spoke to Moses again of the covenant as we read in **Exodus 34 (KJV)**:10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.
- 36.) The Lord then told Moses to observe all that He was commanding him this day as we read in **Exodus 34 (KJV)**:11 Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: 13 But ye shall destroy their altars,

break their images, and cut down their groves: 14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: 15 Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; 16 And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. 17 Thou shalt make thee no molten gods. 18 The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. 19 All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. 20 But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty. 21 Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in shearing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. 22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. 23 Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. 24 For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year. 25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. 26 The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

- 37.) Then the Lord spoke to Moses over another period of forty days and told him to write down all the words that the Lord spoke to him and that in accordance with these words he would make a covenant with Israel. Then God wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments as we read in **Exodus 34 (KJV)**:27 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. 28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

This timeline and sequence of events proves conclusively that God did not give the ordinances and the law of the priesthood or liturgical law, in other words the “yoke of bondage” if you will, in response to Israel’s sin of the golden calf. God was in the process of giving the ordinances and the liturgical law to Moses when the Israelites grew impatient with Moses’ absence, and asked Aaron to make the golden calf. God was not dividing His law up into good and bad laws. God had a purpose in the tabernacle, the Showbread, the priesthood, and all the laws of the Old Covenant. These laws foreshadowed real things in a tangible way, and gave the Israelites an understanding of what was necessary in order to redeem mankind from sin, and make things right with God. Now the Old Covenant with Israel consisted of the Decalogue and all the other commandments God gave to Moses. The Decalogue was written on two stone tablets which were the tokens of the Old Covenant with Israel, just as circumcision was the token of the covenant God made with Abraham as we read in **Genesis 17 (KJV)**:9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

The covenant with Israel was a continuation of the covenant God made with Abraham, and was God’s set purpose all along. The Lord had made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan. The sons of Israel were their descendants, and so God remembered His covenant as we read in **Exodus**

**6 (KJV):**2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: 3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. 4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. 5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. 6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: 7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

This covenant to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, that is to Isaac, Jacob, and all Jacob's descendants, meaning all Israel, is an everlasting covenant as we read in **Psalm 105 (KJV):**6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. 7 He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth. 8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. 9 Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; 10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: 11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:

The Lord gave Moses the two stone tablets twice, and each time it was His set purpose to make a people for Himself and to give them the land of Canaan. The Lord spoke many words to Moses after He spoke the ten commandments to all the assembly from the cloud, and over a period of forty days He told him to set up the tabernacle, a sanctuary where God might dwell among them. The Lord also commanded that priests should minister before him in this tabernacle, and that sacrifice for sin would be made, though they were only sacrifices of bulls and goats which could not take away sin. This was not an after thought, or something God brought about because the people sinned a great sin, but it was God's set plan all along.

And this same sequence of events is recorded again in Deuteronomy, chapter five as we read in **Deuteronomy 5 (KJV):**23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; 24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.

And then the Lord speaks more to Moses as we read in **Deuteronomy 5 (KJV):**28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! 30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. 31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it. 32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

Here the Lord tells Moses that He wants Israel to keep all His commandments always. The Lord says that they are to walk in all the way which He has commanded them. And again in chapter six of Deuteronomy it is written as in **Deuteronomy 6 (KJV):**4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest

down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Again the Lord says in **Deuteronomy 6 (KJV):17** Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

The Israelites were commanded to teach their children all the commandments of the Lord as we read in **Deuteronomy 6 (KJV):20** And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? 21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: 22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: 23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. 24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. 25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

The ten commandments, or the Decalogue, were spoken by God to Moses in the hearing of all the people out of the cloud so that the people would fear the Lord and serve Him always. The ten commandments are the standard of God's righteousness but not the totality of it. The rest of the Lord's commands were not spoken in the hearing of the people. But they were none the less the words of the Lord, and they were to be obeyed. Israel was to obey all the commandments of the Lord. In fact, Israel was to live, not by every command, but by every word of the Lord as we read in **Deuteronomy 8 (KJV):1** All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. 2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. 3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

So the ten commandments were part of the covenant the Lord made with Israel, but they were not the totality of the covenant. The ten commandments may be said to be the standard of God's righteousness, but they are not the totality of His righteousness. The ten commandments spoke of particular sins, but not of all possible sins. This is why Jesus seems to extend the law as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):27** Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

It's not that Jesus made more laws, but He was showing us that the Decalogue, the ten commandments, show us what sin is like. Lustful thoughts are not specifically mentioned in the ten commandments, but Jesus points out that they are still sins. They did not become sins when Jesus pointed them out as sins. They were always sins, but we were not aware.

Jesus pointed out that there were weightier matters in the law, but the whole law was to be obeyed as we read in **Matthew 23 (KJV):23** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

So the words, "and he added no more," at the end of verse 22 in Deuteronomy chapter 5, mean simply that God added no more in the hearing of the people to the standard of His righteousness. They do not mean that God "did demand nothing more of them," for it is abundantly clear in the Scriptures that God demands obedience to His every command, and His voice, and even His every word.

Before Israel crossed the Jordan to enter the promised land, Moses gave them a charge to keep all of the commandments of the Lord as in **Deuteronomy 27 (KJV):1** And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day.

And there was a curse on everyone who did not do all the commandments of the covenant. As Israel stood poised to enter the land, Moses commanded six tribes to stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people and six tribes to stand on Mount Ebal for the curse as in **Deuteronomy 27 (KJV):25** Cursed be he that taketh

reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. 26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

The curse was on those who did not observe to do all the law, and not just the ten commandments. The command to be careful to do all the Lord's commandments is repeated again in **Deuteronomy 28 (KJV):1** And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: 2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Other blessings are mentioned in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. The Lord promised victory over their enemies, and abundance of produce and livestock if they were obedient, and if they did not turn aside from any of the words He commanded them as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (KJV):12** The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. 13 And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: 14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Again, if Israel did not obey all His commandments and statutes, all the curses would come upon them as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (KJV):15** But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: 16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. 17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. 19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

Many more curses are pronounced in Deuteronomy 28:20-68. All these words, the blessings and the curses, are in the covenant which the Lord made with Israel as we read in **Deuteronomy 29 (KJV):1** These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

Horeb was another name for the mountain of God as in **Exodus 3 (KJV):1** Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Horeb is used interchangeably with Mount Sinai, which was where the Lord gave the ten commandments to Israel, as well as all of the ordinances over a period of forty days and forty nights as we read in **Exodus 24 (KJV):12** And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. 13 And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. 14 And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. 15 And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. 16 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

Now, that the blessings and curses were a part of the covenant and written in the book of the law is revealed in **Deuteronomy 29 (KJV):21** And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law:

And Joshua was commanded to meditate on this book of the law day and night so that he would be carerful to do all that is written in it as we read in **Joshua 1 (KJV)**:6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

The reason that Joshua was commanded to meditate on the book of the law day and night is because every word of God is inspired, literally God-breathed, as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV)**:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

This is why the word of God is described as living as in **Hebrews 4 (NASB)**:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

It is the whole word of God that is inspired and living, and not just the ten commandments. It is the word of God that is a light to our path as we read in **Psalm 119 (KJV)**:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

And Psalm 19 describes the law of the Lord as perfect in **Psalm 19 (KJV)**:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

This Psalm describes the whole law, and not just the ten commandments. The whole law reveals truth about God that is not found in the ten commandments. For example, when the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus questioning Him, he responded as in **Mark 12 (KJV)**:24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? 25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. 26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

Jesus points out that the truth about the resurrection was revealed in the book of Exodus, one of the first five books of the Bible, which God commanded Moses to write. These five books are also known as the Torah, and are also referred to simply as “the Law.” Whatever we call them, they are included in the Scriptures, and as such, are inspired by God. And all the words of God are truth for He is the God of truth as we read in **Psalm 31 (KJV)**:5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

The Decalogue is the standard of God’s righteousness, but the Decalogue is only a small part of the truth of God revealed in the word of God. We need all the truth in the word of God in order to truly be free and live for Him.

Irenaeus continues his writing with the words, “But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage.” The term “yoke of bondage” is used in the New Testament in **Galatians 5 (KJV)**:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

It is also translated a “yoke of slavery” as in **Galatians 5 (NASB)**:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Irenaeus is trying to tell us that the ten commandments and the other natural precepts of the law such as the commandments to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as our self, are what we must keep in order to obtain salvation. The rest of the law Irenaeus calls the “yoke of bondage” that Paul mentions here in Galatians. Irenaeus also leads us to believe that some of the laws of Moses are the bad laws spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel, for Irenaeus says that when the Israelites “had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage as Ezekiel the prophet, when stating the reasons for the giving of such a law, declares: “And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live,” referring to Ezekiel 20:24-25.

These verses in Ezekiel must be read in context within the book, and the time that it was written. Here is the verse in the immediate context in which it was written.

**Ezekiel 20 (KJV):**23 I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; 24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. 25 Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; 26 And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.

By the time Ezekiel was writing this, Israel was in captivity in Babylon as we read in **Ezekiel 1 (KJV):**1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, 3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

This exile came about because Israel had rejected the laws of the Lord. Before Moses died, the Lord told him to lay his hands on Joshua and appoint him as the new leader of Israel. Joshua took Moses' place and led the Israelites in conquest of the promised land. This is recorded in the book of Joshua. Israel went through the times of the Judges as the book of Judges records. During this time godly men and women such as Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, Deborah, and Samuel led Israel. Finally a king was appointed. Saul became Israel's first king, but he was rejected because of his sin. David was a man after God's own heart and led the Israelites to conquer Goliath and the Philistines. David became King and his heart was perfect toward the Lord all his days except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba. David committed adultery with Bathsheba and when she became pregnant by David, David had Uriah killed in battle by his commander Joab. Nathan the prophet was sent by the Lord to rebuke David as we read in **2 Samuel 12 (NASB):**9 Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.

The Lord forgave David as we read in **2 Samuel 12 (KJV):**13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. 14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. 15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

David soon had another son by Bathsheba and they named him Solomon. The kingdom of Israel reached its pinnacle in the reign of Solomon. However, at the end of his reign, he fell into sin. He had many foreign wives in disobedience to the Lord's command not to take foreign wives as we read in **1 Kings 11 (KJV):**4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an high

place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

As a result, the Lord judged Israel because of Solomon as we read in **1 Kings 11 (KJV)**:9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. 11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. 12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. 13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

The kingdom of Israel became divided in the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Jeroboam eventually became king over the ten tribes in the north. Rehoboam reigned over Judah and Benjamin. Soon however Jeroboam set up idols for the northern tribes to worship in Dan and Bethel. This became a snare to Israel and they went into captivity as a result by the Assyrians in 723 BC. Here is the account of their captivity and why as we read in **2 Kings 17 (KJV)**:6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, 8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. 9 And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. 10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: 11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: 12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. 13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. 14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. 15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them. 16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. 17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

Israel was led into captivity because of sin. They forsook all the commandments of the Lord and worshipped other gods. They rejected His statutes and His covenant. However, Judah still had one tribe and was faithful a little while longer.

Judah had some good kings who were faithful to the Lord, but after Hezekiah there was only one who was faithful, and that was Josiah. But Hezekiah's son did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any king before or after him as we read in **2 Kings 21 (KJV)**:1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. 4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 7 And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8 Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. 9 But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

Because of Manasseh, the Lord finally determined judgment on Judah as well as we read in **2 Kings 21 (KJV)**:10 And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, 11 Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: 12 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. 13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. 14 And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; 15 Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. 16 Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

Incredibly, Josiah, Manasseh's son, became king of Judah and was zealous for the Lord as we read in **2 Kings 22 (KJV)**:1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boskath. 2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

Josiah gave commands to clean up Israel and tear down the idols and repair the House of the Lord. When Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, he had Shaphan take it to King Josiah and read it to him. The King was greatly distressed when he realized that Israel had not obeyed all that was written as we read in **2 Kings 22 (KJV)**:11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. 12 And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, 13 Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

Josiah realized that the Lord's wrath was upon Israel because they had not obeyed all that was written in the book of the law, and not just because they had not obeyed the ten commandments. Josiah immediately inquired of the Lord and Huldah the prophetess responded as we read in **2 Kings 22 (KJV)**:14 So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her. 15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, 16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: 17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. 18 But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard; 19 Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou hearest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. 20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered

into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

In 2 Kings, chapter 23, it is recorded how zealous Josiah was for the Lord. He led the people back to the Lord as we read in **2 Kings 23 (KJV)**:24 Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25 And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

However the Lord would not turn from His wrath for the sins of Judah were too great as we see in **2 Kings 23 (KJV)**:26 Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. 27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

Josiah was killed in the battle with Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, and every king after him did evil in the sight of the Lord. Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead as we read in **2 Kings 23 (KJV)**:31 Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. 33 And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

Eliakim, son of Josiah, reigned after his brother as we read in **2 Kings 23 (KJV)**:34 And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

Jehoiakim also did evil in the sight of the Lord as we read in **2 Kings 23 (KJV)**:36 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. 37 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

As a result, the King of Babylon came and made Jehoiakim his servant as we read in **2 Kings 24 (KJV)**:1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; 4 And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. 5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 6 So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

Then Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, reigned and eventually was led into exile in Babylon and Zedekiah reigned after him as we read in **2 Kings 24 (KJV)**:7 And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt. 8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. 12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. 13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.

14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. 17 And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. 18 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

This was how Ezekiel came to be exiled in Babylon with the other Israelites. This exile was a fulfillment of the Lord's promise in the wilderness that he would disperse them among the nations, as we read in **Ezekiel 20 (KJV)**:23 I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; 24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols.

We see that blessing would come upon Israel for obeying the Lord as we read in **Deuteronomy**

**28 (KJV)**:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: 2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

All the blessings that the Lord planned for Israel are listed in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, verses 1 to 14. But if Israel was not obedient there was also a curse planned for Israel as we read in **Deuteronomy**

**28 (KJV)**:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

The Lord promised to scatter them among the nations as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (KJV)**:64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: 66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: 67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

The curse came upon Israel for disobedience. But it was disobedience only after the law had already been given. Israel could not be held accountable for the law until the Lord had given it to them through Moses. Israel was placed on a conditional footing after the law was given by Moses. If they were obedient, they would be blessed. If they were disobedient, they would be judged and come under the curse. Ezekiel is prophesying during the time of the curse. Israel had been driven from their land and scattered among the peoples where they could find no rest and serve other gods. They would also fall under other laws, that is, the laws of the peoples where they were scattered. These were laws that were not good. They were the laws of the peoples, and not God's laws, for Israel had rejected the laws of God. All the laws of God, and every word from His mouth, is good. It is the laws of the peoples that are bad because the peoples are sinful and do not have a right standard to judge by until they submit themselves to the living God.

Irenaeus asserts that the Lord gave Israel bad laws, and he asserts that Ezekiel the prophet states the reason for the giving of such a law when he "declares: "And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live." Again, the verse reads as in **Ezekiel 20 (KJV)**:23 I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among

the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; 24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. 25 Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; 26 And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.

Although Ezekiel telescopes back in time to the time of Israel in the wilderness recalling their first disobedience, the Lord promised to disperse them among the nations if they did not obey all the laws He gave them through Moses. Ezekiel is not saying that the Lord gave them bad laws in the wilderness. It was in Deuteronomy that Moses finished writing all the words in the book of the law as we read in **Deuteronomy 31 (KJV)**:24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, 25 That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, 26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.

It was only after Moses finished writing the law that God could actually hold Israel accountable for it. There was actually a prophecy that Israel would be disobedient and fall under the curse as we read in **Deuteronomy 30 (KJV)**:1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

Moses then gave Israel encouragement to be faithful to the Lord, and to do all His commands. Life was to be dependent on their obedience to the Lord's voice and holding fast to Him in relationship as we read in **Deuteronomy 30 (KJV)**:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

At the time of Ezekiel's writing, this prophecy about the curse reached its fulfillment. The Lord did not punish Israel with a curse for breaking bad laws but for breaking His laws. The context of the verses shows that it was their disobedience to the Lord's laws that brought them under judgments and statutes that were not good, such as offering their first born in sacrifice. This was a direct result of idolatry as we read in **Jeremiah 7 (ASV)**:30 For the sons of Judah have done that which is evil in My sight," declares the LORD, "they have set their detestable things in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. 31 They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.

Again Jeremiah says in **Jeremiah 19 (ASV)**:4 Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent 5 and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind;

God does not give bad laws. If He did, how could He exercise judgment on those who disobeyed. The laws of the peoples where Israel was scattered were the bad laws that the Lord gave Israel over to after they rejected His laws. Therefore, there is another interpretation for the words "yoke of bondage" than that which Irenaeus has asserted. We will look at that later.

Irenaeus continues his argument with the statement, "Luke also has recorded that Stephen, who was the first elected into the diaconate by the apostles, and who was the first slain for the testimony of Christ, spoke regarding Moses as follows: "This man did indeed receive the commandments of the living God to give to us, whom your fathers would not obey, but thrust [Him from them], and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for we do not know what has happened to [this] Moses, who led us from the land of Egypt. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices to the idol,

and were rejoicing in the works of their own hands. But God turned, and gave them up to worship the hosts of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets: O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to Me sacrifices and oblations for forty years in the wilderness? And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them;””

Irenaeus makes it sound as if God turned Israel over to worship the hosts of heaven as soon as they worshipped the golden calf. But Stephen is here telescoping back in time and summarizes Israel’s history. Stephen does not have a lot of time to explain all the history of Israel’s disobedience since he is about to be stoned to death. His last quotation is from Amos as we read in **Amos 5 (ASB):25** "Did you present Me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel? 26 You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves.

Amos lived in the eighth century B.C. and prophesied from Judah about 750 B.C. His prophecy was focused on the northern kingdom. All that can be said here is that the curse did come upon Israel for disobedience to God’s laws. Israel did not completely deal with their sin. Eventually judgment came upon Israel, but it was not immediate in the form of God giving them bad laws. The reason Irenaeus quotes Stephen is because he wants to show primarily that the law was a “yoke of bondage” adapted to Israel’s condition of servitude because they are a stiff-necked people. Irenaeus says Stephen is “pointing out plainly, that the law being such, was not given to them by another God, but that, adapted to their condition of servitude, [it originated] from the very same [God as we worship].” Irenaeus defines the “condition of servitude” in the previous sentences as that state of mind of the Israelites that desired to go back to Egypt and be slaves again rather than serve God. Since this was Israel’s desire, Irenaeus asserts that God then gave them a law that was “suited to their wish” and “subjected them to the yoke of bondage.” To further emphasize his point, Irenaeus says, “Wherefore also He says to Moses in Exodus: “I will send forth My angel before thee; for I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff-necked people.””

While it is certainly true that the law was not given by another God, the reason for the giving of the law was not because of the sin of the golden calf. The giving of the law was God’s purpose all along. When God spoke the ten commandments to Israel in the hearing of the people, it was so that Israel would fear God and not sin as we read in **Exodus 20 (KJV):18** And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

After this, it was enough for the Israelites that Moses would speak God’s words to them, and they would obey. God only spoke the ten commandments in their hearing, but gave more commands to Moses to give them. Though God “added no more” to the ten commandments that He spoke in the hearing of the people, He added more commandments through Moses which they were to keep also. These were not the bad laws that Ezekiel speaks of, but they were the ordinances and the liturgical laws of the covenant that God was making with Israel. These further commands were good laws as well. As Paul says, the commandment wasn’t sin, but it was sin which was in us that caused our downfall. The commandment only made us aware of our sin as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. 12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Paul does not place the fault on the law, but on our sin as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):13** Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

If the law is holy and just and good, why then does Paul himself call it a yoke of bondage as in **Galatians 5 (KJV):1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Paul begins his epistle to the Galatians with a great concern as he says in **Galatians 1 (KJV)**:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Paul tells them that he received the gospel that he preached to them by revelation from the Lord as we read in **Galatians 1 (KJV)**:11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul's concern was that the Galatians were observing the law as he explains in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. 5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

The Galatians did not receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law, that is, by observing the law. They received the Spirit by believing what they heard.

Abraham received the Spirit in the same way, by believing what he heard, as Paul instructs us in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

The words "it was reckoned to him as righteousness" mean that Abraham was justified by his faith. This is why Paul tells us that the Scripture preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, for in the same way that Abraham was justified by faith, so are we. So we are to understand that believers before Christ came were justified by faith in the same way that believers are now justified by faith in Christ after Christ has come.

Paul then explains that being under the law means you are required to abide by all things written in the book of the law, or you are cursed as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Paul does not mention any division of the law into natural precepts and the other laws. He simply mentions "the book of the law." This would include all the laws mentioned in the Scripture. He says that those who are "of the works of the law," that is, those who observe the law, "are under the curse," and must abide by all things written in the book of the law or be cursed. Paul did not say that they must abide by some things, but all things which are written in the book of the law. His point is that no one, except Jesus Christ, can rely on the works of the law for justification. Jesus Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the law by keeping the law to the letter. Therefore, He has born the curse of the law for us, and we receive His righteousness by faith as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The apostles were not law givers like Moses. The law had already been given through Moses. Now, after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the apostles explained how believers were to live a holy and righteous life. The apostles encouraged believers to think soberly of themselves. We are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV)**:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

We all have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):6**  
Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy  
according to the proportion of faith;

This is what Paul is saying in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):7** For I would that all men were even as I myself.  
But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

He is not saying that some have harder hearts than others. He is saying that some have a greater or lesser amount of grace according to the measure of his or her particular gift. Paul had grace to be single. He was not advocating or commanding everyone to be single. But if someone had the grace from God to have authority over his own will, and is under no necessity, that is, he is not burning inside with passion, then let this one remain single. Each one has his own gift from God.

Irenaeus concludes by stating a very clear explanation of salvation by works in the New Testament as he says here in **Book 4: Chapter XV, paragraph two**, “it ought not to be wondered at, if also in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart.” The “ordinances already mentioned” refers to the Decalogue, the ten commandments. The idea is that God grants certain “indulgences for the benefit of his people,” taking into account human infirmity, in order that we might be successful in our obedience to the Decalogue, and so “obtain the gift of salvation through them,” that is through the ten commandments.

The idea is that God takes into account our human infirmity, and grants certain indulgences in order that we might be drawn by these ordinances “so that we might obtain the gift of salvation through them.” That is, through the facilitation of these indulgences, we might the more easily be obedient to the Decalogue, and be restrained from idolatry and apostasy from God, and thereby obtain salvation. It is through the obedience to the Decalogue that we “learn to love God with the whole heart.”

Now as we saw in 1 Corinthians, chapter seven, Paul is not talking about hardness of heart, but of differing measures of grace given to each believer according to the measure of one’s gift from God. And in the Old Testament, Moses allowed a divorce certificate to be given as a civil law for the nation. This was done so that those who were not saved by faith in Christ might be led to believe in Him through the instruction of God’s word which included the ten commandments, the Decalogue. Salvation has always been by faith in Christ in every age, both before the law was given and after. The reason is simple. The law cannot save us, but only show us our sin. Once we are aware of our sin we may try to keep the law again, but keeping the law cannot make us perfect as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

There are not enough sacrifices that we could make to cleanse us of our sin, and so become perfect. This is why Christ came. Our sacrifices cannot take away our sins as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):11** And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

But Christ’s single offering has made us perfect forever as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):10** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

We are saved by grace through faith as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Our salvation is not as a result of works. That is, there is nothing we can do to save ourselves but believe in Jesus Christ. So the law made Israel feel unclean because it revealed sin in their lives, but it could never take away the sin it revealed. And so the law was a yoke that was heavy to bear. In the book of Acts, Peter refers to the law using these very words as we see in the account of Paul and Barnabas going down to the apostles in Jerusalem to discuss the teaching of certain men from Judea who came up to Antioch and taught that you had to

be circumcised to be saved as in **Acts 15 (KJV)**:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

So Paul and Barnabas went down from Antioch to Jerusalem as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV)**:3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

We must understand that the law made a separation between the clean and the unclean. Israel was set apart from the peoples, and were holy to the Lord as we read in **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:22 Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out. 23 And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. 24 But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people. 25 Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. 26 And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Acts, chapter ten, tells us how Peter came to the conclusion that the Gentiles were to be included in salvation. There was a devout man, a centurion, who feared God with all his household in Caesarea. He prayed continually, and one day an angel appeared to him and told him to send for Peter who was in Joppa. Now God knew that Peter would not receive them since they were Gentiles. So God gave Peter a vision and told him three times to arise and kill animals, which were unclean by the law of Moses, and eat them as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

The men from Cornelius finally arrived at Peter's house at just the right moment as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. 21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Peter then goes with the men the next day to the house of Cornelius and tells them how he had formerly thought it was unlawful for him being a Jew to associate with Gentiles as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an

unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

Cornelius then tells Peter of his vision from God in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Peter then realizes that God is at work, and he then preaches the Gospel to the Gentiles as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

All in the house were saved as a result of Peter's message as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Peter knows now that God has fulfilled the law in some way that allows the Gentiles to be included with the Jews with no distinction between them as we now read in **Acts 15 (KJV)**:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

The law of Moses that made it unlawful for Peter to associate with Gentiles included the Decalogue, the ten commandments. Peter then calls the whole law a yoke that neither he nor the fathers were able to bear as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV)**:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Peter now realizes in this council in Jerusalem that the God who commanded him to eat the unclean animals, and who told him to go with the Gentiles without misgivings, and who gave the Holy Spirit to those who believed among the Gentiles after he preached the Gospel, was the God who had fulfilled the law of sacrifice and saves by grace as we then read in **Acts 15 (KJV)**:11 But we believe that through the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Being under the law was like being under a yoke of bondage. You were constantly reminded of your sin. Freedom from sin had not been made possible yet. The law cannot impart life. It only shuts up everyone under sin as Paul tell us in **Galatians 3 (KJV)**:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the

scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Paul tells us that the law leads us to Christ. The law tells us that we have sin, and that we need a Savior. This knowledge leads us to faith in Christ as Paul concludes in **Galatians 3 (KJV):23** But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Before Christ, the law lead people to faith in their Messiah, the Christ who would come and redeem them from their sin. They were still under the law because Christ had not come yet and fulfilled the law. But they were still saved by their faith in Christ, and not by their keeping the law. Blessings were dependent on their keeping the law, but not their salvation. Now that Christ has come, we are no longer under the law. This doesn't mean that we are free to sin. May it never be. The righteous must live by faith in obedience to all the knowledge of the word of God that they have been given for we all grow in grace and knowledge as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):17** Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

## **Book 4: Chapter XVI.—Perfect righteousness was conferred neither by circumcision nor by any other legal ceremonies. The Decalogue, however, was not cancelled by Christ, but is always in force: men were never released from its commandments.**

1. Moreover, we learn from the Scripture itself, that God gave circumcision, not as the completer of righteousness, but as a sign, that the race of Abraham might continue recognisable. For it declares: "God said unto Abraham, Every male among you shall be circumcised; and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, as a token of the covenant between Me and you." 3983 **Gen. xvii. 9–11.** This same does Ezekiel the prophet say with regard to the Sabbaths: "Also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord, that sanctify them." 3984 **Ezek. xx. 12.** And in Exodus, God says to Moses: "And ye shall observe My Sabbaths; for it shall be a sign between Me and you for your generations." 3985 **Ex. xxxi. 13.** These things, then, were given for a sign; but the signs were not unsymbolical, that is, neither unmeaning nor to no purpose, inasmuch as they were given by a wise Artist; but the circumcision after the flesh typified that after the Spirit. For "we," says the apostle, "have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." 3986 **Col. ii. 11.** And the prophet declares, "Circumcise the hardness of your heart." 3987 **Deut. x. 16,** LXX. version. But the Sabbaths taught that we should continue day by day in God's service. 3988 The Latin text here is: "Sabbata autem perseverantiam totius diei erga Deum deservitionis edocebant;" which might be rendered, "The Sabbaths taught that we should continue the whole day in the service of God;" but Harvey conceives the original Greek to have been, τὴν καθημερινὴν διαμονὴν τῆς περὶ τὸν Θεὸν λατρείας. "For we have been counted," says the Apostle Paul, "all the day long as sheep for the slaughter;" 3989 **Rom. viii. 36,** that is, consecrated [to God], and ministering continually to our faith, and persevering in it, and abstaining from all avarice, and not acquiring or possessing treasures upon earth. 3990 **Matt. vi. 19.** Moreover, the Sabbath of God (*requietio Dei*), that is, the kingdom, was, as it were, indicated by created things; in which [kingdom], the man who shall have persevered in serving God (*Deo assistere*) shall, in a state of rest, partake of God's table.

2. And that man was not justified by these things, but that they were given as a sign to the people, this fact shows,— that Abraham himself, without circumcision and without observance of

Sabbaths, "believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God." 3991 Jas. ii. 23. Then, again, Lot, without circumcision, was brought out from Sodom, receiving salvation from God. So also did Noah, pleasing God, although he was uncircumcised, receive the dimensions [of the ark], of the world of the second race [of men]. Enoch, too, pleasing God, without circumcision, discharged the office of God's legate to the angels although he was a man, and was translated, and is preserved until now as a witness of the just judgment of God, because the angels when they had transgressed fell to the earth for judgment, but the man who pleased [God] was translated for salvation. 3992 Massuet remarks here that Irenæus makes a reference to the apocryphal book of Enoch, in which this history is contained. It was the belief of the later Jews, followed by the Christian fathers, that "the sons of God" (Gen. vi. 2) who took wives of the daughters of men, were the apostate angels. The LXX. translation of that passage accords with this view. See the articles "Enoch," "Enoch, Book of," in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. [See *Paradise Lost*, b. i. 323–431.] Moreover, all the rest of the multitude of those righteous men who lived before Abraham, and of those patriarchs who preceded Moses, were justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses. As also Moses himself says to the people in Deuteronomy: "The Lord thy God formed a covenant in Horeb. The Lord formed not this covenant with your fathers, but for you." 3993 Deut. v. 2.

3. Why, then, did the Lord not form the covenant for the fathers? Because "the law was not established for righteous men." 3994 1 Tim. i. 9. But the righteous fathers had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, 3995 [Hearts and souls; i.e., moral and mental natures. For a correct view of the patristic conceptions of the Gentiles before the law, this is valuable.] that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbour. There was therefore no occasion that they should be cautioned by prohibitory mandates (*correptoriis literis*), 3996 i.e., the letters of the Decalogue on the two tables of stone. because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves. But when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt, God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God; and He afflicted those who were disobedient, that they should not contemn their Creator; and He fed them with manna, that they might receive food for their souls (*uti rationalem acciperent escam*); as also Moses says in Deuteronomy: "And fed thee with manna, which thy fathers did not know, that thou mightest know that man doth not live by bread alone; but by every word of God proceeding out of His mouth doth man live." 3997 Deut. viii. 3. And it enjoined love to God, and taught just dealing towards our neighbour, that we should neither be unjust nor unworthy of God, who prepares man for His friendship through the medium of the Decalogue, and likewise for agreement with his neighbour,—matters which did certainly profit man himself; God, however, standing in no need of anything from man.

4. And therefore does the Scripture say, "These words the Lord spake to all the assembly of the children of Israel in the mount, and He added no more;" 3998 Deut. v. 22. for, as I have already observed, He stood in need of nothing from them. And again Moses says: "And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?" 3999 Deut. x. 12. Now these things did indeed make man glorious, by supplying what was wanting to him, namely, the friendship of God; but they profited God nothing, for God did not at all stand in need of man's love. For the glory of God was wanting to man, which he could obtain in no other way than by serving God. And therefore Moses says to them again: "Choose life, that thou mayest live, and thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, to hear His voice, to cleave unto Him; for this is thy life, and the length of thy days." 4000 Deut. xxx. 19, 20. Preparing man for this life, the Lord Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us, 4001 [Most noteworthy among primitive testimonies to the catholic reception of the Decalogue.] receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation.

5. The laws of bondage, however, were one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited

for their instruction or for their punishment, as Moses himself declared: "And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments." 4002 Deut. iv. 14. These things, therefore, which were given for bondage, and for a sign to them, He cancelled by the new covenant of liberty. But He has increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all, granting to men largely and without grudging, by means of adoption, to know God the Father, and to love Him with the whole heart, and to follow His word unwaveringly, while they abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them. But He has also increased the feeling of reverence; for sons should have more veneration than slaves, and greater love for their father. And therefore the Lord says, "As to every idle word that men have spoken, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment." 4003 Matt. xii. 36. And, "he who has looked upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;" 4004 Matt. v. 28. and, "he that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." 4005 Matt. v. 22. [All this is declared,] that we may know that we shall give account to God not of deeds only, as slaves, but even of words and thoughts, as those who have truly received the power of liberty, in which [condition] a man is more severely tested, whether he will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord. And for this reason Peter says "that we have not liberty as a cloak of maliciousness," 4006 1 Pet. ii. 16. but as the means of testing and evidencing faith.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "Moreover, we learn from the Scripture itself, that God gave circumcision, not as the completer of righteousness, but as a sign, that the race of Abraham might continue recognisable. For it declares: "God said unto Abraham, Every male among you shall be circumcised; and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, as a token of the covenant between Me and you," referring to Genesis 17:9-11. Again, Irenaeus affirms, "This same does Ezekiel the prophet say with regard to the Sabbaths: "Also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord, that sanctify them," referring to Ezeikel 20:12. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "And in Exodus, God says to Moses: "And ye shall observe My Sabbaths; for it shall be a sign between Me and you for your generations," referring to Exodus 31:13. Irenaeus then explains that, "These things, then, were given for a sign; but the signs were not unsymbolical, that is, neither unmeaning nor to no purpose, inasmuch as they were given by a wise Artist; but the circumcision after the flesh typified that after the Spirit." Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "For "we," says the apostle, "have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," referring to Colossians 2:11. And again, Irenaeus affirms, "And the prophet declares, "Circumcise the hardness of your heart," referring to Deuteronomy 10:16. Irenaeus then testifies, "But the Sabbaths taught that we should continue day by day in God's service. "For we have been counted," says the apostle, "all the day long as sheep for the slaughter," referring to Romans 8:36. Irenaeus continues as he explains, "that is, consecrated [to God], and ministering continually to our faith, and persevering in it, and abstaining from all avarice, and not acquiring or possessing treasures upon earth," referring to Matthew 6:19-20. Irenaeus then affirms, "Moreover, the Sabbath of God (requietio Dei), that is, the kingdom, was, as it were, indicated by created things; in which [kingdom], the man who shall have persevered in serving God (Deo assistere) shall, in a state of rest, partake of God's table."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "And that man was not justified by these things, but that they were given as a sign to the people, this fact shows,— that Abraham himself, without circumcision and without observance of Sabbaths, "believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God," referring to James 2:23. Again Irenaeus testifies, "Then, again, Lot, without circumcision, was brought out from Sodom, receiving salvation from God," referring to Genesis, chapters 18-19. Irenaeus continues his testimony as he says, "So also did Noah, pleasing God, although he was uncircumcised, receive the dimensions [of the ark], of the world of the second race [of men]," referring to Genesis, chapters 6-9." Irenaeus then affirms, "Enoch, too, pleasing God, without circumcision, discharged the office of God's legate to the angels although he was a man, and was translated, and is preserved until now as a witness of the just judgment of God, because the angels when they had transgressed fell to the earth for judgment, but the man who pleased [God] was translated for salvation," referring to Genesis 5:18-24, and drawing from Jude 1:6-7, 14-16. Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, "Moreover, all the rest of the multitude of those righteous men

who lived before Abraham, and of those patriarchs who preceded Moses, were justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses. As also Moses himself says to the people in Deuteronomy: "The Lord thy God formed a covenant in Horeb. The Lord formed not this covenant with your fathers, but for you," referring to Deuteronomy 5:2.

And in paragraph three, Irenaeus asks, "Why, then, did the Lord not form the covenant for the fathers?" And he answers, "Because "the law was not established for righteous men," referring to 1 Timothy 1:9. Irenaeus then asserts, "But the righteous fathers had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbour." Irenaeus continues as he again asserts that, "There was therefore no occasion that they should be cautioned by prohibitory mandates (correptoriis literis), because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves." Irenaeus then argues, "But when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt, God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God;" Irenaeus then adds, "and He afflicted those who were disobedient, that they should not contemn their Creator," Irenaeus then affirms, "and He fed them with manna, that they might receive food for their souls (uti rationalem acciperent escam), as also Moses says in Deuteronomy: "And fed thee with manna, which thy fathers did not know, that thou mightest know that man doth not live by bread alone; but by every word of God proceeding out of His mouth doth man live," referring to Deuteronomy 8:3. Irenaeus then explains, "And it enjoined love to God, and taught just dealing towards our neighbour, that we should neither be unjust nor unworthy of God, who prepares man for His friendship through the medium of the Decalogue, and likewise for agreement with his neighbour,—matters which did certainly profit man himself; God, however, standing in no need of anything from man."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus asserts, "And therefore does the Scripture say, "These words the Lord spake to all the assembly of the children of Israel in the mount, and He added no more," referring again to Deuteronomy 5:22, "for, as I have already observed, He stood in need of nothing from them." Irenaeus then affirms, "And again Moses says: "And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?," referring to Deuteronomy 10:12. Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "Now these things did indeed make man glorious, by supplying what was wanting to him, namely, the friendship of God; but they profited God nothing, for God did not at all stand in need of man's love. For the glory of God was wanting to man, which he could obtain in no other way than by serving God." Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "And therefore Moses says to them again: "Choose life, that thou mayest live, and thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, to hear His voice, to cleave unto Him; for this is thy life, and the length of thy days," referring to Deuteronomy 30:19-20. And on the basis of his previous assertions, Irenaeus then asserts, "Preparing man for this life, the Lord Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us, receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation."

In paragraph five, Irenaeus asserts that, "The laws of bondage, however, were one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited for their instruction or for their punishment, as Moses himself declared: "And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments," referring to Deuteronomy 4:14. Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "These things, therefore, which were given for bondage, and for a sign to them, He cancelled by the new covenant of liberty." Irenaeus continues as he again asserts, "But He has increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all, granting to men largely and without grudging, by means of adoption, to know God the Father, and to love Him with the whole heart, and to follow His word unswervingly, while they abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them." And not only so, but Irenaeus also asserts, "But He has also increased the feeling of reverence; for sons should have more veneration than slaves, and greater love for their father." Irenaeus then interprets as he testifies, "And therefore the Lord says, "As to every idle word that men have spoken, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment," referring to Matthew 12:36. Irenaeus then adds, "And, "he who has looked upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," referring to Matthew 5:28, "and, "he that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment," referring to Matthew 5:22. Irenaeus concludes that, "[All this is declared,] that we may know that we shall give account to God not of

deeds only, as slaves, but even of words and thoughts, as those who have truly received the power of liberty, in which [condition] a man is more severely tested, whether he will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord. And for this reason Peter says "that we have not liberty as a cloak of maliciousness," referring to 1 Peter 2:16, "but as the means of testing and evidencing faith."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "Moreover, we learn from the Scripture itself, that God gave circumcision, not as the completer of righteousness, but as a sign, that the race of Abraham might continue recognisable. For it declares: "God said unto Abraham, Every male among you shall be circumcised; and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, as a token of the covenant between Me and you," referring to **Genesis 17 (NASB):9** God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

Actually, the Scriptures do teach as Irenaeus affirms in **Romans 4 (NASB):9** Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

Again, Irenaeus affirms, "This same does Ezekiel the prophet say with regard to the Sabbaths: "Also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord, that sanctify them," referring to **Ezekiel 20 (KJV):12** Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "And in Exodus, God says to Moses: "And ye shall observe My Sabbaths; for it shall be a sign between Me and you for your generations," referring to **Exodus 31 (KJV):13** Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.

Irenaeus then explains that, "These things, then, were given for a sign; but the signs were not unsymbolical, that is, neither unmeaning nor to no purpose, inasmuch as they were given by a wise Artist; but the circumcision after the flesh typified that after the Spirit." Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "For "we," says the apostle, "have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," referring to **Colossians 2 (KJV):11** In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

And again, Irenaeus affirms, "And the prophet declares, "Circumcise the hardness of your heart," referring to **Deuteronomy 10 (Septuagint):16** Therefore ye shall circumcise the hardness of your heart, and ye shall not harden your neck.

This verse reads slightly different in the NASB as in **Deuteronomy 10 (NASB):16** "So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.

Irenaeus then testifies, "But the Sabbaths taught that we should continue day by day in God's service." This reminds us of the Scripture in Hebrews that says **Hebrews 4 (KJV):9** There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

The Greek word for "rest" in verse 9 above is σαββατισμός (pronounced sabbatismos). Vine's says that this word means "a Sabbath-keeping." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 288.**

The Greek word for rest in verse 10 is κατάπαυσις (pronounced katapausis). Vine's says that this word means, "in classical Greek, denotes a causing to cease or putting to rest." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 288.**

And also Jesus' words in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The Greek word for "rest" in verse 28 ἀναπαῦω (pronounced anapauō). Vine's says that this word means "cessation, refreshment, rest (ana, up, pauso, to make to cease)." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 287.**

Irenaeus then testifies, "For we have been counted," says the apostle, "all the day long as sheep for the slaughter," referring to **Romans 8 (KJV):36** As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Irenaeus continues as he explains, "that is, consecrated [to God], and ministering continually to our faith, and persevering in it, and abstaining from all avarice, and not acquiring or possessing treasures upon earth," referring in context to **Matthew 6 (KJV):19** Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Irenaeus then affirms, "Moreover, the Sabbath of God (requietio Dei), that is, the kingdom, was, as it were, indicated by created things; in which [kingdom], the man who shall have persevered in serving God (Deo assistere) shall, in a state of rest, partake of God's table." Actually, the Sabbath was indicated by God's creative acts in **Genesis 2 (KJV):3** And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

And again in **Exodus 31 (KJV):17** It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

And Jesus made it clear that entering into His service was restful, because His yoke is easy and His burden is light. But it is true that when we enter the rest of perfection, that is, when we are resurrected and made like the Son of God, we will enter into a more glorious rest, and will sit down to eat and drink at His table as Jesus spoke to His disciples in **Luke 22 (KJV):28** Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Isaiah also prophesied of this as we read in **Isaiah 11 (KJV):10** And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "And that man was not justified by these things, but that they were given as a sign to the people, this fact shows,— that Abraham himself, without circumcision and without observance of Sabbaths, "believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God," referring to **James 2 (KJV):23** And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Again Irenaeus testifies, "Then, again, Lot, without circumcision, was brought out from Sodom, receiving salvation from God," referring to Genesis, chapters 18-19. Irenaeus continues his testimony as he says, "So also did Noah, pleasing God, although he was uncircumcised, receive the dimensions [of the ark], of the world of the second race [of men]," referring to Genesis, chapters 6-9. , Irenaeus then affirms, "Enoch, too, pleasing God, without circumcision, discharged the office of God's legate to the angels although he was a man, and was translated, and is preserved until now as a witness of the just judgment of God, because the angels when they had transgressed fell to the earth for judgment, but the man who pleased [God] was translated for salvation," referring to Genesis 5:18-24, and drawing from Jude 1:6-7, 14-16. Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, "Moreover, all the rest of the multitude of those righteous men who lived before Abraham, and of those patriarchs who preceded Moses, were justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses. As also Moses himself says to the people in Deuteronomy: "The Lord thy God formed a covenant in Horeb. The Lord formed not this covenant with your fathers, but for you," referring to **Deuteronomy 5 (KJV):2** The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.

Irenaeus says correctly that man is not justified by circumcision or the observance of Sabbaths for "Abraham himself, without circumcision and without observance of Sabbaths, "believed God, and it was

imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.” And again, Irenaeus says that Lot, Noah, Enoch, and “all the rest of the multitude of those righteous men who lived before Abraham, and of those patriarchs who preceded Moses, were justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses.” What Irenaeus does not mention is that all of these who preceded Moses were commended for their faith as we see in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

It is by faith that we understand that God created all things as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):3** Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

From Abel until Noah all those who were righteous were such because of their faith as we see in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):4** By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

All the ancients lived by faith until they died, without receiving the promises, as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):8** By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

It is not because of their own righteousness, but because of the righteousness that comes by faith that they stand out as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):14** For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

And in paragraph three, Irenaeus asks “Why, then, did the Lord not form the covenant for the fathers?” And he answers, “Because “the law was not established for righteous men,” a quote of part of the verse in 1 Timothy 1:9. In context the verse reads as in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):8** But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

Irenaeus then asserts, “But the righteous fathers had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbour.” Irenaeus continues as he again asserts that, “There was therefore no occasion that they should be cautioned by prohibitory mandates (correptoriis literis), because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves.”

However, the Scripture says that the righteous fathers were righteous because of their faith, and by their faith they lived as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):17** By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

And also in **Romans 4 (KJV)**:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

The Scripture says that all men show the work of the Law written in their hearts in **Romans 2 (KJV)**:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

But all men are not justified because not all men have faith as Paul tells us in **2 Thessalonians 3 (KJV)**:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

And when Irenaeus says that “the righteous fathers” had “the righteousness of the law in themselves,” the Scriptures do not say that we are made perfect until we are resurrected. The righteous fathers were righteous because God imputed righteousness to them because of their faith. They still had sin in their flesh just as we have. But because of their faith, they had a standing before God as righteous men and women, just as we have. We have the same faith as they had. They looked forward to the Christ who would come. We look back to the Christ who came.

Irenaeus then argues, “But when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt, God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God;” God did reveal Himself by His voice, but after the sons and daughters of Israel cried out to Him for help as we read in **Exodus 2 (KJV)**:23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

You don’t cry out to someone unless you have faith that they can help you. Not all in Israel had faith, but certainly those who cried out to him did. The account of God first speaking to Moses is in **Exodus 3 (KJV)**:

1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

God called the Israelites “my people” in verse 10 above. He does not call all mankind His people, but only those who have faith in Him. Now it was God’s set plan for His people to be in Egypt, and this was revealed to Abraham in **Genesis 15 (KJV)**:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

We see this also in **Genesis 15 (KJV)**:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Gergashites, and the Jebusites.

God led his people into Egypt to preserve them alive and provide for them through Joseph. God provided for His people even in Egypt for this is where He sent Joseph beforehand to prepare a place for them. It was in Egypt that Jacob blessed Joseph's sons as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV)**:21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

God preserved His people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, alive in Egypt. And so, even in Egypt we see that righteousness and love to God had not "passed into oblivion and became extinct," as Irenaeus asserts. Rather, the parents of Moses hid him by faith for three months and were not afraid as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV)**:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

And it was by faith that Moses left Egypt as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV)**:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them

Moses also led his people through the Red Sea by faith as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV)**:29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

Even after Moses had received the law in Exodus 20:1-20, the people still walked by faith as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV)**:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. 32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

And again without faith it is impossible to please God as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV)**:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

God gave the law to the Israelites so they would not sin, and if they did sin, the law of sacrifice was to be obeyed. But this did not save them from sin. Their faith in Christ, the Rock that followed them, saved them from sin. Irenaeus asserts that "God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God." But again, the enslavement of Israel in Egypt and their deliverance was according to God's set purpose to preserve a people alive who were called by His name.

Irenaeus then adds, "and He afflicted those who were disobedient, that they should not contemn their Creator;" And Irenaeus then affirms, "And He fed them with manna, that they might receive food for their souls (uti rationalem acciperent escam), as also Moses says in Deuteronomy: "And fed thee with manna, which thy fathers did not know, that thou mightest know that man doth not live by bread alone; but by every word of God proceeding out of His mouth doth man live," referring to **Deuteronomy 8 (KJV)**:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he

might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

Irenaeus then explains, “And it enjoined love to God, and taught just dealing towards our neighbour, that we should neither be unjust nor unworthy of God, who prepares man for His friendship through the medium of the Decalogue, and likewise for agreement with his neighbour,—matters which did certainly profit man himself; God, however, standing in no need of anything from man.”

Certainly the word of God teaches us to love God, and to have “just dealing towards our neighbour.” However, Irenaeus asserts that “through the medium of the Decalogue” we are prepared for friendship with God. Irenaeus seems to believe that our friendship with God was some sort of gradual process which is dependent on our keeping the Decalogue. However, Abraham was called the friend of God because of his faith, and not because he kept the Decalogue. The Decalogue only tells us that we have sin. It cannot make us holy or righteous. It only shows us our need for someone to make atonement for us since we cannot do this on our own. This atonement has been made once for all by Jesus Christ’s death on the cross. The law shows us what must be done to make atonement for sin. Thus we are led to faith in Jesus Christ by the law. This is the only value of the law. When we have faith in Jesus Christ, we enter the kingdom of God by faith and we are born again, and we have relationship with God our Father. Our faith is the beginning of our relationship, our friendship, with God. When we have faith in Jesus Christ, He accepts us as sons and daughters. This is why Paul places our justification in the past as he says in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: **2** By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And so the law was not made for a righteous man, and that is what we are when we accept Christ. The law was not made for the man or woman who has faith in Christ, for these are the only ones who can be called righteous. Again, Paul says that the law is good if one uses it lawfully as we read in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):8** But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; **9** Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, **10** For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; **11** According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

Paul tells us that he was formerly in the ranks of the unrighteous. Not only so, but he says he was the chief of sinners as we read in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):12** And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; **13** Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. **14** And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. **15** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. **16** Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

It is through our belief in Him that we receive eternal life. There is no other requirement as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

This is why Paul counted all things lost, even his own righteousness under the law. Paul realized that all his good works under the law did not change his relationship with the Living God. This all changed when he had faith in Christ as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):3** For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. **4** Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: **5** Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; **6** Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. **7** But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. **8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, **9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of

God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Paul was on fire for God because of the relationship with the Living God he found by faith in Jesus Christ. When he realized that all his good works could not save him, it was then that he, in submission to God, believed in Jesus Christ and called him Lord as we read in **Acts 3 (KJV)**:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus asserts, “And therefore does the Scripture say, “These words the Lord spake to all the assembly of the children of Israel in the mount, and He added no more,” referring to **Deuteronomy 5 (NASB)**:22 “These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, of the cloud and of the thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

The Decalogue is God’s standard of righteousness, and God added no more to the words He spoke in the hearing of the people. But every word of God in the Scriptures is inspired by God, and every word of God is valuable and profitable as Paul tell us in **2 Timothy 3 (NASB)**:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

The Lord added no more to the Decalogue, His standard of righteousness, yet He desires us to keep his words, all of them, in our hearts and to meditate on them day and night so that we are careful to do them and not be hearers only. What was spoken to Joshua by the Lord is good advice for us as well as we read in **Joshua 1 (KJV)**:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

The Book of the Law contained all that God spoke to Moses and not just the Decalogue. And His word is the truth that sanctifies us as we read in **John 17 (KJV)**:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. Irenaeus continues as he states, “for, as I have already observed, He stood in need of nothing from them.”

Irenaeus then affirms, “And again Moses says: “And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?,” referring in context to **Deuteronomy 10 (KJV)**:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

But Irenaeus does not quote verse 13 above. Israel was bound to keep every word of God, and not just the Decalogue as we read in **Deuteronomy 11 (KJV)**:1 Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway.

There were statutes and rules apart from the Decalogue that were to be kept. All of the commands and statutes were for Israel’s good. There are at least 213 laws in the Old Testament with medical significance that kept diseases away from them. These laws were in place long before modern medicine discovered their value. Not touching a dead body, or eating something dead, were just two of the prohibitions found in Leviticus. Touching something dead made you unclean, and you had to wash your clothes and yourself.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “Now these things did indeed make man glorious, by supplying what was wanting to him, namely, the friendship of God; but they profited God nothing, for God did not at all stand in need of man’s love. For the glory of God was wanting to man, which he could obtain in no other way than by serving God.”

But man does not obtain the glory of God by serving, or by keeping the law. Keeping all of the laws in Scripture did not “make man glorious, by supplying what was wanting to him, namely, the friendship of God,” as Irenaeus asserts. What makes man glorious and a friend of God is faith, and faith alone. We must serve Him by faith, or nothing we do pleases Him. And if we serve Him after we have faith, He will reward us for our serving. But our salvation is by grace through faith as Paul says in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:8 For by grace you

have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “And therefore Moses says to them again: “Choose life, that thou mayest live, and thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, to hear His voice, to cleave unto Him; for this is thy life, and the length of thy days,” referring in context to **Deuteronomy 30 (KJV):19** I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

And on the basis of his previous assertions, Irenaeus then concludes as he says, “Preparing man for this life, the Lord Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us, receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation.” The Merriam-Webster Online dictionary lists meanings for the word “abrogate” as follows:

- 1: to abolish by authoritative action : annul
- 2: to treat as nonexistent *<abrogating their responsibilities>*

Certainly Jesus did not come to “abrogate” the law. Jesus Himself says in **Matthew 5 (KJV):18** For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

And in Luke it is recorded as in **Luke 16 (KJV):16** The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

However, Jesus also spoke through Paul who tells us that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):4** For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

This does not mean that the law has passed away, but only that righteousness is not obtained by observing the law. Jesus did not say He increased the law, or that He extended it. He simply said that nothing would pass from the law until all is accomplished. The law is still in effect. But when we have faith in Christ, we are not under the law’s power to condemn us because of sin. However, Irenaeus firmly believed that the path to life was obtained in no other way than by keeping the few simple commands of the Decalogue, and that Jesus prepared man for this life speaking “in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation.”

In paragraph five, Irenaeus asserts that, “The laws of bondage, however, were one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited for their instruction or for their punishment, as Moses himself declared: “And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments,” referring to **Deuteronomy 4 (KJV):14** And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary lists meanings for the word “promulgate” as follows:

- 1: to make (as a doctrine) known by open declaration : proclaim
- 2a : to make known or public the terms of (a proposed law)
  - b : to put (a law) into action or force

Irenaeus calls all laws other than the natural laws of the Decalogue, and the commands to love God with all the heart, mind, and soul and to love our neighbor as our self, “laws of bondage” which were “one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited for their instruction or for their punishment.” Irenaeus asserts that this is what Moses meant when he said that “The LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and

judgments.” Irenaeus leads us to believe that the “laws of bondage” were all Moses’ idea. But as we read Exodus, we see that God is the one who is speaking and giving the laws to Moses to give to the people. Exodus, chapter 20, begins as in **Exodus 20 (KJV):1** And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

The Lord continues to speak through chapter 20 in Exodus and into chapter 21 as in **Exodus 21 (KJV):1** Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. 2 If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

The Lord mentions why He is giving the ordinances as He says in **Exodus 22 (KJV):31** And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

The Lord continued to speak to Moses and give him the ordinances through chapter 23. In chapter 24, God tells Moses to come up the mountain as we read in **Exodus 24 (KJV):1** And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. 2 And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

And in chapter 25, the Lord tells Moses to raise a contribution for the tabernacle and its furniture and tells him that he is to build it according to the pattern that He will show him as we read in **Exodus 25 (KJV):1** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. 3 And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, 4 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 5 And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, 6 Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, 7 Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. 8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

Again, the Lord speaks to Moses all the way through chapter 25 of Exodus, giving Moses instructions about the Tabernacle and its furniture, and again He warns Moses to make it after the pattern that He showed Him on the mountain as we read in **Exodus 25 (KJV):40** And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

The Lord continued giving instructions to Moses as to the Tabernacle, the altar, and the tent of meeting in chapters 26 through 27 of Exodus. The Lord then commands Moses to make garments for Aaron and his sons for their priesthood as in **Exodus 28 (KJV):1** And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. 2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. 3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

The Lord gave command to Moses to make the priestly garments all the way through chapter 28 of Exodus, and in chapter 29, He commanded Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons as we read in **Exodus 29 (KJV):1** And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish.

This was how Moses was to ordain Aaron and his sons as priests as we read in **Exodus 29 (KJV):9** And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

And again in **Exodus 29 (KJV):44** And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. 45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

The priesthood, the tabernacle, the altar, the tent of meeting, and all the ordinances were God's idea. None of it was Moses' idea. To say that Moses promulgated one by one the laws of bondage is a gross misstatement of Scripture. God told Moses what laws to give the Israelites and Moses obeyed God. The laws concerning the priesthood and the tabernacle, and the ordinances were not bad laws, or something that God

gave them because of the hardness of their heart. These things were all types of better things to come. There was a purpose to all that God told them to do. The enslavement of the law was that it held them to their sin. There was a remembrance of their sin every time they did a sacrifice of a bull or a goat. These sacrifices could not take away their sin. They only covered them and looked forward to the day when the redeemer would come and take away their sin forever.

Irenaeus asserts that, “These things, therefore, which were given for bondage, and for a sign to them, He cancelled by the new covenant of liberty.” By this statement we know that Irenaeus includes the sign of circumcision and the sign of the Sabbath in the laws of bondage, for these things also “He cancelled by the new covenant of liberty.”

It is interesting that Paul warns us not to be taken captive by the tradition of men as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):8** Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Paul explains how we have been circumcised without hands as in **Colossians 2 (KJV):9** For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

It was the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ that set us free from sin Paul reveals in **Colossians 2 (KJV):13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

The certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us was the law. It was not the ceremonial law, that is the laws concerning the priesthood, the tabernacle, and laws of sacrifice, that was the laws that were hostile to us and that held our sin debt. It was the Decalogue, as the standard of God’s righteousness, that held us as sinners. And really, all the law, as God’s word, reflects His righteousness. So whatever is contrary to the righteousness of God as revealed by His word, “He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” This is why Paul tells us in verse 13 that He has “forgiven us all our transgressions.”

Irenaeus continues as he again asserts, “But He has increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all, granting to men largely and without grudging, by means of adoption, to know God the Father, and to love Him with the whole heart, and to follow His word unswervingly, while they abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them.” And not only so, but Irenaeus also asserts, “But He has also increased the feeling of reverence; for sons should have more veneration than slaves, and greater love for their father.” Irenaeus styles those under the Old Covenant as slaves, and those under the New Covenant as sons. However, Jesus made it clear that all must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God. And all are born again when then believe in Jesus Christ, whether before the law, during the law, or after Christ came.

Irenaeus then testifies, “And therefore the Lord says, “As to every idle word that men have spoken, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment,” referring to **Matthew 12 (KJV):36** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

He continues as he adds, “And, “he who has looked upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart,” referring in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):27** Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Irenaeus further states, “and, “he that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment,” referring in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):21** Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Irenaeus concludes that, “[All this is declared,] that we may know that we shall give account to God not of deeds only, as slaves, but even of words and thoughts, as those who have truly received the power of liberty, in which [condition] a man is more severely tested, whether he will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord.”

Yes, it is sinful words and sinful thoughts that point to our sinful nature. We may be able to keep the Decalogue, but Jesus points to our thoughts and our desires in order to get us to see that we need more than just the righteousness of keeping the Decalogue. We already have a sinful nature in our flesh from which it is impossible to free ourselves apart from Christ.

And Irenaeus asserts finally that it is “for this reason Peter says “that we have not liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,” referring to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):16** As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

And Irenaeus adds, “but as the means of testing and evidencing faith.” In other words, if we believe we are truly free from sin, we must act like it. Our actions will be evidence of our faith as James said in **James 2 (NASB):18** But someone may *well* say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

We are saved by grace through faith, but the evidence of a real faith will be a changed life.

## Commentary Summary: The Law

In summary, Irenaeus states the following in **Book 4: Chapter XVI:**

- that Abraham and the righteous fathers “had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbour.”
- that “Moreover, all the rest of the multitude of those righteous men who lived before Abraham, and of those patriarchs who preceded Moses, were justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses. As also Moses himself says to the people in Deuteronomy: “The Lord thy God formed a covenant in Horeb. The Lord formed not this covenant with your fathers, but for you,” referring to Deuteronomy 5:2.
- that “There was therefore no occasion that they should be cautioned by prohibitory mandates because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves.”
- that “when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt, God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God;”
- that when Jesus came He “increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all” and commanded that they must “abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them.”
- that the Lord was “Preparing man for this life,” and “Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us, receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation.”
- that when Jesus died on the cross, He freed us from the “laws of bondage” which were “one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited for their instruction or for their punishment, as Moses himself declared: “And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments.””
- that “These things, therefore, which were given for bondage, and for a sign to them, He cancelled by the new covenant of liberty.”
- that therefore, as a result of having such a covenant of liberty, we are tested to an even greater degree, whether we “will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord” with all our heart and soul, and whether we will “follow His word unswervingly,” and whether we will evidence faith.

To restate Irenaeus’ thinking, those before the law “had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbour,” and they did

not need the law “because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves.” They were also “justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses.”

Irenaeus states that the law was given “when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt.” God did then “necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God.”

Now, we find in other chapters of Irenaeus’ writing that he also believed that all men and women were lepers in sin, but were made clean through water baptism as he says in **Fragment XXXIV**, ““And dipped himself,” says [the Scripture], “seven times in Jordan.” It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [it served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: “Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.””

This leprosy in sin, which is the state of all men and women before baptism, speaks of original sin. Irenaeus also says that in Adam we do all die, referring to 1 Corinthians 15:22, as he states in **Book 5: Chapter XII, paragraph 3**, “For it is not one thing which dies and another which is quickened, as neither is it one thing which is lost and another which is found, but the Lord came seeking for that same sheep which had been lost. What was it, then, which was dead? Undoubtedly it was the substance of the flesh; the same, too, which had lost the breath of life, and had become breathless and dead. This same, therefore, was what the Lord came to quicken, that as in Adam we do all die, as being of an animal nature, in Christ we may all live, as being spiritual, not laying aside God’s handiwork, but the lusts of the flesh, and receiving the Holy Spirit; as the apostle says in the Epistle to the Colossians: “Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.””

This spiritual death in Adam of all men also speaks of original sin. Also in **Book 4: Chapter II, paragraph 7**, Irenaeus speaks of “the old wound of the serpent” and he says that “man can be saved in no other way... than by believing in Him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth upon the tree of martyrdom, and draws all things to Himself, and vivifies the dead.” Here is **Book 4: Chapter II, paragraph 7** in full.

**Book 4: Chapter II, paragraph 7:** “But as many as feared God, and were anxious about His law, these ran to Christ, and were all saved. For He said to His disciples: “Go ye to the sheep of the house of Israel, which have perished.” And many more Samaritans, it is said, when the Lord had tarried among them, two days, “believed because of His words, and said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we ourselves have heard [Him], and know that this man is truly the Saviour of the world.” And Paul likewise declares, “And so all Israel shall be saved;” but he has also said, that the law was our pedagogue [to bring us] to Christ Jesus. Let them not therefore ascribe to the law the unbelief of certain [among them]. For the law never hindered them from believing in the Son of God; nay, but it even exhorted them so to do, saying that men can be saved in no other way from the old wound of the serpent than by believing in Him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth upon the tree of martyrdom, and draws all things to Himself, and vivifies the dead.

This being the case, we see a paradox in the writing of Irenaeus. If man can be saved in no other way from the “old wound of the serpent,” and the leprosy of sin, and spiritual death, than by believing in Jesus Christ who died on the tree of martyrdom, the cross, then how does Irenaeus say that without the observance of the Decalogue there is no salvation as we read in **Book 4: Chapter XV, paragraph 1**, “They (the Jews) had therefore a law, a course of discipline, and a prophecy of future things. For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them.

Again, in this same paragraph, Irenaeus says that “in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart.”

So again, to summarize Irenaeus' thinking, the righteous fathers before Moses had the law written on their hearts, and the righteousness of the law was in them. They therefore did not need the law of Moses and were justified independently of it. However, when "this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt," God had to do things differently, and reached out to man with a voice and gave the law "in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God." Now, after the law has been given by Moses, Jesus came and "increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all," and commanded that they must "abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them." Jesus prepared "man for this life," and did Himself "speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us, receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation." When Jesus died on the cross, He freed us from the "laws of bondage" which were "one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited for their instruction or for their punishment," and cancelled them "by the new covenant of liberty." And, as a result of having such a covenant of liberty, we are tested to an even greater degree, whether we "will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord" with all our heart and soul, and whether we will "follow His word unswervingly," and whether we will evidence faith.

So now, according to Irenaeus, after Jesus has come, when we are baptized, we are made clean from sin, but then must be tested by observing the Decalogue, reverencing, fearing, and loving the Lord, following His word unswervingly, serving Him, and evidencing faith in order to finally be saved. The man or woman who is baptized, according to Irenaeus, is placed on a conditional footing whether he will do these things or not. If not, and he lives frivolously, he may lose life by losing the Spirit as Irenaeus writes in **Book 5: Chapter IX, paragraph 4**, "In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Just as if he were to say, "Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God.''"

The door is still open in Irenaeus' teaching for the man or woman who loses life to repent and regain what they had lost. We will discuss this more when we get to **Chapter 33: Repentance**, and look at **Fragment XLIII.**

There are several reasons why Irenaeus' teaching about the law will not work, and he is in error here. First of all, the Scriptures make no division between the "natural precepts of the law," and the other laws. I believe Irenaeus' reason for dividing the law of Moses into the "natural precepts of the law" and the "laws of bondage", that is good laws and bad laws, may come from his philosophical training. The Greek philosophers talk about natural law. But Paul never mentions the term "natural precepts of the law," nor does he characterize the laws of God as good and bad laws. Only one law was ever mentioned in all the New Testament as something Moses allowed because "of the hardness of their hearts," and that was the law of divorce. And even that was something Moses allowed, and not the Lord. The Scripture records that Moses did this, and Jesus pointed out in Matthew 19:8 that it was because of the hardness of their hearts that Moses did this. Without the mention of any other such law by Jesus, we have no basis to conclude that there were any other such laws. Irenaeus concludes the opposite and leads us to believe that all the other laws besides the natural precepts are "laws of bondage." And in addition, Irenaeus does not identify specifically what all of the natural precepts of the law are in the Scriptures. He does identify the Decalogue, and the commandment to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and also the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves, as natural precepts. Beyond these, Irenaeus does not identify any other natural precepts of the law. Surely the laws of cleanliness, and the laws commanding them to wash after touching a dead body, and the laws of quarantine for leprosy and other diseases were good. Yet Irenaeus leaves us wondering, not only what all of the "natural precepts of the law" are, but also what the other bad laws are. This throws doubt upon the word of God, and leaves us with uncertainty as to how to interpret it.

Paul does mention the law of nature, that is of creation, in regards to the marriage bed as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):22** Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour

their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

Paul mentions here the “natural function of the woman,” pointing to a law of nature. But he does not connect that with the Decalogue. Homosexuality, which the passage is referring to, is named as an abomination in **Leviticus 18 (KJV)**:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

It was an abomination because it was against the law of nature, or creation. It was a sin because it was against the law of God in Leviticus. This sin was also punishable by death according to the law of God in **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

But the sin of homosexuality is not one of the ten commandments. Irenaeus also does not mention it as a natural precept of the law. There are more laws in the Old Covenant that correspond to laws of nature such as **Leviticus 20 (KJV)**:15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast.

But nowhere in the Scriptures are these laws ever said to be a “natural precept of the law.” Now, the law may be divided into three main divisions, the Decalogue, the ordinances, or the civil laws, and the law of the priesthood, or the ceremonial or ritual law. But to divide the law into natural precepts and laws of bondage, or good and bad laws, is to misinterpret Scripture. To divide the law into natural precepts and laws of bondage is to describe the law in philosophical terms. There may be laws that relate to the way God created nature, but Scripture simply does not describe the law in this way. But God certainly did not give them bad laws since the laws that are given are by His word, and man lives by every word that God speaks. Jesus identified one law permitted by Moses. He did not identify any others. However, God does give man over to the desire of his own heart and He allows man to choose his own laws which may be good or bad as we read in **Psalm 80 (NASB)**:11 “But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. 12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.

The result of not listening to or acknowledging God is also seen in Paul’s address to the Romans as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV)**:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

And in **Romans 1 (KJV)**:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

And in **Romans 1 (KJV)**:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

If we do not acknowledge God, He gives us over to our sin, and we suffer the consequences of our foolishness.

Also, Irenaeus does not name any other “bad laws” in the Old Testament, but he speaks of all the laws other than the natural precepts as the “yoke of bondage,” and he says that they were given because of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites. So we are left with no other choice but to conclude that all the other laws were bad laws. However, the laws of the priesthood and of sacrifice showed the people the repercussions of sin. An atonement was required for sin by the law. A debt had to be paid. The law also showed the people the difference between the clean and the unclean. These clean and unclean laws protected the people from disease more than a thousand years before man realized that germs can cause disease. These clean and unclean laws also taught the people holiness as we read in **Leviticus 11 (KJV):44** For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Holiness is required in order to come into God’s presence. The sanctuary, where no one was allowed to enter but the priests alone, also taught the people that God is holy. The altar where no one was allowed to perform sacrifice but the priests alone, again taught the people that God is holy. The priest’s job was to teach the people to be holy because the Lord their God is holy. This is good.

Now the second reason why Irenaeus’ teaching about the law will not work is because of the meaning of the word “impute.” Irenaeus says that Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. Irenaeus concludes that Abraham had the righteousness of the law in himself because of this. However, Abraham and the fathers before Moses all possessed the “old wound of the serpent,” and were in need of salvation by believing in the only one who could save them, Jesus Christ, just as much as all other men. The fathers before Moses were not therefore righteous in themselves, that is, they were not made perfect yet. But they had the righteousness that comes by faith of Jesus Christ. That is, they had the righteousness of the law imputed to them, as Irenaeus also says. The word Greek word translated “impute” is used in the Scriptures in Romans 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24, II Corinthians 5:19, and James 2:23 and elsewhere. In Romans, Paul reveals that Abraham was justified by faith before he was circumcised, and without the law of Moses, and that righteousness was imputed to him as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

The Greek word translated “impute” in the King James Bible, and translated “CREDITED” in the New American Standard Bible, in Romans 4:3, is ἐλογίσθη which comes from the root word λογίζομαι. Vine’s says that this word means “to reckon, take into account, or, metaphorically, to put down to a person’s account. This same root word is also used in Romans 4:4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24, II Corinthians 5:19, and James 2:23.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 252.**

This Greek word does not mean “to make perfect,” or “to make sinless,” which would be equivalent to being righteous in ourselves or having “the righteousness of the law” in ourselves. In other words, God did not make Abraham perfect when he believed. God imputed, or credited, or reckoned, or put down to Abraham’s account, the righteousness of faith as Paul reveals in **Romans 4 (KJV):13** For the promise, that he should be

the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

Paul is saying here that it is not those who have righteousness because they kept the law who are heirs of the world to come, but those who have righteousness imputed to them because they believed God, that is, they had faith in His promise. And Paul is emphatic in this regard that though he was blameless as touching the law, he counted all the righteousness he had earned by keeping the law as nothing so that he could have the righteousness which is of God by faith in Jesus Christ, as we read again in **Philippians 3 (KJV):6** Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

To Paul, it was about relationship. “That I may know Him” is what Paul prayed. Again, Paul did not make any distinction between one law and another. He simply said “the law” in all his epistles. And works are anything we do. The righteousness that is credited to us by God is apart from works. That is, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith is apart from anything we do, as Paul reveals in **Romans 4 (KJV):6** Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

Paul is saying in his epistle to the Philippians that the righteousness he received from God was not as a result of something he did, which would be his own righteousness. That is, the righteousness which he received from God was “apart from works.” The righteousness that he received was the “righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.” When Paul believed in Jesus Christ and confessed him as Lord, he received this righteousness. He was not made perfect, but he was saved. That is, the righteousness of God was credited, or reckoned, or imputed, or put down to his account, and all his sins were forgiven. His sin debt was paid, but much more. Since this righteousness is from God, and was not Paul’s own righteousness, and since it is a righteousness from God apart from works, this righteousness from God is greater than all Paul’s sin, past, present and future. Paul may be said to have a standing with God as though he had never sinned. And still, this did not make Paul perfect as he says **Philippians 3 (KJV):12** Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If this was true for Paul, it is true for us as well. Though we are justified by faith and have righteousness from God credited to us, we are not perfect yet, and we still sin just as they did. That is, we do not have the righteousness of the law in ourselves. It is imputed to us, and is put down to our account, but it is not in us since we still have the sin nature in our flesh. This sin nature will be purged when we are resurrected. If we sin after we have faith, we do not have to be saved all over again. Jesus’ death on the cross was the propitiation for all sin for all time. We must then confess our sins to restore our fellowship with our Father God. If we sin, we are still His children, but He will discipline us accordingly as His sons and daughters. And it is not that He expects us to be perfect, but He expects us only to walk in the light that He has given us at that stage of growth in our lives.

The third reason why Irenaeus’ teaching about the law will not work is because the consistency of the covenant of God with Abraham is said to be demanded by the Scriptures. The covenant that God made with Abraham was one of imputed righteousness based on faith. God made promise to Abraham that He would bless all the families of the earth through him, and that his descendants would possess the land of Canaan forever. And so Abraham is the father of all who believe. He is the father of the Israelites who walked in his steps and had the same faith as he. And he is the father of all who believe and follow in the footsteps of his faith as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):10** How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?

Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

The covenant God made with Abraham was maintained through his life time, and was renewed with Isaac, and then with Jacob. The Lord God swears that he will remember His covenant with them, and that He will not break it as we read in **Leviticus 26 (KJV)**:42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. 43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. 44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. 45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD.

The covenant states the following as we read in **Genesis 15 (KJV)**:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

The Lord also promises that He will make a new covenant with Israel as we read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV)**:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

And the Lord also says that Israel will not cease from being a nation before Him forever in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV)**:35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

The Lord also speaks through Jeremiah and is emphatic in His promise that Israel will not cease from being a nation as we read in **Jeremiah 33 (KJV)**:19 And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying, 20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; 21 Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. 23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. 25 Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; 26 Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

This same promise has been repeated over and over again throughout the prophets and confirmed by Paul. Paul says that the remnant of Israel will be saved as we read in **Romans 9 (KJV)**:27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: 28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

Isaiah spoke his prophecy over six hundred years before Paul wrote and confirmed it by the word of the Lord. Paul also points out that Israel's mistake was not that they didn't observe the law, but that they had no faith as he continues in **Romans 9 (KJV):30** What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

So God's plan for Israel has not changed. God's covenant with them still stands. They will be His people and He will be their God, and they will dwell forever in the land God promised to Abraham. This is a prophecy by the word of the Lord, and it will happen as surely as God has sworn it will.

The reason this is important is that by Irenaeus' statement, "But when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt, God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God," he implies that God failed in His plan to have a people whom He imputes righteousness to because of their faith, and that His promise to Abraham and the imputation of righteousness didn't work. So God came up with a new plan, that is, He gave them the laws of the Decalogue by which man might be prepared for this life as Irenaeus says in **Book 4: Chapter XVI, paragraph four**, "For the glory of God was wanting to man, which he could obtain in no other way than by serving God. And therefore Moses says to them again: "Choose life, that thou mayest live, and thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, to hear His voice, to cleave unto Him; for this is thy life, and the length of thy days." Preparing man for this life, the Lord Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation."

Observing the Decalogue, the law of the priesthood, and the ordinances, was supposed to prepare man for the advent of Christ. These were not added as a second thought by God. God did not fail and so start over with plan B, the law, as it were. The law had its purpose and that was to reveal sin. But the law did not make the covenant with Abraham void as Paul says in **Galatians 3 (KJV):17** And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Man does not gradually become better and eventually obtain enough righteousness by keeping the law so God will accept him into His presence. God is perfect in righteousness, and no one may enter His presence with sin, and without perfect righteousness. Man cannot cleanse himself of his sin by keeping the Decalogue, and so please God enough so that God can stand to have man in His presence. There is nothing man can do to make himself or herself worthy to be in God's presence. The only thing the Decalogue does, as the standard of God' righteousness, is show us that we have sin as we read in **Romans 3: (KJV):19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

And so with all the other ordinances and laws God gave Moses, the only thing the law does is to show us we have sin. This ultimately results in our condemnation because we all have sinned and fall short of God's glory as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

This is the only thing the law can do for us, that is, to show us that we have sin and that we are under condemnation. And when we have sin, we are under the law. That is, the law has a hold on us. We are liable to pay a debt because of the law. When this fact registers in our hearts and minds, we see our need for atonement. Since our sin is against God, we are utterly helpless to make atonement for ourselves, and to pay our debt of sin. Left to ourselves, we are without a way. This is why Paul calls justification a gift in verse 24 above. It is a gift through the redemption in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, as He said in **John 14 (KJV):1** Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Jesus was going to be with the Father in heaven. And He is my way into heaven, and my way out of my debt of sin. He has done what I could not do for myself. By dying on the cross, Jesus has made atonement for my sin. And not for mine only, but also for the sins of the whole world. He is now everything to me. This is why I worship and praise Him.

Because Jesus has atoned for all sin by His one sacrifice on the cross, He has made an eternal redemption for us possible. Even if we sin after we accept Him, His atonement is still able to save us because He has atoned for all sin for all time by His one sacrifice on the cross. There is no other sacrifice necessary. There is no other sacrifice that could equal His sacrifice. We were not able to atone for our sin before Jesus came and died for us. And we will not be able to atone for our sin after He died for us. This is why righteousness is a gift. When we repent of our sins and accept Christ, He gives us the gift of righteousness as in **Romans 5 (NASB):17** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Since we are not able to atone for sin on our own, and since righteousness is a gift, we are no longer under the condemnation of the law. This does not mean that we are free to break the law. We are not to let sin have any rights to us as Paul reveals in **Romans 6 (KJV):12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Again Paul says in **Galatians 3 (KJV):10** For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

We are not to sin because we are not under law, but when we sin we should confess our sins as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The idea is that after we are born again, that is, after we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and confess Him as Lord, we must then walk in the light to have fellowship with Him. As the Lord reveals sin in our lives, we must confess it in order to maintain our fellowship with Him.

So the law cannot make us righteous or impart life as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):21** Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

So it is by the law that we become aware that we need a savior from our sins. This is why Christ came as we read in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):15** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

It is by grace that we are saved through faith as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):8** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

This salvation is a free gift when we accept Christ. When we receive Him, we are born again as we see in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

So the covenant of God with Abraham is consistent through time. The covenant of God with Abraham was simply enfolded into the covenant of the law under Moses. The promise of God to Abraham was still in effect, and faith was still required during the covenant of the law as is proven when Paul explains why Israel did not attain the righteousness by faith in Romans, chapter nine, as read in **Romans 9 (KJV):30** What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

This statement by Paul in Romans, chapter nine, also proves that faith is still required under the new covenant, the old covenant being the covenant of the law. That is, righteousness comes by faith under the new covenant just as it did under the covenant of God with Abraham, and as it did under the covenant of God with Moses, that is, the old covenant or the covenant of the law. God is still imputing righteousness by faith without the works of the law. Otherwise, Christ died for no reason as Paul reveals in **Galatians 2 (KJV):21** I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

The fourth reason that Irenaeus' teaching about the law will not work is because Jesus came in the flesh and dwelt with men on earth as a man under the old covenant, the covenant of the law, as we read in **Galatians 4 (KJV):4** But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Jesus obeyed all the rules of the Old Covenant as any righteous man would. Jesus allowed John the Baptist to baptize Him in order to fulfill all righteousness as He says in **Matthew 3 (KJV):13** Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Jesus taught the people to be obedient to the law. When a man came up to Him asking to be healed of leprosy, Jesus healed him and told him to obey the law as we read in **Luke 5 (KJV):13** And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. 14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Jesus gave the people greater clarity concerning the law. The law was not just about the letter but about the Spirit and issues of the heart as well as we see in **Matthew 5 (KJV):23** Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Jesus taught the people to keep the commandments to enter life as we read in **Matthew 19 (KJV):16** And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Jesus taught the people not to transgress the law of God for the sake of tradition as we read also in

**Matthew 15 (KJV):3** But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Jesus said He came to fulfill the law as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

And Jesus did fulfill the law. He is the only sinless man who ever lived as Peter reveals in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Jesus taught those He ministered to while He was on earth to keep the law. He Himself lived under the law and kept the law. But Jesus kept all the law blamelessly, and so fulfilled the law and earned the righteousness of the law. Because He did this, He was able to bear our sins in His body on the cross. Jesus is then our propitiation, that is, our atonement for sin. Because Jesus did this, God is able to impute His righteousness to us when we have faith in Him. It is His righteousness that is imputed because we have none. God requires perfect righteousness which we don't have. We were helpless to help ourselves, so God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He earned perfect righteousness for us.

When Jesus died on the cross, the atonement was accomplished, and the way into the holiest was now made possible by His sacrifice on the cross. The old covenant ended. The law of sacrifice was fulfilled by Jesus' death on the cross, which was a perfect offering for sin. The new covenant is now in effect. Jesus inaugurated this covenant with His death on the cross. Before His death, He celebrated the last Passover and gave us a way to remember His death as we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):15** And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

It was fitting that Jesus would celebrate the Passover meal as His last meal, and the last Passover ever since He would fulfill the symbolism of the Passover celebration Himself by substituting His body for the Pascal lamb. The Pascal lamb was offered by the Israelites as a substitutionary sacrifice for their first born on the day when the Lord struck dead the first born children of the Egyptians so that the Pharaoh would let the Israelites go out free from his land. The substance of what Jesus did on the cross was not that His death freed us from the bondage of the law, but that His death freed us from sin which kept us under the condemnation of the law. The condemnation of the law is what kept us bound as slaves under the law. But Jesus' death on the cross became the one sacrifice for all time that released us from the condemnation of the law, and so freed us forever. This is the freedom that Paul is talking about in **Galatians 5 (KJV):1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Can Paul be any clearer? If you keep the law in one point, say circumcision, you are under obligation to keep the whole law. Does the whole law not include the Decalogue? Would Paul have made such a statement if there was any doubt?

So we are not saved by keeping the law. We are saved when we believe in Jesus Christ. It is faith in Jesus Christ that in every covenant period was required for salvation. It was not the observance of the law but faith in the redeemer, Jesus Christ, which saves us. Abraham looked forward to this as did Isaac and Jacob and all the other righteous men and women before Moses and the law. When the law came, more was revealed

concerning the requirements of God's righteousness, and what it would take to redeem us from our sin. Yet, faith was still required for righteousness during this covenant as well. Jesus Himself lived under the law and fulfilled it to the letter. He has made atonement for us by His death on the cross. He has also inaugurated the new covenant. And faith is still required for righteousness. However, now under the new covenant the atonement has actually been made, and the power of the law to condemn us has been nailed to the cross as Paul says in **Colossians 2 (KJV):14** Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

The law was a lot of work to keep it to the letter. For certain sins, animal sacrifice was required. This would mean travelling to the temple with the animal to be sacrificed. This could be quite a distance to travel depending on how far from the temple you lived. This would mean time away from family, and working to support the family. And the law was also very exacting. Premeditated murder was to be punished by the death penalty of course, but so was striking your father or mother, cursing father or mother, doing work on the Sabbath, adultery, homosexuality, idolatry, blaspheming the Name, and other sins. There was not a lot of grace under the law. It was a heavy burden. There were certain foods you could not eat because of the laws of clean and unclean animals. But this was only part of the reason why the law was described as a yoke of bondage. The law was described as a yoke of bondage mainly because the law kept us under sin. The law only condemned us by reminding us of our sin. The law could not save us or give us life. And so it was not called a yoke of bondage by Paul because the laws of Moses contained bad laws. The law of Moses given by God is holy, just, and good, as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (KJV):12** Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Again Paul explains in **Romans 7 (KJV):13** Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The law makes sin utterly sinful. This is what Jesus was doing when He "extended" the law. Jesus made us accountable for the thoughts of our heart. In so doing He was making sin utterly sinful so that we would see our sin, and come to Him and have life. The law shows us our sin, and in this way leads us to surrender our hearts and have faith in Jesus Christ. This is why He is called Savior. He saves us from our sin.

Jesus now calls us to take His yoke upon us as we read in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

If we take the yoke of Jesus, we are led by the Spirit, and we are not under yoke of the law as Paul says in **Galatians 5 (KJV):18** But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

We have a new master, Jesus. Sin is no longer our master since Jesus has set us free from sin. We are therefore no longer under law, but under grace as Paul reveals in **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Since we are now not under the law, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus as Paul reveals also in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

This does not mean that we are without law, but that we are under the yoke of Christ as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):20** And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

We are not to go back under the law as the Galatian church did, and received the rebuke of the apostle as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):1** O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having

begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. 5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

And in **Galatians 4 (KJV)**:21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

And Paul states that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. All have sinned and fall short, or lack, the glory of God as we read again in **Romans 3 (KJV)**:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Our justification is from sin. Sin is revealed by the law. Jesus showed the true nature of God's righteousness by clarifying what sin is. Jesus pointed to where sin is, that is, in the thoughts and intents of the heart. The law addresses our sin. It is not just disobedience to ritual laws, but all the laws of God reveal His righteousness, and make us aware that we have sinned. It is for our sin that Jesus died. It was not just for our past sin, but all sin that Jesus died for us as Paul reveals in **Acts 13 (KJV)**:36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

The word "justified" in verse 39 in the Greek is δικαιόω (pronounced dikaiōō). Vine's says that this word means "primarily, to deem to be right, signifies, in the N.T., (a) to show to be right or righteous;" and "(b) to declare to be righteous, to pronounce righteous." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 284.**

This word is the same word translated "justified" in Romans 3:24 above. His blood is now a propitiation for all our sin. God now justifies all who have faith in Jesus based on His blood as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV)**:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

Our justification is by faith without the deeds of the law, whether we are Jew or Gentile. And we are justified from our sin. This is why the law cannot be divided up between the ceremonial or ritual laws, and the Decalogue, that is, the ten commandments. All the laws are the commands of God. Sin is disobeying the law of God, whether it was disobedience to the Decalogue or to the ritual law. It was for our sin that Jesus died. We now receive the righteousness of God as a gift by His grace through our faith in Jesus Christ.

## Chapter 25: The Spiritual Man

**Book 4: Chapter XXXIII.—Whosoever confesses that one God is the author of both Testaments, and diligently reads the Scriptures in company with the presbyters of the Church, is a true spiritual disciple; and he will rightly understand and interpret all that the prophets have declared respecting Christ and the liberty of the New Testament.**

1. A spiritual disciple of this sort truly receiving the Spirit of God, who was from the beginning, in all the dispensations of God, present with mankind, and announced things future, revealed things present, and narrated things past—[such a man] does indeed “judge all men, but is himself judged by no man.” 4253 *1 Cor. ii. 15.* [The argument of this chapter hinges on *Ps. xxv. 14*, and expounds a difficult text of St. Paul. A man who has the mind of God’s Spirit is the only judge of spiritual things. Worldly men are incompetent critics of Scripture and of Christian exposition. For he judges the Gentiles, “who serve the creature more than the Creator,” 4254 *Rom. i. 21.* and with a reprobate mind spend all their labour on vanity. And he also judges the Jews, who do not accept of the word of liberty, nor are willing to go forth free, although they have a Deliverer present [with them]; but they pretend, at a time unsuitable [for such conduct], to serve, [with observances] beyond [those required by] the law, God who stands in need of nothing, and do not recognise the advent of Christ, which He accomplished for the salvation of men, nor are willing to understand that all the prophets announced His two advents: the one, indeed, in which He became a man subject to stripes, and knowing what it is to bear infirmity, 4255 *Isa. liii. 3.* and sat upon the foal of an ass, 4256 *Zech. ix. 9.* and was a stone rejected by the builders, 4257 *Ps. cxviii. 22.* and was led as a sheep to the slaughter, 4258 *Isa. liii. 7.* and by the stretching forth of His hands destroyed Amalek; 4259 *Ex. xvii. 11.* while He gathered from the ends of the earth into His Father’s fold the children who were scattered abroad, 4260 *Isa. xi. 12.* and remembered His own dead ones who had formerly fallen asleep, 4261 *Comp. book iii. 20, 4.* and came down to them that He might deliver them: but the second in which He will come on the clouds, 4262 *Dan. vii. 13.* bringing on the day which burns as a furnace, 4263 *Mal. iv. 1.* and smiting the earth with the word of His mouth, 4264 *Isa. xi. 4.* and slaying the impious with the breath of His lips, and having a fan in His hands, and cleansing His floor, and gathering the wheat indeed into His barn, but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire. 4265 *Matt. iii. 12; Luke iii. 17.*

2. Moreover, he shall also examine the doctrine of Marcion, [inquiring] how he holds that there are two gods, separated from each other by an infinite distance. 4266 Harvey points this sentence interrogatively. Or how can he be good who draws away men that do not belong to him from him who made them, and calls them into his own kingdom? And why is his goodness, which does not save all [thus], defective? Also, why does he, indeed, seem to be good as respects men, but most unjust with regard to him who made men, inasmuch as he deprives him of his possessions? Moreover, how could the Lord, with any justice, if He belonged to another father, have acknowledged the bread to be His body, while He took it from that creation to which we belong, and affirmed the mixed cup to be His blood? 4267 “Temperamentum calicis.” on which Harvey remarks that “the mixture of water with the wine in the holy Eucharist was the universal practice of antiquity … the wine signifying the mystical Head of the Church, the water the body.” [Whatever the significance, it harmonizes with the Paschal chalice, and with *1 John v. 6*, and St. John’s gospel *John xix. 34, 35.*] And why did He acknowledge Himself to be the Son of man, if He had not gone through that birth which belongs to a human being? How, too, could He forgive us those sins for which we are answerable to our Maker and God? And how, again, supposing that He was not flesh, but was a man merely in appearance, could He have been crucified, and could blood and water have issued from His pierced side? 4268 *John xix. 34.* What body, moreover, was it that those who buried Him consigned to the tomb? And what was that which rose again from the dead?

3. [This spiritual man] shall also judge all the followers of Valentinus, because they do indeed confess with the tongue one God the Father, and that all things derive their existence from Him, but do at the same time maintain that He who formed all things is the fruit of an apostasy or defect. [He shall judge them, too, because] they do in like manner confess with the tongue one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, but assign in their [system of] doctrine a production of his own to the Only-begotten, one of his own also to the Word, another to Christ, and yet another to the Saviour; so that, according to them, all these beings are indeed said [in Scripture to be], as it were, one; [while they maintain], notwithstanding, that each one of them should be understood [to exist] separately [from the rest], and to have [had] his own special origin, according to his peculiar conjunction. [It appears], then

4269 This sentence is very obscure in the Latin text, that their tongues alone, forsooth, have conceded the unity [of God], while their [real] opinion and their understanding (by their habit of investigating profundities) have fallen away from [this doctrine of] unity, and taken up the notion of manifold deities,—[this, I say, must appear] when they shall be examined by Christ as to the points [of doctrine] which they have invented. Him, too, they affirm to have been born at a later period than the Pleroma of the Æons, and that His production took place after [the occurrence of] a degeneracy or apostasy; and they maintain that, on account of the passion which was experienced by Sophia, they themselves were brought to the birth. But their own special prophet Homer, listening to whom they have invented such doctrines, shall himself reprove them, when he expresses himself as follows:—“Hateful to me that man as Hades’ gates, Who one thing thinks, while he another states.” 4270 *Iliad*, ix. 312, 313. [This spiritual man] shall also judge the vain speeches of the perverse Gnostics, by showing that they are the disciples of Simon Magus.

4. He will judge also the Ebionites; [for] how can they be saved unless it was God who wrought out their salvation upon earth? Or how shall man pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into man? And how shall he (man) escape from the generation subject to death, if not by means

4271 The text is obscure, and the construction doubtful, of a new generation, given in a wonderful and unexpected manner (but as a sign of salvation) by God—[I mean] that regeneration which flows from the virgin through faith? 4272 The Latin here is, “quæ est ex virgine per fidem regenerationem.” According to Massuet, “virgine” here refers not to Mary, but to the Church. Grabe suspects that some words have been lost. Or how shall they receive adoption from God if they remain in this [kind of] generation, which is naturally possessed by man in this world? And how could He (Christ) have been greater than Solomon, 4273 *Matt. xii. 41, 42.* or greater than Jonah, or have been the Lord of David, 4274 *Matt. xxii. 43.* who was of the same substance as they were? How, too, could He have subdued 4275 *Matt. xxii. 29; Luke xi. 21, 22.* him who was stronger than men, 4276 Literally, “who was strong against men.” who had not only overcome man, but also retained him under his power, and conquered him who had conquered, while he set free mankind who had been conquered, unless He had been greater than man who had thus been vanquished? But who else is superior to, and more eminent than, that man who was formed after the likeness of God, except the Son of God, after whose image man was created? And for this reason He did in these last days 4277 In fine; lit. “in the end.” exhibit the similitude; [for] the Son of God was made man, assuming the ancient production [of His hands] into His own nature, 4278 In semetipsum: lit. “unto Himself.” as I have shown in the immediately preceding book.

5. He shall also judge those who describe Christ as [having become man] only in [human] opinion. For how can they imagine that they do themselves carry on a real discussion, when their Master was a mere imaginary being? Or how can they receive anything stedfast from Him, if He was a merely imagined being, and not a verity? And how can these men really be partaken of salvation, if He in whom they profess to believe, manifested Himself as a merely imaginary being? Everything, therefore, connected with these men is unreal, and nothing [possessed of the character of] truth; and, in these circumstances, it may be made a question whether (since, perchance, they themselves in like manner are not men, but mere dumb animals) they do not present, 4279 We here follow the reading “proferant.” the passage is difficult and obscure, but the meaning is as above. in most cases, simply a shadow of humanity.

6. He shall also judge false prophets, who, without having received the gift of prophecy from God, and not possessed of the fear of God, but either for the sake of vainglory, or with a view to some personal advantage, or acting in some other way under the influence of a wicked spirit, pretend to utter prophecies, while all the time they lie against God.

7. He shall also judge those who give rise to schisms, who are destitute of the love of God, and who look to their own special advantage rather than to the unity of the Church; and who for trifling reasons, or any kind of reason which occurs to them, cut in pieces and divide the great and glorious body of Christ, and so far as in them lies, [positively] destroy it,—men who prate of peace while they give rise to war, and do in truth strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel. 4280 Matt. xxiii. 24. For no reformation of so great importance can be effected by them, as will compensate for the mischief arising from their schism. He shall also judge all those who are beyond the pale of the truth, that is, who are outside the Church; but he himself shall be judged by no one. For to him all things are consistent: he has a full faith in one God Almighty, of whom are all things; and in the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things, and in the dispensations connected with Him, by means of which the Son of God became man; and a firm belief in the Spirit of God, who furnishes us with a knowledge of the truth, and has set forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, in virtue of which He dwells with every generation of men 4281 The Greek text here is σκηνοβατοῦν (lit. “to tabernacle:” comp. ἐσκήνωσεν, John i. 14) καθ’ ἐκάστην γενεὰν ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις: the Latin is, “Secundum quas (dispositiones) aderat generi humano.” We have endeavoured to express the meaning of both. according to the will of the Father.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that, “A spiritual disciple of this sort truly receiving the Spirit of God, who was from the beginning, in all the dispensations of God, present with mankind, and announced things future, revealed things present, and narrated things past—[such a man] does indeed “judge all men, but is himself judged by no man,” referring to 1 Corinthians 2:15. Irenaeus then testifies, “For he judges the Gentiles, “who serve the creature more than the Creator,” referring to Romans 1:25, “and with a reprobate mind spend all their labour on vanity,” referring in part to Romans 1:28. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And he also judges the Jews, who do not accept of the word of liberty, nor are willing to go forth free, although they have a Deliverer present [with them]; but they pretend, at a time unsuitable [for such conduct], to serve, [with observances] beyond [those required by] the law, God who stands in need of nothing,” drawing in part from Mark 7:6-13. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and do not recognise the advent of Christ, which He accomplished for the salvation of men, nor are willing to understand that all the prophets announced His two advents: the one, indeed, in which He became a man subject to stripes, and knowing what it is to bear infirmity,” referring to Matthew 8:17, Isaiah 53:4, “and sat upon the foal of an ass,” referring to Zechariah 9:9, “and was a stone rejected by the builders,” referring to Psalm 118:22, Matthew 21:42, “and was led as a sheep to the slaughter,” referring to Isaiah 53:7. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and by the stretching forth of His hands destroyed Amalek,” referring to Exodus 17:11, “while He gathered from the ends of the earth into His Father’s fold the children who were scattered abroad,” referring to Isaiah 11:12 and John 11:52. Irenaeus continues as he adds, “and remembered His own dead ones who had formerly fallen asleep, and came down to them that He might deliver them,” referring to Irenaeus’ own statement in **Book 3: Chapter XX, paragraph 4**. He continues as he affirms, “but the second in which He will come on the clouds,” referring to Daniel 7:13, “bringing on the day which burns as a furnace,” referring to Malachi 4:1, “and smiting the earth with the word of His mouth,” referring to Isaiah 11:4, “and slaying the impious with the breath of His lips, and having a fan in His hands, and cleansing His floor, and gathering the wheat indeed into His barn, but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire,” referring to Matthew 3:12, and Luke 3:17.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “Moreover,” the spiritual disciple “shall also examine the doctrine of Marcion, [inquiring]” as follows:

- “how he holds that there are two gods, separated from each other by an infinite distance.”
- “Or how can he be good who draws away men that do not belong to him from him who made them, and

calls them into his own kingdom?"

- "And why is his goodness, which does not save all [thus], defective?"
- "Also, why does he, indeed, seem to be good as respects men, but most unjust with regard to him who made men, inasmuch as he deprives him of his possessions?"
- "Moreover, how could the Lord, with any justice, if He belonged to another father, have acknowledged the bread to be His body, while He took it from that creation to which we belong, and affirmed the mixed cup to be His blood?"
- "And why did He acknowledge Himself to be the Son of man, if He had not gone through that birth which belongs to a human being?"
- "How, too, could He forgive us those sins for which we are answerable to our Maker and God?"
- "And how, again, supposing that He was not flesh, but was a man merely in appearance, could He have been crucified, and could blood and water have issued from His pierced side?," referring to John 19:34.
- "What body, moreover, was it that those who buried Him consigned to the tomb?"
- "And what was that which rose again from the dead?"

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge all the followers of Valentinus, because" of the following:

- "...they do indeed confess with the tongue one God the Father, and that all things derive their existence from Him, but do at the same time maintain that He who formed all things is the fruit of an apostasy or defect."
- "...they do in like manner confess with the tongue one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, but assign in their [system of] doctrine a production of his own to the Only-begotten, one of his own also to the Word, another to Christ, and yet another to the Saviour; so that, according to them, all these beings are indeed said [in Scripture to be], as it were, one; [while they maintain], notwithstanding, that each one of them should be understood [to exist] separately [from the rest], and to have [had] his own special origin, according to his peculiar conjunction.
- "...their tongues alone, forsooth, have conceded the unity [of God], while their [real] opinion and their understanding (by their habit of investigating profundities) have fallen away from [this doctrine of] unity, and taken up the notion of manifold deities,—[this, I say, must appear] when they shall be examined by Christ as to the points [of doctrine] which they have invented."
- "Him, too, they affirm to have been born at a later period than the Pleroma of the Æons, and that His production took place after [the occurrence of] a degeneracy or apostasy;"
- "and they maintain that, on account of the passion which was experienced by Sophia, they themselves were brought to the birth."

Irenaeus also testifies, "But their own special prophet Homer, listening to whom they have invented such doctrines, shall himself reprove them, when he expresses himself as follows:—"Hateful to me that man as Hades' gates, Who one thing thinks, while he another states," referring to the **Illiad, Chapter IX, 312, 313**. Again, Irenaeus testifies that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge the vain speeches of the perverse Gnostics, by showing that they are the disciples of Simon Magus."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies that the spiritual disciple "will judge also the Ebionites" by inquiring the following:

- "how can they be saved unless it was God who wrought out their salvation upon earth?"
- "Or how shall man pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into man?"
- "And how shall he (man) escape from the generation subject to death, if not by means of a new generation, given in a wonderful and unexpected manner (but as a sign of salvation) by God—[I mean] that regeneration which flows from the virgin through faith?"
- "Or how shall they receive adoption from God if they remain in this [kind of] generation, which is

naturally possessed by man in this world?"

- "And how could He (Christ) have been greater than Solomon, or greater than Jonah, or have been the Lord of David, who was of the same substance as they were?" referring in part to Matthew 12:41-43.
- "How, too, could He have subdued him who was stronger than men, who had not only overcome man, but also retained him under his power, and conquered him who had conquered, while he set free mankind who had been conquered, unless He had been greater than man who had thus been vanquished?" drawing from Matthew 12:29 and Luke 11:21-22.

Irenaeus then argues, "But who else is superior to, and more eminent than, that man who was formed after the likeness of God, except the Son of God, after whose image man was created?" And Irenaeus testifies, "And for this reason He did in these last days exhibit the similitude; [for] the Son of God was made man, assuming the ancient production [of His hands] into His own nature, as I have shown in the immediately preceding book."

In paragraph five, Irenaeus asserts that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge those who describe Christ as [having become man] only in [human] opinion," by inquiring as follows:

- "For how can they imagine that they do themselves carry on a real discussion, when their Master was a mere imaginary being?"
- "Or how can they receive anything stedfast from Him, if He was a merely imagined being, and not a verity?"
- "And how can these men really be partaken of salvation, if He in whom they profess to believe, manifested Himself as a merely imaginary being?"

Irenaeus then argues, "Everything, therefore, connected with these men is unreal, and nothing [possessed of the character of] truth; and, in these circumstances, it may be made a question whether (since, perchance, they themselves in like manner are not men, but mere dumb animals) they do not present, in most cases, simply a shadow of humanity."

In paragraph six, Irenaeus affirms that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge false prophets, who, without having received the gift of prophecy from God, and not possessed of the fear of God, but either for the sake of vainglory, or with a view to some personal advantage, or acting in some other way under the influence of a wicked spirit, pretend to utter prophecies, while all the time they lie against God."

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge those" who

- "give rise to schisms,
- "are destitute of the love of God"
- "look to their own special advantage rather than to the unity of the Church"
- "for trifling reasons, or any kind of reason which occurs to them, cut in pieces and divide the great and glorious body of Christ, and so far as in them lies, [positively] destroy it,"
- "prate of peace while they give rise to war, and do in truth strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel," referring to Matthew 23:24

Irenaeus then testifies, "For no reformation of so great importance can be effected by them, as will compensate for the mischief arising from their schism."

Irenaeus affirms that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge all those who are beyond the pale of the truth, that is, who are outside the Church; but he himself shall be judged by no one," referring to 1 Corinthians 2:15. To the spiritual disciple, Irenaeus affirms, "For to him all things are consistent: he has a full faith in" the following:

- "one God Almighty, of whom are all things"
- "in the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things"

- “in the dispensations connected with Him, by means of which the Son of God became man”
- “in the Spirit of God, who furnishes us with a knowledge of the truth, and has set forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, in virtue of which He dwells with every generation of men according to the will of the Father”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms that, “A spiritual disciple of this sort truly receiving the Spirit of God, who was from the beginning, in all the dispensations of God, present with mankind, and announced things future, revealed things present, and narrated things past—[such a man] does indeed “judge all men, but is himself judged by no man,” referring in context to **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):14** But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. 16 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

The King James translation is as in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

The word translated “appraised” and “appraises” in verses 14 and 15 in the NASB, and translated by “discerned” and “judgeth” and “judged” in the KJV is the Greek word ἀνακρίνω (pronounced anakrinō). Vine’s says that this words means “to examine, investigate, question,” and “judged.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 280.**

Irenaeus then testifies, “For he judges the Gentiles, “who serve the creature more than the Creator,” referring to **Romans 1 (KJV):25** Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “and with a reprobate mind spend all their labour on vanity,” referring in context to **Romans 1 (KJV):28** And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiseful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And he also judges the Jews, who do not accept of the word of liberty, nor are willing to go forth free, although they have a Deliverer present [with them]; but they pretend, at a time unsuitable [for such conduct], to serve, [with observances] beyond [those required by] the law, God who stands in need of nothing,” drawing in part from **Mark 7 (KJV):6** He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and do not recognise the advent of Christ, which He accomplished for the salvation of men, nor are willing to understand that all the prophets announced His two advents: the one, indeed, in which He became a man subject to stripes, and knowing what it is to bear infirmity,” referring in context to **Matthew 8 (KJV):16** When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

And **Isaiah 53 (KJV)**:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and sat upon the foal of an ass,” referring to **Zechariah 9 (NASB)**:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And again Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and was a stone rejected by the builders,” referring to **Psalm 118 (KJV)**:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

And to **Matthew 21 (NASB)**:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

And again Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and was led as a sheep to the slaughter,” referring to **Isaiah 53 (KJV)**:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Again, Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and by the stretching forth of His hands destroyed Amalek,” referring in context to **Exodus 17 (KJV)**:11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

And again Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “while He gathered from the ends of the earth into His Father’s fold the children who were scattered abroad,” referring to **Isaiah 11 (KJV)**:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

And in context to **John 11 (KJV)**:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “and remembered His own dead ones who had formerly fallen asleep, and came down to them that He might deliver them,” referring to Irenaeus’ statement in **Book 3: Chapter XX, paragraph 4** as recorded in the following:

### **Book 3: Chapter XX**

...  
4. Again, that it should not be a mere man who should save us, nor [one] without flesh—for the angels are without flesh—[the same prophet] announced, saying: “Neither an elder, nor angel, but the Lord Himself will save them because He loves them, and will spare them: He will Himself set them free.” And that He should Himself become very man, visible, when He should be the Word giving salvation, Isaiah again says: “Behold, city of Zion: thine eyes shall see our salvation.” And that it was not a mere man who died for us, Isaiah says: “And the holy Lord remembered His dead Israel, who had slept in the land of sepulture; and He came down to preach His salvation to them, that He might save them.” And Amos (Micah) the prophet declares the same: “He will turn again, and will have compassion upon us: He will destroy our iniquities, and will cast our sins into the depths of the sea.” And again, specifying the place of His advent, he says: “The Lord hath spoken from Zion, and He has uttered His voice from Jerusalem.” And that it is from that region which is towards the south of the inheritance of Judah that the Son of God shall come, who is God, and who was from Bethlehem, where the Lord was born [and] will send out His praise through all the earth, thus says the prophet Habakkuk: “God shall come

from the south, and the Holy One from Mount Effrem. His power covered the heavens over, and the earth is full of His praise. Before His face shall go forth the Word, and His feet shall advance in the plains.” Thus he indicates in clear terms that He is God, and that His advent was [to take place] in Bethlehem, and from Mount Effrem which is towards the south of the inheritance, and that [He is] man. For he says, “His feet shall advance in the plains.” and this is an indication proper to man.

Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “but the second in which He will come on the clouds,” referring to **Daniel 7 (KJV):13** I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

Again Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “bringing on the day which burns as a furnace,” referring to **Malachi 4 (KJV):1** For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

And again, Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and smiting the earth with the word of His mouth,” referring to **Isaiah 11 (KJV):4** But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

And finally, Irenaeus concludes as he says, “and slaying the impious with the breath of His lips, and having a fan in His hands, and cleansing His floor, and gathering the wheat indeed into His barn, but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire,” referring to **Matthew 3 (KJV):12** Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

And to **Luke 3 (KJV):17** Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “Moreover,” the spiritual disciple “shall also examine the doctrine of Marcion, [inquiring]” as follows:

- “how he holds that there are two gods, separated from each other by an infinite distance.”

That is, Marcion taught that there was another god greater than the God of the Old Testament. This god was the Heavenly Father of Jesus, according to Marcion.

- “Or how can he be good who draws away men that do not belong to him from him who made them, and calls them into his own kingdom?”

This is a logical conclusion of Marcion’s teaching. If the Heavenly Father of Jesus is not the God of the Old Testament, then Jesus did not come to His own creation but to those of another God as it were.

- “And why is his goodness, which does not save all [thus], defective?”

This was an argument of the Gnostics. The God of the Old Testament does not save all, and is therefore defective.

- “Also, why does he, indeed, seem to be good as respects men, but most unjust with regard to him who made men, inasmuch as he deprives him of his possessions?”

Again, this is a logical conclusion of Marcion’s teaching. The god of Marcion is really a thief.

- “Moreover, how could the Lord, with any justice, if He belonged to another father, have acknowledged the bread to be His body, while He took it from that creation to which we belong, and affirmed the

mixed cup to be His blood?"

Irenaeus forcefully and logically destroys Marcion's teaching. Marcion's god is dishonest.

- "And why did He acknowledge Himself to be the Son of man, if He had not gone through that birth which belongs to a human being?"

Another forceful and logical argument against Marcion's teaching by Irenaeus.

- "How, too, could He forgive us those sins for which we are answerable to our Maker and God?"

Again, another forceful and logical argument against Marcion's teaching by Irenaeus.

- "And how, again, supposing that He was not flesh, but was a man merely in appearance, could He have been crucified, and could blood and water have issued from His pierced side?", referring to **John 19 (KJV):34** But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
- "What body, moreover, was it that those who buried Him consigned to the tomb?"
- "And what was that which rose again from the dead?"

Irenaeus reveals the nonsense of Marcion's teaching, and shows the clarity of his thinking.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge all the followers of Valentinus, because" of the following:

- "...they do indeed confess with the tongue one God the Father, and that all things derive their existence from Him, but do at the same time maintain that He who formed all things is the fruit of an apostasy or defect."

Valentinus taught a slightly different version of Gnostic teaching.

- "...they do in like manner confess with the tongue one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, but assign in their [system of] doctrine a production of his own to the Only-begotten, one of his own also to the Word, another to Christ, and yet another to the Saviour; so that, according to them, all these beings are indeed said [in Scripture to be], as it were, one; [while they maintain], notwithstanding, that each one of them should be understood [to exist] separately [from the rest], and to have [had] his own special origin, according to his peculiar conjunction."

This is obviously an invention.

- "...their tongues alone, forsooth, have conceded the unity [of God], while their [real] opinion and their understanding (by their habit of investigating profundities) have fallen away from [this doctrine of] unity, and taken up the notion of manifold deities,—[this, I say, must appear] when they shall be examined by Christ as to the points [of doctrine] which they have invented."
- "Him, too, they affirm to have been born at a later period than the Pleroma of the *Æons*, and that His production took place after [the occurrence of] a degeneracy or apostasy;"

How could the Gnostics know this, since they were not there when the Pleroma was created with the *Æons*? This is another obvious invention as Irenaeus points out.

- “and they maintain that, on account of the passion which was experienced by Sophia, they themselves were brought to the birth.”

This is something that is impossible for the Gnostics to know. Irenaeus is effective in his arguments.

Irenaeus also testifies, “But their own special prophet Homer, listening to whom they have invented such doctrines, shall himself reprove them, when he expresses himself as follows:—“Hateful to me that man as Hades’ gates, Who one thing thinks, while he another states,” referring to the **Illiad, Chapter IX, 312, 313**. Irenaeus testifies that the source of this teaching is ultimately Homer whom they were listening to. However, even Homer would have disagreed with their dishonesty apparently, according to Irenaeus.

Again, Irenaeus testifies that the spiritual disciple “shall also judge the vain speeches of the perverse Gnostics, by showing that they are the disciples of Simon Magus.” Simon Magus was a convert in Samaria as Luke reports in Acts, chapter eight. Simon reportedly believed the Gospel preached by Philip, and apparently repented of his avarice. However, early church tradition has him as a heretic again. We discuss Simon in **Chapter 11: The Teaching of Marcion and the Gnostics under Book 1: Chapter XXVII**.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus says that the spiritual disciple “will judge also the Ebionites” as he argues the following:

- “how can they be saved unless it was God who wrought out their salvation upon earth?”
- “Or how shall man pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into man?”
- “And how shall he (man) escape from the generation subject to death, if not by means of a new generation, given in a wonderful and unexpected manner (but as a sign of salvation) by God—[I mean] that regeneration which flows from the virgin through faith?”

It is more probable that Irenaeus is referring to **Matthew 1 (ESV):23** “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

This is brought out also in **Book 3: Chapter XIX**, as Irenaeus states as follows in paragraph 2:

### **Book 3: Chapter XIX**

...

2. For this reason [it is, said], “Who shall declare His generation?” since “He is a man, and who shall recognise Him?” But he to whom the Father which is in heaven has revealed Him, knows Him, so that he understands that He who “was not born either by the will of the flesh, or by the will of man,” is the Son of man, this is Christ, the Son of the living God. For I have shown from the Scriptures, that no one of the sons of Adam is as to everything, and absolutely, called God, or named Lord. But that He is Himself in His own right, beyond all men who ever lived, God, and Lord, and King Eternal, and the Incarnate Word, proclaimed by all the prophets, the apostles, and by the Spirit Himself, may be seen by all who have attained to even a small portion of the truth. Now, the Scriptures would not have testified these things of Him, if, like others, He had been a mere man. But that He had, beyond all others, in Himself that pre-eminent birth which is from the Most High Father, and also experienced that pre-eminent generation which is from the Virgin, the divine Scriptures do in both respects testify of Him: also, that He was a man without comeliness, and liable to suffering; that He sat upon the foal of an ass; that He received for drink, vinegar and gall; that He was despised among the people, and humbled Himself even to death and that He is the holy Lord, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Beautiful in appearance, and the Mighty God, coming on the clouds as the Judge of all men; all these things did the Scriptures prophesy of Him.

We have already looked at this paragraph in **Chapter 4: Irenaeus’ Statement of Faith**, so we will not discuss it here. I think it speaks for itself. This is a marvelous statement of faith by Irenaeus.

- “Or how shall they receive adoption from God if they remain in this [kind of] generation, which is

naturally possessed by man in this world?"

Yes, man is dead in trespasses and sins as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

- "And how could He (Christ) have been greater than Solomon, or greater than Jonah, or have been the Lord of David, who was of the same substance as they were?" referring in part to **Matthew 12 (KJV):41** The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. **42** The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Good point.

- "How, too, could He have subdued him who was stronger than men, who had not only overcome man, but also retained him under his power, and conquered him who had conquered, while he set free mankind who had been conquered, unless He had been greater than man who had thus been vanquished?" drawing from **Matthew 12 (KJV):22** Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. **23** And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? **24** But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. **25** And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: **26** And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? **27** And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. **28** But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. **29** Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

And also drawing from **Luke 11 (KJV):14** And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. **15** But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. **16** And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. **17** But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. **18** If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. **19** And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. **20** But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. **21** When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: **22** But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. **23** He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Irenaeus then argues, "But who else is superior to, and more eminent than, that man who was formed after the likeness of God, except the Son of God, after whose image man was created?" And Irenaeus then testifies, "And for this reason He did in these last days exhibit the similitude; [for] the Son of God was made man, assuming the ancient production [of His hands] into His own nature, as I have shown in the immediately preceding book." Irenaeus gives us his testimony that Jesus was a man in the flesh.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus asserts that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge those who describe Christ as [having become man] only in [human] opinion," inquiring as follows:

- "For how can they imagine that they do themselves carry on a real discussion, when their Master was a

mere imaginary being?"

- "Or how can they receive anything steadfast from Him, if He was a merely imagined being, and not a verity?"
- "And how can these men really be partaken of salvation, if He in whom they profess to believe, manifested Himself as a merely imaginary being?"

Irenaeus reveals some of the current Gnostic views of Christ here. He then argues again effectively, "Everything, therefore, connected with these men is unreal, and nothing [possessed of the character of] truth; and, in these circumstances, it may be made a question whether (since, perchance, they themselves in like manner are not men, but mere dumb animals) they do not present, in most cases, simply a shadow of humanity."

In paragraph six, Irenaeus affirms that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge false prophets, who, without having received the gift of prophecy from God, and not possessed of the fear of God, but either for the sake of vainglory, or with a view to some personal advantage, or acting in some other way under the influence of a wicked spirit, pretend to utter prophecies, while all the time they lie against God." Irenaeus again reveals that false prophets existed in his time, and argues effectively that the disciple who is spiritual has authority over them. That is, the spiritual disciple has authority to rebuke and reprove as Paul charged Timothy in **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):1** I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; **2** Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. **3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; **4** And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge those" who

- "give rise to schisms,
- "are destitute of the love of God"
- "look to their own special advantage rather than to the unity of the Church"
- "for trifling reasons, or any kind of reason which occurs to them, cut in pieces and divide the great and glorious body of Christ, and so far as in them lies, [positively] destroy it,"
- "prate of peace while they give rise to war, and do in truth strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel," referring to **Matthew 23 (KJV):24** Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Irenaeus testifies, "For no reformation of so great importance can be effected by them, as will compensate for the mischief arising from their schism." Irenaeus affirms that the spiritual disciple "shall also judge all those who are beyond the pale of the truth, that is, who are outside the Church; but he himself shall be judged by no one," referring again to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. **15** But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. **16** For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

To the spiritual disciple, Irenaeus affirms, "For to him all things are consistent: he has a full faith in" the following:

- "one God Almighty, of whom are all things"
- "in the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things"
- "in the dispensations connected with Him, by means of which the Son of God became man"
- "in the Spirit of God, who furnishes us with a knowledge of the truth, and has set forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, in virtue of which He dwells with every generation of men according to the will of the Father"

Irenaeus testifies to his calling here as a defender of the faith.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIII

To summarize, in paragraph one, Irenaeus says that the spiritual man, who “truly receiving the Spirit of God,” does indeed “judge all men, but is himself judged by no man.” Irenaeus hints at the deity of the Spirit of God here for he says of the Spirit of God that He “was from the beginning, in all the dispensations of God, present with mankind, and announced things future, revealed things present, and narrated things past,” meaning He is omniscient. Then he says that this spiritual man judges “the Gentiles, who serve the creature more than the Creator,” and judges the Jews who reject their Christ, their Savior, because they don’t realize the Scriptures speak of “two advents.” The first advent was when the Christ became a man, “a stone rejected by the builders, and was led as a sheep to the slaughter.” Then, in the second advent, Irenaeus says, “He will come on the clouds bringing on the day which burns as a furnace,” that is, the judgment day.

Irenaeus is to be commended for his staunch defense of the Church against the Gnostic heresies that were so vehement as stormy winds in his day. And he is to be commended for his stand against false prophets, and anyone who would say that Jesus was not truly man, or that He was not truly God. He is also to be commended for his stand against schisms in the Church.

However, it is important to note that the Greek word used in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 is ἀνακρίνω (pronounced anakrinō). This word means “to examine, investigate, question (ana, up, krino, separate, select, choose; hence to determine, and so to judge, pronounce judgment.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 280.**

It might be summarized by the word “discern” in the context of 1 Corinthians 2:14-15. The one who is spiritual discerns all things.

There is another Greek word translated “judge” in **Matthew 7 (KJV):1** Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

The Greek word translated “judge” in these verses is κρίνω (pronounced krinō). Vine’s says that this words “primarily denotes to separate, select, choose; hence, to determine, and so to judge, pronounce judgment.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 280.**

We must be careful not to confuse discernment with pronouncing judgment. What Paul reveals in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 was that the spiritual man is aware of the spiritual realm, the Kingdom of God, and spiritual truths that are grasped by faith as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Paul’s desire for the Corinthians was that they might become spiritual. That is, that they would not be ruled by their fleshly desires, that is, be carnal. Paul’s desire for the Corinthians was also that they would be ruled by the Spirit of God. He wanted them to discern what was holy versus what was of the flesh. If they would do this there would be no division among them as there was when Paul first wrote to them. We discussed this more in **Chapter 8: On the Nature of Man** under the heading, **Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII.**

The spiritual man looks at the things not seen, that is, the things of the Spirit. He understands by faith that God, by His Spirit, made all things. In other words, He has a spiritual dimension to his understanding, and is not limited to just the physical realm. He sees vertically as well as horizontally. He looks at earthly things but also at heavenly things.

I believe Irenaeus is correct in his exhortation to judge, that is to be discerning, in that we are to discipline those who are within the bounds of the church so that they teach no other doctrine than that which agrees with the word of God. For example, we are to judge immorality as we see in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):9** I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

In verse 12, Paul uses the Greek word κρίνω (pronounced krinō) twice. We are to also command people not to teach false doctrine in the church as we read in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV)**:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; 2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. 5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: 6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; 7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderer of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

The word “doctrine” in verse 10 is the Greek word διδασκαλία (pronounced didaskalia). Vine’s says that this word means “that which is taught, doctrine.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 331,332.** The word comes from the verb διδάσκω (pronounced didaskō), which means “to teach or speak in a public assembly.” **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition by Moulton, page 98.**

Now the word for “teach” in the Greek is διδάσκω (pronounced didaskō), and the word for “teacher” in the Greek is διδάσκαλος (pronounced didaskalos). This word “teacher” is used in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

These are ministry gifts given by God, for it is God who places or sets us in His body as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Being a teacher is a gift given by God as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

So doctrine is teaching material. Doctrine is what is taught by a teacher. In the Biblical sense, doctrine is Biblical truth that is found only in the word of God. In order to judge false doctrine, we must know the word of God for ourselves. This will give us discernment as to what is spiritual versus what is of the flesh. The apostle John wrote as in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:26 These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

All believers have this ability to judge truth from error. But not all believers have the ministry gift of a teacher. A good teacher can help us understand the difficult parts in God’s word. But we ourselves must be discerning if we are to abide in Him as John further encourages in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Irenaeus in this section is trying to show us the authority of the believer. The Scriptures teach us that the believer who is spiritual has authority to judge what is true and what is not true. But we make no judgment on people. That is God’s place. The Church must be a safe place, and open sin must not be tolerated. But we must be safe people first. We need time and space to grow, and we must have the grace to allow others time and space to grow. And there are times when we must let God discipline, for we are all His children.

## Chapter 26: A Refutation of Two Gods

### Book 4: Chapter XXXVI.—The prophets were sent from one and the same Father from whom the Son was sent.

1. Which [God] the Lord does not reject, nor does He say that the prophets [spake] from another god than His Father; nor from any other essence, but from one and the same Father; nor that any other being made the things in the world, except His own Father, when He speaks as follows in His teaching: “There was a certain householder, and he planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged in it a winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants unto the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants: they cut one to pieces, stoned another, and killed another. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his only son, saying, Perchance they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and we shall possess his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto these husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy these wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season.” **4355 Matt. xxi.**

**33—41.** Again does the Lord say: “Have ye never read, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore I say unto you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” **4356 Matt. xxi. 42—44** By these words He clearly points out to His disciples one and the same Householder—that is, one God the Father, who made all things by Himself; while [He shows] that there are various husbandmen, some obstinate, and proud, and worthless, and slayers of the Lord, but others who render Him, with all obedience, the fruits in their seasons; and that it is the same Householder who sends at one time His servants, at another His Son. From that Father, therefore, from whom the Son was sent to those husbandmen who slew Him, from Him also were the servants [sent]. But the Son, as coming from the Father with supreme authority (*principali auctoritate*), used to express Himself thus: “But I say unto you.” **4357 Matt. v.**

**22.** The servants, again, [who came] as from their Lord, spake after the manner of servants, [delivering a message]; and they therefore used to say, “Thus saith the Lord.”

...  
4. Since the Son of God is always one and the same, He gives to those who believe on Him a well of water **4368 John iv. 14.** [springing up] to eternal life, but He causes the unfruitful fig-tree immediately to dry up; and in the days of Noah He justly brought on the deluge for the purpose of extinguishing that most infamous race of men then existent, who could not bring forth fruit to God, since the angels that sinned had commingled with them, and [acted as He did] in order that He might put a check upon the sins of these men, but [that at the same time] He might preserve the archetype, **4369** This is Massuet’s conjectural emendation of the text, viz., *archetypum* for *arcætypum*. Grabe would insert *per* before *arcæ*, and he thinks the passage to have a reference to **1 Pet. iii. 20.** Irenæus, in common with the other ancient Fathers, believed that the fallen angels were the “sons of God” who commingled with “the daughters of men,” and thus produced a race of spurious men. [**Gen. vi. 1, 2, 3,** and **Josephus.**] the formation of Adam. And it was He who rained fire and brimstone from heaven, in the days of Lot, upon Sodom and Gomorrah, “an example of the righteous judgment of God,”

**4370 Jude 7.** [And note “strange flesh” (Gr. σαρκὸς ἐτέρων) as to the angels. **Gen. xix. 4, 5.**] that all may know, “that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.”

**4371 Matt. iii. 10.** And it is He who uses [the words], that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the general judgment than for those who beheld His wonders, and did not believe on Him, nor receive His doctrine. **4372 Matt. xi. 24; Luke x. 12.** For as He gave by His advent a greater privilege to those

who believed on Him, and who do His will, so also did He point out that those who did not believe on Him should have a more severe punishment in the judgment; thus extending equal justice to all, and being to exact more from those to whom He gives the more; the more, however, not because He reveals the knowledge of another Father, as I have shown so fully and so repeatedly, but because He has, by means of His advent, poured upon the human race the greater gift of paternal grace.

...

8. Then, in the case of the publican, who excelled the Pharisee in prayer, [we find] that it was not because he worshipped another Father that he received testimony from the Lord that he was justified rather [than the other]; but because with great humility, apart from all boasting and pride, he made confession to the same God. 4388 Luke xviii. 10. The parable of the two sons also: those who are sent into the vineyard, of whom one indeed opposed his father, but afterwards repented, when repentance profited him nothing; the other, however, promised to go, at once assuring his father, but he did not go (for “every man is a liar;” 4389 Ps. cxvi. 2, “to will is present with him, but he finds not means to perform” 4390 Rom. vii. 18.),—[this parable, I say], points out one and the same Father. Then, again, this truth was clearly shown forth by the parable of the fig-tree, of which the Lord says, “Behold, now these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, but I find none” 4391 Luke xiii. 6. (pointing onwards, by the prophets, to His advent, by whom He came from time to time, seeking the fruit of righteousness from them, which he did not find), and also by the circumstance that, for the reason already mentioned, the fig-tree should be hewn down. And, without using a parable, the Lord said to Jerusalem, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest those that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate.” 4392 Luke xiii. 34; Matt. xxiii. 37. For that which had been said in the parable, “Behold, for three years I come seeking fruit,” and in clear terms, again, [where He says], “How often would I have gathered thy children together,” shall be [found] a falsehood, if we do not understand His advent, which is [announced] by the prophets—if, in fact, He came to them but once, and then for the first time. But since He who chose the patriarchs and those [who lived under the first covenant], is the same Word of God who did both visit them through the prophetic Spirit, and us also who have been called together from all quarters by His advent; in addition to what has been already said, He truly declared, “Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall go into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 4393 Matt. viii. 11, 12. If, then, those who do believe in Him through the preaching of His apostles throughout the east and west shall recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, partaking with them of the [heavenly] banquet, one and the same God is set forth as He who did indeed choose the patriarchs, visited also the people, and called the Gentiles.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues, “Which [God] the Lord does not reject, nor does He say that the prophets [spake] from another god than His Father; nor from any other essence, but from one and the same Father; nor that any other being made the things in the world, except His own Father, when He speaks as follows in His teaching: “There was a certain householder, and he planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged in it a winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants unto the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants: they cut one to pieces, stoned another, and killed another. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his only son, saying, Perchance they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and we shall possess his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto these husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy these wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season,”

referring to Matthew 21:33-41. Irenaeus continues his argument as he says, “Again does the Lord say: ‘Have ye never read, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore I say unto you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,’ referring to Matthew 21:42-43. Irenaeus explains that, “By these words He clearly points out to His disciples one and the same Householder—that is, one God the Father, who made all things by Himself; while [He shows] that there are various husbandmen, some obstinate, and proud, and worthless, and slayers of the Lord, but others who render Him, with all obedience, the fruits in their seasons; and that it is the same Householder who sends at one time His servants, at another His Son.” Irenaeus affirms that it is “From that Father, therefore, from whom the Son was sent to those husbandmen who slew Him, from Him also were the servants [sent]. But the Son, as coming from the Father with supreme authority (principali auctoritate), used to express Himself thus: ‘But I say unto you,’ referring to Matthew 5:22. Irenaeus then affirms that, “The servants, again, [who came] as from their Lord, spake after the manner of servants, [delivering a message]; and they therefore used to say, ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ referring, as an example, to Exodus 4:22, or Exodus 5:1.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “Since the Son of God is always one and the same, He gives to those who believe on Him a well of water [springing up] to eternal life,” referring to John 4:14, “but He causes the unfruitful fig-tree immediately to dry up,” referring to Matthew 21:18-22. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and in the days of Noah He justly brought on the deluge for the purpose of extinguishing that most infamous race of men then existent, who could not bring forth fruit to God, since the angels that sinned had commingled with them, and [acted as He did] in order that He might put a check upon the sins of these men, but [that at the same time] He might preserve the archetype, the formation of Adam,” referring to Genesis, chapter 6, and Jude 6-7. Irenaeus then affirms, “And it was He who rained fire and brimstone from heaven, in the days of Lot, upon Sodom and Gomorrah, “an example of the righteous judgment of God,” referring to Genesis 19:4-5, “that all may know, “that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire,” referring to Matthew 3:10. Irenaeus then testifies, “And it is He who uses [the words], that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the general judgment than for those who beheld His wonders, and did not believe on Him, nor receive His doctrine,” referring to Matthew 11:24, Luke 10:12. Irenaeus then affirms, “For as He gave by His advent a greater privilege to those who believed on Him, and who do His will, so also did He point out that those who did not believe on Him should have a more severe punishment in the judgment,” drawing possibly from James 3:1, “thus extending equal justice to all, and being to exact more from those to whom He gives the more,” referring to Luke 12:47-48. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “the more, however, not because He reveals the knowledge of another Father, as I have shown so fully and so repeatedly, but because He has, by means of His advent, poured upon the human race the greater gift of paternal grace.”

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus testifies, “Then, in the case of the publican, who excelled the Pharisee in prayer, [we find] that it was not because he worshipped another Father that he received testimony from the Lord that he was justified rather [than the other]; but because with great humility, apart from all boasting and pride, he made confession to the same God,” referring to Luke 18:10. Irenaeus then again testifies as he says, “The parable of the two sons also: those who are sent into the vineyard, of whom one indeed opposed his father, but afterwards repented, when repentance profited him nothing; the other, however, promised to go, at once assuring his father, but he did not go,” referring to Matthew 21:28-32, “(for “every man is a liar,” referring to Romans 3:4. Irenaeus continues as he says, “to will is present with him, but he finds not means to perform,” referring to Romans 7:18. Irenaeus goes further as he testifies again that ”—[this parable, I say], points out one and the same Father.” And Irenaeus continues as he argues, “Then, again, this truth was clearly shown forth by the parable of the fig-tree, of which the Lord says, “Behold, now these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, but I find none,” referring to Luke 13:6. Irenaeus explains that the Lord was “(pointing onwards, by the prophets, to His advent, by whom He came from time to time, seeking the fruit of righteousness from them, which he did not find), and also by the circumstance that, for the reason already mentioned, the fig-tree should be hewn down.” Irenaeus then argues, “And, without using a parable, the Lord said to Jerusalem, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest those that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate,” referring to Luke 13:34, and Matthew 23:37-38. Irenaeus then argues,

"For that which had been said in the parable, "Behold, for three years I come seeking fruit," and in clear terms, again, [where He says], "How often would I have gathered thy children together," shall be [found] a falsehood, if we do not understand His advent, which is [announced] by the prophets—if, in fact, He came to them but once, and then for the first time." Irenaeus then testifies, "But since He who chose the patriarchs and those [who lived under the first covenant], is the same Word of God who did both visit them through the prophetic Spirit, and us also who have been called together from all quarters by His advent; in addition to what has been already said, He truly declared, "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall go into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," referring to Matthew 8:11-12. Irenaeus effectively concludes as he argues, "If, then, those who do believe in Him through the preaching of His apostles throughout the east and west shall recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, partaking with them of the [heavenly] banquet, one and the same God is set forth as He who did indeed choose the patriarchs, visited also the people, and called the Gentiles."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues the Lord Jesus did not reject the God of the Old Testament as he testifies, "Which [God] the Lord does not reject, nor does He say that the prophets [spake] from another god than His Father; nor from any other essence, but from one and the same Father; nor that any other being made the things in the world, except His own Father, when He speaks as follows in His teaching: "There was a certain householder, and he planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged in it a winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants unto the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants: they cut one to pieces, stoned another, and killed another. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his only son, saying, Perchance they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and we shall possess his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto these husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy these wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season," referring to **Matthew 21 (KJV):33** Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. 40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

We see here how faithfully Irenaeus quotes the Scriptures. Irenaeus then continues his argument as he testifies, "Again does the Lord say: "Have ye never read, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore I say unto you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," referring to **Matthew 21 (KJV):42** Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Again, we note here Irenaeus' diligence in quoting the Scriptures word for word. Now Irenaeus then explains convincingly that, "By these words He clearly points out to His disciples one and the same Householder—that is, one God the Father, who made all things by Himself; while [He shows] that there are various husbandmen, some obstinate, and proud, and worthless, and slayers of the Lord, but others who render Him, with all obedience, the fruits in their seasons; and that it is the same Householder who sends at one time

His servants, at another His Son." Irenaeus affirms that it is "From that Father, therefore, from whom the Son was sent to those husbandmen who slew Him, from Him also were the servants [sent]. But the Son, as coming from the Father with supreme authority (principali auctoritate), used to express Himself thus: "But I say unto you," referring for example to **Matthew 5 (KJV):21** Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. 26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Irenaeus has a good point as he then affirms that "The servants, again, [who came] as from their Lord, spake after the manner of servants, [delivering a message]; and they therefore used to say, "Thus saith the Lord," referring, for example, to **Exodus 4 (KJV):21** And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. 22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: 23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

And in **Exodus 5 (KJV):1** And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. 2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms that, "Since the Son of God is always one and the same, He gives to those who believe on Him a well of water [springing up] to eternal life," referring to **John 4 (KJV):14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Irenaeus continues as he says, "but He causes the unfruitful fig-tree immediately to dry up," referring to **Matthew 21 (KJV):18** Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. 19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. 20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "and in the days of Noah He justly brought on the deluge for the purpose of extinguishing that most infamous race of men then existent, who could not bring forth fruit to God, since the angels that sinned had commingled with them, and [acted as He did] in order that He might put a check upon the sins of these men, but [that at the same time] He might preserve the archetype, the formation of Adam," referring to Genesis, chapter 6. This chapter begins as in **Genesis 6 (KJV):1** And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

The term "sons of God" here is also used in Job of angels as we read in **Job 2 (KJV):1** Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

The reason that this term probably relates to angels is revealed in **Job 38 (KJV):1** Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. 4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

It is revealed further in Genesis, chapter 6, that the wickedness was so great on earth that God was willing to blot out man whom He had made as we read in **Genesis 6 (KJV):5** And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

It is revealed further in Genesis, chapter 6, that God found Noah blameless in his time and gave him instructions to build an ark so that he would be saved from the flood the Lord was going to bring upon the earth as we read in **Genesis 6 (KJV):9** These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15 And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

This event is also spoken of in **Jude 1 (KJV):6** And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Irenaeus seems to draw from Jude as he then affirms, “And it was He who rained fire and brimstone from heaven, in the days of Lot, upon Sodom and Gomorrah,” referring to verse 7 above, “an example of the righteous judgment of God,” referring to **Genesis 19 (KJV):4** But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: 5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “that all may know, “that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire,” referring to the words of John the Baptist in context in **Matthew 3 (KJV):1** In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

John leaves no doubt about the judgment on those who disobey God. And Jesus endorsed John with the highest praise with these words in **Matthew 11 (KJV):7** And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? 8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Irenaeus then testifies, "And it is He who uses [the words], that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the general judgment than for those who beheld His wonders, and did not believe on Him, nor receive His doctrine," referring to Jesus' words in **Matthew 11 (KJV):20** Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Irenaeus then affirms, "For as He gave by His advent a greater privilege to those who believed on Him, and who do His will, so also did He point out that those who did not believe on Him should have a more severe punishment in the judgment," drawing possibly from **James 3 (NASB):1** Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "thus extending equal justice to all, and being to exact more from those to whom He gives the more," drawing from **Luke 12 (KJV):47** And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "the more, however, not because He reveals the knowledge of another Father, as I have shown so fully and so repeatedly, but because He has, by means of His advent, poured upon the human race the greater gift of paternal grace."

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus testifies, "Then, in the case of the publican, who excelled the Pharisee in prayer, [we find] that it was not because he worshipped another Father that he received testimony from the Lord that he was justified rather [than the other]; but because with great humility, apart from all boasting and pride, he made confession to the same God," referring in context to **Luke 18 (KJV):9** And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Irenaeus then again testifies as he says, "The parable of the two sons also: those who are sent into the vineyard, of whom one indeed opposed his father, but afterwards repented, when repentance profited him nothing; the other, however, promised to go, at once assuring his father, but he did not go," referring to **Matthew 21 (KJV):28** But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. 31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in

the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

Irenaeus continues, “(for “every man is a liar,” referring in context to **Romans 3 (KJV):4** God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “to will is present with him, but he finds not means to perform,” referring to **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Irenaeus goes further as he testifies again that ”—[this parable, I say], points out one and the same Father.”

And Irenaeus continues as he argues, “Then, again, this truth was clearly shown forth by the parable of the fig-tree, of which the Lord says, “Behold, now these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, but I find none,” referring in context to **Luke 13 (KJV):6** He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Irenaeus explains that the Lord was “(pointing onwards, by the prophets, to His advent, by whom He came from time to time, seeking the fruit of righteousness from them, which he did not find), and also by the circumstance that, for the reason already mentioned, the fig-tree should be hewn down.” Irenaeus then argues, “And, without using a parable, the Lord said to Jerusalem, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killst the prophets, and stonest those that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate,” referring to **Luke 13 (KJV):34** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killst the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! 35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

And **Matthew 23 (NASB):37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killst the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Irenaeus then argues, “For that which had been said in the parable, “Behold, for three years I come seeking fruit,” and in clear terms, again, [where He says], “How often would I have gathered thy children together,” shall be [found] a falsehood, if we do not understand His advent, which is [announced] by the prophets—if, in fact, He came to them but once, and then for the first time.” Irenaeus then testifies, “But since He who chose the patriarchs and those [who lived under the first covenant], is the same Word of God who did both visit them through the prophetic Spirit, and us also who have been called together from all quarters by His advent; in addition to what has been already said, He truly declared, “Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall go into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” referring to **Matthew 8 (KJV):11** And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Irenaeus effectively concludes as he argues, “If, then, those who do believe in Him through the preaching of His apostles throughout the east and west shall recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, partaking with them of the [heavenly] banquet, one and the same God is set forth as He who did indeed choose the patriarchs, visited also the people, and called the Gentiles.”

Irenaeus is persuasive in his arguments. They are sound and reasonable, and his use of Scripture is sensible. The Scriptures do indeed teach that there is one God who declares what is going to take place hundreds of years before the time. The prophet Isaiah lived in the eighth century B.C., and began prophesying during the latter part of the reign of King Uzziah, probably around 740 B.C. Through Isaiah the prophet, the Lord gave us His signature, for who else could foretell the future as He says He does in **Isaiah**

**41 (KJV):21** Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. 22 Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. 23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. 24 Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you. 25 I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon morter, and as the potter treadeth clay. 26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declarereth, yea, there is none that heareth your words. 27 The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings. 28 For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word. 29 Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.

Again the Lord speaks through Isaiah in **Isaiah 44 (NASB):6** "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me. 7 Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; Yes, let him recount it to Me in order, From the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming And the events that are going to take place.'

And again, the Lord speaks through Isaiah in **Isaiah 46 (KJV):8** Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

And again, the Lord speaks through Isaiah in **Isaiah 48 (KJV):1** Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. 2 For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name. 3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. 4 Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; 5 I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. 6 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. 7 They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them. 8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. 9 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. 10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. 11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

These words all declare that He alone is God, who declares the former things before they come to pass, and the end from the beginning. The New Testament records the fulfillment of His words. The record of Jesus birth shows the fulfillment of prophecy as we read in **Matthew 1 (KJV):18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then

Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

This was a fulfillment of the prophecy in **Isaiah 7 (KJV):14** Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The fulfillment of prophecy is again recorded in **Matthew 2 (KJV):13** And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. 14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

This prophecy was given by Hosea in **Hosea 11 (KJV):1** When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

And the fulfillment of prophecy is again recorded in **Matthew 4 (KJV):12** Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

This prophecy was given by Isaiah as in **Isaiah 9 (KJV):1** Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

And the fulfillment of prophecy is also again recorded in **Matthew 8 (KJV):14** And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. 16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

This prophecy was also given by Isaiah as we read in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):4** Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

And the fulfillment of prophecy is also again recorded in **Matthew 12 (KJV):14** Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. 15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; 16 And charged them that they should not make him known: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

This prophecy was also given by Isaiah as we read in **Isaiah 42 (KJV):1** Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

And the fulfillment of prophecy is also again recorded in **Matthew 13 (KJV):33** Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a

parable spake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

This prophecy was also given by Asaph in **Psalm 78 (KJV)**:2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: 3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

And the fulfillment of prophecy is also again recorded in **Matthew 21 (KJV)**:1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. 3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. 4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. 6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. 8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

This prophecy was also given by Zechariah as we read in **Zechariah 9 (NASB)**:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The greatest proof that there is one God, and that He is the God who inspired the prophets of the Old Testament, is the fulfillment of prophecy. There are many more prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ that are recorded in the New Testament. Even a casual reading of the New Testament would reveal them. So we could say that Jesus Christ is God's signature.

In this chapter of his writing, we see that Irenaeus has very effectively refuted the Gnostic notions that there was more than one God. Irenaeus' arguments are multifaceted, reasonable, and cogent. He has done well in this chapter of his writing.

## Chapter 28: Physical Death

### Book 5: Chapter XXIII.—The devil is well practised in falsehood, by which Adam having been led astray, sinned on the sixth day of the creation, in which day also he has been renewed by Christ.

1. He had indeed been already accustomed to lie against God, for the purpose of leading men astray. For at the beginning, when God had given to man a variety of things for food, while He commanded him not to eat of one tree only, as the Scripture tells us that God said to Adam: "From every tree which is in the garden thou shalt eat food; but from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, from this ye shall not eat: for in the day that ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death;" he then, lying against the Lord, tempted man, as the Scripture says that the serpent said to the woman: "Has God indeed said this, Ye shall not eat from every tree of the garden?" And when she had exposed the falsehood, and simply related the command, as He had said, "From every tree of the garden we shall eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die: "when he had [thus] learned from the woman the command of God, having brought his cunning into play, he finally deceived her by a falsehood, saying, "Ye shall not die by death; for God knew that in the day ye shall eat of it your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." In the first place, then, in the garden of God he disputed about God, as if God was not there, for he was ignorant of the greatness of God; and then, in the next place, after he had learned from the woman that God had said that they should die if they tasted the aforesaid tree, opening his mouth, he uttered the third falsehood, "Ye shall not die by death." But that God was true, and the serpent a liar, was proved by the result, death having passed upon them who had eaten. For along with the fruit they did also fall under the power of death, because they did eat in disobedience; and disobedience to God entails death. Wherefore, as they became forfeit to death, from that [moment] they were handed over to it.

2. Thus, then, in the day that they did eat, in the same did they die, and became death's debtors, since it was one day of the creation. For it is said, "There was made in the evening, and there was made in the morning, one day." Now in this same day that they did eat, in that also did they die. But according to the cycle and progress of the days, after which one is termed first, another second, and another third, if anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day out of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord. For by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up its death. From this it is clear that the Lord suffered death, in obedience to His Father, upon that day on which Adam died while he disobeyed God. Now he died on the same day in which he did eat. For God said, "In that day on which ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death." The Lord, therefore, recapitulating in Himself this day, underwent His sufferings upon the day preceding the Sabbath, that is, the sixth day of the creation, on which day man was created; thus granting him a second creation by means of His passion, which is that [creation] out of death. And there are some, again, who relegate the death of Adam to the thousandth year; for since "a day of the Lord is as a thousand years," he did not overstep the thousand years, but died within them, thus bearing out the sentence of his sin. Whether, therefore, with respect to disobedience, which is death; whether [we consider] that, on account of that, they were delivered over to death, and made debtors to it; whether with respect to [the fact that on] one and the same day on which they ate they also died (for it is one day of the creation); whether [we regard this point], that, with respect to this cycle of days, they died on the day in which they did also eat, that is, the day of the preparation, which is termed "the pure supper," that is, the sixth day of the feast, which the Lord also exhibited when He suffered on that day; or whether [we reflect] that he (Adam) did not overstep the thousand years, but died within their limit,—it follows that, in regard to all these significations, God is indeed true. For they died who tasted of the tree; and the serpent is proved a liar and a murderer, as the Lord said of him: "For he is a murderer from the beginning, and the truth is not in him."

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus begins as he points out that, “He had indeed been already accustomed to lie against God, for the purpose of leading men astray.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For at the beginning, when God had given to man a variety of things for food, while He commanded him not to eat of one tree only, as the Scripture tells us that God said to Adam: “From every tree which is in the garden thou shalt eat food; but from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, from this ye shall not eat: for in the day that ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death,” referring to Genesis 2:16-17, “he then, lying against the Lord, tempted man, as the Scripture says that the serpent said to the woman: “Has God indeed said this, Ye shall not eat from every tree of the garden?,” referring to Genesis 3:1. Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “And when she had exposed the falsehood, and simply related the command, as He had said, “From every tree of the garden we shall eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die,” referring to Genesis 3:2-3. Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “when he had [thus] learned from the woman the command of God, having brought his cunning into play, he finally deceived her by a falsehood, saying, “Ye shall not die by death; for God knew that in the day ye shall eat of it your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,” referring to Genesis 3:4-5. Irenaeus then explains that, “In the first place, then, in the garden of God he disputed about God, as if God was not there, for he was ignorant of the greatness of God; and then, in the next place, after he had learned from the woman that God had said that they should die if they tasted the aforesaid tree, opening his mouth, he uttered the third falsehood, “Ye shall not die by death,” referring again to Genesis 3:4. Irenaeus then testifies, “But that God was true, and the serpent a liar, was proved by the result, death having passed upon them who had eaten.” Irenaeus affirms, “For along with the fruit they did also fall under the power of death, because they did eat in disobedience; and disobedience to God entails death.” Again, Irenaeus affirms, “Wherefore, as they became forfeit to death, from that [moment] they were handed over to it.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then explains, “Thus, then, in the day that they did eat, in the same did they die, and became death’s debtors, since it was one day of the creation. For it is said, “There was made in the evening, and there was made in the morning, one day.” Irenaeus then affirms, “Now in this same day that they did eat, in that also did they die.” Irenaeus then asserts, “But according to the cycle and progress of the days, after which one is termed first, another second, and another third, if anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day out of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “For by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up its death,” referring in part to Ephesians 1:9-12. Irenaeus then asserts, “From this it is clear that the Lord suffered death, in obedience to His Father, upon that day on which Adam died while he disobeyed God.” Irenaeus then affirms, “Now he died on the same day in which he did eat. For God said, “In that day on which ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death,” referring again to Genesis 2:17. Irenaeus then asserts, “The Lord, therefore, recapitulating in Himself this day, underwent His sufferings upon the day preceding the Sabbath, that is, the sixth day of the creation, on which day man was created,” referring to Genesis 1:27, 31. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “thus granting him a second creation by means of His passion, which is that [creation] out of death.” Irenaeus then records that, “there are some, again, who relegate the death of Adam to the thousandth year; for since “a day of the Lord is as a thousand years,” referring to 2 Peter 3:8. Irenaeus continues as he says, “he did not overstep the thousand years, but died within them, thus bearing out the sentence of his sin.” Irenaeus then summarizes as he considers:

- “Whether, therefore, with respect to disobedience, which is death;”
- “whether [we consider] that, on account of that, they were delivered over to death, and made debtors to it;”
- “whether with respect to [the fact that on] one and the same day on which they ate they also died (for it is one day of the creation);”
- “whether [we regard this point], that, with respect to this cycle of days, they died on the day in which they did also eat, that is, the day of the preparation, which is termed “the pure supper,” that is, the sixth day of the feast, which the Lord also exhibited when He suffered on that day;

- or whether [we reflect] that he (Adam) did not overstep the thousand years, but died within their limit,“

Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, “—it follows that, in regard to all these significations, God is indeed true. For they died who tasted of the tree; and the serpent is proved a liar and a murderer, as the Lord said of him: “For he is a murderer from the beginning, and the truth is not in him.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus begins as he points out that, “He had indeed been already accustomed to lie against God, for the purpose of leading men astray.” Irenaeus is correct in that he states that the devil had fallen into sin before man fell. Although Irenaeus does not mention it, the Scriptures state that the devil was once known as Lucifer, or “son of the morning” as it is translated here in Isaiah, who fell because of the sin of pride as we read in **Isaiah 14 (KJV):12** How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. 16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; 17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? 18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. 19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. 20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

Again the Scriptures describe a covering cherub in Eden, the garden of God, who fell because of sin as we read in **Ezekiel 28 (KJV):11** Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

The real king of Tyre was a covering cherub who had “the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,” and who was “blameless” in his ways “from the day” that he was created “until unrighteousness was found” in him. This cherub, or angel, fell because of sin. We know that the devil is a fallen angel as Jesus said in **Matthew 24 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

The devil is also called Satan as stated in **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

That the covering cherub in Ezekiel is the same as Lucifer, star of the morning, and the devil, also called Satan, there can be no doubt. The devil, that is Satan, was the serpent of old who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Irenaeus then testifies, “For at the beginning, when God had given to man a variety of things for food, while He commanded him not to eat of one tree only, as the Scripture tells us that God said to Adam: “From every tree which is in the garden thou shalt eat food; but from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, from this ye shall not eat: for in the day that ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death,” referring to **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Irenaeus continues as he says that the devil, “then, lying against the Lord, tempted man, as the Scripture says that the serpent said to the woman: “Has God indeed said this, Ye shall not eat from every tree of the garden?,” referring to **Genesis 3 (KJV):1** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And when she had exposed the falsehood, and simply related the command, as He had said, “From every tree of the garden we shall eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die,” referring to **Genesis 3 (KJV):2** And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “when he had [thus] learned from the woman the command of God, having brought his cunning into play, he finally deceived her by a falsehood, saying, “Ye shall not die by death; for God knew that in the day ye shall eat of it your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,” referring to **Genesis 3 (KJV):4** And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Irenaeus then explains that, “In the first place, then, in the garden of God he disputed about God, as if God was not there, for he was ignorant of the greatness of God; and then, in the next place, after he had learned from the woman that God had said that they should die if they tasted the aforesaid tree, opening his mouth, he uttered the third falsehood, “Ye shall not die by death,” referring again to Genesis 3:4 above. Irenaeus then testifies, “But that God was true, and the serpent a liar, was proved by the result, death having passed upon them who had eaten.” And the Scriptures tell us that Adam did indeed die as we read in **Genesis 5 (KJV):4** And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: 5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

Irenaeus then affirms, “For along with the fruit they did also fall under the power of death, because they did eat in disobedience; and disobedience to God entails death.” Again, Irenaeus affirms, “Wherefore, as they became forfeit to death, from that [moment] they were handed over to it.” The Scriptures also testify the same as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then explains, “Thus, then, in the day that they did eat, in the same did they die, and became death’s debtors, since it was one day of the creation. For it is said, “There was made in the evening, and there was made in the morning, one day.” Irenaeus then affirms, “Now in this same day that they did eat, in that also did they die.” Irenaeus then asserts, “But according to the cycle and progress of the days, after which one is termed first, another second, and another third, if anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day out of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “For by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up its death,” referring in part to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):9** Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Irenaeus then asserts, "From this it is clear that the Lord suffered death, in obedience to His Father, upon that day on which Adam died while he disobeyed God." Irenaeus then affirms, "Now he died on the same day in which he did eat. For God said, "In that day on which ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death," referring again to Genesis 2:17. Irenaeus then asserts, "The Lord, therefore, recapitulating in Himself this day, underwent His sufferings upon the day preceding the Sabbath, that is, the sixth day of the creation, on which day man was created," referring to **Genesis 1 (KJV):27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And to **Genesis 1 (KJV):31** And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

However, the Lord Jesus Himself prophesied that He would be in the grave three days and three nights, just as the prophet Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights as we read in **Matthew 12 (KJV):40** For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The Gospels record that Jesus was crucified on the day before the Sabbath as we read in **Mark 15 (KJV):42** And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

We know that Jesus was crucified on the day of the Passover. This day in the Jewish calendar was the day before the feast of unleavened bread. The feast of unleavened bread lasted for seven days, and began and ended with a Sabbath. Therefore, since Jesus died at 3 PM and rose from the dead very early on the first day of the week, which in the Jewish calendar would make it a Sunday, Jesus could be in the ground for three days and three nights only if He died on a Wednesday. As anyone with even a remedial knowledge of arithmetic knows, this will not work if Jesus was crucified on Friday, the day before the weekly Sabbath. The Sabbath therefore had to be relating to the Feast of Unleavened bread.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "thus granting him a second creation by means of His passion, which is that [creation] out of death." Irenaeus then records that, "there are some, again, who relegate the death of Adam to the thousandth year; for since "a day of the Lord is as a thousand years," referring to **2 Peter 3 (KJV):8** But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "he did not overstep the thousand years, but died within them, thus bearing out the sentence of his sin." It is true that Adam died well before the thousand year limit Irenaeus mentions. But Peter is saying that one day is with the Lord "as a thousand years." Peter does not say that one day is a thousand years in the Lord's estimation. However, Jesus did taste death for everyone as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Irenaeus then continues as he summarizes, considering all of the following:

- "Whether, therefore, with respect to disobedience, which is death;"
- "whether [we consider] that, on account of that, they were delivered over to death, and made debtors to it;"
- "whether with respect to [the fact that on] one and the same day on which they ate they also died (for it is one day of the creation);"
- "whether [we regard this point], that, with respect to this cycle of days, they died on the day in which they did also eat, that is, the day of the preparation, which is termed "the pure supper," that is, the sixth day of the feast, which the Lord also exhibited when He suffered on that day;
- or whether [we reflect] that he (Adam) did not overstep the thousand years, but died within their limit,"

Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, "—it follows that, in regard to all these significations, God is indeed true. For they died who tasted of the tree; and the serpent is proved a liar and a murderer, as the Lord said of him: "For he is a murderer from the beginning, and the truth is not in him," referring to **John 8 (KJV):44** Ye are of your

father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Irenaeus has done well to point out that man died a physical death because of Adam's sin which polluted the whole human race at its source. However it is clear in his summarizing that he does not completely understand that man died spiritually in the day that he sinned. That is, in the moment man sinned, he died spiritually, and needed to be born again. The Scriptures state that man without Christ is dead in trespasses and sins, and is by nature a child of wrath as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: **3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, **5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **6** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: **7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

And in Adam, all die as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

We are quickened, that is, made alive in Christ, in our spirit the moment we believe in Him, being born of the Spirit of God. The life of the Spirit of God is then the life of our spirit. This is referred to as "Christ in us" by Paul. Having Christ in us, we thus possess eternal life as John says in **1 John 5 (NASB):11** And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. **12** He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

## Chapter 29: The Devil and Governments

### Book 5: Chapter XXIV.—Of the constant falsehood of the devil, and of the powers and governments of the world, which we ought to obey, inasmuch as they are appointed of God, not of the devil.

1. As therefore the devil lied at the beginning, so did he also in the end, when he said, "All these are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give them." For it is not he who has appointed the kingdoms of this world, but God; for "the heart of the king is in the hand of God." And the Word also says by Solomon, "By me kings do reign, and princes administer justice. By me chiefs are raised up, and by me kings rule the earth." Paul the apostle also says upon this same subject: "Be ye subject to all the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: now those which are have been ordained of God." And again, in reference to them he says, "For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath to him who does evil." Now, that he spake these words, not in regard to angelical powers, nor of invisible rulers—as some venture to expound the passage—but of those of actual human authorities, [he shows when] he says, "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, doing service for this very thing." This also the Lord confirmed, when He did not do what He was tempted to by the devil; but He gave directions that tribute should be paid to the tax-gatherers for Himself and Peter; because "they are the ministers of God, serving for this very thing."

2. For since man, by departing from God, reached such a pitch of fury as even to look upon his brother as his enemy, and engaged without fear in every kind of restless conduct, and murder, and avarice; God imposed upon mankind the fear of man, as they did not acknowledge the fear of God, in order that, being subjected to the authority of men, and kept under restraint by their laws, they might attain to some degree of justice, and exercise mutual forbearance through dread of the sword suspended full in their view, as the apostle says: "For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath upon him who does evil." And for this reason too, magistrates themselves, having laws as a clothing of righteousness whenever they act in a just and legitimate manner, shall not be called in question for their conduct, nor be liable to punishment. But whatsoever they do to the subversion of justice, iniquitously, and impiously, and illegally, and tyrannically, in these things shall they also perish; for the just judgment of God comes equally upon all, and in no case is defective. Earthly rule, therefore, has been appointed by God for the benefit of nations, and not by the devil, who is never at rest at all, nay, who does not love to see even nations conducting themselves after a quiet manner, so that under the fear of human rule, men may not eat each other up like fishes; but that, by means of the establishment of laws, they may keep down an excess of wickedness among the nations. And considered from this point of view, those who exact tribute from us are "God's ministers, serving for this very purpose."

3. As, then, "the powers that be are ordained of God," it is clear that the devil lied when he said, "These are delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give them." For by the law of the same Being as calls men into existence are kings also appointed, adapted for those men who are at the time placed under their government. Some of these [rulers] are given for the correction and the benefit of their subjects, and for the preservation of justice; but others, for the purposes of fear and punishment and rebuke: others, as [the subjects] deserve it, are for deception, disgrace, and pride; while the just judgment of God, as I have observed already, passes equally upon all. The devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, [namely] to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God.

4. Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man's territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery; so likewise also the devil, being one among those angels

who are placed over the spirit of the air, as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians, becoming envious of man, was rendered an apostate from the divine law: for envy is a thing foreign to God. And as his apostasy was exposed by man, and man became the [means of] searching out his thoughts (*et examination sententiae ejus, homo factus est*), he has set himself to this with greater and greater determination, in opposition to man, envying his life, and wishing to involve him in his own apostate power. The Word of God, however, the Maker of all things, conquering him by means of human nature, and showing him to be an apostate, has, on the contrary, put him under the power of man. For He says, "Behold, I confer upon you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy," in order that, as he obtained dominion over man by apostasy, so again his apostasy might be deprived of power by means of man turning back again to God.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "As therefore the devil lied at the beginning, so did he also in the end, when he said, "All these are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give them," referring to Matthew 4:9. Irenaeus then affirms, "For it is not he who has appointed the kingdoms of this world, but God; for "the heart of the king is in the hand of God," referring to Proverbs 21:1. Irenaeus again affirms, "And the Word also says by Solomon, "By me kings do reign, and princes administer justice. By me chiefs are raised up, and by me kings rule the earth," referring to Proverbs 8:15-16. Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, "Paul the apostle also says upon this same subject: "Be ye subject to all the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: now those which are have been ordained of God," referring to Romans 13:1. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, "in reference to them he says, "For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath to him who does evil," referring to Romans 13:4. Irenaeus then explains, "Now, that he spake these words, not in regard to angelical powers, nor of invisible rulers—as some venture to expound the passage—but of those of actual human authorities, [he shows when] he says, "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, doing service for this very thing," referring to Romans 13:6. Again Irenaeus testifies that, "This also the Lord confirmed, when He did not do what He was tempted to by the devil; but He gave directions that tribute should be paid to the tax-gatherers for Himself and Peter," referring to Matthew 17:24-27. Irenaeus concludes as he explains that the Lord did so "because "they are the ministers of God, serving for this very thing," again referring to Romans 13:6.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "For since man, by departing from God, reached such a pitch of fury as even to look upon his brother as his enemy, and engaged without fear in every kind of restless conduct, and murder, and avarice; God imposed upon mankind the fear of man, as they did not acknowledge the fear of God, in order that, being subjected to the authority of men, and kept under restraint by their laws, they might attain to some degree of justice, and exercise mutual forbearance through dread of the sword suspended full in their view, as the apostle says: "For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath upon him who does evil," referring again to Romans 13:4. Irenaeus then explains as he affirms also, "And for this reason too, magistrates themselves, having laws as a clothing of righteousness whenever they act in a just and legitimate manner, shall not be called in question for their conduct, nor be liable to punishment. But whatsoever they do to the subversion of justice, iniquitously, and impiously, and illegally, and tyrannically, in these things shall they also perish; for the just judgment of God comes equally upon all, and in no case is defective." Irenaeus then affirms that "Earthly rule, therefore, has been appointed by God for the benefit of nations, and not by the devil, who is never at rest at all, nay, who does not love to see even nations conducting themselves after a quiet manner, so that under the fear of human rule, men may not eat each other up like fishes; but that, by means of the establishment of laws, they may keep down an excess of wickedness among the nations." Irenaeus then testifies, "And considered from this point of view, those who exact tribute from us are "God's ministers, serving for this very purpose," referring again to Romans 13:4.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus argues, "As, then, "the powers that be are ordained of God," it is clear that the devil lied when he said, "These are delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give them," referring to Luke 4:6. Irenaeus then affirms, "For by the law of the same Being as calls men into existence are kings also appointed, adapted for those men who are at the time placed under their government." Irenaeus then explains, "Some of these [rulers] are given for the correction and the benefit of their subjects, and for the preservation of

justice; but others, for the purposes of fear and punishment and rebuke: others, as [the subjects] deserve it, are for deception, disgrace, and pride; while the just judgment of God, as I have observed already, passes equally upon all." Irenaeus then affirms, "The devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, [namely] to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God," referring in part to Isaiah 14:13-14.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, "Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man's territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery; so likewise also the devil, being one among those angels who are placed over the spirit of the air, as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians, becoming envious of man, was rendered an apostate from the divine law: for envy is a thing foreign to God," referring in part to Ephesians 2:1-2. Irenaeus then asserts, "And as his apostasy was exposed by man, and man became the [means of] searching out his thoughts (et examination sententiæ ejus, homo factus est), he has set himself to this with greater and greater determination, in opposition to man, envying his life, and wishing to involve him in his own apostate power." Irenaeus then testifies that, "The Word of God, however, the Maker of all things, conquering him by means of human nature, and showing him to be an apostate, has, on the contrary, put him under the power of man. For He says, "Behold, I confer upon you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy," referring to Luke 10:18-19. Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, "in order that, as he obtained dominion over man by apostasy, so again his apostasy might be deprived of power by means of man turning back again to God."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "As therefore the devil lied at the beginning, so did he also in the end, when he said, "All these are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give them," referring in context to **Matthew 4 (KJV):5** And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

However, Irenaeus did not at this time understand that the devil is the god of this world as we read in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):4** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Since we have already discussed this in **Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures**, under **Book3: Chapter VII, paragraph one**, we will not go into it again here. It is enough to say that the whole world lies in the hands of the wicked one.

Again Irenaeus testifies, "For it is not he who has appointed the kingdoms of this world, but God; for "the heart of the king is in the hand of God," referring to **Proverbs 21 (KJV):1** The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

It is true that God has appointed the kingdoms of this world as we read in **Acts 17 (KJV):24** God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

However, because of man's sin, God in His sovereignty has allowed man to go his own way until the times of restitution of all things as Peter says in **Acts 3 (KJV):18** But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. 19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom the heaven must

receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

This is when the kingdoms of this world will again become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ as we read in **Revelation 11 (NASB):15** And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Irenaeus again testifies, “And the Word also says by Solomon, “By me kings do reign, and princes administer justice. By me chiefs are raised up, and by me kings rule the earth,” referring to **Proverbs 8 (KJV):15** By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

But in the context of Solomon’s writing, it is by wisdom that kings reign, and princes administer justice as we see by the verses which precede verse 15 and read in **Proverbs 8 (KJV):11** For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. 12 I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. 13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. 14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “Paul the apostle also says upon this same subject: “Be ye subject to all the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: now those which are have been ordained of God,” referring to **Romans 13 (KJV):1** Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

It is true that the authorities which exist are established by God, but those in government positions may or may not be saved. This is one reason why we must pray for them as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):1** I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Irenaeus again affirms that “in reference to them he says, “For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath to him who does evil,” referring in context to **Romans 13 (KJV):2** Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Irenaeus then testifies, “Now, that he spake these words, not in regard to angelical powers, nor of invisible rulers—as some venture to expound the passage—but of those of actual human authorities, [he shows when] he says, “For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, doing service for this very thing,” referring in context to **Romans 13 (KJV):5** Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Again Irenaeus testifies that, “This also the Lord confirmed, when He did not do what He was tempted to by the devil; but He gave directions that tribute should be paid to the tax-gatherers for Himself and Peter,” referring in context to **Matthew 17 (KJV):24** And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? 25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. 27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Irenaeus continues as he explains that the Lord did so “because “they are the ministers of God, serving for this very thing.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “For since man, by departing from God, reached such a pitch of fury as even to look upon his brother as his enemy, and engaged without fear in every kind of restless conduct, and murder, and avarice; God imposed upon mankind the fear of man, as they did not acknowledge the fear of God, in order that, being subjected to the authority of men, and kept under restraint by their laws, they might attain to some degree of justice, and exercise mutual forbearance through dread of the sword suspended full in their view, as the apostle says: “For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath upon him who does evil,” referring again to Romans 13:4 above.

Irenaeus then explains as he affirms also, “And for this reason too, magistrates themselves, having laws as a clothing of righteousness whenever they act in a just and legitimate manner, shall not be called in question for their conduct, nor be liable to punishment. But whatsoever they do to the subversion of justice, iniquitously, and impiously, and illegally, and tyrannically, in these things shall they also perish; for the just judgment of God comes equally upon all, and in no case is defective. Earthly rule, therefore, has been appointed by God for the benefit of nations, and not by the devil, who is never at rest at all, nay, who does not love to see even nations conducting themselves after a quiet manner, so that under the fear of human rule, men may not eat each other up like fishes; but that, by means of the establishment of laws, they may keep down an excess of wickedness among the nations.” Indeed, earthly rule has been established by God as also Luke tells us as he quotes Paul in **Acts 17 (NASB):26** And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Irenaeus affirms further, “And considered from this point of view, those who exact tribute from us are “God’s ministers, serving for this very purpose,” referring again to Romans 13:4 above.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts, “As, then, “the powers that be are ordained of God,” it is clear that the devil lied when he said, “These are delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give them,” referring again to **Luke 4 (KJV):6** And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it

Irenaeus then affirms, “For by the law of the same Being as calls men into existence are kings also appointed, adapted for those men who are at the time placed under their government.” Irenaeus then explains, “Some of these [rulers] are given for the correction and the benefit of their subjects, and for the preservation of justice; but others, for the purposes of fear and punishment and rebuke: others, as [the subjects] deserve it, are for deception, disgrace, and pride; while the just judgment of God, as I have observed already, passes equally upon all.” Irenaeus then testifies that, “The devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, [namely] to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God,” referring in part to **Isaiah 14 (KJV):13** For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

The devil’s sin was that he wanted to make himself like the Most High.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man’s territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery; so likewise also the devil, being one among those angels who are placed over the spirit of the air, as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians, becoming envious of man, was rendered an apostate from the divine law: for envy is a thing foreign to God,” referring to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The devil is the “prince of the power of the air,” and “the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”

Irenaeus then asserts, “And as his apostasy was exposed by man, and man became the [means of] searching out his thoughts (et examination sententiae ejus, homo factus est), he has set himself to this with greater and greater determination, in opposition to man, envying his life, and wishing to involve him in his own apostate power.”

Actually, the devil had sinned before man sinned. The devil was already cast down to the earth and confined to the first heaven, that is, the air surrounding the earth.

John tells us that the devil is our accuser as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):10** And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

It is true that the devil, who is Satan, will still try to involve man in his own apostate power. Paul speaks of one who is to come who would oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):1** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

The Greek word translated “letteth” in the King James Version is κατέχων (pronounced katechon) from κατέχω (pronounced katechō) and means ”to hold fast or down.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol III, page 290.** This word is in the nominative, singular, masculine, participle, present, active form. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition, by Harold K. Moulton, page 224.** Literally therefore, since the participle contains the article, it the verse should be translated as follows:

τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἥδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας μόνον οἱ κατέχων  
the For mystery already work the of lawlessness only the one who restrains until  
ἄρτι ἔως ἐκ μέσου γένηται  
just now until out of the midst He comes

**The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament by Reverend Dr. Alfred Marshall, 1974, page 816.**

The one who restrains is the Holy Spirit. When the Church is raptured, the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way. Now Paul tells us that his coming, that is, the coming of the antichrist, will be in accord with Satan in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):8** And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Paul is speaking here of the Antichrist who is called the Beast in **Revelation 13 (KJV):1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

The antichrist, under Satan’s power, will gather all nations to oppose God, but he will be taken and cast into the Lake of Fire as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):20** And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. Irenaeus then testifies that, “The Word of God, however, the Maker of all things, conquering him by means of human nature, and showing him to be an apostate, has, on the contrary, put him under the power of man. For He says, “Behold, I confer upon you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy,” referring in context to **Luke 10 (KJV):18** And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

This is true for Christians, but not man in general as we see in **Luke 10 (KJV):13** Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and

chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “in order that, as he obtained dominion over man by apostasy, so again his apostasy might be deprived of power by means of man turning back again to God.” This is why Jesus came as Luke tells us in **Luke 4 (KJV)**:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Jesus came to set the captives free and to destroy the works of the devil as John reveals in **1 John 3 (KJV)**:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

And in we read as in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Jesus’ final instructions in the gospel of Matthew were for the disciples to go with His authority to make other disciples of all nations as we read in **Matthew 28 (KJV)**:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

## Chapter 30: Free Will

### Book 4: Chapter XXXVII.—Men are possessed of free will, and endowed with the faculty of making a choice. It is not true, therefore, that some are by nature good, and others bad.

1. This expression [of our Lord], “How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not,” 4394 [Matt. xxiii. 37](#) set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (*ad utendum sententia*) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. For there is no coercion with God, but a good will [towards us] is present with Him continually. And therefore does He give good counsel to all. And in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves. On the other hand, they who have not obeyed shall, with justice, be not found in possession of the good, and shall receive condign punishment: for God did kindly bestow on them what was good; but they themselves did not diligently keep it, nor deem it something precious, but poured contempt upon His super-eminent goodness. Rejecting therefore the good, and as it were spurning it out, they shall all deservedly incur the just judgment of God, which also the Apostle Paul testifies in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says, “But dost thou despise the riches of His goodness, and patience, and long-suffering, being ignorant that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” “But glory and honour,” he says, “to every one that doeth good.”

4395 [Rom. ii. 4, 5, 7](#). God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle, and they who work it shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their power not to do it; but those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their power so to do.

2. But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally]. But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good. And therefore the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness, as I have so largely demonstrated, because it is in our power so to do, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful, and thus stand in need of that good counsel which the good God has given us to know by means of the prophets.

3. For this reason the Lord also said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” 4396 [Matt. v. 16](#). And, “Take heed to yourselves, lest perchance your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and worldly cares.” 4397 [Luke xxi. 34](#). And, “Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He returns from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing.” 4398 [Luke xii. 35, 36](#). And again, “The servant who knows his Lord’s will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.” 4399 [Luke xii. 47](#). And, “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” 4400 [Luke vi. 46](#). And again, “But if the servant say in his heart, The Lord delayeth, and begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat, and drink, and to be drunken, his Lord will come in a day on which he does not expect Him, and shall cut him in sunder, and appoint his portion

with the hypocrites.” 4401 **Luke xii. 45, 46; Matt. xxiv. 48–51.** All such passages demonstrate the independent will 4402 τὸ αὐτεξούσιον of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him, by which He exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him, and seeks to turn us away from [the sin of] unbelief against Him, without, however, in any way coercing us.

4. No doubt, if any one is unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his power [to reject it], but it is not expedient. For it is in man’s power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief. And on this account Paul says, “All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient;” 4403 **1 Cor. vi. 12.** referring both to the liberty of man, in which respect “all things are lawful,” God exercising no compulsion in regard to him; and [by the expression] “not expedient” pointing out that we “should not use our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,” 4404 **1 Pet. ii. 16.** for this is not expedient. And again he says, “Speak ye every man truth with his neighbour.” 4405 **Eph. iv. 25.** And, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor scurrility, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.” 4406 **Eph. iv. 29.** And, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk honestly as children of the light, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in anger and jealousy. And such were some of you; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified in the name of our Lord.” 4407 **1 Cor. vi. 11.** If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others? But because man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God.

5. And not merely in works, but also in faith, has God preserved the will of man free and under his own control, saying, “According to thy faith be it unto thee;” 4408 **Matt. ix. 29** thus showing that there is a faith specially belonging to man, since he has an opinion specially his own. And again, “All things are possible to him that believeth;” 4409 **Mark ix. 23** and, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” 4410 **Matt. viii. 13.** Now all such expressions demonstrate that man is in his own power with respect to faith. And for this reason, “he that believeth in Him has eternal life while he who believeth not the Son hath not eternal life, but the wrath of God shall remain upon him.” 4411 **John iii. 36** In the same manner therefore the Lord, both showing His own goodness, and indicating that man is in his own free will and his own power, said to Jerusalem, “How often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen [gathereth] her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Wherefore your house shall be left unto you desolate.” 4412 **Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.**

6. Those, again, who maintain the opposite to these [conclusions], do themselves present the Lord as destitute of power, as if, forsooth, He were unable to accomplish what He willed; or, on the other hand, as being ignorant that they were by nature “material,” as these men express it, and such as cannot receive His immortality. “But He should not,” say they, “have created angels of such a nature that they were capable of transgression, nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (*inflexibiles et sine judicio*), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created.” But upon this supposition, neither would what is good be grateful to them, nor communion with God be precious, nor would the good be very much to be sought after, which would present itself without their own proper endeavour, care, or study, but would be implanted of its own accord and without their concern. Thus it would come to pass, that their being good would be of no consequence, because they were so by nature rather than by will, and are possessors of good spontaneously, not by choice; and for this reason they would not understand this fact, that good is a comely thing, nor would they take pleasure in it. For how can those who are ignorant of good enjoy it? Or what credit is it to those who have not aimed at it? And

what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest?

7. On this account, too, did the Lord assert that the kingdom of heaven was the portion of "the violent;" and He says, "The violent take it by force;" 4413 Matt. xi. 12. that is, those who by strength and earnest striving are on the watch to snatch it away on the moment. On this account also Paul the Apostle says to the Corinthians, "Know ye not, that they who run in a racecourse, do all indeed run, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. Every one also who engages in the contest is temperate in all things: now these men [do it] that they may obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. But I so run, not as uncertainty; I fight, not as one beating the air; but I make my body livid, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when preaching to others, I may myself be rendered a castaway." 4414 1 Cor. ix. 24-27. This able wrestler, therefore, exhorts us to the struggle for immortality, that we may be crowned, and may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle, but which does not encircle us of its own accord (*sed non ulti coalitam*). And the harder we strive, so much is it the more valuable; while so much the more valuable it is, so much the more should we esteem it. And indeed those things are not esteemed so highly which come spontaneously, as those which are reached by much anxious care. Since, then, this power has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it. For otherwise, no doubt, this our good would be [virtually] irrational, because not the result of trial. Moreover, the faculty of seeing would not appear to be so desirable, unless we had known what a loss it were to be devoid of sight; and health, too, is rendered all the more estimable by an acquaintance with disease; light, also, by contrasting it with darkness; and life with death. Just in the same way is the heavenly kingdom honourable to those who have known the earthly one. But in proportion as it is more honourable, so much the more do we prize it; and if we have prized it more, we shall be the more glorious in the presence of God. The Lord has therefore endured all these things on our behalf, in order that we, having been instructed by means of them all, may be in all respects circumspect for the time to come, and that, having been rationally taught to love God, we may continue in His perfect love: for God has displayed long-suffering in the case of man's apostasy; while man has been instructed by means of it, as also the prophet says, "Thine own apostasy shall heal thee;" 4415 Jer. ii. 19. God thus determining all things beforehand for the bringing of man to perfection, for his edification, and for the revelation of His dispensations, that goodness may both be made apparent, and righteousness perfected, and that the Church may be fashioned after the image of His Son, and that man may finally be brought to maturity at some future time, becoming ripe through such privileges to see and comprehend God. 4416 [If we but had the original, this would doubtless be found in all respects a noble specimen of primitive theology.]

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asserts, "This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," referring to Matthew 23:37, "set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God." Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "For there is no coercion with God, but a good will [towards us] is present with Him continually." Irenaeus then asserts, "And therefore does He give good counsel to all. And in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves." Irenaeus then affirms that, "On the other hand, they who have not obeyed shall, with justice, be not found in possession of the good, and shall receive condign punishment: for God did kindly bestow on them what was good; but they themselves did not diligently keep it, nor deem it something precious, but poured contempt upon His super-eminent goodness." Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "Rejecting therefore the good, and as it were spurning it out, shall all deservedly incur the just judgment of God, which also the Apostle Paul testifies in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says, "But dost thou despise the riches of His goodness, and patience, and long-suffering, being ignorant that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the

righteous judgment of God,” referring to Romans 2:4-5. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “But glory and honour to every one that doeth good,” referring to Romans 2:7. Irenaeus then concludes as he asserts that “God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle, and they who work it shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their power not to do it; but those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their power so to do.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, “But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally].” Irenaeus then argues, “But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good.” Irenaeus then asserts, “And therefore the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness, as I have so largely demonstrated, because it is in our power so to do, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful, and thus stand in need of that good counsel which the good God has given us to know by means of the prophets.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts that it was “For this reason the Lord also said, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father who is in heaven,’ referring to Matthew 5:16. Irenaeus then adds, “And, ‘Take heed to yourselves, lest perchance your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and worldly cares,’ referring to Luke 21:34. And again Irenaeus adds, “And, ‘Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He returns from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing,’ referring to Luke 12:35-36. And Irenaeus also adds, “And again, ‘The servant who knows his Lord’s will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes,’ referring to Luke 12:47. And Irenaeus again adds, “And, ‘Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?’ referring to Luke 6:46. And finally Irenaeus adds, “And again, ‘But if the servant say in his heart, The Lord delayeth, and begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat, and drink, and to be drunken, his Lord will come in a day on which he does not expect Him, and shall cut him in sunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites,’ referring to Luke 12:45-46 and to Matthew 24:48-51. Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “All such passages demonstrate the independent will of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him, by which He exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him, and seeks to turn us away from [the sin of] unbelief against Him, without, however, in any way coercing us.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus argues, “No doubt, if any one is unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his power [to reject it], but it is not expedient. For it is in man’s power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief.” Irenaeus then adds, “And on this account Paul says, ‘All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient;’” referring to 1 Corinthians 6:12. Irenaeus then asserts that Paul is here “referring both to the liberty of man, in which respect ‘all things are lawful,’ God exercising no compulsion in regard to him; and [by the expression] ‘not expedient’ pointing out that we ‘should not use our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,’ referring to 1 Peter 2:16, ‘for this is not expedient.’” Irenaeus then adds, “And again he says, ‘Speak ye every man truth with his neighbour,’ referring to Ephesians 4:25. Irenaeus then adds, “And, ‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor scurrility, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks,’ referring to Ephesians 4:29. Again, Irenaeus adds, “And, ‘For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord,’ referring to Ephesians 5:8. Irenaeus continues as he encourages, “walk honestly as children of the light, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in anger and jealousy,” referring to Romans 13:13. Irenaeus then testifies, “And such were some of you; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified in the name of our Lord,” referring to 1 Corinthians 6:11. Irenaeus then argues, “If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others?” He then asserts, “But because man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is

always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God.”

In paragraph five, Irenaeus asserts, “And not merely in works, but also in faith, has God preserved the will of man free and under his own control, saying, “According to thy faith be it unto thee,” referring to Matthew 9:29. Irenaeus asserts that this Scripture is “thus showing that there is a faith specially belonging to man, since he has an opinion specially his own.” To support his assertion, Irenaeus then adds:

- “And again, “All things are possible to him that believeth,” referring to Mark 9:23.
- “and, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee,” referring to Matthew 8:13.
- “Now all such expressions demonstrate that man is in his own power with respect to faith.” Again he adds, “And for this reason, “he that believeth in Him has eternal life while he who believeth not the Son hath not eternal life, but the wrath of God shall remain upon him,” referring to John 3:36.
- “In the same manner therefore the Lord, both showing His own goodness, and indicating that man is in his own free will and his own power, said to Jerusalem, “How often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen [gathereth] her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Wherefore your house shall be left unto you desolate,” referring to Matthew 23:37-38.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus asserts that, “Those, again, who maintain the opposite to these [conclusions], do themselves present the Lord as destitute of power, as if, forsooth, He were unable to accomplish what He willed; or, on the other hand, as being ignorant that they were by nature “material,” as these men express it, and such as cannot receive His immortality.” Irenaeus then quotes his opposers as he says, ““But He should not,” say they, “have created angels of such a nature that they were capable of transgression, nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (*inflexibles et sine judicio*), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created.”” Irenaeus then reasons, “But upon this supposition, neither would what is good be grateful to them, nor communion with God be precious, nor would the good be very much to be sought after, which would present itself without their own proper endeavour, care, or study, but would be implanted of its own accord and without their concern.”” Irenaeus then argues, “Thus it would come to pass, that their being good would be of no consequence, because they were so by nature rather than by will, and are possessors of good spontaneously, not by choice; and for this reason they would not understand this fact, that good is a comely thing, nor would they take pleasure in it.”” Irenaeus then reasons, “For how can those who are ignorant of good enjoy it? Or what credit is it to those who have not aimed at it? And what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest?””

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus asserts that, “On this account, too, did the Lord assert that the kingdom of heaven was the portion of “the violent;” and He says, “The violent take it by force,” referring to Matthew 11:12. Irenaeus explains his point as he says, “that is, those who by strength and earnest striving are on the watch to snatch it away on the moment.” Irenaeus then adds, “On this account also Paul the Apostle says to the Corinthians, “Know ye not, that they who run in a racecourse, do all indeed run, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. Every one also who engages in the contest is temperate in all things: now these men [do it] that they may obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. But I so run, not as uncertainty; I fight, not as one beating the air; but I make my body livid, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when preaching to others, I may myself be rendered a castaway,” referring to 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Irenaeus then asserts, “This able wrestler, therefore, exhorts us to the struggle for immortality, that we may be crowned, and may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle, but which does not encircle us of its own accord (*sed non ultro coalitam*).” Irenaeus then asserts, “And the harder we strive, so much is it the more valuable; while so much the more valuable it is, so much the more should we esteem it.” Irenaeus then reasons, “And indeed those things are not esteemed so highly which come spontaneously, as those which are reached by much anxious care.” And Irenaeus then asserts, “Since, then, this power has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by

striving after it." Irenaeus then argues, "For otherwise, no doubt, this our good would be [virtually] irrational, because not the result of trial. Moreover, the faculty of seeing would not appear to be so desirable, unless we had known what a loss it were to be devoid of sight; and health, too, is rendered all the more estimable by an acquaintance with disease; light, also, by contrasting it with darkness; and life with death." And, "Just in the same way," Irenaeus asserts, "is the heavenly kingdom honourable to those who have known the earthly one." He then reasons, "But in proportion as it is more honourable, so much the more do we prize it; and if we have prized it more, we shall be the more glorious in the presence of God." Irenaeus concludes as he asserts that, "The Lord has therefore endured all these things on our behalf, in order that we, having been instructed by means of them all, may be in all respects circumspect for the time to come, and that, having been rationally taught to love God, we may continue in His perfect love: for God has displayed long-suffering in the case of man's apostasy; while man has been instructed by means of it, as also the prophet says, "Thine own apostasy shall heal thee," referring to Jeremiah 2:19. Irenaeus finalizes his conclusion as he asserts that, "God thus determining all things beforehand for the bringing of man to perfection, for his edification, and for the revelation of His dispensations, that goodness may both be made apparent, and righteousness perfected, and that the Church may be fashioned after the image of His Son, and that man may finally be brought to maturity at some future time, becoming ripe through such privileges to see and comprehend God."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus begins as he asserts, "This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," referring to **Matthew 23 (NASB):37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Irenaeus then continues as he asserts that this verse "set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God."

Irenaeus refers to the time in the beginning of Genesis when God placed man in the garden of Eden, and gave him the freedom to choose whatever he wished to eat. Irenaeus would have known this from the Septuagint Bible as we read in **Genesis 2 (Septuagint):15** And the Lord God took the man whom he had formed, and placed him in the garden of Delight, to cultivate and keep it. 16 And the Lord God gave a charge to Adam, saying, Of every tree which is in the garden thou mayest freely eat, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—of it ye shall not eat, but in whatsoever day ye eat of it, ye shall surely die.

It is similar to our current translation as in **Genesis 2 (KJV):15** And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The word "freely" in verse 16 is simply a construction in the Hebrew. It is the word **לֹא** (pronounced *laka*). meaning "to eat," repeated. In English we would say "to eat you may eat," literally. We would translate this as "freely eat". However, this command of God was before the fall. When man fell into sin, everything changed as we shall see.

But Irenaeus continues as he asserts, "For there is no coercion with God, but a good will [towards us] is present with Him continually." Irenaeus then asserts, "And therefore does He give good counsel to all. And in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves."

Again, this was true before the fall of man. As we shall soon see, everything changed as a result of the fall of man.

However, Irenaeus continues as he asserts also that, "On the other hand, they who have not obeyed shall, with justice, be not found in possession of the good, and shall receive condign punishment: for God did kindly bestow on them what was good; but they themselves did not diligently keep it, nor deem it something precious, but poured contempt upon His super-eminent goodness." So Irenaeus says that God bestowed on man what was good, but if man does not diligently keep it, he will "be not found in possession of the good, and shall receive condign punishment. That is, there is reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “Rejecting therefore the good, and as it were spuing it out, shall all deservedly incur the just judgment of God, which also the Apostle Paul testifies in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says, “But dost thou despise the riches of His goodness, and patience, and long-suffering, being ignorant that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,” referring in context to **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

The word “despisest” in the Greek is the word καταφρονέω (pronounced kataphroneō). Vine’s says that this word means “lit. to think down upon or against anyone (kata, down, phren, the mind), hence signifies to think slightly of, to despise.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol I, page 301.** This word is also used in **Matthew 6 (KJV):24** No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The word translated “despise” in verse 24 is also καταφρονέω (pronounced kataphroneō). Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But glory and honour to every one that doeth good,” referring to **Romans 2 (KJV):7** To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Irenaeus then concludes as he asserts that, “God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle, and they who work it shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their power not to do it; but those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their power so to do.”

Irenaeus will use the word “power” fourteen times in this chapter. Notice here though that Irenaeus says that God has given man “that which is good,” and “they who work it shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their power not to do it.” Irenaeus seems to have only read Romans 2:4-7 which we just read, and thus concluded that God rewards those who persevere in doing good with immortality, that is, eternal life. However, when we put these verses in context with the rest of what is written in the word of God, we come to a different conclusion. We will put these verses in context shortly.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, “But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally].” Irenaeus then argues, “But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good.” Of course, this is true as long as we can assume that “all men are of the same nature,” and are “able both to hold fast and to do what is good,” as Irenaeus asserts.

Irenaeus then asserts, “And therefore the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness, as I have so largely demonstrated, because it is in our power so to do, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful, and thus stand in need of that good counsel which the good God has given us to know by means of the prophets.” Yes, the prophets spoke the words of God. They were His mouthpiece. And God is good, all the time. And it does seem that man in in his own power, and able to act justly and to work righteousness. But we must know what the Bible says about man before we conclude with Irenaeus that this is true.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus argues that is was “For this reason the Lord also said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father who is in heaven,” referring to **Matthew 5 (KJV):16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Irenaeus then adds, “And, “Take heed to yourselves, lest perchance your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and worldly cares,” referring to **Luke 21 (KJV):34** And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

The words “Take heed to yourselves” in the Greek are one word, προσέχω (pronounced prosechō). Vine’s says that this word means “lit. to hold to, signifies to turn to, turn one’s attention to; hence, to give heed; **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol II, page 211.**

Again Irenaeus adds, “And, “Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He returns from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing,” referring to **Luke 12 (KJV):35** Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; **36** And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

And Irenaeus also adds, “And again, “The servant who knows his Lord’s will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes,” referring in context to **Luke 12 (KJV):47** And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

And Irenaeus again adds, “And, “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?,” referring to **Luke 6 (KJV):46** And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

And finally Irenaeus adds, “And again, “But if the servant says in his heart, The Lord delayeth, and begins to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat, and drink, and to be drunken, his Lord will come in a day on which he does not expect Him, and shall cut him in sunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites,” referring in context to **Luke 12 (KJV):45** But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; **46** The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. **47** And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

And to **Matthew 24 (KJV):48** But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; **49** And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; **50** The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, **51** And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “All such passages demonstrate the independent will of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him, by which He exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him, and seeks to turn us away from [the sin of] unbelief against Him, without, however, in any way coercing us.”

Irenaeus quotes all of these Scriptures to show that the Lord indicated that man had a choice, and that he was free to choose good or evil. Irenaeus believed that man was responsible to obey His master, or suffer the consequences.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus then argues, “No doubt, if any one is unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his power [to reject it], but it is not expedient. For it is in man’s power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief.” Irenaeus then adds, “And on this account Paul says, “All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient;” referring to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):12** All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Irenaeus then asserts that Paul is here “referring both to the liberty of man, in which respect “all things are lawful,” God exercising no compulsion in regard to him; and [by the expression] “not expedient” pointing out that we “should not use our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,“ for this is not expedient.”

While it is true that we “should not use our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,“ it was Peter who encourages us not to use “our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,” as we read in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):16** As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

And in 1 Corinthians 6:12, Paul is not referring to the liberty of man in respect to man’s free will, but Paul is speaking of the liberty of the man who is not under the law. That is, Paul is saying that he was free from the condemnation of the law, which made all things lawful for him. However, Paul recognized that going against the law was not profitable because it would mean sin in his life. This would not profit him, but rather bring him under bondage to sin again. With this understanding, we see that Paul then says that he is not without the law of God, but that he is under the law of Christ as we read in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):21** To them that are

without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

The law of Christ is everything Jesus said on earth, and everything He spoke through the apostles in the New Testament. That is, the law of Christ is all that is in the word of God revealed to us in Christ. So Paul is not saying that God is “exercising no compulsion in regard to him,” but that he is not under the condemnation of the law. That is, Paul has a legal standing as a righteous one before God, having been justified freely by His grace. But though he has this standing, and that he is not under the law but under grace, he also knows that he is not free to sin.

Irenaeus continues as he then refers to Paul again and adds, “And again he says, “Speak ye every man truth with his neighbour,” referring to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):25** Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Irenaeus is trying to show that man is in his own power with choices to make, whether to do good, that is, to speak truth with his neighbor, or not.

Continuing along this line, Irenaeus then adds, “And, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor scurrility, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks,” referring to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):29** Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Again, Irenaeus adds, “And, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord,” referring in context to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):8** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Irenaeus then encourages, “walk honestly as children of the light, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in anger and jealousy,” referring to **Romans 13 (KJV):13** Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “And such were some of you; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified in the name of our Lord,” referring to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):11** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Irenaeus then argues, “If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others?” He then asserts as if to answer his own question, “But because man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God.”

The apostles and the Lord Himself did give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others. And man was possessed of free will in the beginning in the Garden of Eden. And man was made in the likeness of God, although man is not God, so to make such a comparison is pointless. However, when man sinned, everything changed. And to compare man’s freedom of will to God’s freedom of will, as if they were the same, is to forget that man is the creature, and God is the Creator. Advice is given to those who have faith to do good. Faith is the doorway into life. Without faith, man is the slave of sin, and does not have power to do good. Man must enter the doorway of faith in Jesus Christ before he can do anything that pleases God.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus asserts, “And not merely in works, but also in faith, has God preserved the will of man free and under his own control, saying, “According to thy faith be it unto thee,” referring to **Matthew 9 (KJV):29** Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

Irenaeus asserts that this Scripture is “thus showing that there is a faith specially belonging to man, since he has an opinion specially his own.” It is true that man does have an opinion of his own. Irenaeus then adds, “And again, “All things are possible to him that believeth,” referring to **Mark 9 (KJV):23** Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Yes, and the opposite is true. Without faith, we can do nothing good.

Irenaeus continues as he adds, “and, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee,” referring to **Matthew 8 (KJV):13** And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

Irenaeus then concludes as he asserts, "Now all such expressions demonstrate that man is in his own power with respect to faith." It is true that these Scriptures do demonstrate that man has some power with respect to faith.

Irenaeus then argues, "And for this reason, "he that believeth in Him has eternal life while he who believeth not the Son hath not eternal life, but the wrath of God shall remain upon him," referring to **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Irenaeus then concludes as he asserts, "In the same manner therefore the Lord, both showing His own goodness, and indicating that man is in his own free will and his own power, said to Jerusalem, "How often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen [gathereth] her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Wherefore your house shall be left unto you desolate," referring to **Matthew 23 (KJV):37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killst the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

However, Jesus is not indicating that man is in his own free will and his own power here. Jesus is speaking of Jerusalem, who had a history of killing the prophets sent to her. Jesus speaks to the multitude at the beginning of this chapter of Matthew as in **Matthew 23 (KJV):1** Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, 6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Jesus is upbraiding its leaders, the scribes and Pharisees as we read here and in **Matthew 23 (KJV):13** But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

The scribes and Pharisees were the leaders of the people. They had taken over control of the city. They would not enter the kingdom, and were hindering people from entering. That is, they were not born again, and were hindering people from being born again. Jesus speaks of the nation as a whole, represented by Jerusalem, but nothing is here stated specifically about the free will of man. There are many more verses in the word of God which speak specifically about man's will as we shall see shortly.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus asserts that, "Those, again, who maintain the opposite to these [conclusions], do themselves present the Lord as destitute of power, as if, forsooth, He were unable to accomplish what He willed; or, on the other hand, as being ignorant that they were by nature "material," as these men express it, and such as cannot receive His immortality." These men Irenaeus refers to here would be the Gnostics in his time. They taught that there were two Gods, and that the one of the Old Testament was a lesser god who failed to get Israel to obey as he wanted them to, and was an angry wrathful God. It was in this respect that the Gnostics believed He was "destitute of power."

Irenaeus then quotes his opposers as he says, "But He should not," say they, "have created angels of such a nature that they were capable of transgression, nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (inflexiles et sine judicio), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created." Again, it was in this respect that the Gnostics said that the God of the Old Testament was "destitute of power." That is, he should have known better than to create beings that were rational and "endowed with the power of examining and judging," so that "they were capable of

transgression,” and being “ungrateful towards Him.”

Irenaeus however then argues, “But upon this supposition, neither would what is good be grateful to them, nor communion with God be precious, nor would the good be very much to be sought after, which would present itself without their own proper endeavour, care, or study, but would be implanted of its own accord and without their concern.” Irenaeus sees how much God values man, and has given him such a high ranking in the order of creation. God has created man as someone He Himself can relate to.

Irenaeus continues as he argues, “Thus it would come to pass, that their being good would be of no consequence, because they were so by nature rather than by will, and are possessors of good spontaneously, not by choice; and for this reason they would not understand this fact, that good is a comely thing, nor would they take pleasure in it.” Irenaeus again argues, “For how can those who are ignorant of good enjoy it? Or what credit is it to those who have not aimed at it? And what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest?”

To give angels and men freedom to choose to obey or not to obey was God’s choice. In the case of the angels, Lucifer became Satan, and those who followed him became his angels. They were not given a second chance. In the case of man, Adam was tested in the Garden of Eden, and failed the test by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden as a result. We will look at the consequences of their sin in a moment.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus asserts that, “On this account, too, did the Lord assert that the kingdom of heaven was the portion of “the violent;” and He says, “The violent take it by force,” referring to **Matthew 11 (KJV):12** And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Irenaeus explains his point as he says, “that is, those who by strength and earnest striving are on the watch to snatch it away on the moment.” Irenaeus then adds, “On this account also Paul the Apostle says to the Corinthians, “Know ye not, that they who run in a racecourse, do all indeed run, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. Every one also who engages in the contest is temperate in all things: now these men [do it] that they may obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. But I so run, not as uncertainty; I fight, not as one beating the air; but I make my body livid, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when preaching to others, I may myself be rendered a castaway,” referring to **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):24** Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Irenaeus then asserts that Paul, as “This able wrestler, therefore, exhorts us to the struggle for immortality, that we may be crowned, and may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle, but which does not encircle us of its own accord (sed non ultro coalitam).”

Irenaeus asserts here that eternal life, that is, immortality, is “acquired by our struggle,” and “does not encircle us of its own accord.” This however makes our salvation dependent on something we do. The crown Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 9:25 is not immortality, but is an incorruptible crown. That is, Paul is saying that we will be rewarded for a disciplined life, a life lived to the glory of God. We have eternal life when we believe in Jesus, and are born again of the Spirit of God. We will then be rewarded for works of righteousness we do as Paul explains in 1 Corinthians, chapter 3.

Irenaeus then asserts, “And the harder we strive, so much is it the more valuable; while so much the more valuable it is, so much the more should we esteem it.” Irenaeus does not understand Paul’s meaning when he says we are saved by grace, through faith, and not by works as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Irenaeus then reasons, “And indeed those things are not esteemed so highly which come spontaneously, as those which are reached by much anxious care.” And Irenaeus then asserts, “Since, then, this power has been

conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it.”

Again, this makes our salvation dependent on something we strive after. However, our salvation is the gift of God.

Irenaeus then argues, “For otherwise, no doubt, this our good would be [virtually] irrational, because not the result of trial. Moreover, the faculty of seeing would not appear to be so desirable, unless we had known what a loss it were to be devoid of sight; and health, too, is rendered all the more estimable by an acquaintance with disease; light, also, by contrasting it with darkness; and life with death.” And, “Just in the same way,” Irenaeus asserts, “is the heavenly kingdom honourable to those who have known the earthly one.” He then reasons, “But in proportion as it is more honourable, so much the more do we prize it; and if we have prized it more, we shall be the more glorious in the presence of God.” Irenaeus concludes as he asserts that, “The Lord has therefore endured all these things on our behalf, in order that we, having been instructed by means of them all, may be in all respects circumspect for the time to come, and that, having been rationally taught to love God, we may continue in His perfect love: for God has displayed long-suffering in the case of man’s apostasy; while man has been instructed by means of it, as also the prophet says, “Thine own apostasy shall heal thee,” referring in context to **Jeremiah 2 (Septuagint):19** Thine apostasy shall correct thee, and thy wickedness shall reprove thee: know then, and see, that thy forsaking me *has been* bitter to thee, saith the Lord thy God; and I have taken no pleasure in thee, saith the Lord thy God.

And also as in **Jeremiah 2 (KJV):19** Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Irenaeus finalizes his conclusion as he asserts that, “God thus determining all things beforehand for the bringing of man to perfection, for his edification, and for the revelation of His dispensations, that goodness may both be made apparent, and righteousness perfected, and that the Church may be fashioned after the image of His Son, and that man may finally be brought to maturity at some future time, becoming ripe through such privileges to see and comprehend God.”

Irenaeus is asserting here that by keeping the good that God has given us, and thus exercising our free will to choose the good over the bad, we are progressively sanctified and will win the prize of immortality for ourselves.

## Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXVII

Irenaeus begins his argument in paragraph one as he says, “This expression [of our Lord], “How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not,” set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God.

Irenaeus asserts here that man has free will, that is, that man possesses “his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God.” So God will not make us accept His salvation, but has given us free will to choose whether we will be saved or not.

We see that Irenaeus’ arguments for free will begin in paragraph one when he notices that the Lord said He would have gathered the children of Jerusalem together often but they were not willing. In Irenaeus’ thinking, this places the power of choice in man. And he also notices that this power of choice was given to man from the beginning with Adam. Though he doesn’t mention it specifically, he draws from the account in Genesis when God gave command to Adam that he may eat of any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now Irenaeus also notices that Paul says that men “despise the riches of His goodness,” and that men will receive “glory and honor” as a reward for doing good, but wrath will be the reward for those who reject his goodness.

Irenaeus continues his argument in paragraph two where he says that “all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it.” In other words, man was not made bad or good by nature, but he was given the power of

choice to do good, and thus win God's approval, and "obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein;" Others, "because of their rejection of what is fair and good," are "blamed, and receive a just condemnation," he asserts. Irenaeus also asserts that the prophets gave "good counsel which the good God has given us to know" by means of their prophecy so that we would not "by excessive negligence" become "forgetful."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus notices that the Lord gives encouragement to us to let our lights shine so that men may see our good deeds, and glorify our Father in heaven. And Irenaeus notices that the Lord encourages us to take heed to ourselves, and by such encouragement He is demonstrating "the independent will of man."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus moves the focus of his attention to the writings of Paul, and he notices that this same "liberty of man" is implied by Paul's exhortations to walk as children of light, and to speak truth with our neighbor. However, it was Peter who encouraged us not to use "our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness," as we saw in 1 Peter 2:16. Irenaeus then asks why the Lord or the apostle Paul would speak such exhortations if it was "not in our power to do or not to do" some things, and "to abstain from others." And, since God has free will, and man was created in God's likeness, "man is possessed of free will from the beginning," Irenaeus concludes.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus believed that "not merely in works, but also in faith, has God preserved the will of man free and under his own control, saying, "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

Man has his own opinion, Irenaeus argues, and therefore he has a faith "specially belonging" to him. By such a saying, Irenaeus asserts that the Lord demonstrated that "man is in his own power with regard to faith." Again, Irenaeus emphasized Matthew 23:37 again to show that He would have gathered Jerusalem's children like a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but they would not, and in saying this, Irenaeus believed He was revealing the independent will of man.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus implies that men were "made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (*inflexibles et sine judicio*), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created." Irenaeus also implies that God has placed man in a great contest in which he must strive to be victorious, and so obtain the crown.

And in paragraph seven, Irenaeus develops this thought of a contest more as he begins by saying, "On this account, too, did the Lord assert that the kingdom of heaven was the portion of "the violent;" and He says, "The violent take it by force;" quoting the Lord in Matthew 11:12. Irenaeus explains that the Lord was here asserting that it is "those who by strength and earnest striving are on the watch to snatch it away on the moment." Irenaeus also continues as he states, "On this account also Paul the Apostle says to the Corinthians, "Know ye not, that they who run in a racecourse," referring to 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Irenaeus believed that our struggle is for the crown of immortality "which does not encircle us of its own accord," but must be won by our "earnest striving," and "reached by much anxious care." Irenaeus concludes as he says, "Since, then, this power has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it."

## Commentary Summary: Free Will

Now the crux of Irenaeus' argument for the free will of man is in his first statement, as he says at the beginning of paragraph one, "This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (*ad utendum sententia*) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God."

To be absolutely clear, Irenaeus says that man possesses "his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (*ad utendum sententia*) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God." As we look at

all the instances where Irenaeus uses the word power, we see that he adheres to this assertion throughout his writing in this chapter. There are in fact fourteen instances as follows:

1. This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own **power**, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (*ad utendum sententia*) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. (paragraph 1)
2. And in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the **power** of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves. (paragraph 1)
3. God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle, and they who work it shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their **power** not to do it; but those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their **power** so to do. (paragraph 1)
4. But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the **power** to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good. (paragraph 2)
5. And therefore the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness, as I have so largely demonstrated, because it is in our **power** so to do, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful, and thus stand in need of that good counsel which the good God has given us to know by means of the prophets. (paragraph 2)
6. No doubt, if any one is unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his **power** [to reject it], but it is not expedient. For it is in man's **power** to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief. (paragraph 4)
7. If then it were not in our **power** to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others? (paragraph 4)
8. Now all such expressions demonstrate that man is in his own **power** with respect to faith. (paragraph 5)
9. In the same manner therefore the Lord, both showing His own goodness, and indicating that man is in his own free will and his own **power**, said to Jerusalem, "How often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen [gathereth] her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Wherefore your house shall be left unto you desolate." (paragraph 5)
10. Those, again, who maintain the opposite to these [conclusions], do themselves present the Lord as destitute of **power**, as if, forsooth, He were unable to accomplish what He willed; (paragraph 6)
11. "But He should not," say they, "have created angels of such a nature that they were capable of transgression, nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the **power** of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (*inflexibles et sine judicio*), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created." (paragraph 6)
12. Since, then, this **power** has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it. (paragraph 7)

Again, to summarize Irenaeus' thinking, he asserts that man has free will. That is, God has made man from the beginning a free agent, possessing his own power, so that he may obey the commands of God voluntarily and not under compulsion by God. Man has been given the power of choice, and was made a rational being just as angels, and is endowed with the power of examining and judging so that man may justly possess what is good. In Irenaeus' thinking, this liberty to choose has not been abrogated because of the fall of man. Man must yield obedience, and so preserve the good given him by God. Man has the power to obey or not to obey God. Since all men "are of the same nature," and are able to "hold fast and to do what is good," and, "on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it," God is just to reward those who do what is good and condemn those who do not do good.

Irenaeus also believes that, since therefore man has this power, the prophets "used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness" in case "by excessive negligence we might become forgetful." God therefore supplied man's need for good counsel through the prophets. The Lord Himself and the apostle Paul also gave us counsel to do good and abstain from evil because it is in our power to do one or the other. Irenaeus also believes that the Lord Himself shows us that man has power to believe or not believe by His statements in the Gospels. And since we have this power to choose, Irenaeus asserts that Paul encouraged us to strive to win the prize of immortality by choosing to love God all the more.

Now, in Irenaeus' thinking, for God to be just, man must have free will so that, through this rational process of man's choosing, God is able to reward man with the crown of immortality for choosing the good, or allow man to reject it and fall under His just condemnation. Also in Irenaeus' thinking, man not only has free will to choose good or reject it, but he also has the power to do what he has chosen to do as well, since having free will without the power to do what you have chosen would be nonsense to Irenaeus as he asserts in paragraph two, "But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally]." Irenaeus firmly believed that man has the power to carry out his choices as he asserts, "But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein."

Irenaeus sees man in a great contest, the last of which will be in the tribulation in the last days as he also says in **Book5: XXIX, paragraph 1**, "For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption."

According to Irenaeus, man must run the race by obeying the Decalogue and choosing the good and loving God more and more in order to reach the prize and be "crowned with incorruption." Man is striving to please God by doing good, and so be accepted by Him.

According to Irenaeus, the prize man is striving for is immortality, that is, to be "crowned with incorruption," which is obtained by a struggle. This is ordained by God so that we "may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle." Irenaeus' argument, however, implies a test by God to see if we are worthy to obtain eternal life. In Irenaeus' thinking, though we have believed, we still don't have eternal life yet, but we must first struggle in this life to obtain the prize of eternal life, that is, to be "crowned with incorruption." And when Irenaeus says that the crown "does not encircle us of its own accord," he is saying that we must run the race to win this prize.

It is evident that there is more at stake here than just the free will of man for Irenaeus. It is eternal life that is the prize in Irenaeus' thinking as he says, speaking of Paul in paragraph seven, "This able wrestler, therefore, exhorts us to the struggle for immortality, that we may be crowned, and may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle, but which does not encircle us of its own accord (sed non ultro coalitam). And the harder we strive, so much is it the more valuable; while so much the more valuable it is, so much the more should we esteem it."

I believe Irenaeus raises three issues in his argument for man's free will which are as follows:

- 1.) What is the nature of man?

- 2.) What power does man possess?
- 3.) And what are his choices?

We must ask ourselves what is the Biblical truth about each of these issues if we are to answer these questions. Now Irenaeus' argument for man's free will really hinges on his statement about the nature of man in paragraph two where he asserts, "But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good."

In arguing this way, Irenaeus assumes that the nature of man has not changed after the fall, and that God made man neither good or bad but simply gave them the ability "to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it." That Irenaeus has assumed that the nature of man had not changed after the fall is also evident in his assertion that the "expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty," referring here to Jesus' words in Matthew 23:37. And he continues by saying, "because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God." However, we know that something changed after the fall for the Scriptures say that we are, before accepting Christ, all by nature children of wrath as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The word "nature" in the Greek is φύσις (pronounced physis). Vine's says that this word means "to bring forth, produce, signifies (a) the nature (i.e., the natural powers or constitution) of a person or thing." Also, the word means "(b) origin, birth," and "(c) the regular law or order of nature." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol. III, page 103.**

**The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament, George V. Wigram, page 792,** lists other Scriptures where this same Greek word is used. Here are some of the instances.

The word is actually used twice, first as an adjective, "natural," and second as a noun, "against nature," in **Romans 1 (KJV):26** For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

This word is translated "instinctively" in **Romans 1 (KJV):14** I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

And this word is translated "physically" in **Romans 2 (KJV):27** And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

So when Paul said in Ephesians 2:3 that we were all by nature children of wrath, he meant that to sin was something natural or innate in us. That is, to sin was according to our natural constitution. It was our nature to sin. Thus when Irenaeus says that "all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good," this was true of Adam and Eve, but certainly not true of their descendants, for all of their descendants are "dead in trespasses and sin," and are "by nature children of wrath."

The Scriptures reveal far more about the effects of man's sin upon man and the creation after the fall than Irenaeus mentions in his argument for free will. We would do well to ask ourselves how we became children of wrath in the first place.

To start at the beginning, we know that sin was already in the universe before man fell because the tempter, that is, the serpent, was in the Garden of Eden before man fell. The tempter is the devil, who is called Satan as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out

with him.

The tempter who was in the Garden of Eden is the same who tried to get the Son of God to sin in **Matthew 4 (KJV):3** And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. **4** But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Jesus' final response to him was to be gone Satan as we read in **Matthew 4 (KJV):10** Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Now, in the beginning when man was in the Garden of Eden, he was innocent until he fell as see in **Genesis 2 (KJV):25** And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The account of man's sin is recorded in **Genesis 3 (KJV):1** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? **2** And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: **3** But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. **4** And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: **5** For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. **6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

After the man sinned, there were huge changes in man's being, and even the creation as a result. We may note the following from the account in Genesis:

- Man and woman felt shame for the first time, and hid from God as a result as we see in **Genesis 3 (KJV):7** And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. **8** And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.
- Man felt fear for the first time as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):9** And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? **10** And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.
- Man and woman practiced blame shifting for the first time as we see in **Genesis 3 (KJV):11** And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? **12** And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. **13** And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.
- God placed a curse on the serpent and enmity between the serpent and the woman, but promised a victorious seed would come as we see in **Genesis 3 (KJV):14** And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: **15** And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
- Woman would have pain in childbirth as we note in **Genesis 3 (KJV):16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.
- The ground was cursed and, as a result, man would have to toil and sweat for food to eat. Also, both man and woman would die physical death as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):17** And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; **18** Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat

the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

In addition to all of the above, man suffered spiritual death for we see that God promised the man that in the day he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would surely die as read in **Genesis**

**2 (KJV):16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

That spiritual death, as well as physical death, is spoken of here, there can be no doubt as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Again we read in **Colossians 2 (NASB):13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

It is evident that Adam and Eve polluted the human race at its source, and plunged us into spiritual death as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

In this spiritual death we walked according to the course of this world and the prince of the power of the air, that is, according to Satan, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

In this state of spiritual death we lived in the lusts of our flesh and were by nature children of wrath just as all others as Paul states in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

It was our nature to sin before we accepted Christ. Not only so, but before accepting Christ we walked in the futility of our mind, being darkened in our understanding, and excluded from the life of God as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):17** This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

And before Christ in this state of spiritual death, both our mind and conscience were defiled as we note in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Therefore, before Christ, since our mind and conscience were defiled, and being just in our flesh without the Spirit of God, we do not have the right standards by which to judge right and wrong by. Our heart is also more deceitful than all else as we read in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

The heart is the center of our emotions. We were all about this world, and the god of this world had blinded our minds as we read in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):3** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

We were without the Spirit of God, and we were thus mere natural men and women. Being just in this natural state, we could not understand the thins of the Spirit of God as Paul states in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Before Christ, we were in the flesh and our minds were set on the flesh. Being in this state we were hostile toward God as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

We are all, without exception, spiritually dead in Adam, but when we accept Christ as our Savior, we are made alive as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

In addition to physical and spiritual death, man's condition is described as follows:

- He is under sin and does not understand his need for God as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; **10** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: **11** There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
- He is unprofitable as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.  
Now the word “unprofitable” in the Greek is ἀχρειόω (pronounced achreioō). Wuest says that this word means “to make useless, render unserviceable,” and that the Hebrew word here means “to go bad, become sour like milk.” **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume 1, page 55.** So to give an analogy, man is as fruit spoiled rotten.
- In God's estimation, man does not do good. In fact, he does the opposite as read in **Romans 3 (KJV):12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. **13** Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: **14** Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: **15** Their feet are swift to shed blood: **16** Destruction and misery are in their ways: **17** And the way of peace have they not known:
- Man in his spiritually dead state has no fear of God as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):18** There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Not only so, but ever since Adam, man is in possession of a nature that is on the downgrade and from which it is impossible to free himself apart from Christ. The apostle Paul describes man's condition in general in **Romans 1 (KJV):18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; **19** Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. **20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: **21** Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. **22** Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, **23** And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Because of this Paul tells us that man sank even lower as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):24** Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: **25** Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

It is hard for us to understand, but because of this man sank even lower as we continue to read in **Romans 1 (KJV):26** For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: **27** And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

It is hard for us to believe, but man sank even lower as Paul continues in **Romans 1 (KJV):28** And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; **29** Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, **30** Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, **31** Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: **32** Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

The effects of man's fall were not limited to man, but the whole creation also is said to be longing for its freedom from corruption as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Now since the man apart from Christ is in such a condition of spiritual death, it stands therefore that the whole world is guilty before God as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Every mouth is closed because we all have sin. Since we all have sin, we are then all under the law, and we are all accountable to God. Before we accept Christ, we are dead in trespasses and sins. In such a state of sin, the law spoke to us and condemned us for all have sinned and fall short of God's glory as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Man who has not repented of his sin and been born again, that is, man who is in his unregenerate state, is said to be in the flesh and cannot please God as we read again in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

In the flesh without the Spirit of God, man is not able to be subject to the law of God, and cannot please God. This is what it means to be by nature a child of wrath. As sinners by nature, we are not able to be subject to the law of God. Thus we are under the law's condemnation. Being just in the flesh, we cannot please God, and we all are under judgment, wrath, and a curse until we accept Christ as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

And in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

And in **Galatians 3 (KJV):13** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Before Christ, we were servants of sin as Jesus told the Jews who trusted in their descent from Abraham for righteousness as we see in **John 8 (KJV):33** They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

It is the Son who makes us free. But before Christ, our whole being was impacted by sin. Our body, mind, will, conscience, and heart were controlled by our sinful nature. We ourselves walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. In such a state, we were helpless sinners as Paul states in **Romans 5 (NASB):6** For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The word "helpless" in the Greek is ἀσθενῆς (pronounced asthenēs). Vine says that this word is composed of two words (a, negative, sthenos, strength). The word literally means "without strength."

**Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol II, page 252.**

This word is translated as “sick” or “weak” or “impotent” in other Scriptures, but it must be interpreted by the context in which it is used as we see in **Acts 4 (KJV):8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

The man Peter is speaking of in verse 9 is the one who was begging at the gate called Beautiful, and who couldn’t walk, and is the one whom he healed in the name of Jesus Christ as we read in **Acts 3 (KJV):1** Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

The man whom Peter and John healed in the name of Jesus Christ could not walk, and had to be carried to his place of begging. Therefore the better translation here is “impotent” as we read in **Acts 4 (KJV):9** If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

In the same way, in our state of being sinners in spiritual death and darkness, we are impotent, without strength, and unable to save ourselves. In our state of spiritual death, we are oblivious to the spiritual world. Being just in our natural state, the word of God is foolishness to us as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

In our state of spiritual death we were also enemies of God as Paul tells us in **Romans 5 (KJV):10** For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

The word “enemies” in the Greek is ἐχθρός (pronounced echthros). This is the same Greek word translated foes in **Acts 2 (KJV):34** For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

We cannot change our nature as Jeremiah reveals in **Jeremiah 13 (KJV):23** Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

Man in such a state has no power to do good. Even if he wanted to, he could not do good. Man in such a state needs a Savior. He is powerless to help himself in his present condition. We cannot save ourselves. We need God to save us. This is why Jesus came. Jesus came to save sinners as we read in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):15** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

So man is spiritually dead apart from Christ. Man in this state is in the flesh, and does not have the Spirit of God. He cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God being just a natural man. Man’s conscience is defiled so that he does not have the right standards to judge right and wrong. And man is in possession of a nature that is on the downgrade, and from which it is impossible to free himself apart from Christ. In this state of spiritual death, man’s heart is desperately wicked. His mind is set on the flesh, and is hostile toward God. Man in this state of spiritual death has no power to do good, even if he wanted to.

Now the only question is, what are our choices? In our sinful state of spiritual death, everything we do is tainted by sin. We may have the desire to do good, but since we have sin, all that we do is tainted by our sin and is unacceptable to God. According to the Scriptures, we were made good by God, but we became sinful by Adam’s sin. Irenaeus’ argument, that if “if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally],” is simply hypothetical. The reality is, according to the Scriptures, that all men became bad, that is, sinful, when Adam sinned. And because they have a sinful nature, they can only do bad. Man has no power in his sinful state to do good. He may wish to do good, but he does not

have the power to do good because he has sin which taints everything he does.

Therefore, Irenaeus' statements that "God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God," is true of Adam before he sinned. After Adam sinned, however, he cannot "yield obedience" so that he "might justly possess what is good." Man cannot preserve the good given by God because he does not have the good any longer. Man after the fall of Adam has sin as a nature. Since man has a sin nature, he cannot do good. He does not have the power to not sin.

So sinful man, who is dead in trespasses and sin, and who walks according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, and who lives in the lusts of his flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and who is by nature a child of wrath, who is in darkness, and who is excluded from the life of God by the ignorance in him, who is without strength to save himself from his sin, who is a slave of sin and an enemy of God, whose heart is desperately sick, and whose mind and conscience are defiled, and who does not possess the power to do good, has really only one choice. He can believe in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior or reject Him. This is the statement of the apostle John in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Until we accept Christ, we remain under the judgment of God. Until we accept Christ as our Savior, we do not have the power to do good, and our choices are limited. Now we may well ask how then does man in such a condition of spiritual death come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ? The answer is found in the Scriptures. God saves us by His word, that is, the word which is preached by those He sends as we see in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

And in **Romans 10 (KJV):14** How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? **15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

However, not all believe, but the word preached causes faith in some as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV):16** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? **17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

So we believe when we hear the message preached. Faith to believe comes by reading or hearing the word of Christ as it is preached by those He sends. Now when we hear His word, whether by reading it ourselves or hearing it through another believer, our minds are enlightened with the truth about who He is. We begin to change our minds about Him and our sin, and we see ourselves in a new light. The enlightening of our minds is the first stage of repentance, which is the Greek word μετάνοια (pronounced metanoia). This word means "lit. to perceive afterwards (meta, after, implying change, noeo, to perceive; nous the mind, the seat of moral reflection), in contrast to pronoeo, to perceive beforehand, hence signifies to change one's mind or purpose." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol III, page 281.**

The word "repentance" then has in it the idea of a change of mind, and ultimately a change of heart about something. Dr. Albert Grimes in his booklet, The Doctrine of Repentance, says this about repentance.

"It stands to reason after our minds have been changed and we see ourselves as we really are, and Christ as He really is, that our emotions will be touched as in **2 Corinthians 7 (NASB):9** I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance...

The Greek word for repentance in this connection means "to be a care to one afterwards," "to cause great concern." The Hebrew is stronger and means "to pant," "to sigh," or "to moan." The emotions of the publican were so touched that he smote upon his breast as in **Luke 18 (NASB):13** But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

Just how much emotion is necessary to true repentance no one can say. But a certain amount of

emotion, even though it may not be shown, is evident in true repentance. It no doubt would depend upon the type of person themselves.” **Doctrines of Salvation, Lesson 2: The Doctrine of Repentance, Dr. Albert Grimes, page 3.**

The Greek word which is used in 2 Corinthians 7:9 for “sorrowful” is ἐλυπήθητε (pronounced elupethete) and in context is ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν (pronounced elupethete ace metanoian) which when translated means “were sorrowful unto repentance.” The word elupethete comes from the Greek word λύπη (pronounced lupe) which means pain, distress, grief. The verb is λυπέω (pronounced lupeō) which means “to occasion grief or sorrow to, to distress.” **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition, by Harold K. Moulton, page 254.** So the idea of sorrow as a part of true repentance is shown here in this verse.

Repentance was foremost in Jesus’ preaching as we read in **Mark 1 (KJV):14** Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, **15** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Repentance was also foremost in the apostle’s preaching. When Peter preached for the first time after Jesus ascended and the Holy Spirit had come upon them in the upper room, at the end of his preaching when they asked him what they should do, he told his hearers to repent as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):37** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? **38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. **39** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. **40** And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Peter was speaking to Jews here who were devout men from every nation under heaven as in **Acts 2 (KJV):5** And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Peter told them that they had crucified Jesus, the Christ as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):22** Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: **23** Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: **24** Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

And in **Acts 2 (KJV):36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Peter was telling them to change their minds about Jesus who is the Christ. This is what the prodigal son did after he had squandered his inheritance in riotous living as we read in **Luke 15 (KJV):17** And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! **18** I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, **19** And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

Confession of sin is involved in true repentance. When we truly repent, the Father’s arms are wide open and He puts the best robe on us as Jesus tells us in **Luke 15 (KJV):20** And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. **21** And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. **22** But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: **23** And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: **24** For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

It is only after our spiritual rebirth, which comes when we truly repent, that we can do any good. Until we repent, all our righteousness is as filthy rags as we read in **Isaiah 64 (KJV):6** But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Our nature is changed when we believe in Jesus Christ, and we are born again. The Holy Spirit becomes the life of our Spirit. His life in us is eternal life. Our spirit is renewed to life, and receives a new nature, the

divine sinless nature of the Holy Spirit, who gives us new life when we are born of Him. Being born of the Spirit in this way, we are truly a new creation.

In this chapter, Irenaeus leaves out the fall of man in his thinking. He treats man, the descendant of Adam, as if he were just as responsible as Adam himself before he sinned. We know that Adam was not made by God with a sin nature. Adam became sinful when he disobeyed God's command not to eat of the tree of good and evil. This made the new birth absolutely essential for every man and woman afterwards. Man is as an Ethiopian who cannot change his skin, and as a leopard who cannot change his spots. That is, man cannot change his nature. So being in this condition, we cannot do good until we have had a change in our nature. This only happens when we repent and are born again. Jesus tells us that, unless we repent, we will all perish as we read in **Luke 13 (KJV):1** There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. **2** And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? **3** I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

So as we repent, we come to believe that Jesus is who He said He was. When we surrender our hearts to Him, believing that God raised Him from the dead, and confess Him as Lord of our lives, we are born again. God is said to have quickened us. That is, He made us alive together with Christ as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, **5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **6** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: **7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The apostle John says that this new birth was not by the will of man but of God as in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: **13** Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Again, James says in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

And Peter says in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):23** Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

However hard this is to accept, we must understand that this is the plain teaching of the word of God as we see in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

It was God who sent those who preached the word to us. It was God who, through His Spirit acting in the word preached, gave us faith as a gift, and we then believed the good news, the Gospel as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

As a result, we were born of the Spirit, that is, we were born again. We now possess the life of the Spirit in our Spirit since we are born of Him as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Having believed, we are then God's purchased possession, and the Holy Spirit is given to us as an earnest, or pledge, of His redemption as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):14** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Now Isaiah spoke in prophecy to Israel as we read in **Isaiah 30 (NASB):15** For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength." But you were not willing.

By this we understand that repentance is ongoing in the life of the believer. As we walk in the light of His word, He cleanses us of all unrighteousness. This will go on until we are raptured or resurrected. But the new birth is a one time experience in the life of the believer.

Now Paul describes his experience as a Christian in Romans, chapter seven. As a sinner before Christ, he was of flesh, sold into bondage to sin as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

After accepting Christ, his spirit was made alive, and he was born of the Spirit. His inner being then was made a partaker of a new nature, that is, the divine nature. Peter explains this in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):1** Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The word for “nature” in the Greek is again φύσις (pronounced physis).

Being born of the Spirit, we now share or partake of the divine nature of God in our spirit. We are truly sons and daughters of God, but not made perfect yet in our soul. Our mind, will, conscience, and emotions compose our soul, and it is there that we are progressively cleansed as we walk in the light of His word, and grow in grace and knowledge. Now after Paul was born again, he said that he joyfully concurs with the law of God in his inner man, but that evil is still present with him as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Before we accepted Christ, being dead in our trespasses and sins, our inner man only had a sinful nature. We were controlled by this sinful nature in our flesh. After we accept Christ, we are born again, and we receive a new nature in our inner man, our spirit. This is spoken of in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Paul joyfully concurred with the law of God in his inner man made new by the new birth, but he still possessed a sinful nature in his flesh that disagreed with the new nature in his spirit as a result of being born again. There was a war between the two. Before he accepted Christ, there was no such war. He only had a sinful nature, and sinned by nature. It was only afterwards that he found himself doing things that he hated doing as he says in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Paul tells us that now, as a result of the new birth in his spirit, he is no longer the one doing the thing he hates as he says in **Romans 7 (KJV):17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul tells us that nothing good dwells in his flesh, but that he is now willing to do good as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul says he is no longer the one doing the evil, but sin which dwells in him. If this is the case with the Christian, then the sinner is totally under the control of the flesh. Though he may will to do good, he cannot because of the sin that dwells in him. You can have all the free will you want, but if you don't have the power to carry out your choices, how much freedom do you really have? Man living in darkness believes he is truly free. It is only when we come to Christ that we realize that we were slaves to sin.

Paul continues by saying that, although the law of sin is in his flesh, he delights in the law of God in the inner man, and he finds the victory over his flesh in Jesus Christ our Lord as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Paul did not delight in the law of God in his inner man before he was born again. The change came when he was born again. And further, Paul says that in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set him free from the law of sin and death as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to

them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

It is the Spirit of God who gives life to our spirit when we are born again. It is our spirit that is referred to as the new man which is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The apostle John assures us that we have this life in our spirit if we have believed that Jesus is the Son of God as we read in **1 John 5 (NASB):11** And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

We do not have to wait to see if we finish the race well before we can know that we have eternal life.

Now, if the Christian has to submit in this way to the Spirit of God, what of the one who has not yet accepted Christ? His will is powerless against his flesh. He has sin, and without Christ, he has no way to keep from sinning. He or she is a slave of sin, but again, Paul says that the Christian is no longer a slave of sin as was the case before Christ as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

So if we have become Christians by accepting Christ as Savior, and have been born again, we now have a choice to make whether we will continue in sin, or present ourselves to God for His service as we see in **Romans 6 (KJV):12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Before Christ, sin reigned in our death doomed body. We were slaves of sin. But after we accept Christ, we now have power not to sin and give in to our lusts. Now Paul is thankful that apparently the Romans made the choice to submit to God as he reveals in **Romans 6 (KJV):17** But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

We are freed from sin when we accept Christ as Lord of our lives and are born again. This is why Paul says that it was for freedom that Christ set us free as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Before Christ, we are slaves to sin. This put us under the condemnation of the law which was like a yoke of bondage because it only condemns us. After we accept Christ as Lord and Savior, we are set free from sin, and are given a standing as righteous before God. That is, we are justified by faith. We are therefore no longer under the law in any part. The law was a yoke of slavery because it kept us under sin. Until Christ came and died on the cross for us and rose again from the dead for our justification, we were helpless to keep from sinning. In Christ, our will has now been set free, and we are no longer the slaves of sin. We are now able to do good in God's estimation.

Now before Christ came, men and women trusted in Him who was to come. Their faith is what saved them, and not the keeping of the law. The law was their tutor to bring them to the Christ who was to come. They were born again by their faith, and were also children of Abraham by this faith, just as we who believe today are. When Jesus came, this truth was not being taught as we see in Jesus' remark to Nicodemus in **John 3 (KJV):10** Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

After Jesus explains to Nicodemus that, to see or enter the kingdom of God, you must be born again, all Nicodemus can say is in **John 3 (KJV):9** Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

This is why the prophets could speak to Israel as if they had a choice to obey or not to obey. The idea was that the law would bring them to faith in the Messiah, the Christ who was to come. This would give them inward freedom to obey the Lord's commands, and power over their sin. Some believed and some did not. The prophets spoke to the believers in Israel, that is, those who were sons and daughters of God by faith and who

were therefore able to obey the prophet's words. Yet many were disobedient sons and were being chastened. As it was in Jesus' time, there was little faith, though there was some. But the nation as a whole was in unbelief as Jeremiah says in **Jeremiah 9 (KJV):3** And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.

And so Jesus told the Pharisees in the temple that they did not know Him or His Father as we read in **John 8 (KJV):19** Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

Jesus wants a personal relationship with us. He wants to be known, and He wants to know us. And He wants for us to do the same, that is, to know Him and be known by Him. This has not changed from the beginning.

So now that Christ has come, we are no longer under a tutor as Paul says in **Galatians 3 (KJV):23** But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

As a born again believer, I am now able to do good. This is what I was created for in Christ Jesus as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are now able to put on the new man which God created in us by the new birth as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The new birth was actually a resurrection in our spirit. We were dead in sins, but we have now been given new life. We now have Christ in us as the very life of our spirit as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The fruit of true repentance is manifest in a patient endurance of a good work. This is what Paul is saying in **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

Verse 6 in the Greek is as follows:

Ος αποδωσει εκαστω κατα τα εργα αυτου  
who will give to each man according to his works

And verse 7 in the Greek is as follows:

τοις μεν καθ' υπομονην εργου αγαθου  
to those on the one hand according to a patient endurance of a good work  
δοξαν και τιμην και αφθαρσιαν ζητουσιν ζωην αιωνιον  
glory and honor and incorruption are seeking life eternal

The preposition **κατα** (pronounced kata) is **καθ'** (pronounced kath), and is abbreviated because of the beginning vowel **υ** in the adjacent word **υπομονην** (pronounced hupomonen). Vine's says that this Greek word

υπομονὴν (pronounced hypomonen) means “lit. an abiding under (hupo, under, meno, to abide),” and that this word “is almost invariably rendered “patience.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol III, page 169.**

This Greek word, υπομονὴν, is in the accusative case, and therefore demands that the preposition καθ’ preceding it be translated “according to.” If it were in the genitive case, it could be translated as “by,” but it is not in the genitive case. The Greek words εργοῦ ἀγαθοῦ (pronounced ergou agathou) are in the genitive, singular case, and simply mean most literally “of a good work.” The Greek word ζητούσιν (pronounced dzetousin) is in the dative, singular, masculine, participle, present, active form of the verb ζητεω (pronounced zeteo), “to seek.” The Greek words δοξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ αφθαρσίαν (pronounced timen kai aphtharsian), meaning “for glory and honor and incorruption,” are all in the accusative singular form and are the objects of the verb, to seek. The Greek words, ζωὴν αἰώνιον, are also accusative singular in form, and are the object of the verb, αποδώσει, “will give” in verse 6.

The verses together can be translated most literally as God “...who will give to each man according to his works: to those who on the one hand according to a patient endurance of a good work are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life...”

The verse does not read “to those who on the one hand by patiently doing good works are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life.” The use of the word “by” is not called for in the Greek. Paul is not saying that we are rewarded eternal life by doing good works. That is missing the point of the Gospel message Paul is preaching. Paul is preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that if we repent and believe that God raised Him from the dead and confess Him as Lord, we will be saved. That is, we will have eternal life and we will have it at the moment we believe. This is the moment when we receive the Spirit of God, who becomes the life of our spirit in us. Our nature is changed, and we are then pleasing to God, and in a position as a child of God to do good works which God ordained beforehand to His glory that we should walk in them.

The meaning of the literal translation of verse 7 is God “...who will give to each man according to his works: to those who on the one hand according to a patient endurance of a good work are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life...,” relates to the “good work” He is doing in each of us once we believe as we read in **Philippians 1 (KJV):6** Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

As we are patient to wait on Him, enduring all things by His Spirit, He works a “good work” in us. We are His workmanship as Ephesians 2:10 states above. So Paul in Romans, chapter 2, verse 7, is stating the fact that it is all those who have truly repented who will manifest good works, and be rewarded accordingly with eternal life. Let us remember that it is God who is at work in us as we read in **Philippians 2 (KJV):12** Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Is God coercing my will? No, but He is working in me to will and to work for His good pleasure. My job is to present myself to Him as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

We are only ashamed when we realize we have done wrong. This realization of wrongdoing is what the law does for us, and in this way leads us to Christ. Once we have accepted Christ, we are free from sin and must not continue in sin any longer, but yield to God’s good work of sanctification in our lives as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):21** What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Again, referring to paragraph two where Irenaeus says that the prophets exhorted men and women to act justly and work righteousness, “because it is in our power so to do,” the prophets spoke for the most part directly to Israelites who were supposed to be children of God. That is, Israel was supposed to be God’s peculiar people who were the people of God by faith. It is the children of God who have the power to do what God requires. Those who were born again by faith were the children of God in Israel.

Paul explains that the people of God are not so because they have physical descent from Abraham. It is the children of the promise that are counted as his descendants as we see in **Romans 9 (KJV)**:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 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.

The children of the promise are those descendants of Abraham who possess the righteousness of faith. In other words, they have the same faith that Abraham possessed, and are thereby his sons as Paul reveals in **Romans 4 (KJV)**:13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

What Paul is saying is that there is no need for faith if keeping the law makes us heirs. This would make the promise void. Then there is also the fact those who lived before Moses did not have the law for the law was given by Moses. For this reason, Paul says, we are made heirs by faith in accordance with grace so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants. Those of the law must also have the faith of Abraham in order to be sons. And those without the law, but who had the same faith as Abraham, will also be counted as his sons. Without this faith, it is impossible to please God as we see in **Hebrews 11 (NASB)**:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

The prophets encouraged and spoke to those who had faith. It is those who had faith who had the power to do what the prophets said to do. And those who had no faith had no power to do what the prophets said to do. However, the prophet's words also had the power to convert the faithless man so that he could turn to the Lord. The prophets spoke the words of God to the people, and their words brought about the faith that is needed for repentance and doing the will of God as we see in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

It is the Spirit of God acting in the word of God spoken by those whom God sends that changes lives. The point is that it is only those who have faith who can do the will of God. So then we may ask, does man need free will in order to have faith, that is, can he get faith by his own choice? The Scripture seems to indicate otherwise as we read in **John 1 (NASB)**:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John in his gospel states clearly that we are not born into the kingdom by natural descent or by anything in our flesh or even our own will but of God. The Scriptures also speak of faith as a gift from God as we see in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Faith is not something we work up in ourselves, or strive for, but it is the gift of God as Paul says. It comes by hearing the word of God preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. Also, faith doesn't come as the result of good works so that no one who does not have faith may boast of his good works. For it is impossible to please God without faith as read in **Hebrews 11 (NASB)**:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Just as James says that faith without works is dead, we could also say that works without faith are dead works as in **James 2 (NASB)**:26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

So when we act justly and work righteousness by faith, it is the result of His working in us as Paul says again in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

The one who has faith can do all things as Paul says in **Philippians 4 (NASB)**:13 I can do all things

through Him who strengthens me.

But the man who does not have faith believes that he can do all things, and that he has free will. However, the man who does not have faith is in darkness, and his choices are always limited by his fleshly nature. His vision is limited to this natural world as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural man, or the man without the Spirit, is missing something. He does not have the wherewithal to understand the word of God. It is foolishness to him. The Spirit of God must move in man to enlighten his mind so that he can see and understand what the word of God is saying. This happens during repentance. As the Spirit of God moves upon man and enlightens his mind with the Gospel message, and then opens his heart to believe, man is then made to see his condition of sin. It is then that man surrenders his will to God, and receives the Spirit who reveals to him or her the things of the spiritual world as read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):10** But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Man does not know that he is a wretch bound by sin. It is only after he has faith that he or she can say with Paul that they are wretched as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Those without faith are totally in the flesh, serving the law of sin, and they make their choices accordingly.

Now, Irenaeus asserts in paragraph three that the Lord exhorts us to do good, implying our freedom to choose to do so or not, as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

However, Jesus also said that it is the one who follows Him who will have the Light of life as we read in **John 8 (KJV):12** Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Those who have no faith walk in darkness, and do not know where they are going as we read in **John 12 (KJV):35** Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

And again in **John 12 (KJV):36** While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

The idea here is that Jesus was the Light, and in order for us to let our light shine, we must become sons of the Light. We do this by believing in the Light. When speaking of Himself as the bread of life, Jesus told His followers that it is the Spirit that gives life as we read in **John 6 (NASB):63** "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

The way we get this life is through the new birth as we read in **John 6 (KJV):54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

By eating Jesus' flesh and blood, that is, by identifying with the sacrifice of His body on the cross, and resurrection from the dead, we are born again, and in this way receive eternal life. It is then that we can say we have the light of life. We must have this new life as a result of the new birth in order to have the light of this new life in ourselves. It is only after we have believed in the Son of God that we can do what Jesus said to do, that is, to let our light shine before men so that they can see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. And it is only after we are born again that we can call God our Father.

Again in paragraph three, Irenaeus adds that the Lord also spoke as in **Luke 21 (KJV):34** And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

First of all, to put this verse in context, we see that Jesus is speaking here to the ones who have repented and believed in Him, that is, His disciples as we read in **Luke 20 (KJV):45** Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, 46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; 47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

It was to these disciples that Jesus spoke of a future time when the temple would be torn down as we

read in **Luke 21 (KJV):5** And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

It was these disciples who asked him when this would happen as see in **Luke 21 (KJV):7** And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Jesus then began to teach His disciples what must happen before He returns in **Luke 21 (KJV):8** And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. 9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. 10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Jesus was preparing His disciples for His return as He says in **Luke 21 (KJV):25** And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

And so in verse 34 of Luke, chapter 21, Jesus warns His disciples to be on guard so that they will recognize the time of His coming and not be caught off guard. He continues by telling them to keep alert at all times in prayer as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):34** And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Jesus is indicating here that a disciple has a responsibility to stay on the path. The disciples were all, except for Judas, believers. As believers they had the light of life in themselves. Jesus was telling these believers to be careful, and not to let the cares of this life distract from what He had taught them before about being a disciple. As a believer in Christ, we have been given a purpose and a work which we will be held accountable for. As believers, our choices are different than when we were unsaved.

The one who has the Light of life, that is, who has been born again and is a son of the Light, will most certainly have the strength to escape all the things of this life as Paul says in **Romans 8 (NASB):37** But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nevertheless, let him who stands take heed lest he fall as Paul warns in **1 Corinthians 10 (NASB):12** Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

Now, verse 34 of Luke, chapter 21, also has a secondary application, and that is for those who have not believed in Jesus Christ, and so have no strength to escape that day when all that Jesus describes will come upon the earth and those living upon it. Jesus is warning them that there will be consequences for unbelief in **Luke 13 (NASB):5** I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

Again in paragraph three, Irenaeus then refers to Jesus' words in **Luke 12 (NASB):35** "Be dressed in readiness, and *keep* your lamps lit. 36 Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open *the door* to him when he comes and knocks.

This verse assumes that the master of these men is the Lord Jesus, for the warning is to be dressed in readiness with your lamps lit. The way we light our lamps is to believe in the light, that is, in Jesus. And those who have their lamps lit in this way will be free to obey His command. Those who do not believe in Him will not be able to obey His command.

Irenaeus then refers to verses in continuation of the previous parable as we read in **Luke 12 (KJV):45** But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the

menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

In verse 47 above, Irenaeus asserts that the context of the verse implies the ability of the slave to do or not to do his master's will. However, the context of the verse must also include who Jesus was speaking to. In this case, Jesus is speaking to His disciples and explaining to them that they now have a responsibility to their Lord and master to abide in His teaching and not just be hearers only. As Paul says in **Galatians 5 (KJV):1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

The idea here is that the born again disciple has true freedom in Christ, and is able, or has power, to do His will since this one is renewed in his spirit, and his spirit has a new nature. This one who is renewed or made alive in Christ now has a responsibility to do His will since he is able. Now this one must abide in Him. Jesus said as much to the Jews who had believed in Him as we read in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

The Jews thought they were free, that is, that they had free will, but Jesus explains to them that the one who commits sin is the slave of sin as we read in **John 8 (KJV):34** Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

It is the Son that makes us free indeed, or really free. But Jesus knew their hearts and He knew they wanted to kill Him as we continue to read in **John 8 (KJV):37** I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

Jesus acknowledged that these Jews were Abraham's descendants, but they were not doing the deeds that Abraham did as He continues in **John 8 (KJV):39** They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

The Jews insisted that they were children of God, but Jesus was adamant that they were children of another father as He continues in **John 8 (KJV):41** Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

These Jews did not believe Jesus. They were not children with the faith of Abraham, for Abraham heard God's words and believed. These Jews did not believe God's words, and Jesus knew therefore that they were not of God. It is evident that they were not born again. They did not have ears to hear or eyes to see. They were still bound by sin and the devil. Not being free from sin, and having to do the desires of their father the devil, these Jews no doubt did not have much freedom of will. These Jews only had one choice, and that was to repent and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, or perish.

Irenaeus continues in paragraph three to try to prove the free will of man as he then refers to Jesus' words in **Luke 6 (KJV):46** And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Irenaeus asserts that this verse demonstrates "the independent will of man." However, neither this verse nor the previous verses Irenaeus references even mention man's will specifically, and whether it is free or not. Jesus is primarily speaking to Jews, the people of Israel, who were His own people as John mentioned in **John 1 (KJV):11** He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

The Pharisees and scribes, the leaders of the Jews, obeyed outwardly. That is, they taught the law of Moses. But they did not practice what they preached as Jesus says in **Matthew 23 (KJV):1** Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

The Pharisees and the scribes were saying "Lord, Lord," but not doing what the Lord was commanding them. They were like the son who said he would go work in the vineyard but didn't go, as in the parable that Jesus taught in **Matthew 21 (KJV):28** But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. 31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

The Jews in their past had a history of falling away, then repentance, and obedience, and then disobedience again. Isaiah prophesied in his time of their need for repentance in **Isaiah 29 (KJV):13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

And again we read in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):8** Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Jesus also refers to Isaiah's words in **Matthew 15 (KJV):7** Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

In Jesus' time, the Jews as a nation were in a state of disobedience, and so He came preaching repentance foremost as we read in **Mark 1 (KJV):14** Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Repentance brings a change of heart, and is the doorway to the born again experience as we read in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Though these verses speak of a future time of blessing for Israel, this is the experience of all who are born again. It is only after this experience that the believer can do the will of God and obey His commands.

The last verse Irenaeus mentions in paragraph three in context is **Matthew 24 (KJV):45** Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This segment of Jesus' teaching begins in **Matthew 24 (KJV):36** But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

In Matthew, chapter 24, Jesus is teaching about His return, that is, His second coming. In this segment He warns us to stay alert as we read in **Matthew 24 (KJV):42** Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also

ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Here, Irenaeus is pointing out that the Lord will punish man for his disobedience, and justly reward him for his obedience. Irenaeus infers that man has free will, for otherwise the Lord could not hold him accountable for his disobedience. However, we must remember that this is a parable. We cannot make it walk on all fours, as it were. Jesus used parables to reach the Jews who were for the most part in unbelief. Parables illustrate a single truth in simple terms. Jesus is teaching us in this parable that we must be servants who are steadfast and alert, and waiting expectantly for His coming. Our reward will depend on how we serve Him. If we have truly repented, He is now our Master and a worthy Master He is. The one who has truly repented is now a child of God. As such, he or she will be treated as a son or a daughter. If he or she is disobedient, they will be disciplined accordingly. However, Jesus is also pointing out the severity of punishment on the one who has not believed in Him, and therefore not His child. The unbeliever will be cut “in pieces” and assigned “a place with the hypocrites,” a place where “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Irenaeus concludes paragraph three with the statement, “All such passages demonstrate the independent will of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him, by which He exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him, and seeks to turn us away from [the sin of] unbelief against Him, without, however, in any way coercing us.” While it is true that God “exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him,” and that He “seeks to turn us away from the sin of unbelief against Him,” whether He coerces us or not, and whether man’s will is independent or not, are not things which these verses address. Irenaeus tries to prove free will from these verses, and he combines them all together as if they all spoke about “the independent will of man.” However, in the context in which they were written, the verses Irenaeus references are primarily addressed to believers as a warning of God’s discipline, and to unbelievers as a warning of the severity of the punishment for unbelief.

Now Irenaeus states in paragraph four that if man is “unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his power to reject it, but it is not expedient. For it is in man’s power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief.” And Irenaeus says that Paul the apostle implied the liberty of man when he said “all things are lawful for me but all things are not expedient;” And Irenaeus says that Paul also exhorted us to do good, implying that we have a choice.

Irenaeus is referring to when Paul was speaking to the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. 12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Irenaeus seems to particularly notice the word “expedient” in these verses. The word in Greek is συμφέρει (pronounced sumpherei) and is used in 1 Corinthians 6:11 as a verb, in the 3rd person, singular, present, indicative, active tense. Vine’s says that this word when used transitively literally means “to bring together” and intransitively, it means “to be an advantage, profitable, expedient (not merely ‘convenient’). **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol. II, page 62.**

The intransitive meaning is the correct one in 1 Corinthians 6:11. It is important to note here who Paul is speaking to in this verse. Paul says to the Corinthians that some of them were fornicators and some were idolators, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers. But, Paul says, they were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. In other words, after they accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, in addition to being renewed in their spirits, they were also given a legal standing before the Lord as righteous, that is, as sons and daughters. As such, all things were lawful to them, but not all things were profitable to them. As children of God, sin would not profit them anything. Walking in obedience to the Lord brings blessing and reward. Walking in sin brings discipline, pain, and punishment, and ultimately death.

So yes, Paul does imply the liberty of the child of God with the warning of punishment for sin. But Paul is not talking primarily to the unbeliever in these verses. Irenaeus does not seem to recognize the change in nature of the believer in his spirit when one is born again. This change in nature is what makes the believer a child of God. As such, the Lord deals differently with us. As sinners, we must first enter by the Door before we

can do anything that pleases God as Jesus said in **John 10 (KJV):9** I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Irenaeus asserts again in paragraph four that, “If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others?”

In the year 1524, a man named Erasmus wrote a booklet entitled, “De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio,” otherwise known as “The Diatribe,” in which he defends man’s free will. In the year 1525 a man named Martin Luther wrote his book, “De servo arbitrio,” otherwise known as “The Bondage of the Will.” In this book, Martin Luther quotes Erasmus as saying in the Diatribe, “Is it not ridiculous to say to a blind man: ‘if thou art willing to see, thou wilt find a treasure’? or to a deaf man: ‘if thou art willing to hear, I will tell thee a good story’? That would be mocking their misery.” **The Bondage of the Will, page 152.**

In this quote from Erasmus, we hear the most succinct summary of the argument for free will, which is similar to what Irenaeus is arguing here in paragraph four. That is, why would the Lord give us a command and hold us accountable if we were not able to carry it out in our own power.

Luther responds to Erasmus with the following, “How often do parents thus play with their children, bidding them to come to them, or do this or that, only in order that it may appear how impotent they are, and that they may be compelled to call for the help of the parent’s hand?” **The Bondage of the Will, page 152.** Luther continues by stating that by the law “man is admonished of his own impotence.” **The Bondage of the Will, page 156.** Again, Luther states emphatically, “By the law is the knowledge of sin,’ says Paul. He does not say: abolition, or avoidance, of sin. The entire design and power of the law is just to give knowledge, and that of nothing but of sin; not to display or confer any power. This knowledge is not power, nor does it bring power; but it teaches and displays that there is here no power, and great weakness. What can ‘knowledge of sin’ be, but knowledge of our weakness and badness? He does not say: ‘by the law comes knowledge of power or goodness’! All that the law does, on Paul’s testimony, is to make sin known.” **The Bondage of the Will, page 158.**

Luther is speaking of Romans 3:20. Here is the verse in context in **Romans 3 (NASB):19** Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Luther then replies to Erasmus when he states, “It is from this passage that I derive my answer to you: that by the words of the law man is admonished and taught, not what he can do, but what he ought to do; that is, that he may know his sin, not that he may believe that he has any strength. Wherefore, my good Erasmus, as often as you confront me with the words of the law, so often shall I confront you with the words of Paul: ‘By the law is knowledge of sin’ –not power of will!” **The Bondage of the Will, page 158-9.**

The Lord does give us counsel to do His will. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, Jesus told him about the first step into relationship with God, that is, to be born again. When Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, did not know about this, Jesus asked him how it was that he was a leader of Israel and didn’t know about being born again. But this was the state of Israel for the most part when Jesus came to His own. Isaiah says as much when he prophesies of Israel’s messiah in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):2** For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Israel was like parched ground when Jesus came to them. The Jews did not understand what He was saying. They did not esteem Him or His words as of any value. As a result, Jesus told the Jews that they had not even taken the first step into relationship with God. It is relationship that God wants with us. Jesus knew this and called the Jews back to God. This is why He told them to keep the commandments for He knew that the commandments would give them knowledge of their sins, and would lead them back to relationship with God, and so be led to Himself and be born again. The law would show the Israelites, that is, the Jews, their sin and their impotence in keeping the law, and their need for repentance and a Savior which would lead them to Jesus. This was and is the purpose of the law. This is what Luther was saying. This is what the Scriptures teach.

Irenaeus asserts lastly in paragraph four that, since “man is possessed of free will from the beginning,

and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God."

Again, it is true that, in the beginning, Adam and Eve had free will in the Garden of Eden before they sinned. It is also true that God has free will, and it is true that man was created in the image and likeness of God. But it does not follow that, because man is made in God's image, he has the same freedom of will that God has. Indeed, such a comparison is blasphemous. To compare the creature with the creator is very bold of Irenaeus. Certainly we would not say that God is possessed of almighty power, and so man is possessed of almighty power since he is created in God's image and likeness. We could go on and on about all the attributes of God, and there would still be none to compare with the Lord as Isaiah says in **Isaiah 46 (KJV)**:5 To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

And again the Lord alone can say as in **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV)**:40 For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever.

And again in **Isaiah 55 (KJV)**:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

From the beginning, man was to submit himself to God's will, and not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, man was to surrender his will to God's will. After Adam and Eve rebelled, and in the very day they sinned, they both died spiritually and were doomed to die physically as well as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

After Adam and Eve sinned, all men must repent and believe God before they can "keep fast the good," or do any good. Adam and Eve repented and were born again as it says in **Luke 3 (KJV)**:38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

But after Adam, both men and women are born spiritually dead in sin, and our bodies are mortal, that is, death doomed. Whatever freewill we have we must surrender to God and repent and be born again, or forever be banned from the Kingdom of Heaven. This is God's command to all men and women everywhere. We must make up our minds to repent and return to the Father as the prodigal son did whom Jesus spoke of in **Luke 15 (KJV)**:17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

We were dead in sin, but made alive again when we surrender to the Father's will. It is the decision to surrender all we are to the Father and obey Him that saves us. And His will is that we believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, that we might be saved as in **John 3 (KJV)**:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

And again in **John 5 (KJV)**:34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

And in **John 10 (KJV)**:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

This is what Jesus was teaching us in the parable of the prodigal son in **Luke 15 (NASB)**:32 'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.'"

Now Irenaeus asserts in paragraph five that God has "preserved the will of man free and under his own control" in works and also in faith. Irenaeus asserts also that the Lord Jesus shows us that man is free in regards to faith when He spoke in the gospel of Matthew as in **Matthew 9 (KJV)**:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

Irenaeus is saying that man can believe or not believe under his own power because Jesus was showing us that “there is a faith specially belonging to man, since he has an opinion specially his own.” Irenaeus also quotes the gospel of Mark to support this as in **Mark 9 (KJV)**:23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Irenaeus also asserts that Jesus also demonstrated that “man is in his own power with respect to faith” when He spoke as in **Matthew 8 (KJV)**:13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

However, Irenaeus unknowingly has here asserted what is the blindness of man. That is, man thinks he is under his own control, and that his will is free. Before a man comes to Christ, he is blind to his impotence as Paul says in **2 Corinthians 4 (NASB)**:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Regarding faith, the Scriptures say that the faith that saves us is the gift of God, and not of ourselves as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

In the life of Lydia, we see that the Lord opened her heart to believe in **Acts 16 (KJV)**:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Yes, man has an opinion of his own. But he cannot of himself conjure up faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God as is preached or taught, or by just reading it ourselves as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Peter tells us to long for the pure milk of the word so that we grow with respect to our salvation as in **1 Peter 2 (KJV)**:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Our faith grows as we walk in the light of what He shows us in His word. He does not give us everything at once, but nurtures us as babies into adulthood. And so it is not as though we become supermen by faith, doing anything we please. All things are possible to the one who has the faith which comes from the Spirit of God to do the will of God. As we ask according to His will, our faith will be evident in the works He has ordained for us to walk in. Rather than having free will to do just as we please, we are to grow in submission to His will, doing as His word instructs.

Irenaeus also asserts in paragraph five that man has free will, and can choose to have eternal life or reject it for Jesus said, referring to John 3:36, that “he that believeth in Him has eternal life while he who believeth not the Son hath not eternal life, but the wrath of God shall remain upon him.” With this assertion, Irenaeus is building on his previous assertion that man “has an opinion specially his own.” “Opinion” in Irenaeus’ thinking is the basis of belief. Therefore, because man is able to have his own opinions, “man is in his own power with respect to faith.”

Certainly man can have his own opinions, and have faith in whatever he believes. However, the faith that God requires is something beyond man’s natural abilities as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB)**:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Paul explains that the things concerning God and His salvation are revealed to man by His Spirit as he says in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB)**:10 For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

This is why the word of God is so important, and weighs in so heavily against tradition. The word of God is God’s thoughts written down as inspired by the Spirit of God. And this word of God is even then not understood by the natural man. The man or woman who would understand the things of God and His salvation message must receive the Spirit of God in order to understand anything about God. This is what Jesus meant when He spoke as in **John 6 (KJV)**:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw

him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Again Jesus spoke as in **John 6 (KJV)**:64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Luther said, “We know that man was made lord over things below him, and that he has a right and a free will with respect to them, that they should obey him and do as he wills and thinks. But our question is this: whether he has ‘free will’ God-ward, that God should obey man and do what man wills, or whether God has not rather a free will with respect to man, that man should will and do what God wills, and be able to do nothing but what He wills and does.” **The Bondage of the Will, Martin Luther, page 310.**

When we realize that we have no power to save ourselves, there is only one thing we can do. We must surrender to Him. And this is the will of God, that we submit our will to His. Whether we have free will or not is not the question. The question is, “Will we submit our will to His?” Will we surrender our will to His will? That is, will we surrender the inmost part of us to Him? Is this not what Jesus was saying when He spoke as in **Matthew 16 (KJV)**:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

This surrender of all that we are to Him feels like we are losing our life. But in reality we are finding it. Jesus came to give us fullness of life, not to take it away, as He says in **John 10 (KJV)**:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

This act of surrender is how we get new life in Jesus. And as we have received Him, in this way we are to also walk in Him as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV)**:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

This surrendering manifests itself in the presenting of our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice as Paul says in **Romans 12 (KJV)**:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This is how we prove what the will of God is. If we want to know the will of God, we find that our will is not really that important. It is in the yielding of ourselves to Him that we will be able to discern what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Irenaeus also asserts in paragraph five that “the Lord, both showing His own goodness, and indicating that man is in his own free will and his own power, said to Jerusalem, “How often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen [gathereth] her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Wherefore your house shall be left unto you desolate.””

Irenaeus here asserts that the whole point of Jesus’ words in Matthew 23:37 is to show that “man is in his own free will and his own power.” But the verse does not specifically mention free will. Irenaeus infers free will from Jesus’ words. Jesus was however lamenting over the Jews in Jerusalem, and their current state of disobedience to God. Jesus does not speak of every man, woman, and child in Jerusalem, but of the people living in Jerusalem in general. There is always a remnant that will be saved. This passage does infer some freedom of will in a general sense, but to infer that “man is in his own free will and his own power” goes beyond its scope. The Lord was speaking of His love for Israel, and His desire that they be saved. He was looking at the situation from a human perspective as a man while He was here on earth. Yet He knew that there was, hidden in the mind of God, the purpose of the Father which does not allow for all to be saved. Some will be lost. Sin will be judged, and here Jesus speaks prophetically of the judgment that was to come on Israel.

Irenaeus then asserts in paragraph six that those who oppose his conclusions on free will, that is to say the Gnostics, “do themselves present the Lord as destitute of power, as if, forsooth, He were unable to accomplish what He willed; or, on the other hand, as being ignorant that they were by nature ‘material,’ as these men express it, and such as cannot receive His immortality.” Irenaeus states that the Gnostics assert that God should not have created angels capable of transgressions, “nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will.” The

Gnostics also assert that men are not “drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (inflexibiles et sine judicio),” as if they were “incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created.”

The Gnostics here are reproving God for making man able to transgress which is the height of hubris. Do they not know that the God who created all things holds our souls in life as is stated in **Psalm 66 (KJV):9** Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

Don’t they know that He sustains all things, upholding them by the word of His power, as we read in **Hebrews 1 (NASB):1** God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

Irenaeus, to his credit, is rebuking them for such arrogance and audacity. Irenaeus also says that the Gnostics present God as powerless to fulfill His will and design, as if the universe were out of control with man who transgressed. Yet man’s transgression was known before the foundation of the world, and a plan of salvation was determined by God even before man sinned as see in **Acts 2 (KJV):22** Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

And in **Revelation 13 (KJV):8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Still however, Irenaeus would agree with the Gnostics for the purposes of his own argument that man is a rational being “endowed with the power of examining and judging.” Irenaeus would also agree that man is not irrational nor of an animal nature “which can do nothing” of his own will. Further, Irenaeus would also agree that man is not “drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good,” nor is he “incapable of being anything else except just what” he was created for.

Now in paragraph six, based on the Gnostic suppositions that God should not have created man as rational and able to disobey Him, Irenaeus then asserts that “neither would what is good be grateful to them, nor communion with God be precious, nor would the good be very much to be sought after, which would present itself without their own proper endeavour, care, or study, but would be implanted of its own accord and without their concern.”

Here we find the gist of Irenaeus’ argument for free will. If man is not able to exert some “endeavor, care, or study,” he would not know how good the good really is. That is, man would not value the good very much. Irenaeus cannot conceive of God being just if man does not have a choice to obey or not to obey. Man must have free will so that he can choose the good or reject it. God can then justly reward him for his good choices, and justly punish him for his bad ones. This is the gist of what Irenaeus is arguing.

Also in paragraph six, Irenaeus asserts that, if good were “implanted of its own accord and without their concern,” then for men “their being good would be of no consequence, because they were so by nature rather than by will, and are possessors of good spontaneously, not by choice;” Irenaeus asserts also that man has to have free will, otherwise, “how can those who are ignorant of good enjoy it? Or what credit is it to those who have not aimed at it? And what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest?” Irenaeus is saying in so many words that the creature is more valuable and of a higher rank because God has given him or her the power to choose to do good or not. For all of these reasons, man must have free will. According to Irenaeus, God has so designed the world of mankind so that His justice is preserved and so that those who do good are rewarded, and those who do wrong are condemned.

Irenaeus then also argues in paragraph seven that our good would be irrational if we didn’t have it by trial. That is, we are rational because we have a choice. Then lastly in paragraph seven Irenaeus asserts that, “Since, then, this power has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it.” In other words, man has to have free will so that through this rational process of man’s choosing the good he is able to continue in God’s perfect love and thus win the crown of immortality.

It is clear by this statement that, for Irenaeus, the goal of man's free will is the crown of immortality. According to Irenaeus, the way to win the crown of immortality is to strive after it by loving God, and by exercising our free will to choose the good and so continue in God's perfect love. In Irenaeus' thinking, free will makes the observance of the law a logical necessity since the law represents good choices that God has set before man. Breaking the law represents the bad choices of free will.

And so what is the truth about free will? Is it really true that there is no other way for God to be just and grant man eternal life unless man has free will, and is able to make his own good choices and so win the crown of immoratality as it were, lawfully, and under his own power? Is our salvation dependent on the exercise of our free will in order to continue in God's perfect love by choosing the good, and so earning, or making ourselves worthy, of our salvation by our goodness? Is this what the Scriptures teach, or is there another way?

Irenaeus' tact has been to show by inference what the Scriptures and common sense teach us about man's free will. Irenaeus does not need the Scriptures to support his assertions on free will. Simply observing a young child running away from its mother is enough to substantiate Irenaeus' assertions on free will. Irenaeus simply does not understand the effects of sin on man's being. Sin placed man in bondage. His will is not free, and man is being coerced by the sin in his flesh. Yet the word of God preached in the power of the Spirit gives light to man's mind, and empowers him to accept the truth of the Gospel, and so be saved. Paul tells us that if we confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved as we read again in context in **Romans 10 (KJV):5** For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. **6** But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) **7** Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) **8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Can it be this simple? How can one act of faith save us for all eternity? Yet this is what Paul states emphatically above in Romans 10:9. If we look at the process of salvation in the Scriptures, we will understand the place of our will in believing.

Our salvation begins with God as we see in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):13** But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

The word sanctification means to set apart for God's use, or to separate to God. It is the Holy Spirit who begins this work of separation to God in our lives. It is the Holy Spirit working in the word of God that convicts us of our sin. In our sinful state, as a son of Adam, we were enemies of God as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

It is the Holy Spirit who begins the work of repentance in our lives as He convicts us of our sin and rebellion to God. As we hear the word of the truth of the Gospel, we begin to change our minds about our sin and about God and His Son, Jesus Christ as we understand from **Psalm 119 (KJV):130** The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

And in **Psalm 36 (KJV):9** For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Our minds were blinded by the god of this world and we were perishing, but the entrance of the Gospel words brought light into our hearts as we read in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):3** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: **4** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. **5** For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Our minds were enlightened by the Gospel as we read in **Job 33 (KJV):30** To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

And in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):32** But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were

illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

We were enlightened with the knowledge of the truth of the Gospel. But before Christ, that is, when we were unbelievers, both our mind and our conscience were defiled as we read again in **Titus 1 (NASB):15** To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

As unbelievers, our hearts were deceitful as we read in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

We did not care about walking in the truth as we read in **Genesis 6 (KJV):5** And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

But when the light of the gospel shines in our hearts, we are made to see ourselves as we really are for the first time in our lives and our emotions are touched. We feel sorrow for our sin as we read in **2 Corinthians 7 (NASB):10** For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

It is at this point that the Lord opens our hearts to believe as he did with Lydia in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Our minds are changed and we make a definite decision to turn to God just as the prodigal son did in **Luke 15 (KJV):18** I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

After Lydia believed, she and her household were baptized as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):15** And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

There is no waiting period with God.

And so we are saved when we believe with our heart as we read again in **Romans 10 (NASB):8** But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

So it is with the heart that a person believes resulting in righteousness. It is the heart that directs the will as it did those who heard Peter's message in **Acts 2 (KJV):37** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

And Jesus says that we can know the truth if we are willing in **John 7 (NASB):17** "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

This willingness to know and do His will speaks of a surrender of the heart to Him. It speaks of an openness to God to hear His voice and surrender to Him. It is relationship that God wants with us. This is shown by Samuel's response to Saul when Saul kept some of the things devoted to destruction by the command of the Lord in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV):22** And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

God wants us to hear His voice and obey His will. When we hear His voice and surrender our hearts to Him, He then changes us on the inside so that we are born again in our spirit. This is the beginning of our relationship with God. This is entering by the doorway of Jesus Christ. Without this experience we are still in our sins. It is only after this experience that we are truly free. After this experience we can say with Paul that we have been freed from sin as in **Romans 6 (KJV):22** But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

That is, we no longer have to live in sin as if we were slaves to sin.

Because of the new life in our spirit as a result of the new birth, we now have the victory over sin because the Holy Spirit is the life of our spirit. It is not that we cannot sin, but that we now have a choice not to

sin. In our spirit we have become partakers of the divine nature because of the life of the Spirit in our spirits. But in our flesh we still have sin. Thus we now have two natures, one being the sinless nature of God, and the other being the old Adamic sin nature of our flesh. This is why we as Christians are commanded to put off the old man and put on the new as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):22** That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

It is the truth that makes us free as Jesus said in **John 8 (NASB):31** So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

And it is the Son who makes us free as we read in **John 8 (NASB):34** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

The Son can say this because the Son is the truth as we read in **John 14 (NASB):6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

We will never be free in any true sense of the word until we know Him.

## Chapter 31: Future Events

### Book 5: Chapter XXV.—The fraud, pride, and tyrannical kingdom of Antichrist, as described by Daniel and Paul.

1. And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God; and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king. For he (Antichrist) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e., one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: “Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.” The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped—that is, above every idol—for these are indeed so called by men, but are not [really] gods; and that he will endeavor in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.

2. Moreover, he (the apostle) has also pointed out this which I have shown in many ways, that the temple in Jerusalem was made by the direction of the true God. For the apostle himself, speaking in his own person, distinctly called it the temple of God. Now I have shown in the third book, that no one is termed God by the apostles when speaking for themselves, except Him who truly is God, the Father of our Lord, by whose directions the temple which is at Jerusalem was constructed for those purposes which I have already mentioned; in which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: “But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: for there shall then be great hardship, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.”

4664 Matt. xxiv. 15, 21.

3. Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face. He says: “And, behold, eyes were in this horn as the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and his look was more stout than his fellows. I was looking, and this horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came and gave judgment to the saints of the most high God, and the time came, and the saints obtained the kingdom.” 4665 Dan. vii. 8, etc. Then, further on, in the interpretation of the vision, there was said to him: “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall excel all other kingdoms, and devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and cut it in pieces. And its ten horns are ten kings which shall arise; and after them shall arise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all that were before him, and shall overthrow three kings; and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time,” 4666 Dan. vii. 23, etc. that is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth. Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second [Epistle] to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus

says: "And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the presence of His coming; whose coming [i.e., the wicked one's] is after the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and portents of lies, and with all deceivableness of wickedness for those who perish; because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And therefore God will send them the working of error, that they may believe a lie; that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but gave consent to iniquity," 4667 2 Thess. ii. 8.

4. The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him: "I have come in my Father's name, and ye have not received Me: when another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," 4668 John v. 43. calling Antichrist "the other," because he is alienated from the Lord. This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one "who feared not God, neither regarded man," 4669 Luke xviii. 2, etc. to whom the widow fled in her forgetfulness of God,—that is, the earthly Jerusalem,—to be avenged of her adversary. Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom: he shall remove his kingdom into that [city], and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ. To this purpose Daniel says again: "And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin has been given for a sacrifice, 4670 This may refer to Antiochus Epiphanes, Antichrist's prototype, who offered swine upon the altar in the temple at Jerusalem. The LXX. version has, ἐδόθη ἐπὶ τὴν θυσίαν ἀμαρτία, i.e., sin has been given against (or, *upon*) the sacrifice. and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active (*fecit*), and gone on prosperously." 4671 Dan. viii. 12. And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision, states with regard to this person: "And towards the end of their kingdom a king of a most fierce countenance shall arise, one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonders; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence (*faciet*), and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand, and he shall be lifted up in his heart: he shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs." 4672 Dan. viii. 23, etc. And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: "And in the midst of the week," he says, "the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete." 4673 Dan. ix. 27. Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.

5. From all these passages are revealed to us, not merely the particulars of the apostasy, and [the doings] of him who concentrates in himself every satanic error, but also, that there is one and the same God the Father, who was declared by the prophets, but made manifest by Christ. For if what Daniel prophesied concerning the end has been confirmed by the Lord, when He said, "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet" 4674 Matt. xxiv. 15. (and the angel Gabriel gave the interpretation of the visions to Daniel, and he is the archangel of the Creator (*Demiurgi*), who also proclaimed to Mary the visible coming and the incarnation of Christ), then one and the same God is most manifestly pointed out, who sent the prophets, and made promise 4675 The mss. have "præmisit," but Harvey suggests "promisit," which we have adopted. of the Son, and called us into His knowledge.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus speaks of the Antichrist as he testifies, "And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that..."

Irenaeus then states the following:

- "he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God;"
- "and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king."
- "For he (Antichrist) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e., one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one,"

- “as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous;”
- “as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy;”
- “and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols.”
- “This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: “Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God,” referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

Irenaeus then testifies that, “The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped—that is, above every idol—for these are indeed so called by men, but are not [really] gods; and that he will endeavor in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “Moreover, he (the apostle) has also pointed out this which I have shown in many ways, that the temple in Jerusalem was made by the direction of the true God.” Irenaeus himself then points out, “For the apostle himself, speaking in his own person, distinctly called it the temple of God.” Irenaeus continues and affirms, “Now I have shown in the third book, that no one is termed God by the apostles when speaking for themselves, except Him who truly is God, the Father of our Lord, by whose directions the temple which is at Jerusalem was constructed for those purposes which I have already mentioned.” Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “in which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: “But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: for there shall then be great hardship, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be,” referring to Matthew 24:15-21.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues his narrative about the Antichrist. He affirms that “Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “He says: “And, behold, eyes were in this horn as the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and his look was more stout than his fellows. I was looking, and this horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came and gave judgment to the saints of the most high God, and the time came, and the saints obtained the kingdom,” referring to Daniel 7:7-8. Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “Then, further on, in the interpretation of the vision, there was said to him: “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall excel all other kingdoms, and devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and cut it in pieces. And its ten horns are ten kings which shall arise; and after them shall arise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all that were before him, and shall overthrow three kings; and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time,” referring in context to Daniel 7:23, “that is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth.” Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second [Epistle] to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus says: “And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the presence of His coming; whose coming [i.e., the wicked one’s] is after the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and portents of lies, and with all deceivableness of wickedness for those who perish; because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And therefore God will send them the working of error, that they may believe a lie; that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but gave consent to iniquity,” referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies that, “The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him: “I have come in my Father’s name, and ye have not received Me: when another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive, calling Antichrist “the other,” because he is alienated from the Lord,” referring to John 5:43. Irenaeus then interprets that, “This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one “who feared not God, neither regarded man,” referring to Luke 18:1-8, “to whom the widow fled in her forgetfulness of God,—that is, the earthly Jerusalem,—to be avenged of her adversary.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms , “Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom: he shall remove his kingdom into that [city], and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms further, “To this purpose Daniel says again: “And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin has been given for a sacrifice, and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active (fecit), and gone on prosperously,” referring to Daniel 8:12. Again Irenaeus continues and affirms, “And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision, states with regard to this person: “And towards the end of their kingdom a king of a most fierce countenance shall arise, one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonders; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence (faciet), and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand, and he shall be lifted up in his heart: he shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs,” referring to Daniel 8:23. Irenaeus then explains, “And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: “And in the midst of the week,” he says, “the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete,” referring to Daniel 9:27. Irenaeus then defines the “week” as he concludes, “Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.”

And in paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “From all these passages are revealed to us, not merely the particulars of the apostasy, and [the doings] of him who concentrates in himself every satanic error, but also, that there is one and the same God the Father, who was declared by the prophets, but made manifest by Christ.” Irenaeus then concludes, “For if what Daniel prophesied concerning the end has been confirmed by the Lord, when He said, “When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet,” referring to Matthew 24:15, “(and the angel Gabriel gave the interpretation of the visions to Daniel, and he is the archangel of the Creator (*Demiurgi*), who also proclaimed to Mary the visible coming and the incarnation of Christ), then one and the same God is most manifestly pointed out, who sent the prophets, and made promise of the Son, and called us into His knowledge.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus continues his argument, and the theme of his writing in general, that “there is one and the same God the Father,” as he also restates in paragraph five that, “From all these passages are revealed to us, not merely the particulars of the apostasy, and [the doings] of him who concentrates in himself every satanic error, but also, that there is one and the same God the Father, who was declared by the prophets, but made manifest by Christ.” Here in this chapter of his writing he will show the unity of prophecy, and explain that God has one purpose to fulfill in Christ.

First of all, in paragraph one, Irenaeus speaks of the Antichrist, and testifies that the Antichrist’s time is yet future as he states, “And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God;”

Irenaeus then states the following concerning the Antichrist:

- “he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God;”
- “and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king.”
- “For he (Antichrist) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e., one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one;”
- “as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous;”
- “as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy,”

- “and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols.”
- “This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: “Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God,” referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

Irenaeus then affirms that, “The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped—that is, above every idol—for these are indeed so called by men, but are not [really] gods; and that he will endeavor in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.” Irenaeus refers in context to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV)**:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

Paul is speaking here of the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and that it will take place after certain events he lists. He informs us of these events so that we will not be quickly shaken or disturbed should someone say that He has already come.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “Moreover, he (the apostle) has also pointed out this which I have shown in many ways, that the temple in Jerusalem was made by the direction of the true God.” Irenaeus himself then points out, “For the apostle himself, speaking in his own person, distinctly called it the temple of God.” Irenaeus continues and affirms, “Now I have shown in the third book, that no one is termed God by the apostles when speaking for themselves, except Him who truly is God, the Father of our Lord, by whose directions the temple which is at Jerusalem was constructed for those purposes which I have already mentioned.” Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “in which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: “But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: for there shall then be great hardship, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be,” referring in context to **Matthew 24 (KJV)**:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues his narrative about the Antichrist. He affirms that “Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “He says: “And, behold, eyes were in this horn as the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and his look was more stout than his fellows. I was looking, and this horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came and gave judgment to the saints of the most high God, and the time came, and the saints obtained the kingdom,” referring to **Daniel 7 (KJV)**:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the

horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “Then, further on, in the interpretation of the vision, there was said to him: “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall excel all other kingdoms, and devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and cut it in pieces. And its ten horns are ten kings which shall arise; and after them shall arise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all that were before him, and shall overthrow three kings; and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time,” referring in context to **Daniel 7 (KJV)**:21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Irenaeus continues as he explains, “that is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth.” With this statement, Irenaeus gives us to understand that he believed the weeks in Daniel referred to years. Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second [Epistle] to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus says: “And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the presence of His coming; whose coming [i.e., the wicked one’s] is after the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and portents of lies, and with all deceivableness of wickedness for those who perish; because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And therefore God will send them the working of error, that they may believe a lie; that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but gave consent to iniquity,” referring to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV)**:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies that, “The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him: “I have come in my Father’s name, and ye have not received Me: when another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive, calling Antichrist “the other,” because he is alienated from the Lord,” referring to **John 5 (NASB)**:43 I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

Irenaeus then interprets that, “This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one “who feared not God, neither regarded man,” referring in context to **Luke 18 (KJV)**:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Irenaeus, in his interpretation, tries to make this parable fit the nation of Israel as he continues and asserts, “to whom the widow fled in her forgetfulness of God,—that is, the earthly Jerusalem,—to be avenged of her adversary.” We note that there is nothing in this parable that indicates that the widow represents

Jerusalem, or that the unrighteous judge represents the antichrist. The primary lesson in the parable is that God will bring about justice for His elect though it seems to take a long time to them. We must have faith that He is coming for us. However, in the parable Jesus does refer to this individual as one who does not fear God nor regard man. This may be said of Antichrist as well, and Irenaeus is correct in his correlation in this respect.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms , “Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom: he shall remove his kingdom into that [city], and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ.” Irenaeus continues as he affirms further, “To this purpose Daniel says again: “And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin has been given for a sacrifice, and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active (fecit), and gone on prosperously,” referring in context to **Daniel 8 (KJV):9** And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. 11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down. 12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

Now notice note **4670** in paragraph four which asserts, “This may refer to Antiochus Epiphanes, Antichrist’s prototype, who offered swine upon the altar in the temple at Jerusalem. The LXX. version has, ἐδόθη ἐπὶ τὴν θυσίαν ἀμαρτίᾳ, i.e., sin has been given against (or, *upon*) the sacrifice.” However, we shall soon see why the assertion in this note could not be the case.

Now Irenaeus does not explain the context of Daniel, chapter eight. In this chapter, Daniel received a vision in the third year of Belshazzar the king as we read in **Daniel 8 (KJV):1** In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. 2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. 3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

The vision continues as described by Daniel in **Daniel 8 (KJV):5** And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. 7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. 8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

Now, the angel Gabriel interprets the vision for Daniel as we read in **Daniel 8 (KJV):15** And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. 18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. 19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

And the angel continues as he says in **Daniel 8 (KJV):20** The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

The Reverend Clarence Larkin writes in his book, **The Book of Daniel**, that Daniel received the “Vision of the “RAM” and the “HE-GOAT” during the “Third Year” of the reign of Belshazzar, B.C. 538, or two years

after the previous Vision of the Four Wild Beasts.” **The Book of Daniel, page 155, by Rev. Clarence Larkin, 1929.**

Larkin also says that the key to understanding this vision is in verse 17 where the angel Gabriel says that “the vision pertains to the time of the end.” Ibid, page 159.

The angel Gabriel tells us that the “large horn that is between the eyes” of the shaggy goat represents the first king of the kingdom of Greece. Larkin says that, “this King, as all historians know, was Alexander the Great (B.C. 356-323, the son of Philip of Macedon, who became King of Greece when but twenty years of age, B.C. 336. Ibid, page 162.

Alexander the Great defeated Persian armies in B.C. 334 and B.C. 333, and in B.C. 331 defeated the Persian King, Darius at the Battle of Arbela. “From B.C. 330 to 327, Alexander was engaged in subjugating the outlying provinces of the Persian Empire.” Ibid, 163.

He later “returned to Babylon, where at the climax of his glory, he died of marsh fever and intemperance in June, B.C. 323, in his thirty-third year.” Ibid 163.

The four horns that sprang up after Alexander’s death were Gassander who “took Macedonia and the western part,” Lysimachus who “took Thrace and the Northern part,” Seleucus who “took Syria and the Eastern part,” and Ptolemy who “took Egypt and the Southern part.” Ibid, page 163.

“The “Four Horns” may therefore be named “Macedonia,” “Thrake,” “Syria,” and “Egypt.” Ibid, page 163. Larkin also says that these four kingdoms “were in time absorbed” by the Roman empire. Ibid, page 163.

Again Irenaeus continues and affirms, “And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision, states with regard to this person: “And towards the end of their kingdom a king of a most fierce countenance shall arise, one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonders; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence (faciet), and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand, and he shall be lifted up in his heart: he shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs,” referring to Daniel 8:23. Irenaeus then explains, “And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: “And in the midst of the week,” he says, “the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete,” referring to Daniel 9:27. Irenaeus then defines the “week” as he concludes, “Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.”

This is the backdrop to Daniel’s vision. Now Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision, states with regard to this person: “And towards the end of their kingdom a king of a most fierce countenance shall arise, one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonders; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence (faciet), and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand, and he shall be lifted up in his heart: he shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs,” referring in context to **Daniel 8 (Septuagint):23** And at the latter time of their kingdom, when their sins are coming to the full, there shall arise a king bold in countenance, and understanding riddles. 24 And his power shall be great, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and prosper, and practise, and shall destroy mighty men, and the holy people. 25 And the yoke of his chain shall prosper: there is craft in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by craft shall destroy many, and he shall stand up for the destruction of many, and shall crush them as eggs in his hand. 26 And the vision of the evening and morning that was mentioned is true: and do thou seal the vision; for it is for many days.

Another version reads as in **Daniel 8 (KJV):23** And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. 26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

Notice in both versions that the vision “is for many days.” That this was many days in the future is proven by history, for we know that Alexander the Great lived from 356 to 323 B.C., and Daniel had his vision in 538 B.C. This would have been almost two hundred years after Daniel received this vision.

Now Irenaeus then explains, “And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: “And in the midst of the week,” he says, “the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete,” referring to **Daniel 9 (NASB):27** And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Irenaeus then defines the “week” as he affirms, “Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.”

Now we mentioned previously that note **4670** in paragraph four asserts that this “may refer to Antiochus Epiphanes, Antichrist’s prototype, who offered swine upon the altar in the temple at Jerusalem.” History tells us that Antiochus Epiphanes offered swine upon the altar in the temple at Jerusalem in approximately 168 BC. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC) was the 8th ruler of the Seleucid empire. He was violently bitter against the Jews, and he made a furious and determined effort to exterminate them and their religion. He devastated Jerusalem (168 BC), defiled the Temple, offered a sow on its altar, erected an altar to Jupiter, prohibited Temple worship, forbade circumcision on pain of death, sold thousands of Jewish families into slavery, destroyed all copies of Scripture that could be found, and slaughtered everyone discovered in possession of such copies, and resorted to every conceivable torture to force Jews to renounce their religion. This led to the Maccabaean revolt, one of the most heroic feats in history. Daniel does possibly refer to Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel 11:21-31. Reverend Clarence Larkin in his book, **The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World**, says that, “The “King of the North” was the King of Syria, and as his character and conduct is described (Dan. 11:36-38) as similar to that of the “Little Horn” that came out of one of the “Four Horns,” it is clear that the Antichrist is to come from Syria. That the “King of the North” spoken of in Dan. 11:21-31 was Antiochus Epiphanes there can be no question, but that he was not the “Little Horn,” or the Antichrist, who is to come out of Syria in the “latter Days” is clear from the remainder of the chapter from the 35th verse, which describes the conduct of the future Antichrist.” **The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World, pg. 118, by Rev. Clarence Larkin.** Larkin also says that, “The “Abomination of Desolation” that Daniel refers to (Dan. 9:27) is to occur in the “last half” of “Daniel’s Seventieth week” and, as Jesus spoke of it as still unfulfilled in his day in Matthew 24:15, it is clear that Antiochus Epiphanes was not the fulfillment of the ”Little Horn” of Dan. 8:9-13. *Ibid*, page 118.

Jesus spoke these words in regards to the time of the end as we read in **Matthew 24 (KJV):14** And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Clearly Jesus was speaking of the time of the end here.

Then in paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies that, “From all these passages are revealed to us, not merely the particulars of the apostasy, and [the doings] of him who concentrates in himself every satanic error, but also, that there is one and the same God the Father, who was declared by the prophets, but made manifest by Christ.” Irenaeus then summarily testifies, “For if what Daniel prophesied concerning the end has been confirmed by the Lord, when He said, “When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet,” referring to Matthew 24:15 above, “(and the angel Gabriel gave the interpretation of the visions to Daniel, and he is the archangel of the Creator (Demiurgi), who also proclaimed to Mary the visible coming and

the incarnation of Christ), then one and the same God is most manifestly pointed out, who sent the prophets, and made promise."

Irenaeus has defended the faith here by pointing out the unity of prophecy. And the fulfillment of prophecy is the signature of the one creator God.

## **Book 5: Chapter XXVIII.—The distinction to be made between the righteous and the wicked. The future apostasy in the time of Antichrist, and the end of the world.**

1. Inasmuch, then, as in this world (*αἰῶνι*) some persons betake themselves to the light, and by faith unite themselves with God, but others shun the light, and separate themselves from God, the Word of God comes preparing a fit habitation for both. For those indeed who are in the light, that they may derive enjoyment from it, and from the good things contained in it; but for those in darkness, that they may partake in its calamities. And on this account He says, that those upon the right hand are called into the kingdom of heaven, but that those on the left He will send into eternal fire for they have deprived themselves of all good.

2. And for this reason the apostle says: "Because they received not the love of God, that they might be saved, therefore God shall also send them the operation of error, that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but consented to unrighteousness."

**4690 2 Thess. ii. 10–12.** For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly "be cast into the lake of fire:" **4691 Rev. xix. 20.** [this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, "that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness;" whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: "And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might. And one of his heads was as it were slain unto death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto this beast, and who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemy and power was given to him during forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation. And all who dwell upon the earth worshipped him, [every one] whose name was not written in the book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any one have ears, let him hear. If any one shall lead into captivity, he shall go into captivity. If any shall slay with the sword, he must be slain with the sword. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints." **4692 Rev. xiii. 2, etc.** After this he likewise describes his armour-bearer, whom he also terms a false prophet: "He spake as a dragon, and exercised all the power of the first beast in his sight, and caused the earth, and those that dwell therein, to adore the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he shall perform great wonders, so that he can even cause fire to descend from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men, and he shall lead the inhabitants of the earth astray."

**4693 Rev. xiii. 11, etc.** Let no one imagine that he performs these wonders by divine power, but by the working of magic. And we must not be surprised if, since the demons and apostate spirits are at his service, he through their means performs wonders, by which he leads the inhabitants of the earth astray. John says further: "And he shall order an image of the beast to be made, and he shall give breath to the image, so that the image shall speak; and he shall cause those to be slain who will not adore it." He says also: "And he will cause a mark [to be put] in the forehead and in the right hand, that no one may be able to buy or sell, unless he who has the mark of the name of the beast or the

number of his name; and the number is six hundred and sixty-six," 4694 Rev. xiii. 14, etc. that is, six times a hundred, six times ten, and six units. [He gives this] as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years.

3. For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: "Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works." 4695 Gen. ii. 2. This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; 4696 2 Pet. iii. 8. and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year.

4. And therefore throughout all time, man, having been moulded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit, is made after the image and likeness of God: the chaff, indeed, which is the apostasy, being cast away; but the wheat, that is, those who bring forth fruit to God in faith, being gathered into the barn. And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire [for purification], they may be fitted for the royal banquet. As a certain man of ours said, when he was condemned to the wild beasts because of his testimony with respect to God: "I am the wheat of Christ, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God." 4697 This is quoted from the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, ch. iv. It is found in the two Greek recensions of his works, and also in the Syriac. See pp. 75 and 103 of this volume. The Latin translation is here followed: the Greek of Ignatius would give "the wheat of God," and omits "of God" towards the end, as quoted by Eusebius.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "Inasmuch, then, as in this world (*αιώνι*) some persons betake themselves to the light, and by faith unite themselves with God, but others shun the light, and separate themselves from God, the Word of God comes preparing a fit habitation for both." Irenaeus then adds, "For those indeed who are in the light, that they may derive enjoyment from it, and from the good things contained in it; but for those in darkness, that they may partake in its calamities." Irenaeus then affirms, "And on this account He says, that those upon the right hand are called into the kingdom of heaven, but that those on the left He will send into eternal fire for they have deprived themselves of all good," referring in context to Matthew 25:31-46.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "And for this reason the apostle says: "Because they received not the love of God, that they might be saved, therefore God shall also send them the operation of error, that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but consented to unrighteousness," referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. Irenaeus then also affirms, "For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God," referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, "so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly "be cast into the lake of fire," referring to Revelation 19:20. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "[this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, "that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness," again referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:12. Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, "whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: "And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might. And one of his heads was as it were slain unto death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto this beast, and who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemy and power was given to him during forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation. And all who dwell upon the earth worshipped him, [every one] whose name was not written in the book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any one have ears, let him hear. If any one shall lead into captivity, he shall

go into captivity. If any shall slay with the sword, he must be slain with the sword. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints," referring to Revelation 13:2-10. Irenaeus then continues as he again testifies, "After this he likewise describes his armour-bearer, whom he also terms a false prophet: "He spake as a dragon, and exercised all the power of the first beast in his sight, and caused the earth, and those that dwell therein, to adore the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he shall perform great wonders, so that he can even cause fire to descend from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men, and he shall lead the inhabitants of the earth astray," referring in context to Revelation 13:11-14. Irenaeus then explains, "Let no one imagine that he performs these wonders by divine power, but by the working of magic. And we must not be surprised if, since the demons and apostate spirits are at his service, he through their means performs wonders, by which he leads the inhabitants of the earth astray." Again, Irenaeus testifies that "John says further: "And he shall order an image of the beast to be made, and he shall give breath to the image, so that the image shall speak; and he shall cause those to be slain who will not adore it, He says also: "And he will cause a mark [to be put] in the forehead and in the right hand, that no one may be able to buy or sell, unless he who has the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name; and the number is six hundred and sixty-six," drawing from Revelation 13:15-18. Irenaeus concludes as he interprets, "that is, six times a hundred, six times ten, and six units. [He gives this] as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts "For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded." Irenaeus then affirms, "And for this reason the Scripture says: "Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works," referring in context to Genesis 2:1-3. Irenaeus then asserts, "This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years," referring to 2 Peter 3:8. And so Irenaeus concludes, "and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, "And therefore throughout all time, man, having been moulded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit, is made after the image and likeness of God: the chaff, indeed, which is the apostasy, being cast away; but the wheat, that is, those who bring forth fruit to God in faith, being gathered into the barn," referring to Matthew 3:12. Irenaeus then interprets, "And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire [for purification], they may be fitted for the royal banquet." Irneaeus then testifies, "As a certain man of ours said, when he was condemned to the wild beasts because of his testimony with respect to God: "I am the wheat of Christ, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God," referring to a quote from the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, chapter IV.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "Inasmuch, then, as in this world ( $\alphaἰώνι$ ) some persons betake themselves to the light, and by faith unite themselves with God, but others shun the light, and separate themselves from God, the Word of God comes preparing a fit habitation for both." Irenaeus then adds, "For those indeed who are in the light, that they may derive enjoyment from it, and from the good things contained in it; but for those in darkness, that they may partake in its calamities." Irenaeus then affirms, "And on this account He says, that those upon the right hand are called into the kingdom of heaven, but that those on the left He will send into eternal fire for they have deprived themselves of all good," referring in context to Jesus' words in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: **32** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: **33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

In this passage in Matthew, Jesus says he will separate the nations into two groups, the sheep on the right, and the goats on the left. He first states the criteria of His judgment on the sheep. Those who gave Him something to eat when He was hungry, who gave Him drink when He was thirsty, who invited Him in when He was a stranger, who clothed Him when He was naked, and who visited Him when He was in prison will inherit the Kingdom as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come,

ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Jesus then states the criteria of His Judgment on the goats as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV)**:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

We notice in this passage that, in verse 32, it is the nations who will be gathered before Him. It is the nations that He will separate “from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” Then in verse 33, the sheep nations will be placed on His right, and the goat nations on the left. The nations are judged on how they treated His brothers, that is, the Jews, “even the least of them” according to verse 40, during the tribulation period. Nothing is said about “light” in this passage, although it may be implied. This passage is referring to the judgment of the nations who will go into the kingdom when Jesus returns after the great tribulation. This passage is not referring to the judgment of the wicked dead which will occur at the Great White Throne judgment at the renovation of the earth as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Now the order of events is given in Revelation, chapter 20. At the end of the great tribulation, Satan will be bound for a thousand years as is revealed in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

After Satan is bound, the saints who died during the tribulation period are resurrected as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

This thousand year period is known as the Kingdom Age. It is for entrance into this Kingdom Age that the nations are judged in Matthew 25:31-46. It is after this period of a thousand years that Satan will again be loosed as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire

and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

So, according to the word of God, the Great White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 above takes place at the end of the thousand year period known as the Kingdom Age.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “And for this reason the apostle says: “Because they received not the love of God, that they might be saved, therefore God shall also send them the operation of error, that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but consented to unrighteousness,” referring to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):10** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Irenaeus also affirms, “For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God,” referring to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly “be cast into the lake of fire,” referring to **Revelation 19 (KJV):20** And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “[this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, “that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness,” again referring to **2 Thessalonians 2:12** above, but also drawing from **Ephesians 1 (KJV):9** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Irenaeus continues as he then testifies, “whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: “And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might. And one of his heads was as it were slain unto death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto this beast, and who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemy and power was given to him during forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation. And all who dwell upon the earth worshipped him, [every one] whose name was not written in the book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any one have ears, let him hear. If any one shall lead into captivity, he shall go into captivity. If any shall slay with the sword, he must be slain with the sword. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints,” referring to **Revelation 13 (KJV):2** And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all

that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

We see here how faithfully Irenaeus quotes the Scriptures. He quotes the above passage almost word for word, and preserves the context. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “After this he likewise describes his armour-bearer, whom he also terms a false prophet: “He spake as a dragon, and exercised all the power of the first beast in his sight, and caused the earth, and those that dwell therein, to adore the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he shall perform great wonders, so that he can even cause fire to descend from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men, and he shall lead the inhabitants of the earth astray,” referring in context to **Revelation 13 (KJV):**11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Irenaeus then explains, “Let no one imagine that he performs these wonders by divine power, but by the working of magic. And we must not be surprised if, since the demons and apostate spirits are at his service, he through their means performs wonders, by which he leads the inhabitants of the earth astray.” Again, Irenaeus testifies that “John says further: “And he shall order an image of the beast to be made, and he shall give breath to the image, so that the image shall speak; and he shall cause those to be slain who will not adore it, He says also: “And he will cause a mark [to be put] in the forehead and in the right hand, that no one may be able to buy or sell, unless he who has the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name; and the number is six hundred and sixty-six,” drawing from **Revelation 13 (KJV):**14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Irenaeus continues as he interprets, “that is, six times a hundred, six times ten, and six units. [He gives this] as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years.”

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts “For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded.” Irenaeus then affirms, “And for this reason the Scripture says: “Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works,” referring in context to **Genesis 2 (KJV):**1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Irenaeus then asserts, “This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years,” referring in context to **2 Peter 3 (NASB):**8 But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

And so Irenaeus concludes, “and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year.”

Now we see that Irenaeus shows his reliance on the Scriptures rather than on tradition by his many references to Scripture. Irenaeus is looking to the conclusion of God's work on earth. However, his identification of the passage in Genesis 2 as a prophecy that the world would end in 6000 years because of Peter's statement in his second epistle that with the Lord, a day is as a thousand years, may have been the formation of another tradition in Irenaeus' time. Peter did not say that, with the Lord, a day is a thousand years. He said that with the Lord, a day is as a thousand years. He was showing that with the Lord, time is meaningless. That is, the Lord is outside of time. The days mentioned in this passage simply refer to 24 hour periods of time. This is proven by the word of God as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):5** And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "And therefore throughout all time, man, having been moulded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit, is made after the image and likeness of God: the chaff, indeed, which is the apostasy, being cast away; but the wheat, that is, those who bring forth fruit to God in faith, being gathered into the barn," referring to **Matthew 3 (KJV):12** Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Irenaeus then interprets, "And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire [for purification], they may be fitted for the royal banquet." Irneaeus then testifies, "As a certain man of ours said, when he was condemned to the wild beasts because of his testimony with respect to God: "I am the wheat of Christ, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God," referring to a quote from the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, chapter IV.

Irenaeus is saying that the wheat goes through threshing before it is gathered into the barn. It is in this sense that he believes "tribulation is necessary for those who are saved." However, the Scriptures state that when we come to Christ, we are sanctified as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The word sanctified in this verse is in the past tense. To be sanctified means to be set apart to God. When we accept Christ, we are set apart to God as His own unique possession, being bought with a price, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

After we come to Christ, we are not our own, but God's own unique possession, having been bought with the precious blood of Christ. The writer of Hebrews explains how believers are in one sense purified for all time as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):11** And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

The Scripture says in verse 14 above that Jesus has perfected forever those who are sanctified. In verse 12 above it says that He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time. There is no other offering that can take away sins. This is why in verse 18 above it says, "where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin."

Also, in 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul says also that we were justified as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Again, the words "were justified" are in the past tense. This is also mentioned in Romans, chapter five, verse one where Paul says that we have been justified by faith as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we

have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

The past tense of the verb is used here in the Greek as well. This tells us that this event occurred when we accepted Christ by faith as our Lord and Savior. It was then that God saw our faith and justified us. That is, He declared us to be righteous in His sight, for the word “justified” means “to declare righteous.” Having then been declared righteous by God, we were given a standing as though we had never sinned. Because of this act of justification by God, we have peace with Him as it says in verse 1 above. The word peace in the Greek means “to set at one with.” So we are righteous in standing before God, and we are set at one with Him and stand in grace by faith as it says in verse 2 above. This act of justification by God is a gift as stated in **Romans**

**5 (NASB):17** For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Because of our justification, and the gift of righteousness, we reign in life through Jesus Christ. Also, in reference again to verse two above, since we stand in grace by faith, Paul says that nothing can separate us in heaven or on earth from the love of God in Christ Jesus as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So tribulation is not necessary for those who are already saved because they are already sanctified and perfected forever by the blood of Jesus Christ which He offered as a sacrifice for our sins once, for all time. However, this is not to say that believers have already been made perfect in their character. There may be much in our lives that needs to be cleansed after we are saved by our faith in Christ. But God is faithful as a loving Father to discipline those He loves and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. This is the process of sanctification that goes on in the believer’s life after he or she is saved. Our spirit is perfect because it is born of the Spirit of God, but our souls, that is, our mind, will, emotions, and conscience, still need to be cleansed. Our standing however remains the same in this process. Once we are born again, we cannot be unborn as it were. But our character will change to be more like Christ moment by moment. The Scriptures state this in **Romans**

**5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:  
**2** By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. **3** And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; **4** And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Also we read in **James 1 (KJV):2** My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; **3** Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. **4** But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

We will all give account of ourselves after we accept Christ as Savior as we see in **2 Corinthians**  
**5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

We will receive rewards for the good deeds, and suffer loss in this life for bad deeds as Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. **11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; **13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. **14** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. **15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The fire Paul speaks of is the result of pain suffered in this life because of foolish choices. It is not a fire of purification, but of judgment brought on by sinful behavior. We are saved by our faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross by which we were washed, sanctified, and justified as we read in **1 Corinthians**

**6 (KJV):9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

We were sinners. That is some of us were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers. But after we accept Christ, we are said to be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Our past is done away with by our faith in Christ. This does not mean however that we are now perfect in our character. It is true that trials help us become more like Him. We still have a sin nature in our flesh, and we can still sin. Trials help us see the faithfulness of God who does not give us more than we can bear. However, our spirit has been made alive by the Spirit of God because of our faith in Jesus Christ, and we have His life in us. It is by this same Spirit that we will be perfected at the resurrection. We will be rewarded in the next life for disciplining our flesh in this life. But we are saved from the moment we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord.

## **Book 5: Chapter XXIX.—All things have been created for the service of man. The deceits, wickedness, and apostate power of Antichrist. This was prefigured at the deluge, as afterwards by the persecution of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

1. In the previous books I have set forth the causes for which God permitted these things to be made, and have pointed out that all such have been created for the benefit of that human nature which is saved, ripening for immortality that which is [possessed] of its own free will and its own power, and preparing and rendering it more adapted for eternal subjection to God. And therefore the creation is suited to [the wants of] man; for man was not made for its sake, but creation for the sake of man. Those nations however, who did not of themselves raise up their eyes unto heaven, nor returned thanks to their Maker, nor wished to behold the light of truth, but who were like blind mice concealed in the depths of ignorance, the word justly reckons “as waste water from a sink, and as the turning-weight of a balance—in fact, as nothing;” **4698 Isa. xl. 15.** so far useful and serviceable to the just, as stubble conduces towards the growth of the wheat, and its straw, by means of combustion, serves for working gold. And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, “There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.” **4699 Matt. xxiv. 21.** For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.

2. And there is therefore in this beast, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire. Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels. For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah. And [Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just. For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misaël, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man’s coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be

worshipped by all men. Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, and the number of the cubits of the image for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of the name of that man in whom is concentrated the whole apostasy of six thousand years, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things' sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth].

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asserts, "In the previous books I have set forth the causes for which God permitted these things to be made, and have pointed out that all such have been created for the benefit of that human nature which is saved, ripening for immortality that which is [possessed] of its own free will and its own power, and preparing and rendering it more adapted for eternal subjection to God." Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, "And therefore the creation is suited to [the wants of] man; for man was not made for its sake, but creation for the sake of man." Irenaeus then affirms that, "Those nations however, who did not of themselves raise up their eyes unto heaven, nor returned thanks to their Maker, nor wished to behold the light of truth, but who were like blind mice concealed in the depths of ignorance, the word justly reckons "as waste water from a sink, and as the turning-weight of a balance—in fact, as nothing," referring to Isaiah 40:15. Irenaeus continues as he reasons, "so far useful and serviceable to the just, as stubble conduces towards the growth of the wheat, and its straw, by means of combustion, serves for working gold." Irenaeus then testifies, "And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this," referring to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, "it is said, "There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be," referring to Matthew 24:21. Irenaeus then asserts, "For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "And there is therefore in this beast, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire." Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, "Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels." Irenaeus then testifies, "For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah," referring to Genesis 7:6. And Irenaeus then affirms, "And [Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just." Irenaeus then testifies, "For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits," referring to Daniel 3:1, "on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire," referring to Daniel 3:14-23. Irenaeus then affirms that this was "pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men," referring to Daniel 3:1-7. Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, "Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, and the number of the cubits of the image for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of the name of that man in whom is concentrated the whole apostasy of six thousand years, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things' sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth]."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asserts, "In the previous books I have set forth the causes for which God permitted these things to be made, and have pointed out that all such have been created for the benefit of that human nature which is saved, ripening for immortality that which is [possessed] of its own free will and its own power, and preparing and rendering it more adapted for eternal subjection to God." Irenaeus sees in the Scriptures God's plan for the ages. All things are created for those who will spend eternity with Him. But he also asserts that man is possessed of his own free will and power which he believes man must utilize in order to be prepared and rendered "adapted for eternal subjection to God." Irenaeus does not understand the grace of God, and that man is saved by grace. Man's rewards are dependent on his obedience to the word of God, but his salvation is dependent solely upon his faith in Jesus Christ.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And therefore the creation is suited to [the wants of] man; for man was not made for its sake, but creation for the sake of man.” Irenaeus then affirms that, “Those nations however, who did not of themselves raise up their eyes unto heaven, nor returned thanks to their Maker, nor wished to behold the light of truth, but who were like blind mice concealed in the depths of ignorance, the word justly reckons “as waste water from a sink, and as the turning-weight of a balance—in fact, as nothing,” referring to **Isaiah 40 (Septuagint):15** since all the nations are counted as a drop from a bucket, and as the turning of a balance, *and* shall be counted as spittle? 16 And Libanus is not enough to burn, nor all beasts enough for a whole-burnt offering: 17 and all the nations are as nothing, and counted as nothing.

This verse is also translated as in **Isaiah 40 (KJV):15** Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. 16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. 17 All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

Irenaeus sees on a national level that nations would be judged for not raising their eyes toward heaven, that is, to give “thanks to their Maker,” and to “behold the light of truth.” Irenaeus continues as he reasons, “so far useful and serviceable to the just, as stubble conduces towards the growth of the wheat, and its straw, by means of combustion, serves for working gold.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, “There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be,” referring to **Matthew 24 (NASB):21** “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

Now when Irenaeus says that “the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this,” he may be referring to the rapture which is spoken of in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):13** But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The words “caught up” in the Greek are from ἀρπάζω (pronounced harpazō). **Strong’s Concordance** says that this word means “to seize (in various applications): catch (away,up), pluck, pull, take (by force).” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, James Strong, 1890.**

The word “rapture” comes from the Latin Vulgate, from which the King James Version is translated, and is a translation of the Latin word “rapturo”. So those who are alive and remain on earth when the Lord comes will be caught up together with those who have fallen asleep, that is, the dead in Christ. So the dead in Christ at His coming will be raised first, and then those who are alive and remain will be changed as Paul explains further in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Irenaeus then asserts, “For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.” Irenaeus is not clear, but by this statement he makes it sound like he believed the Church would go through the tribulation period for purification, and then be caught up, or raptured, at some point during that time. Irenaeus did believe that the Church had replaced Israel as the people of God, as we shall see when we look at **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph two**. And so he sees the end time as “the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.” It is true that many will be

saved during this “great tribulation” period. Though Irenaeus does not quote this verse, it is so stated in **Revelation 7 (KJV):13** And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

However, we know from Scripture that those who remain, and are caught up to be with the Lord when He comes will be those whome He keeps from the hour of temptation as we read in **Revelation 3 (KJV):10** Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Then in paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “And there is therefore in this beast, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire.” Irenaeus then continues as he then affirms, “Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah,” referring to **Genesis 7 (KJV):6** And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

The “infamous generation” Irenaeus speaks of are those who were the offspring of the angels who cohabited with the daughters of men. Jude summarizes this in **Jude (NASB):6** And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

The “infamous generation” of Noah’s time were guilty of gross immorality and went after strange flesh, just as Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now, Irenaeus sees a type in the recorded years of the age of Noah, who also lived in a time of great apostasy such as shall be during the “great tribulation” period. Irenaeus then affirms, “And [Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits,” referring to **Daniel 3 (KJV):1** Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misaël, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire.”

The Scriptures record that Ananias, Azarias, and Misael were given the new names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by the Babylonian commander in **Daniel 1 (KJV):6** Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

And there was indeed a decree given by Nebuchadnezzar that anyone who would not worship his image would be thrown into a furnace of fire as we read in **Daniel 3 (KJV):2** Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, 5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: 6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the

people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Just as Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, that is, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were thrown into a furnace of fire for not worshipping Nebuchadnezzar's image, so this is certainly very much like the time of the end when many will be slain for not receiving the mark of the beast in the "great tribulation" period. The casting of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace of fire is recorded in Scripture in **Daniel**

**3 (KJV):14** Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? **15** Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? **16** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. **17** If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. **18** But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Nebuchadnezzar then had these three men thrown into the fire for not worshipping his image as we read in **Daniel 3 (KJV):19** Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. **20** And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. **21** Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. **22** Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flames of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. **23** And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

And in the book of Revelation we see that there were many who lost their lives for standing for their faith in Jesus Christ, and not worshipping the beast or his image as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Irenaeus then affirms that this was "pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men," referring again to Daniel 3:1-7 as above. Irenaeus then concludes, "Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, and the number of the cubits of the image for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of the name of that man in whom is concentrated the whole apostasy of six thousand years, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things' sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth]." Irenaeus may be referring here to Paul's words to the Colossians in **Colossians 3 (NASB):5** Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. **6** For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, **7** and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

The Lord rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego personally from their fiery trials as we read in **Daniel 3 (KJV):24** Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. **25** He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. **26** Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. **27** And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw

these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

## **Book 5: Chapter XXXII.—In that flesh in which the saints have suffered so many afflictions, they shall receive the fruits of their labours; especially since all creation waits for this, and God promises it to Abraham and his seed.**

1. Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature (*capere Deum* 4720 *Or, "gradually to comprehend God."*); and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it behoves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards. For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, in that they should reign. For God is rich in all things, and all things are His. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous; and the apostle has made this plain in the Epistle to the Romans, when he thus speaks: "For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature has been subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; since the creature itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." 4721 *Rom. viii. 19, etc.*

2. Thus, then, the promise of God, which He gave to Abraham, remains steadfast. For thus He said: "Lift up thine eyes, and look from this place where now thou art, towards the north and south, and east and west. For all the earth which thou seest, I will give to thee and to thy seed, even for ever." 4722 *Gen. xiii. 13, 14.* And again He says, "Arise, and go through the length and breadth of the land, since I will give it unto thee;" 4723 *Gen. xiii. 17.* and [yet] he did not receive an inheritance in it, not even a footprint, but was always a stranger and a pilgrim therein. 4724 *Acts vii. 5; Heb. xi. 13.* And upon the death of Sarah his wife, when the Hittites were willing to bestow upon him a place where he might bury her, he declined it as a gift, but bought the burying-place (giving for it four hundred talents of silver) from Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite. 4725 *Gen. xxiii. 11.* Thus did he await patiently the promise of God, and was unwilling to appear to receive from men, what God had promised to give him, when He said again to him as follows: "I will give this land to thy seed, from the river of Egypt even unto the great river Euphrates." 4726 *Gen. xv. 13.* If, then, God promised him the inheritance of the land, yet he did not receive it during all the time of his sojourn there, it must be, that together with his seed, that is, those who fear God and believe in Him, he shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For his seed is the Church, which receives the adoption to God through the Lord, as John the Baptist said: "For God is able from the stones to raise up children to Abraham." 4727 *Luke iii. 8.* Thus also the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "But ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." 4728 *Gal. iv. 28.* And again, in the same Epistle, he plainly declares that they who have believed in Christ do receive Christ, the promise to Abraham thus saying, "The promises were spoken to Abraham, and to his seed. Now He does not say, And of seeds, as if [He spake] of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." 4729 *Gal. iii. 16.* And again, confirming his former words, he says, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, declared to Abraham beforehand, That in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which are of faith shall

be blessed with faithful Abraham." 4730 Gal. iii. 6, etc. Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham. Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." 4731 Matt. v. 5.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asserts, "Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature;" Irenaeus continues as he adds, "and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards." Irenaeus then affirms, "For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, in that they should reign." Irenaeus then affirms, "For God is rich in all things, and all things are His." Again Irenaeus affirms, "It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous;" Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "and the apostle has made this plain in the Epistle to the Romans, when he thus speaks: "For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature has been subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; since the creature itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God," referring to Romans 8:19-21.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "Thus, then, the promise of God, which He gave to Abraham, remains steadfast. For thus He said: "Lift up thine eyes, and look from this place where now thou art, towards the north and south, and east and west. For all the earth which thou seest, I will give to thee and to thy seed, even for ever," referring to Genesis 13:14-15. Again Irenaeus affirms, "And again He says, "Arise, and go through the length and breadth of the land, since I will give it unto thee," referring to Genesis 13:17. Irenaeus then affirms, "and [yet] he did not receive an inheritance in it, not even a footprint, but was always a stranger and a pilgrim therein," referring to Acts 7:5. Irenaeus then affirms, "And upon the death of Sarah his wife, when the Hittites were willing to bestow upon him a place where he might bury her, he declined it as a gift, but bought the burying-place (giving for it four hundred talents of silver) from Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite," referring to Genesis 23:11. Irenaeus again affirms, "Thus did he await patiently the promise of God, and was unwilling to appear to receive from men, what God had promised to give him, when He said again to him as follows: "I will give this land to thy seed, from the river of Egypt even unto the great river Euphrates," referring to Genesis 15:18. Irenaeus then reasons, "If, then, God promised him the inheritance of the land, yet he did not receive it during all the time of his sojourn there, it must be, that together with his seed, that is, those who fear God and believe in Him, he shall receive it at the resurrection of the just." Irenaeus then asserts, "For his seed is the Church, which receives the adoption to God through the Lord, as John the Baptist said: "For God is able from the stones to raise up children to Abraham," referring to Luke 3:8. Irenaeus then testifies, "Thus also the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "But ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise," referring to Galatians 4:28. Irenaeus again testifies, "And again, in the same Epistle, he plainly declares that they who have believed in Christ do receive Christ, the promise to Abraham thus saying, "The promises were spoken to Abraham, and to his seed. Now He does not say, And of seeds, as if [He spake] of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," referring to Galatians 3:16. And again Irenaeus testifies, "And again, confirming his former words, he says, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, declared to Abraham beforehand, That in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then, they which are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham," referring to

Galatians 3:6-9. Irenaeus then emphasizes, “Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham. Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, ‘Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,’ referring to Matthew 5:5.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus asserts, “Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God’s dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature;” Irenaeus refers here to the previous chapter, **Book 5: Chapter XXXI** in his writing, which I have already discussed in **Chapter 6: His Teaching on The Resurrection**. It is in reference to this previous chapter, that Irenaeus says that the “opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses.” Irenaeus says that they are ignorant of the following:

- “God’s dispensations”
- “the mystery of the resurrection of the just”
- “the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption”

Now Irenaeus was fighting the Gnostic heresy. He wanted believers to know about God’s dispensations, that is, of the times He had planned for the righteous. He wanted believers to know that there is one God who had planned all things. He also mentions the word “dispensation” in **Book 5: Chapter XXIII, paragraph two**, which we covered in **Chapter 28: Physical Death**, as he says, “But according to the cycle and progress of the days, after which one is termed first, another second, and another third, if anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day out of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord. For by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up its death,” referring in part to **Ephesians 1 (NASB):9** He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

Irenaeus mentions “the mystery of the resurrection of the just” to show that the one God will reward the righteous with eternal life. Jesus also spoke of this “resurrection of the righteous” or “just” in **Luke 14 (KJV):14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Again, Irenaeus wanted to show believers that the one God had prepared a kingdom for the righteous before the foundation of the world, as we saw when discussed **Book 5: Chapter XXVIII, paragraph 1**, and referred to **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Now Irenaeus asserts that it is by means of this kingdom that “those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature.” The note **4720** lists an alternate translation as “gradually to comprehend God.” Peter in his second epistle says that God has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):1** Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

And Peter says that it is by these that He has granted to us His precious promises as we read in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

It is not that we are becoming partakers of the divine nature gradually, but by our faith in our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, we have been born again. That is, God has made us alive who were dead in trespasses and sins. Having been born of the Spirit, we now have the new life of the Spirit as the life of our spirit. It is by this means, that is, being born of the Spirit, that we have become partakers of the divine nature. This is why John says that we are now children of God as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. **2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And John also tells us that we can know that we have eternal life as we read in **1 John (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Our souls and boidies will be made pefect when we see Him, that is, at the resurrection of the righteous, which is also the commencement of the Kingdom age Irenaeus speaks of here. Since we will be completely perfect when we are like Him, the righteous will not gradually become accustomed to partake of the divine nature during this period. However, there will still be unsaved people in the Kingdom age as we shall see.

Irenaeus continues as he adds, “and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards.

Now Irenaeus placed the order of these events in the following sequence:

- the righteous first “receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers”
- the righteous “reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated”
- the “judgment should take place afterwards”

Irenaeus then affirms, “For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, in that they should reign.” Irenaeus then affirms, “For God is rich in all things, and all things are His.” Again Irenaeus affirms, “It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous;” Irenaeus then explains as he testifies, “and the apostle has made this plain in the Epistle to the Romans, when he thus speaks: “For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature has been subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; since the creature itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God,” referring to **Romans 8 (KJV):19** For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. **20** For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, **21** Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Again, Irenaeus has placed the order of events in sequence as follows:

- “in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering,” the righteous “receive the reward of their suffering”
- “in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God,” the righteous will be “revived again”
- “in the creation in which they endured servitude,” the righteous will “reign”
- “the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition,” will “without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, “Thus, then, the promise of God, which He gave to Abraham, remains steadfast. For thus He said: “Lift up thine eyes, and look from this place where now thou art, towards the north and south, and east and west. For all the earth which thou seest, I will give to thee and to thy seed, even for ever,” referring to **Genesis 13 (KJV):14** And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: **15** For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

Again Irenaeus affirms, “And again He says, “Arise, and go through the length and breadth of the land, since I will give it unto thee,” referring to **Genesis 13 (KJV):17** Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

Irenaeus then affirms, “and [yet] he did not receive an inheritance in it, not even a footstep, but was always a stranger and a pilgrim therein,” referring to **Acts 7 (KJV):5** And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

Irenaeus then affirms, “And upon the death of Sarah his wife, when the Hittites were willing to bestow upon him a place where he might bury her, he declined it as a gift, but bought the burying-place (giving for it four hundred talents of silver) from Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite,” referring to **Genesis 23 (KJV):1** And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. **2** And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. **3** And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, **4** I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

And in **Genesis 23 (KJV):14** And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, **15** My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. **16** And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. **17** And the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure **18** Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. **19** And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. **20** And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.

Ireneaeus again affirms, “Thus did he await patiently the promise of God, and was unwilling to appear to receive from men, what God had promised to give him, when He said again to him as follows: “I will give this land to thy seed, from the river of Egypt even unto the great river Euphrates,” referring to **Genesis 15 (KJV):18** In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

Irenaeus then reasons, “If, then, God promised him the inheritance of the land, yet he did not receive it during all the time of his sojourn there, it must be, that together with his seed, that is, those who fear God and believe in Him, he shall receive it at the resurrection of the just.” Irenaeus states that the “seed” are all of Abraham’s descendants who “fear God and believe in Him,” and that Abraham will receive the inheritance of the land at the “resurrection of the just.”

Irenaeus then asserts, “For his seed is the Church, which receives the adoption to God through the Lord, as John the Baptist said: “For God is able from the stones to raise up children to Abraham,” referring to **Luke 3 (KJV):8** Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

It is true that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from the stones, but that does not mean that Abraham’s seed is the Church, or that somehow the Church has replaced Israel in the plans and purposes of God by receiving “adoption to God through the Lord.” Paul tells us why Abraham is the father of all who believe as he explains in **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? **2** For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. **3** For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. **4** Now to him that

worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Paul then recounts Abraham's moment of faith in **Romans 4 (KJV):9** Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

So Abraham is the father of all who believe, both circumcised and uncircumcised. Abraham is never said to be the father of the Church, or that his "seed is the Church," but the Scriptures say that he is the father of all who walk in the steps of his faith "which he had while uncircumcised." In Romans, chapter 4, Paul is making the point that it is not those who are justified by works that are counted as his descendants, but those who have the same faith as Abraham, both circumcised and uncircumcised.

Irenaeus then testifies, "Thus also the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "But ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise," referring to **Galatians 4 (KJV):28** Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Irenaeus again testifies, "And again, in the same Epistle, he plainly declares that they who have believed in Christ do receive Christ, the promise to Abraham thus saying, "The promises were spoken to Abraham, and to his seed. Now He does not say, And of seeds, as if [He spake] of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," referring to **Galatians 3 (NASB):16** Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

Irenaeus then adds, "And again, confirming his former words, he says, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, declared to Abraham beforehand, That in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham," referring to **Galatians 3 (NASB):6** Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

We see that just as Paul says, God did make promise to Abraham that through him, all the nations of the earth would be blessed as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV):17** And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; 18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

We shall see that the great and mighty nation that would come from Abraham is Israel, and not the Church, as Irenaeus intimates. We must keep in mind that Abraham was the father of all who are of faith, whether circumcised or uncircumcised.

Irenaeus then emphasizes, "Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham. Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," referring to **Matthew 5 (KJV):5** Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Indeed, the promise to Abraham that he should be heir of the world was through the righteousness of faith as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):13** For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

While it is true that those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham, and that these shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, God primarily made promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, that is Israel. Irenaeus treats God's promises to Abraham as if there were just one promise, the promise that his seed would be Christ as in **Galatians 3 (NASB):16** Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

Now we see that Paul also says in Galatians 3:16 that "the promises were spoken to Abraham," speaking of more than one promise spoken to Abraham. The promises compose what is known as the Abrahamic covenant which is stated in **Genesis 12 (KJV):1** Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

God here made promise to Abram, whom He later renamed Abraham, that He would make him a great nation and bless him and make his name great. Abram would stand apart as one whom all who bless would be blessed, and also as one whom all who cursed would be cursed. And in Abram all the families of the earth would be blessed, speaking of Christ who would come through one of Abraham's descendants.

God also made promise to Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years, but afterward God would deliver them as we read in **Genesis 15 (KJV):13** And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

The nation that would come from Abraham's descendants was Israel, and they would live in the land of Canaan as we read in **Genesis 15 (KJV):18** In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

This possession of the land of Canaan was to be an everlasting possession just as the Lord says to Abraham in **Genesis 17 (KJV):8** And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

The covenant that God made with Abraham was continued and extended in the time of Moses as we read in **Deuteronomy 29 (KJV):1** These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

The Lord made this covenant with Israel, just as He made it with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as we read in **Deuteronomy 29 (KJV):10** Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, 11 Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: 12 That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: 13 That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

And God spoke to Moses to take possession of the land as we read in **Deuteronomy 32 (NASB):49** "Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession.

But God knew that Israel was a stubborn people and He prophesied a blessing and a curse on Israel. The Lord promised Moses before it came to pass that after all these things have come upon his people Israel that they would again be regathered and inherit the land as we see in **Deuteronomy 30 (KJV):1** And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy

fathers. 6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

The Lord states that just as He is the one who “gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,” so Israel will not cease from being a nation before Him forever as we read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):31** Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. 35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

Therefore, since Israel will not perish as a nation, all the promises of God to Israel still stand, and they are not transferred to the Church, as Irenaeus suggests.

So everyone of every age gains approval through their faith. As to the seed of Abraham being the Church, it is true that all who walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham are his children. However, this does not mean that God’s purpose for Israel has changed. Israel has been set aside until the fullness of the Gentiles is come into the Church as Paul reveals in **Romans 11 (KJV):25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father’s sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

It is interesting to note that Irenaeus does mention that “they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham.” Then again, Irenaeus says that it is Abraham’s seed, “that is, those who are justified by faith,” who will receive the inheritance with Abraham at the resurrection of the just. Salvation has always been by faith in Christ in every age. Abraham and the fathers looked forward by faith to Christ’s coming. We now in the Church still look by faith to Christ who came. The writer of Hebrews points out in Hebrews, chapter 11, that in every age, it is by faith that we are rewarded. After speaking of the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and Rahab, we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):32** And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Without faith it is impossible to please Him as we read again in **Hebrews 11 (NASB):6** And without

faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

To repeat again, Irenaeus states, "But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, declared to Abraham beforehand, That in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham." Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham. Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Indeed the meek shall inherit the earth. But God's plan for Israel has not changed. For now, Israel has been set aside. But there are some of the natural branches that are being grafted into the Church in our day. Yes, also in our day, God is setting the stage for the restoration of the nation of Israel. Let us agree with Paul as we read in **Galatians 6 (NASB):15** For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

The Israel of God are all those who walk in the steps of our father Abraham. And though Israel has been set aside for their unbelief now, a time is coming when Israel will again be granted repentance and believe to their salvation.

## **Book 5: Chapter XXXIII.—Further proofs of the same proposition, drawn from the promises made by Christ, when He declared that He would drink of the fruit of the vine with His disciples in His Father's kingdom, while at the same time He promised to reward them an hundred-fold, and to make them partake of banquets. The blessing pronounced by Jacob had pointed out this already, as Papias and the elders have interpreted it.**

1. For this reason, when about to undergo His sufferings, that He might declare to Abraham and those with him the glad tidings of the inheritance being thrown open, [Christ], after He had given thanks while holding the cup, and had drunk of it, and given it to the disciples, said to them: "Drink ye all of it: this is My blood of the new covenant, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of this vine, until that day when I will drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 4732 **Matt. xxvi. 27.** Thus, then, He will Himself renew the inheritance of the earth, and will re-organize the mystery of the glory of [His] sons; as David says, "He who hath renewed the face of the earth." 4733 **Ps. civ. 30.** He promised to drink of the fruit of the vine with His disciples, thus indicating both these points: the inheritance of the earth in which the new fruit of the vine is drunk, and the resurrection of His disciples in the flesh. For the new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup. And He cannot by any means be understood as drinking of the fruit of the vine when settled down with his [disciples] above in a super-celestial place; nor, again, are they who drink it devoid of flesh, for to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not spirit.

2. And for this reason the Lord declared, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, do not call thy friends, nor thy neighbours, nor thy kinsfolk, lest they ask thee in return, and so repay thee. But call the lame, the blind, and the poor, and thou shall be blessed, since they cannot recompense thee, but a recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just." 4734 **Luke xiv. 12, 13.** And again He says, "Whosoever shall have left lands, or houses, or parents, or brethren, or children because of Me, he shall receive in this world an hundred-fold, and in that to come he shall inherit eternal life.

4735 **Matt. xix. 29; Luke xviii. 29, 30.** For what are the hundred-fold [rewards] in this world, the entertainments given to the poor, and the suppers for which a return is made? These are [to take place] in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them

by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes.

3. The blessing of Isaac with which he blessed his younger son Jacob has the same meaning, when he says, "Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a full field which the Lord has blessed." 4736 Gen. xxvii. 27, etc. But "the field is the world." 4737 Matt. xiii. 38. And therefore he added, "God give to thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, plenty of corn and wine. And let the nations serve thee, and kings bow down to thee; and be thou lord over thy brother, and thy father's sons shall bow down to thee: cursed shall be he who shall curse thee, and blessed shall be he who shall bless thee." 4738 Gen. xxvii. 28, 29. If any one, then, does not accept these things as referring to the appointed kingdom, he must fall into much contradiction and contrariety, as is the case with the Jews, who are involved in absolute perplexity. For not only did not the nations in this life serve this Jacob; but even after he had received the blessing, he himself going forth [from his home], served his uncle Laban the Syrian for twenty years; 4739 Gen. xxxi. 41. and not only was he not made lord of his brother, but he did himself bow down before his brother Esau, upon his return from Mesopotamia to his father, and offered many gifts to him. 4740 Gen. xxxiii. 3. Moreover, in what way did he inherit much corn and wine here, he who emigrated to Egypt because of the famine which possessed the land in which he was dwelling, and became subject to Pharaoh, who was then ruling over Egypt? The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; 4741 From this to the end of the section there is an Armenian version extant, to be found in the *Spicil. Solesm.* i. p. 1, edited by M. Pitra, Paris 1852, and which was taken by him from an Armenian ms. in the Mechitarist Library at Venice, described as being of the twelfth century, when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth: as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times, and say: The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true 4742 This word "true" is not found in the Armenian. twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, 4743 Or, following Arm. vers., "But if any one shall lay hold of an holy cluster." another shall cry out, "I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me." In like manner [the Lord declared] that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds (*quinque bilibres*) of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, 4744 The Arm. vers. is here followed; the old Latin reads, "Et reliqua autem poma." and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions (*secundum congruentiam iis consequentem*); and that all animals feeding [only] on the productions of the earth, should [in those days] become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man.

4. And these things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled (*συντεταγμένα*) by him. 4745 [See pp. 151–154, this volume.] And he says in addition, "Now these things are credible to believers." And he says that, "when the traitor Judas did not give credit to them, and put the question, 'How then can things about to bring forth so abundantly be wrought by the Lord?' the Lord declared, 'They who shall come to these [times] shall see.'" When prophesying of these times, therefore, Esaias says: "The wolf also shall feed with the lamb, and the leopard shall take his rest with the kid; the calf also, and the bull, and the lion shall eat together; and a little boy shall lead them. The ox and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall agree together; and the lion shall eat straw as well as the ox. And the infant boy shall thrust his hand into the asp's den, into the nest also of the adder's brood; and they shall do no harm, nor have power to hurt anything in my holy mountain." And again he says, in recapitulation, "Wolves and lambs shall then browse together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the serpent earth as if it were bread; and they shall neither hurt

nor annoy anything in my holy mountain, saith the Lord." 4746 Isa. xl. 6, etc. I am quite aware that some persons endeavour to refer these words to the case of savage men, both of different nations and various habits, who come to believe, and when they have believed, act in harmony with the righteous. But although this is [true] now with regard to some men coming from various nations to the harmony of the faith, nevertheless in the resurrection of the just [the words shall also apply] to those animals mentioned. For God is rich in all things. And it is right that when the creation is restored, all the animals should obey and be in subjection to man, and revert to the food originally given by God (for they had been originally subjected in obedience to Adam), that is, the productions of the earth. But some other occasion, and not the present, is [to be sought] for showing that the lion shall [then] feed on straw. And this indicates the large size and rich quality of the fruits. For if that animal, the lion, feeds upon straw [at that period], of what a quality must the wheat itself be whose straw shall serve as suitable food for lions?

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "For this reason, when about to undergo His sufferings, that He might declare to Abraham and those with him the glad tidings of the inheritance being thrown open, [Christ], after He had given thanks while holding the cup, and had drunk of it, and given it to the disciples, said to them: "Drink ye all of it: this is My blood of the new covenant, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of this vine, until that day when I will drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," referring to Matthew 26:27. Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, "Thus, then, He will Himself renew the inheritance of the earth, and will re-organize the mystery of the glory of [His] sons; as David says, "He who hath renewed the face of the earth," referring to Psalm 104:30. Irenaeus then continues as he summarizes, "He promised to drink of the fruit of the vine with His disciples, thus indicating both these points: the inheritance of the earth in which the new fruit of the vine is drunk, and the resurrection of His disciples in the flesh. For the new flesh, which rises again, is the same which also received the new cup." Irenaeus then combats Gnostic heresy as he affirms, "And He cannot by any means be understood as drinking of the fruit of the vine when settled down with his [disciples] above in a super-celestial place; nor, again, are they who drink it devoid of flesh, for to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not spirit."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "And for this reason the Lord declared, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, do not call thy friends, nor thy neighbours, nor thy kinsfolk, lest they ask thee in return, and so repay thee. But call the lame, the blind, and the poor, and thou shall be blessed, since they cannot recompense thee, but a recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just," referring to Luke 14:12-13. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, "And again He says, "Whosoever shall have left lands, or houses, or parents, or brethren, or children because of Me, he shall receive in this world an hundred-fold, and in that to come he shall inherit eternal life," referring to Luke 18:29-30. Irenaeus then interprets as he says, "For what are the hundred-fold [rewards] in this world, the entertainments given to the poor, and the suppers for which a return is made? These are [to take place] in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts that, "The blessing of Isaac with which he blessed his younger son Jacob has the same meaning, when he says, "Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a full field which the Lord has blessed," referring to Genesis 27:27. Irenaeus then asserts, "But "the field is the world," referring to Matthew 13:38. Irenaeus continues as he concludes, "And therefore he added, "God give to thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, plenty of corn and wine. And let the nations serve thee, and kings bow down to thee; and be thou lord over thy brother, and thy father's sons shall bow down to thee: cursed shall be he who shall curse thee, and blessed shall be he who shall bless thee," referring to Genesis 27:28-29. Irenaeus then judges that, "If any one, then, does not accept these things as referring to the appointed kingdom, he must fall into much contradiction and contrariety, as is the case with the Jews, who are involved in absolute perplexity. For not only did not the nations in this life serve this Jacob; but even after he had received the blessing, he himself going forth [from his home], served his uncle Laban the Syrian for twenty years," referring to Genesis

31:41. Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “and not only was he not made lord of his brother, but he did himself bow down before his brother Esau, upon his return from Mesopotamia to his father, and offered many gifts to him,” referring to Genesis 33:3. Irenaeus then asks, “Moreover, in what way did he inherit much corn and wine here, he who emigrated to Egypt because of the famine which possessed the land in which he was dwelling, and became subject to Pharaoh, who was then ruling over Egypt?” Irenaeus then concludes that, “The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth.” Irenaeus continues as he testifies:

- “as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times, and say: The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, “I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me.”
- “In like manner [the Lord declared] that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds (quinque bilibres) of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions (secundum congruentiam iis consequentem);”
- “and that all animals feeding [only] on the productions of the earth, should [in those days] become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man,” drawing from Isaiah 11:6-9.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus then testifies to Papias and Polycarp as he says, “And these things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled (*συντεταγμένα*) by him,” referring to an **Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord** by Papias. Irenaeus continues as he records, “And he says in addition, “Now these things are credible to believers.” And he says that, “when the traitor Judas did not give credit to them, and put the question, ‘How then can things about to bring forth so abundantly be wrought by the Lord?’ the Lord declared, ‘They who shall come to these [times] shall see,’” referring to the five books that Papias is reputed to have written but of which only a small fragment remain. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “When prophesying of these times, therefore, Esaias says:

- “The wolf also shall feed with the lamb, and the leopard shall take his rest with the kid;”
- “the calf also, and the bull, and the lion shall eat together; and a little boy shall lead them.”
- “The ox and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall agree together;”
- “and the lion shall eat straw as well as the ox.”
- “And the infant boy shall thrust his hand into the asp’s den, into the nest also of the adder’s brood;”
- “and they shall do no harm, nor have power to hurt anything in my holy mountain.”

Irenaeus continues as he summarizes, “And again he says, in recapitulation, “Wolves and lambs shall then browse together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the serpent earth as if it were bread; and they shall neither hurt nor annoy anything in my holy mountain, saith the Lord,” referring to Isaiah 11:6-9. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “I am quite aware that some persons endeavour to refer these words to the case of savage men, both of different nations and various habits, who come to believe, and when they have believed, act in harmony with the righteous.” Irenaeus explains as he affirms, “But although this is [true] now with regard to some men coming from various nations to the harmony of the faith, nevertheless in the resurrection of the just [the words shall also apply] to those animals mentioned.” Irenaeus continues as he reasons, “For God is rich in all things. And it is right that when the creation is restored, all the animals should obey and be in subjection to man, and revert to the food originally given by God (for they had been originally subjected in obedience to

Adam), that is, the productions of the earth." Again Irenaeus affirms, "But some other occasion, and not the present, is [to be sought] for showing that the lion shall [then] feed on straw." And Irenaeus concludes as he again reasons, "And this indicates the large size and rich quality of the fruits. For if that animal, the lion, feeds upon straw [at that period], of what a quality must the wheat itself be whose straw shall serve as suitable food for lions?"

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "For this reason, when about to undergo His sufferings, that He might declare to Abraham and those with him the glad tidings of the inheritance being thrown open, [Christ], after He had given thanks while holding the cup, and had drunk of it, and given it to the disciples, said to them: "Drink ye all of it: this is My blood of the new covenant, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of this vine, until that day when I will drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," referring to **Matthew 26 (KJV):26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

I do not see any reference to Abraham in these words of Jesus, though Irenaeus correctly connects the time when Jesus will drink wine anew with the disciples in His Father's Kingdom at the resurrection of the just. Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, "Thus, then, He will Himself renew the inheritance of the earth, and will re-organize the mystery of the glory of [His] sons; as David says, "He who hath renewed the face of the earth," referring to **Psalm 104 (NASB):30** You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the ground.

Irenaeus then testifies, "He promised to drink of the fruit of the vine with His disciples, thus indicating both these points: the inheritance of the earth in which the new fruit of the vine is drunk, and the resurrection of His disciples in the flesh. For the new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup." This is true in part as we saw in **Chapter 6: His Teaching on the Resurrection**. When Christ arose from the dead, He said He had flesh and bones as we read in **Luke 24 (NASB):39** "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

But His body of flesh and bones is now imperishable. It is not a body of flesh and blood where the life is in the blood. The body that is raised imperishable has the Spirit as its life, and not the blood, and it is immortal. Irenaeus then combats Gnostic heresy as he affirms, "And He cannot by any means be understood as drinking of the fruit of the vine when settled down with his [disciples] above in a super-celestial place; nor, again, are they who drink it devoid of flesh, for to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not spirit." Irenaeus is correct. Our bodies at the resurrection will be changed to be like His glorious body, but they will still be bodies of flesh and bones. But our bodies will then be immortal. Jesus Himself ate and drank after He rose from the dead as we see in **Luke 24 (NASB):41** And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

And again in **Acts 10 (NASB):40** God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is*, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "And for this reason the Lord declared, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, do not call thy friends, nor thy neighbours, nor thy kinsfolk, lest they ask thee in return, and so repay thee. But call the lame, the blind, and the poor, and thou shall be blessed, since they cannot recompense thee, but a recompence shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just," referring to **Luke 14 (KJV):12** Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Irenaeus is pointing out that rewards will be given at the resurrection of the just for good deeds done in this life. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “And again He says, “Whosoever shall have left lands, or houses, or parents, or brethren, or children because of Me, he shall receive in this world an hundred-fold, and in that to come he shall inherit eternal life,” referring to **Luke 18 (KJV):29** And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, **30** Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Irenaeus then interprets as he says, “For what are the hundred-fold [rewards] in this world, the entertainments given to the poor, and the suppers for which a return is made? These are [to take place] in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes.”

However, we note that in Luke 18:29-30, Jesus says that those who left their possessions because of Him shall receive many times as much, that is, “an hundred-fold,” at this time, that is, in this world, or this lifetime. Jesus then adds that they will inherit eternal life in the world to come.

Irenaeus describes the “times of the Kingdom” as the “seventh day,” corresponding to the seven days in which the Lord made creation as we read in **Exodus 20 (KJV):11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

That is, Irenaeus believed that this Kingdom age would be a time of rest for the righteous. The Scriptures state that the Kingdom age will be a time when the sons of God will be manifest, or revealed, as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):19** For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

The manifestation of the sons of God will occur when all the righteous will have resurrected bodies which can no longer die. This is the time when the righteous are glorified as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (NASB):30** and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

That is, when we see Him we will be like Him as the apostle John reveals in **1 John 3 (NASB):2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

This manifestation or revealing of the sons of God, who have been resurrected and glorified like Jesus Christ, will be a rest of perfection, “which is the true Sabbath of the righteous,” as Irenaeus describes. This rest of perfection is also mentioned by Paul in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):8** Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part; **10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. **11** When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. **12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. **13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

What Paul is saying is that when Jesus comes, and we are resurrected, all sin will be removed from our lives, and we will be perfect knowing fully as we have been fully known. When we see Him, we will be like Him.

Now in paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts that, “The blessing of Isaac with which he blessed his younger son Jacob has the same meaning, when he says, “Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a full field which the Lord has blessed,” referring **Genesis 27 (KJV):27** And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

Again Irenaeus asserts, “But “the field is the world,” referring to Jesus’ explanation of the parable of the tares among the wheat in **Matthew 13 (KJV):36** Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. **37** He answered

and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

However, when Isaac was blessing his son Jacob, he did not use the word “field” in the same sense as Jesus used it in the parable of the tares among the wheat. Isaac uses the word “field” in Genesis 27:27 to mean abounding, that is, a field that “the Lord has blessed.” Jacob’s life was a sweet smelling offering, just like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. Jacob abounded in his soul with the presence of God because of his walk by faith. On the other hand, when Jesus uses the word “field” in Matthew 13:38, He is speaking of the world of mankind which has tares as well as wheat. There is therefore no connection between the two uses of the word, and therefore no connection between the two passages of Scripture, the one in Matthew, chapter 13, and the other in Genesis, chapter 27. Isaac was simply prophesying how blessed and pleasing to the Lord that his son Jacob was and would be in God’s sight.

Irenaeus continues as he again asserts, “And therefore he added, “God give to thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, plenty of corn and wine. And let the nations serve thee, and kings bow down to thee; and be thou lord over thy brother, and thy father’s sons shall bow down to thee: cursed shall be he who shall curse thee, and blessed shall be he who shall bless thee,” referring in context to **Genesis 27 (KJV):28** Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: 29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee. 30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

Again, this passage of Scripture has only a secondary connection to the times of the Kingdom. It has primarily to do with the life of Jacob and the nation of Israel. But Israel shall be the head of the nations in the Kingdom.

Irenaeus then judges that, “If any one, then, does not accept these things as referring to the appointed kingdom, he must fall into much contradiction and contrariety, as is the case with the Jews, who are involved in absolute perplexity. For not only did not the nations in this life serve this Jacob; but even after he had received the blessing, he himself going forth [from his home], served his uncle Laban the Syrian for twenty years,” referring to **Genesis 31 (KJV):41** Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

Jacob did serve his uncle Laban for twenty years, and the promises God made to Jacob were only partially fulfilled, and they shall reach their ultimate fulfillment in the Kingdom age. However, Jacob walked by faith as did Abraham. And they died in faith as we read in **Hebrews 11 (NASB):13** These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

And in **Hebrews 11 (NASB):21** By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Irenaeus continues as he asserts, “and not only was he not made lord of his brother, but he did himself bow down before his brother Esau, upon his return from Mesopotamia to his father, and offered many gifts to him,” referring in context to **Genesis 33 (HCSB):1** Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming toward him with 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two female slaves. 2 He put the female slaves and their children first, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3 He himself went on ahead and bowed to the ground seven times until he approached his brother.

But on this occasion Esau did no harm to Jacob and even embraced him as we read in **Genesis 33 (HCSB):4** But Esau ran to meet him, hugged him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. Then they wept.

Irenaeus continues as he then asks, “Moreover, in what way did he inherit much corn and wine here, he

who emigrated to Egypt because of the famine which possessed the land in which he was dwelling, and became subject to Pharaoh, who was then ruling over Egypt?" Irenaeus then asserts, "The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth." It is true that God's promises to Jacob shall reach their complete fulfillment in the Kingdom period. But they have been partially fulfilled up to the present time. Jacob did become a nation, the nation of Israel. God even changed his name to fulfill His promise as we read in **Genesis 32 (KJV):28** And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Esau was never again a factor in Jacob's life. And it was Jacob and his children who became a great nation, the nation of Israel, which has born rule over Esau and the brothers of Jacob. To blanketly assert that, "The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth," is to exceed what is written in the Scriptures. Irenaeus continues as he testifies,

- "as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times, and say: The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, "I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me."
- "In like manner [the Lord declared] that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds (quinque bilibres) of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions (secundum congruentiam iis consequentem);"
- "and that all animals feeding [only] on the productions of the earth, should [in those days] become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man," drawing from **Isaiah 11:6-9.**

In paragraph four, Irenaeus continues as he then testifies to Papias and Polycarp as he says, "And these things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled (*συντεταγμένα*) by him," referring to an **Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord** by Papias. Irenaeus continues as he now quotes Papias, "And he says in addition, "Now these things are credible to believers." And he says that, "when the traitor Judas did not give credit to them, and put the question, 'How then can things about to bring forth so abundantly be wrought by the Lord?' the Lord declared, 'They who shall come to these [times] shall see,'" referring to the five books that Papias is reputed to have written but of which only a small fragment remain. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "When prophesying of these times, therefore, Esaias says:

- "The wolf also shall feed with the lamb, and the leopard shall take his rest with the kid;"
- "the calf also, and the bull, and the lion shall eat together; and a little boy shall lead them."
- "The ox and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall agree together;"
- "and the lion shall eat straw as well as the ox."
- "And the infant boy shall thrust his hand into the asp's den, into the nest also of the adder's brood;"
- "and they shall do no harm, nor have power to hurt anything in my holy mountain."

Irenaeus continues as he summarizes, "And again he says, in recapitulation, "Wolves and lambs shall then browse together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the serpent earth as if it were bread; and they shall neither hurt nor annoy anything in my holy mountain, saith the Lord," referring in context to **Isaiah**

**11 (HCSB):6** The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat. The calf, the young lion, and the fatling will be together, and a child will lead them. **7** The cow and the bear will graze, their young ones will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. **8** An infant will play beside the cobra's pit, and a toddler will put his hand into a snake's den. **9** None will harm or destroy another on My entire holy mountain, for the land will be as full of the knowledge of the LORD as the sea is filled with water.

We note how faithfully Irenaeus quotes the Scriptures.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "I am quite aware that some persons endeavour to refer these words to the case of savage men, both of different nations and various habits, who come to believe, and when they have believed, act in harmony with the righteous." Irenaeus explains as he affirms, "But although this is [true] now with regard to some men coming from various nations to the harmony of the faith, nevertheless in the resurrection of the just [the words shall also apply] to those animals mentioned." Irenaeus continues as he reasons, "For God is rich in all things. And it is right that when the creation is restored, all the animals should obey and be in subjection to man, and revert to the food originally given by God (for they had been originally subjected in obedience to Adam), that is, the productions of the earth." Again Irenaeus affirms, "But some other occasion, and not the present, is [to be sought] for showing that the lion shall [then] feed on straw." And Irenaeus concludes as he again reasons, "And this indicates the large size and rich quality of the fruits. For if that animal, the lion, feeds upon straw [at that period], of what a quality must the wheat itself be whose straw shall serve as suitable food for lions?"

## Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter XXXIII

Irenaeus is quite correct in his assertion that Isaiah 11:6-9 is a future event, though it has application in a secondary sense to us today. Irenaeus says that he is aware of some who "endeavor to refer these words to the case of savage men, both of different nations and various habits, who come to believe, and when they have believed, act in harmony with the righteous." Irenaeus correctly shows that it has a secondary application in this sense. That is, when we believe in Christ there is a transformation of character that takes place which is undeniable. But the primary application of these verses in Isaiah, which Irenaeus referred to in the previous chapter, is of a future time when creation will be set free from its slavery into the glorious freedom of the children of God as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. **19** For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. **20** For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, **21** Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. **23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. **24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? **25** But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

## Book 5: Chapter XXXIV.—He fortifies his opinions with regard to the temporal and earthly kingdom of the saints after their resurrection, by the various testimonies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Daniel; also by the parable of the servants watching, to whom the Lord promised that He would minister.

1. Then, too, Isaiah himself has plainly declared that there shall be joy of this nature at the resurrection of the just, when he says: "The dead shall rise again; those, too, who are in the tombs shall arise, and those who are in the earth shall rejoice. For the dew from Thee is health to them."

**4747 Isa. xxvi. 19.** And this again Ezekiel also says: "Behold, I will open your tombs, and will bring you forth out of your graves; when I will draw my people from the sepulchres, and I will put breath in

you, and ye shall live; and I will place you on your own land, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.”

4748 **Ezek. xxxvii. 12, etc.** And again the same speaks thus: “These things saith the Lord, I will gather Israel from all nations whither they have been driven, and I shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the sons of the nations: and they shall dwell in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell in it in peace; and they shall build houses, and plant vineyards, and dwell in hope, when I shall cause judgment to fall among all who have dishonoured them, among those who encircle them round about; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and the God of their fathers.” 4749 **Ezek. xxviii. 25, 26.** Now I have shown a short time ago that the church is the seed of Abraham; and for this reason, that we may know that He who in the New Testament “raises up from the stones children unto Abraham,” 4750 **Matt. iii. 9.** is He who will gather, according to the Old Testament, those that shall be saved from all the nations, Jeremiah says: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, who led the children of Israel from the north, and from every region whither they had been driven; He will restore them to their own land which He gave to their fathers.” 4751 **Jer. xxiii. 6, 7.**

2. That the whole creation shall, according to God’s will, obtain a vast increase, that it may bring forth and sustain fruits such [as we have mentioned], Isaiah declares: “And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every prominent hill, water running everywhere in that day, when many shall perish, when walls shall fall. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, seven times that of the day, when He shall heal the anguish of His people, and do away with the pain of His stroke.” 4752 **Isa. xxx. 25, 26.** Now “the pain of the stroke” means that inflicted at the beginning upon disobedient man in Adam, that is, death; which [stroke] the Lord will heal when He raises us from the dead, and restores the inheritance of the fathers, as Isaiah again says: “And thou shall be confident in the Lord, and He will cause thee to pass over the whole earth, and feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob thy father.” 4753 **Isa. Iviii. 14.** This is what the Lord declared: “Happy are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down [to meat], and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the evening watch, and find them so, blessed are they, because He shall make them sit down, and minister to them; or if this be in the second, or it be in the third, blessed are they.”

4754 **Luke xii. 37, 38.** Again John also says the very same in the Apocalypse: “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.” 4755 **Rev. xx. 6.** Then, too, Isaiah has declared the time when these events shall occur; he says: “And I said, Lord, how long? Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses be without men, and the earth be left a desert. And after these things the Lord shall remove us men far away (*longe nos faciet Deus homines*), and those who shall remain shall multiply upon the earth.” 4756 **Isa. vi. 11.** Then Daniel also says this very thing: “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of those under the heaven, is given to the saints of the Most High God, whose kingdom is everlasting, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

4757 **Dan. vii. 27.** And lest the promise named should be understood as referring to this time, it was declared to the prophet: “And come thou, and stand in thy lot at the consummation of the days.”

4758 **Dan. xii. 13.**

3. Now, that the promises were not announced to the prophets and the fathers alone, but to the Churches united to these from the nations, whom also the Spirit terms “the islands” (both because they are established in the midst of turbulence, suffer the storm of blasphemies, exist as a harbour of safety to those in peril, and are the refuge of those who love the height [of heaven], and strive to avoid Bythus, that is, the depth of error), Jeremiah thus declares: “Hear the word of the Lord, ye nations, and declare it to the isles afar off; say ye, that the Lord will scatter Israel, He will gather him, and keep him, as one feeding his flock of sheep. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and rescued him from the hand of one stronger than he. And they shall come and rejoice in Mount Zion, and shall come to what is good, and into a land of wheat, and wine, and fruits, of animals and of sheep; and their soul shall be as a tree bearing fruit, and they shall hunger no more. At that time also shall the virgins rejoice in the company of the young men: the old men, too, shall be glad, and I will turn their sorrow into joy; and I will make them exult, and will magnify them, and satiate the souls of the priests

the sons of Levi; and my people shall be satiated with my goodness." 4759 *Jer. xxxi. 10*, etc. Now, in the preceding book 4760 See. iv. 8, 3. I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests, they who used in the temple to profane the Sabbath, but are blameless. 4761 *Matt. xii.* 5. Promises of such a nature, therefore, do indicate in the clearest manner the feasting of that creation in the kingdom of the righteous, which God promises that He will Himself serve.

4. Then again, speaking of Jerusalem, and of Him reigning there, Isaiah declares, "Thus saith the Lord, Happy is he who hath seed in Zion, and servants in Jerusalem. Behold, a righteous king shall reign, and princes shall rule with judgment." 4762 *Isa. xxxi. 9, Isa. xxxii. 1* And with regard to the foundation on which it shall be rebuilt, he says: "Behold, I will lay in order for thee a carbuncle stone, and sapphire for thy foundations; and I will lay thy ramparts with jasper, and thy gates with crystal, and thy wall with choice stones: and all thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children; and in righteousness shalt thou be built up." 4763 *Isa. liv. 11-14* And yet again does he say the same thing: "Behold, I make Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my people [a joy]; for the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Also there shall not be there any immature [one], nor an old man who does not fulfil his time: for the youth shall be of a hundred years; and the sinner shall die a hundred years old, yet shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them themselves; and shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them themselves, and shall drink wine. And they shall not build, and others inhabit; neither shall they prepare the vineyard, and others eat. For as the days of the tree of life shall be the days of the people in thee; for the works of their hands shall endure." 4764 *Isa. lxv. 18.*

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "Then, too, Isaiah himself has plainly declared that there shall be joy of this nature at the resurrection of the just, when he says: "The dead shall rise again; those, too, who are in the tombs shall arise, and those who are in the earth shall rejoice. For the dew from Thee is health to them," referring to Isaiah 26:19. Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, "And this again Ezekiel also says: "Behold, I will open your tombs, and will bring you forth out of your graves; when I will draw my people from the sepulchres, and I will put breath in you, and ye shall live; and I will place you on your own land, and ye shall know that I am the Lord," referring to Ezekiel 37:12. Irenaeus affirms further, "And again the same speaks thus: "These things saith the Lord, I will gather Israel from all nations whither they have been driven, and I shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the sons of the nations: and they shall dwell in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell in it in peace; and they shall build houses, and plant vineyards, and dwell in hope, when I shall cause judgment to fall among all who have dishonoured them, among those who encircle them round about; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and the God of their fathers," referring to Ezekiel 28:25-26. Irenaeus refers to the previous chapter in his writing as he asserts, "Now I have shown a short time ago that the church is the seed of Abraham; and for this reason, that we may know that He who in the New Testament "raises up from the stones children unto Abraham," referring to Matthew 3:9, "is He who will gather, according to the Old Testament, those that shall be saved from all the nations." Irenaeus then asserts that, "Jeremiah says: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, who led the children of Israel from the north, and from every region whither they had been driven; He will restore them to their own land which He gave to their fathers," referring to Jeremiah 23:6-7.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "That the whole creation shall, according to God's will, obtain a vast increase, that it may bring forth and sustain fruits such [as we have mentioned], Isaiah declares: "And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every prominent hill, water running everywhere in that day, when many shall perish, when walls shall fall. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, seven times that of the day, when He shall heal the anguish of His people, and do away with the pain of His stroke," referring to Isaiah 30:25-26. Irenaeus then asserts, "Now "the pain of the stroke" means that inflicted at the beginning upon disobedient man in Adam, that is, death; which [stroke] the Lord will heal when He raises us from the dead, and restores the inheritance of the fathers, as Isaiah again says: "And thou shall be confident in the Lord, and He will cause thee to pass over the whole earth, and feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob thy father," referring to Isaiah 58:14. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "This is what the Lord declared: "Happy are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird

Himself, and make them to sit down [to meat], and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the evening watch, and find them so, blessed are they, because He shall make them sit down, and minister to them; or if this be in the second, or it be in the third, blessed are they," referring to Luke 12:37-38. Irenaeus again testifies, "Again John also says the very same in the Apocalypse: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection," referring to Revelation 20:6. Irenaeus then asserts, "Then, too, Isaiah has declared the time when these events shall occur; he says: "And I said, Lord, how long? Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses be without men, and the earth be left a desert. And after these things the Lord shall remove us men far away (longe nos faciet Deus homines), and those who shall remain shall multiply upon the earth," referring to Isaiah 6:11. Irenaeus then affirms, "Then Daniel also says this very thing: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of those under the heaven, is given to the saints of the Most High God, whose kingdom is everlasting, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him," referring to Daniel 7:27. Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, "And lest the promise named should be understood as referring to this time, it was declared to the prophet: "And come thou, and stand in thy lot at the consummation of the days," referring to Daniel 12:13.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts, "Now, that the promises were not announced to the prophets and the fathers alone, but to the Churches united to these from the nations, whom also the Spirit terms "the islands" (both because they are established in the midst of turbulence, suffer the storm of blasphemies, exist as a harbour of safety to those in peril, and are the refuge of those who love the height [of heaven], and strive to avoid Bythus, that is, the depth of error), Jeremiah thus declares: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye nations, and declare it to the isles afar off; say ye, that the Lord will scatter Israel, He will gather him, and keep him, as one feeding his flock of sheep. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and rescued him from the hand of one stronger than he. And they shall come and rejoice in Mount Zion, and shall come to what is good, and into a land of wheat, and wine, and fruits, of animals and of sheep; and their soul shall be as a tree bearing fruit, and they shall hunger no more. At that time also shall the virgins rejoice in the company of the young men: the old men, too, shall be glad, and I will turn their sorrow into joy; and I will make them exult, and will magnify them, and satiate the souls of the priests the sons of Levi; and my people shall be satiated with my goodness," referring to Jeremiah 31:10-14. Again Irenaeus asserts, "Now, in the preceding book," referring to **Book 4: Chapter VIII**, **paragraph 3**, "I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests, they who used in the temple to profane the Sabbath, but are blameless," referring to Matthew 12:5. Irenaeus then affirms that, "Promises of such a nature, therefore, do indicate in the clearest manner the feasting of that creation in the kingdom of the righteous, which God promises that He will Himself serve," drawing from Luke 12:37.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, "Then again, speaking of Jerusalem, and of Him reigning there, Isaiah declares, "Thus saith the Lord, Happy is he who hath seed in Zion, and servants in Jerusalem. Behold, a righteous king shall reign, and princes shall rule with judgment," referring to Isaiah 31:9, and Isaiah 32:1. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "And with regard to the foundation on which it shall be rebuilt, he says: "Behold, I will lay in order for thee a carbuncle stone, and sapphire for thy foundations; and I will lay thy ramparts with jasper, and thy gates with crystal, and thy wall with choice stones: and all thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children; and in righteousness shalt thou be built up," referring to Isaiah 54:11-14. Irenaeus then affirms further, "And yet again does he say the same thing: "Behold, I make Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my people [a joy]; for the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Also there shall not be there any immature [one], nor an old man who does not fulfil his time: for the youth shall be of a hundred years; and the sinner shall die a hundred years old, yet shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them themselves; and shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them themselves, and shall drink wine. And they shall not build, and others inhabit; neither shall they prepare the vineyard, and others eat. For as the days of the tree of life shall be the days of the people in thee; for the works of their hands shall endure," referring to Isaiah 65:18.

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "Then, too, Isaiah himself has plainly declared that there shall be joy of this nature at the resurrection of the just, when he says: "The dead shall rise again; those, too, who are in the tombs shall arise, and those who are in the earth shall rejoice. For the dew from Thee is health to them," referring to **Isaiah 26 (KJV):19** Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall

they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Yes, there shall be joy at the resurrection of the just, or the resurrection of the righteous, as we read in **Luke 14 (KJV):14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “And this again Ezekiel also says: “Behold, I will open your tombs, and will bring you forth out of your graves; when I will draw my people from the sepulchres, and I will put breath in you, and ye shall live; and I will place you on your own land, and ye shall know that I am the Lord,” referring to **Ezekiel 37 (KJV):12** Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

Irenaeus then affirms further, “And again the same speaks thus: “These things saith the Lord, I will gather Israel from all nations whither they have been driven, and I shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the sons of the nations: and they shall dwell in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell in it in peace; and they shall build houses, and plant vineyards, and dwell in hope, when I shall cause judgment to fall among all who have dishonoured them, among those who encircle them round about; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and the God of their fathers,” referring to **Ezekiel 28 (KJV):25** Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. 26 And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God.

Irenaeus then refers to the previous chapter of his writing, **Book 5: Chapter XXXIII**, as he asserts, “Now I have shown a short time ago that the church is the seed of Abraham; and for this reason, that we may know that He who in the New Testament “raises up from the stones children unto Abraham,” referring to **Matthew 3 (KJV):9** And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Irenaeus is saying that those in the Church are as it were “stones” raised up as children to Abraham since they are not children of natural descent. As we look at the context in which this verse is written however, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, is baptizing in the Jordan river and the Jews were coming to him confessing their sins as we read in **Matthew 3 (KJV):4** And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came for baptism, John saw through their hypocrisy and told them the truth about their need for repentance as we read in **Matthew 3 (KJV):7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

John was saying that it is not enough to have Abraham as our father according to natural descent. We must repent, and walk in the faith of our father Abraham to be a son of God, just as John was encouraging the Jews to do at that time. Irenaeus then continues as he asserts that the one who “raises up from the stones children unto Abraham, is He who will gather, according to the Old Testament, those that shall be saved from all the nations.” This is true. The God of the Old Testament who raised up stones to be the children to Abraham from the Jews is the same God in the New Testament who raises up stones from all the nations to be children to Abraham. All who walk in the faith that Abraham had are the seed of Abraham, just as the Jews who had faith were Abraham’s descendants, for without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Again, to repeat for context, Irenaeus says, “Now I have shown a short time ago that the church is the seed of Abraham; and for this reason, that we may know that He who in the New Testament “raises up from the stones children unto Abraham,” referring to Matthew 3:9, “is He who will gather, according to the Old

Testament, those that shall be saved from all the nations. Jeremiah says: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, who led the children of Israel from the north, and from every region whither they had been driven; He will restore them to their own land which He gave to their fathers," referring to **Jeremiah 23 (KJV):7** Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Irenaeus is placing the Church in the Old Testament as if the prophecies that were spoken over Israel somehow now relate to the Church. However, he does not quote verse eight above in its entirety. The verse refers to the Lord bringing back the "seed of the house of Israel," from all the countries where He had driven them. This is not a reference to the Church, but to the regathering of Israel in the time of the end. Israel has been put aside until the fullness of the Gentiles comes into the Church. The Lord will again deal with Israel when the Church is taken out of the way. This is important to understand when we seek to know what the Bible says about future events.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "That the whole creation shall, according to God's will, obtain a vast increase, that it may bring forth and sustain fruits such [as we have mentioned], Isaiah declares: "And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every prominent hill, water running everywhere in that day, when many shall perish, when walls shall fall. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, seven times that of the day, when He shall heal the anguish of His people, and do away with the pain of His stroke," referring to **Isaiah 30 (NASB):25** On every lofty mountain and on every high hill there will be streams running with water on the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. 26 The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times *brighter*, like the light of seven days, on the day the LORD binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted.

However, Irenaeus then asserts, "Now "the pain of the stroke" means that inflicted at the beginning upon disobedient man in Adam, that is, death; which [stroke] the Lord will heal when He raises us from the dead, and restores the inheritance of the fathers, as Isaiah again says: "And thou shall be confident in the Lord, and He will cause thee to pass over the whole earth, and feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob thy father," referring to **Isaiah 58 (KJV):14** Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

But this verse tells of God speaking directly to Israel through Isaiah, the prophet of Israel. Irenaeus takes these verses completely out of the context in which they were written in order to support his opinion that the Church will replace Israel in God's plans and purposes. As we first look at the context in which Isaiah 30:25-26, is written, we see that God is speaking to the sons of Israel as we read in **Isaiah 30 (KJV):1** Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: 2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! 3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

Again Isaiah prophesies the words of the Lord as he says in **Isaiah 30 (KJV):9** That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: 10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: 11 Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

And as we continue in Isaiah, chapter 30, he then prophesies in **Isaiah 30 (KJV):12** Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: 13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. 14 And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit. 15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. 16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. 17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

Israel had rejected the word of the Lord, and so they were about to fall like a bulge in a high wall whose collapse is like “the breaking of the potters’ vessel that is broken in pieces.” But yet, the Lord still longs to be gracious to Israel and will heal the bruise He has inflicted as Isaiah continues his prophecy in **Isaiah**

**30 (KJV):18** And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him. **19** For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. **20** And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: **21** And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. **22** Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstrual cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. **23** Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. **24** The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. **25** And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. **26** Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

That the “pain of the stroke” does not refer to the stroke of the curse when Adam sinned, but to the stroke on Israel when they were led into captivity, is also plainly evident by the words of Jeremiah the prophet in **Jeremiah 5 (KJV):3** O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

Again we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):12** For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. **13** There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. **14** All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased. **15** Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.

Again, speaking to Israel, the Lord says through Ezekiel as we read in **Ezekiel 7 (NASB):9** My eye will show no pity nor will I spare. I will repay you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst; then you will know that I, the LORD, do the smiting.

So it is clear from the Scriptures that by the “pain of His stroke” is meant the pain that the Lord inflicted on Israel for their refusal to repent and obey Him. But the Lord is so gracious, He will heal the bruise He has inflicted on Israel one day in the future, just as He has promised.

Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “This is what the Lord declared: “Happy are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down [to meat], and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the evening watch, and find them so, blessed are they, because He shall make them sit down, and minister to them; or if this be in the second, or it be in the third, blessed are they,” referring to **Luke 12 (KJV):35** Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; **36** And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. **37** Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. **38** And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “Again John also says the very same in the Apocalypse: “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection,” referring to **Revelation 20 (KJV):6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Irenaeus then asserts, “Then, too, Isaiah has declared the time when these events shall occur; he says: “And I said, Lord, how long? Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses be without men, and the earth be left a desert. And after these things the Lord shall remove us men far away (longe nos faciet Deus homines), and those who shall remain shall multiply upon the earth,” referring to **Isaiah 6 (KJV):11** Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, 12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

However, this prophecy was a word from the Lord directly to the nation of Israel which was going to be as a potter’s jar that had been smashed as we saw in Isaiah 30:14 above. Thus their cities would be devastated and the land utterly desolate. Irenaeus is confusing the time of the Kingdom age with the judgment on Israel in Isaiah’s time.

Irenaeus then affirms, “Then Daniel also says this very thing: “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of those under the heaven, is given to the saints of the Most High God, whose kingdom is everlasting, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him,” referring to **Daniel 7 (KJV):27** And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Daniel is speaking of the time of the Kingdom age, but again, Irenaeus is confusing this passage in Daniel with the passage in Isaiah. Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “And lest the promise named should be understood as referring to this time, it was declared to the prophet: “And come thou, and stand in thy lot at the consummation of the days,” referring to **Daniel 12 (KJV):13** “As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.”

That Daniel is speaking of the end time is revealed the previous verses as we read in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Daniel and Isaiah are speaking of two different time periods. Isaiah, chapter 30, speaks of a time when Israel would be smashed as a potters vessel, but then restored by the Lord’s great compassion and gracious hand. Daniel speaks of the end time. We will discuss Daniel more thoroughly shortly.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts, “Now, that the promises were not announced to the prophets and the fathers alone, but to the Churches united to these from the nations, whom also the Spirit terms “the islands” (both because they are established in the midst of turbulence, suffer the storm of blasphemies, exist as a harbour of safety to those in peril, and are the refuge of those who love the height [of heaven], and strive to avoid Bythus, that is, the depth of error), Jeremiah thus declares: “Hear the word of the Lord, ye nations, and declare it to the isles afar off; say ye, that the Lord will scatter Israel, He will gather him, and keep him, as one feeding his flock of sheep. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and rescued him from the hand of one stronger than he. And they shall come and rejoice in Mount Zion, and shall come to what is good, and into a land of wheat, and wine, and fruits, of animals and of sheep; and their soul shall be as a tree bearing fruit, and they shall hunger no more. At that time also shall the virgins rejoice in the company of the young men: the old men, too, shall be glad, and I will turn their sorrow into joy; and I will make them exult, and will magnify them, and satiate the souls of the priests the sons of Levi; and my people shall be satiated with my goodness,” referring to **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):10** Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. 11 For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. 12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. 13 Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will

turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. 14 And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

Irenaeus is again battling the Gnostics who believed that there was a god behind the God of the Old Testament, that is, Bythus, the “depth of error,” as Irenaeus says, and the unknown god. But the passage Irenaeus quotes says that the Lord will “scatter Israel,” and that “He will gather him, and keep him, as one feeding his flock of sheep.” This is a promise directly to Israel, and not to the unbelieving nations to whom Jeremiah addresses. The Lord is telling the unbelieving nations that He has scattered Israel, but has promised that He will gather him again. That is, Israel will be regathered and they will yet “rejoice in Mount Zion.” The Lord spoke this prophecy so those in the nations He has chosen would believe in Him.

Again Irenaeus asserts, “Now, in the preceding book,” referring to **Book 4: Chapter 8, paragraph 3**, which we discussed in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood**, “I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests, they who used in the temple to profane the Sabbath, but are blameless,” referring to **Matthew 12 (KJV):5** Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

Irenaeus is referring back to Jeremiah 31:14, which he just quoted when he said, “and will magnify them, and satiate the souls of the priests the sons of Levi,” above, as if this applied to the Church. However, we showed in our discussion in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood**, that all the disciples of the Lord in the New Testament are believer priests, but that the law of the priesthood is not valid in the Church. It is possible that the Levitical priesthood will be reestablished when Israel is again made the head of the nations in the Kingdom age, but that will be for Israel and will only symbolize what Jesus has already done for them on the cross. Jeremiah is referring to the future regathering and blessing of Israel in the Kingdom age.

Irenaeus then affirms that, “Promises of such a nature, therefore, do indicate in the clearest manner the feasting of that creation in the kingdom of the righteous, which God promises that He will Himself serve,” drawing again from Luke 12:37, as we read again in **Luke 12 (KJV):37** Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus affirms, “Then again, speaking of Jerusalem, and of Him reigning there, Isaiah declares, “Thus saith the Lord, Happy is he who hath seed in Zion, and servants in Jerusalem. Behold, a righteous king shall reign, and princes shall rule with judgment,” referring to **Isaiah 31 (Septuagint):9** for they shall be compassed with rocks as with a trench, and shall be worsted; and he that flees shall be taken. Thus saith the Lord, Blessed is he that has a seed in Sion, and household friends in Jerusalem.

And to **Isaiah 32 (Septuagint):1** For, behold, a righteous king shall reign, and princes shall govern with judgment.

Another translation has it as in **Isaiah 31 (KJV):9** And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

And as in **Isaiah 32 (KJV):1** Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “And with regard to the foundation on which it shall be rebuilt, he says: “Behold, I will lay in order for thee a carbuncle stone, and sapphire for thy foundations; and I will lay thy ramparts with jasper, and thy gates with crystal, and thy wall with choice stones: and all thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children; and in righteousness shalt thou be built up,” referring to **Isaiah 54 (KJV):11** O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. 12 And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. 13 And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. 14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

Irenaeus then testifies further, “And yet again does he say the same thing: “Behold, I make Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my people [a joy]; for the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Also there shall not be there any immature [one], nor an old man who does not fulfil his time: for the youth shall be of a hundred years; and the sinner shall die a hundred years old, yet shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them themselves; and shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them themselves, and

shall drink wine. And they shall not build, and others inhabit; neither shall they prepare the vineyard, and others eat. For as the days of the tree of life shall be the days of the people in thee; for the works of their hands shall endure," referring to **Isaiah 65 (KJV):19** And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

To summarize, Irenaeus is placing the Church in the Old Testament as if the prophecies that were spoken over Israel somehow now relate to the Church. However, we saw that he does not quote Jeremiah 23:8 in its entirety. The verse refers to the Lord bringing back the "the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them." This is not a reference to the Church, but to the regathering of Israel in the time of the end. Israel has been put aside until the fullness of the Gentiles comes into the Church. The Lord will again deal with Israel when the Church is taken out of the way at the rapture.

Irenaeus leads the reader to believe that this promise is for the Church which he believes replaces Israel in God's plans. In reality though, the Church has not replaced Israel forever, but only temporarily until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, as Paul reveals in **Romans 11 (KJV):25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Evidently Irenaeus was "ignorant of this mystery." Irenaeus did not see that the seventieth week of Daniel was still to occur for Israel after the Church was taken out of the way, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

We will discuss this more shortly.

## **Book 5: Chapter XXXV.—He contends that these testimonies already alleged cannot be understood allegorically of celestial blessings, but that they shall have their fulfilment after the coming of Antichrist, and the resurrection, in the terrestrial Jerusalem. To the former prophecies he subjoins others drawn from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Apocalypse of John.**

1. If, however, any shall endeavour to allegorize [prophecies] of this kind, they shall not be found consistent with themselves in all points, and shall be confuted by the teaching of the very expressions [in question]. For example: "When the cities" of the Gentiles "shall be desolate, so that they be not inhabited, and the houses so that there shall be no men in them and the land shall be left desolate."

**4765 Isa. vi. 11.** "For, behold," says Isaiah, "the day of the Lord cometh past remedy, full of fury and wrath, to lay waste the city of the earth, and to root sinners out of it." **4766 Isa. xiii. 9.** And again he says, "Let him be taken away, that he behold not the glory of God." **4767 Isa. xxvi. 10.** And when these things are done, he says, "God will remove men far away, and those that are left shall multiply in the earth." **4768 Isa. vi. 12.** "And they shall build houses, and shall inhabit them themselves: and plant vineyards, and eat of them themselves." **4769 Isa. lxv. 21.** For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to]

those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one. For it is in reference to them that the prophet says: "And those that are left shall multiply upon the earth," And Jeremiah 4770 The long quotation following is not found in Jeremiah, but in the apocryphal book of Baruch iv. 36, etc., and the whole of Baruch v. the prophet has pointed out, that as many believers as God has prepared for this purpose, to multiply those left upon earth, should both be under the rule of the saints to minister to this Jerusalem, and that [His] kingdom shall be in it, saying, "Look around Jerusalem towards the east, and behold the joy which comes to thee from God Himself. Behold, thy sons shall come whom thou hast sent forth: they shall come in a band from the east even unto the west, by the word of that Holy One, rejoicing in that splendour which is from thy God. O Jerusalem, put off thy robe of mourning and of affliction, and put on that beauty of eternal splendour from thy God. Gird thyself with the double garment of that righteousness proceeding from thy God; place the mitre of eternal glory upon thine head. For God will show thy glory to the whole earth under heaven. For thy name shall for ever be called by God Himself, the peace of righteousness and glory to him that worships God. Arise, Jerusalem, stand on high, and look towards the east, and behold thy sons from the rising of the sun, even to the west, by the Word of that Holy One, rejoicing in the very remembrance of God. For the footmen have gone forth from thee, while they were drawn away by the enemy. God shall bring them in to thee, being borne with glory as the throne of a kingdom. For God has decreed that every high mountain shall be brought low, and the eternal hills, and that the valleys be filled, so that the surface of the earth be rendered smooth, that Israel, the glory of God, may walk in safety. The woods, too, shall make shady places, and every sweet-smelling tree shall be for Israel itself by the command of God. For God shall go before with joy in the light of His splendour, with the pity and righteousness which proceeds from Him."

2. Now all these things being such as they are, cannot be understood in reference to super-celestial matters; "for God," it is said, "will show to the whole earth that is under heaven thy glory." But in the times of the kingdom, the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above, of which the prophet Isaiah says, "Behold, I have depicted thy walls upon my hands, and thou art always in my sight." 4771 Isa. xlix. 16. And the apostle, too, writing to the Galatians, says in like manner, "But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." 4772 Gal. iv. 26. He does not say this with any thought of an erratic *Æon*, or of any other power which departed from the Pleroma, or of Prunicus, but of the Jerusalem which has been delineated on [God's] hands. And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth. 4773 Rev. xxi. 2. For after the times of the kingdom, he says, "I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them." 4774 Rev. xx. 11. And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment, mentioning "the dead, great and small." "The sea," he says, "gave up the dead which it had in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead that they contained; and the books were opened. Moreover," he says, "the book of life was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; and death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death." 4775 Rev. xx. 12–14. Now this is what is called Gehenna, which the Lord styled eternal fire. 4776 Matt. xxv. 41. "And if any one," it is said, "was not found written in the book of life, he was sent into the lake of fire." 4777 Rev. xx. 15. And after this, he says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth have passed away; also there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband." "And I heard," it is said, "a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them as their God. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things have passed away." 4778 Rev. xxi. 1–4. Isaiah also declares the very same: "For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and there shall be no remembrance of the former, neither shall the heart think about them, but they shall find in it joy and

exultation." 4779 Isa. lxv. 17, 18. Now this is what has been said by the apostle: "For the fashion of this world passeth away." 4780 1 Cor. vii. 31. To the same purpose did the Lord also declare, "Heaven and earth shall pass away." 4781 Matt. xxvi. 35. When these things, therefore, pass away above the earth, John, the Lord's disciple, says that the new Jerusalem above shall [then] descend, as a bride adorned for her husband; and that this is the tabernacle of God, in which God will dwell with men. Of this Jerusalem the former one is an image—that Jerusalem of the former earth in which the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation. And of this tabernacle Moses received the pattern in the mount; 4782 Ex. xxv. 40. and nothing is capable of being allegorized, but all things are steadfast, and true, and substantial, having been made by God for righteous men's enjoyment. For as it is God truly who raises up man, so also does man truly rise from the dead, and not allegorically, as I have shown repeatedly. And as he rises actually, so also shall he be actually disciplined beforehand for incorruption, and shall go forwards and flourish in the times of the kingdom, in order that he may be capable of receiving the glory of the Father. Then, when all things are made new, he shall truly dwell in the city of God. For it is said, "He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And the Lord says, Write all this; for these words are faithful and true. And He said to me, They are done." 4783 Rev. xxi. 5, 6. And this is the truth of the matter.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "If, however, any shall endeavour to allegorize [prophecies] of this kind, they shall not be found consistent with themselves in all points, and shall be confuted by the teaching of the very expressions [in question]." Irenaeus then continues as he asserts, "For example: "When the cities" of the Gentiles "shall be desolate, so that they be not inhabited, and the houses so that there shall be no men in them and the land shall be left desolate," referring to Isaiah 6:11. Irenaeus then adds, "For, behold," says Isaiah, "the day of the Lord cometh past remedy, full of fury and wrath, to lay waste the city of the earth, and to root sinners out of it," referring to Isaiah 13:9. Irenaeus then adds, "And again he says, "Let him be taken away, that he behold not the glory of God," referring to Isaiah 26:10. Irenaeus then continues as he adds further, "And when these things are done, he says, "God will remove men far away, and those that are left shall multiply in the earth," referring to Isaiah 6:12. Again Irenaeus adds, "And they shall build houses, and shall inhabit them themselves: and plant vineyards, and eat of them themselves," referring to Isaiah 65:21. And Irenaeus then asserts, "For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one." Again Irenaeus asserts, "For it is in reference to them that the prophet says: "And those that are left shall multiply upon the earth," referring again to Isaiah 6:12. And Irenaeus then quotes Baruch 4:36, and all of Baruch, chapter 5 which he attributes to Jeremiah as he says, "And Jeremiah the prophet has pointed out, that as many believers as God has prepared for this purpose, to multiply those left upon earth, should both be under the rule of the saints to minister to this Jerusalem, and that [His] kingdom shall be in it, saying, "Look around Jerusalem towards the east, and behold the joy which comes to thee from God Himself. Behold, thy sons shall come whom thou hast sent forth: they shall come in a band from the east even unto the west, by the word of that Holy One, rejoicing in that splendour which is from thy God. O Jerusalem, put off thy robe of mourning and of affliction, and put on that beauty of eternal splendour from thy God. Gird thyself with the double garment of that righteousness proceeding from thy God; place the mitre of eternal glory upon thine head. For God will show thy glory to the whole earth under heaven. For thy name shall for ever be called by God Himself, the peace of righteousness and glory to him that worships God. Arise, Jerusalem, stand on high, and look towards the east, and behold thy sons from the rising of the sun, even to the west, by the Word of that Holy One, rejoicing in the very remembrance of God. For the footmen have gone forth from thee, while they were drawn away by the enemy. God shall bring them in to thee, being borne with glory as the throne of a kingdom. For God has decreed that every high mountain shall be brought low, and the

eternal hills, and that the valleys be filled, so that the surface of the earth be rendered smooth, that Israel, the glory of God, may walk in safety. The woods, too, shall make shady places, and every sweet-smelling tree shall be for Israel itself by the command of God. For God shall go before with joy in the light of His splendour, with the pity and righteousness which proceeds from Him."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies, "Now all these things being such as they are, cannot be understood in reference to super-celestial matters; "for God," it is said, "will show to the whole earth that is under heaven thy glory," possibly referring to Isaiah 40:5. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "But in the times of the kingdom, the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above, of which the prophet Isaiah says, "Behold, I have depicted thy walls upon my hands, and thou art always in my sight," referring to Isaiah 49:16. Irenaeus then testifies, "And the apostle, too, writing to the Galatians, says in like manner, "But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all," referring to Galatians 4:26. Irenaeus then affirms, "He does not say this with any thought of an erratic *Aeon*, or of any other power which departed from the Pleroma, or of Prunicus, but of the Jerusalem which has been delineated on [God's] hands." And Irenaeus then testifies, "And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth," referring to Revelations 21:1-2. Again Irenaeus testifies, "For after the times of the kingdom, he says, "I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them," referring to Revelation 20:11. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment, mentioning "the dead, great and small." "The sea," he says, "gave up the dead which it had in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead that they contained; and the books were opened. Moreover," he says, "the book of life was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; and death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death," referring to Revelations 20:12-14. Irenaeus then explains, "Now this is what is called Gehenna, which the Lord styled eternal fire," referring to Matthew 5:22 and Matthew 25:41. Again Irenaeus testifies, "And if any one," it is said, "was not found written in the book of life, he was sent into the lake of fire," referring to Revelation 20:15. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "And after this, he says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth have passed away; also there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband." "And I heard," it is said, "a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them as their God. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things have passed away," referring to Revelation 21:1-4. And Irenaeus then affirms, "Isaiah also declares the very same: "For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and there shall be no remembrance of the former, neither shall the heart think about them, but they shall find in it joy and exultation," referring to Isaiah 65:17-18. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "Now this is what has been said by the apostle: "For the fashion of this world passeth away," referring to 1 Corinthians 7:31. Again Irenaeus continues to testify as he says, "To the same purpose did the Lord also declare, "Heaven and earth shall pass away," referring to Matthew 24:35. Irenaeus then reaches for truth as he testifies, "When these things, therefore, pass away above the earth, John, the Lord's disciple, says that the new Jerusalem above shall [then] descend, as a bride adorned for her husband; and that this is the tabernacle of God, in which God will dwell with men," referring to Revelation 21:9-27. Irenaeus then asserts, "Of this Jerusalem the former one is an image—that Jerusalem of the former earth in which the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation. And of this tabernacle Moses received the pattern in the mount," referring to Exodus 25:40. Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, "and nothing is capable of being allegorized, but all things are steadfast, and true, and substantial, having been made by God for righteous men's enjoyment. For as it is God truly who raises up man, so also does man truly rise from the dead, and not allegorically, as I have shown repeatedly. And as he rises actually, so also shall he be actually disciplined beforehand for incorruption, and shall go forwards and flourish in the times of the kingdom, in order that he may be capable of receiving the glory of the Father. Then, when all things are made new, he shall truly dwell in the city of God. For it is said, "He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And the Lord says, Write all this; for these words are faithful and true. And He said to me, They are done," referring to Revelation 21:5-6. Irenaeus concludes, "And this is the truth of the matter."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “If, however, any shall endeavour to allegorize [prophecies] of this kind, they shall not be found consistent with themselves in all points, and shall be confuted by the teaching of the very expressions [in question].” Irenaeus then continues as he asserts, “For example: “When the cities” of the Gentiles “shall be desolate, so that they be not inhabited, and the houses so that there shall be no men in them and the land shall be left desolate,” referring to **Isaiah 6 (KJV):11** Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

Irenaeus then adds, “For, behold,” says Isaiah, “the day of the Lord cometh past remedy, full of fury and wrath, to lay waste the city of the earth, and to root sinners out of it,” referring to **Isaiah 13 (KJV):9** Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

But these two passages refer to different times. Irenaeus has again taken things out of context. In Isaiah, chapter 6, the Lord is sending Isaiah to tell Israel that He will chasten them for their lack of repentance as we read in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):8** Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. 11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, 12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. 13 But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

Israel will be like an oak tree that was cut down. Yet, the Lord says, there will be a tenth portion in it. That is, a stump of holy seed as it were. Isaiah is saying that Israel would go into captivity, but a stump of holy seed would remain. Isaiah began prophesying in the year 740, the year King Uzziah, who was king of the northern kingdom of Israel, died as we read in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):1** In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

In fact, Isaiah speaks of this in the previous chapter as we read in **Isaiah 5 (KJV):1** Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? 5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

And Isaiah even predicts Israel’s exile in **Isaiah 5 (KJV):13** Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. 14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. 15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: 16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. 17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

Israel had mocked the Holy One of Israel and needed to repent of their sin as we read in **Isaiah 5 (KJV):18** Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: 19 That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it! 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put

darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! 22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: 23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

Israel would eventually go into captivity in 723 B.C., being taken captives by Assyria. Isaiah was asking the Lord how long the captivity would last. This is the context of Isaiah, chapter 6.

But in Isaiah 13:9, the Lord speaks through Isaiah about the day of the LORD that is coming. The chapter begins as we read in **Isaiah 13 (KJV):1** The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

But before Isaiah prophesies of the fall of Babylon, he prophesies about the “day of the Lord,” as we see in **Isaiah 13 (KJV):6** Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: 8 And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. 9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. 10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. 11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. 12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

The time when the sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light, and when the Lord will punish the world for its evil, will be the time of the end. But Babylon would fall also as we continue in **Isaiah 13 (KJV):14** And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land. 15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword. 16 Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. 17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. 18 Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eyes shall not spare children. 19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. 22 And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

So Isaiah 13:9 relates to the judgment that would befall the world when the day of the Lord comes. But Isaiah also speaks of a time when Babylon would fall, which it did ultimately in 539 B.C. by the Medes and the Persians. However the judgment of Israel is spoken of in Isaiah 6:11.

Irenaeus then adds, “And again he says, “Let him be taken away, that he behold not the glory of God,” referring to **Isaiah 26 (Septuagint):10** For the ungodly one is put down: no one who will not learn righteousness on the earth, shall be able to do the truth: let the ungodly be taken away, that he see not the glory of the Lord.

This also reads as in **Isaiah 26 (NASB):10** Though the wicked is shown favor, He does not learn righteousness; He deals unjustly in the land of uprightness, And does not perceive the majesty of the LORD.

Irenaeus continues as he adds, “And when these things are done, he says, “God will remove men far away, and those that are left shall multiply in the earth,” referring to **Isaiah 6 (Septuagint):12** And after this God shall remove the men far off, and they that are left upon the land shall be multiplied.

This also reads as in **Isaiah 6 (NASB):12** “The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

However, as we saw in our discussion of Isaiah, chapter 6 above, this verse relates to a judgment on Israel. And again Irenaeus adds, “And they shall build houses, and shall inhabit them themselves: and plant

vineyards, and eat of them themselves,” referring to **Isaiah 65 (KJV):21** And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

This verse relates to the time when Israel will be regathered and enter the Kingdom age as we read in **Isaiah 65 (KJV):8** Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. 9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. 10 And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

And Irenaeus then asserts, “For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one.”

It is true that some of the verses quoted by Irenaeus relate to the resurrection of the just. But see how Irenaeus places the order of events in paragraph one relating to Isaiah’s words of prophecy in Isaiah, chapter 6,13,26, and 65 which Irenaeus quotes from. We list them here in sequence, all from paragraph one:

- “For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule”
- “in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord”
- “and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings”
- “and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one,” these shall “multiply upon the earth”

Again Irenaeus asserts, “For it is in reference to them that the prophet says: “And those that are left shall multiply upon the earth,” referring again to Isaiah 6:12, in the Septuagint version above. And Irenaeus then quotes Baruch 4:36, and all of Baruch, chapter 5 which he attributes to Jeremiah as he says, “And Jeremiah the prophet has pointed out, that as many believers as God has prepared for this purpose, to multiply those left upon earth, should both be under the rule of the saints to minister to this Jerusalem, and that [His] kingdom shall be in it, saying, “Look around Jerusalem towards the east, and behold the joy which comes to thee from God Himself. Behold, thy sons shall come whom thou hast sent forth: they shall come in a band from the east even unto the west, by the word of that Holy One, rejoicing in that splendour which is from thy God. O Jerusalem, put off thy robe of mourning and of affliction, and put on that beauty of eternal splendour from thy God. Gird thyself with the double garment of that righteousness proceeding from thy God; place the mitre of eternal glory upon thine head. For God will show thy glory to the whole earth under heaven. For thy name shall for ever be called by God Himself, the peace of righteousness and glory to him that worships God. Arise, Jerusalem, stand on high, and look towards the east, and behold thy sons from the rising of the sun, even to the west, by the Word of that Holy One, rejoicing in the very remembrance of God. For the footmen have gone forth from thee, while they were drawn away by the enemy. God shall bring them in to thee, being borne with glory as the throne of a kingdom. For God has decreed that every high mountain shall be brought low, and the eternal hills, and that the valleys be filled, so that the surface of the earth be rendered smooth, that Israel, the glory of God, may walk in safety. The woods, too, shall make shady places, and every sweet-smelling tree shall be for Israel itself by the command of God. For God shall go before with joy in the light of His splendour, with the pity and

righteousness which proceeds from Him."

We must remember that Baruch is an apocryphal book. While all of this passage in Baruch is not Scripture, it is in accord with Scripture. However, Irenaeus understands it to be about the Church.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies as he warns against the Gnostics and says, "Now all these things being such as they are, cannot be understood in reference to super-celestial matters; "for God," it is said, "will show to the whole earth that is under heaven thy glory," possibly referring to **Isaiah 40 (KJV):5** And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "But in the times of the kingdom, the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above, of which the prophet Isaiah says, "Behold, I have depicted thy walls upon my hands, and thou art always in my sight," referring to **Isaiah 49 (NASB):16** "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

There will be changes in the earth but I don't know if it will be "called again by Christ [to its pristine condition]," as Irenaeus suggests. Also, the Scripture does not say that Jerusalem will be "rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above." Verse 16 of Isaiah, chapter 49, which Irenaeus refers to, depicts the love and faithfulness of the Lord to Israel, and that is all. The Lord has sworn that He will not forsake Jerusalem as we read in **Isaiah 62 (KJV):1** For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. **2** And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. **3** Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. **4** Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. **5** For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. **6** I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, **7** And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. **8** The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: **9** But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.

Irenaeus then testifies, "And the apostle, too, writing to the Galatians, says in like manner, "But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all," referring to **Galatians 4 (NASB):26** But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Irenaeus then affirms, "He does not say this with any thought of an erratic Æon, or of any other power which departed from the Pleroma, or of Prunicus, but of the Jerusalem which has been delineated on [God's] hands." And Irenaeus then testifies, "And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth," referring to **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. **2** And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Again Irenaeus testifies, "For after the times of the kingdom, he says, "I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them," referring to **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Irenaeus correctly places the time of the great white throne judgment after the thousand year reign of Christ in the Kingdom age. He continues as he testifies, "And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment, mentioning "the dead, great and small." "The sea," he says, "gave up the dead which it had in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead that they contained; and the books were opened. Moreover," he says, "the book of life was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; and death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death," referring to **Revelation 20 (KJV):12** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of

those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Irenaeus then explains, "Now this is what is called Gehenna, which the Lord styled eternal fire," referring to **Matthew 5 (NASB):22** "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ' You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.

And to **Matthew 25 (NASB):41** "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

The word translated "hell" in Matthew 5:22 is γέεννα (pronounced geenna). Vine's says that this word "represents the Hebrew Ge-Hinnom (the valley of Tophet) and a corresponding Aramaic word; it is found twelve times in the N.T., eleven of which are in the Synoptists, in every instance as uttered by the Lord Himself." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 212.**

That hell is eternal is proven in the Scriptures as we read the words of the Lord Jesus Himself in **Mark 9 (KJV):42** And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. 43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Vine's says that the Greek words translated "not quenched" are οὐ σβέννυμι (pronounced *ou* sbennymi). These words mean "not quenched," speaking "of quenching fire or things on fire." The Greek words translated "unquenchable fire" are ἀσβεστος πῦρ (pronounced asbestos pyr). The Greek word ἀσβεστος (pronounced asbestos) is the adjective form of σβέννυμι (pronounced sbennymi), and means not quenchable. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 240.** In other words, the fire of hell is eternal. There are no second chances.

Again Irenaeus testifies, "And if any one," it is said, "was not found written in the book of life, he was sent into the lake of fire," referring to **Revelation 20 (KJV):15** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "And after this, he says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth have passed away; also there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband." "And I heard," it is said, "a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them as their God. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things have passed away," referring to **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And Irenaeus then affirms, "Isaiah also declares the very same: "For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and there shall be no remembrance of the former, neither shall the heart think about them, but they shall find in it joy and exultation," referring to **Isaiah 65 (KJV):17** For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Now this is what has been said by the apostle: “For the fashion of this world passeth away,” referring to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):31** And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

Again Irenaeus continues to testify as he says, “To the same purpose did the Lord also declare, “Heaven and earth shall pass away,” referring to **Matthew 24 (KJV):35** Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Irenaeus then reaches for truth as he testifies, “When these things, therefore, pass away above the earth, John, the Lord’s disciple, says that the new Jerusalem above shall [then] descend, as a bride adorned for her husband; and that this is the tabernacle of God, in which God will dwell with men,” referring to **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. **2** And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Irenaeus then asserts, “Of this Jerusalem the former one is an image—that Jerusalem of the former earth in which the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation. And of this tabernacle Moses received the pattern in the mount,” referring to **Exodus 25 (NASB):40** “See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.

There is nothing mentioned in the Scriptures about the New Jerusalem prior to Revelation, chapter 21. So we have no way of knowing that Moses saw anything more than the tabernacle on the mount. Jerusalem was not the tabernacle that was shown to Moses by God on the mount. That tabernacle was for the priests to do their work of offering sacrifice for the people.

Note also that Irenaeus mentions here that the righteous are “actually disciplined beforehand for incorruption.” He also mentions this in **Book 5: Chapter XXXI, paragraph 1**, where he says, “Since, again, some who are reckoned among the orthodox go beyond the pre-arranged plan for the exaltation of the just, and are ignorant of the methods by which they are disciplined beforehand for incorruption, they thus entertain heretical opinions.” We discussed this in **Chapter 6: His Teaching on the Resurrection**. Irenaeus believed that the righteous went to an intermediate place when they died, and that they were disciplined to make them ready for incorruption. This is simply a tradition that formed in the early Church and has no basis in the Scriptures.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “and nothing is capable of being allegorized, but all things are steadfast, and true, and substantial, having been made by God for righteous men’s enjoyment. For as it is God truly who raises up man, so also does man truly rise from the dead, and not allegorically, as I have shown repeatedly. And as he rises actually, so also shall he be actually disciplined beforehand for incorruption, and shall go forwards and flourish in the times of the kingdom, in order that he may be capable of receiving the glory of the Father. Then, when all things are made new, he shall truly dwell in the city of God. For it is said, “He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And the Lord says, Write all this; for these words are faithful and true. And He said to me, They are done,” referring in context to **Revelation 21 (HCSB):5** Then the One seated on the throne said, “Look! I am making everything new.” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true.” **6** And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give water as a gift to the thirsty from the spring of life.

And Irenaeus concludes, “And this is the truth of the matter.”

We know that when Jesus comes, we will see Him and be like as John says in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

So when the righteous reign in the Kingdom period with the Lord, they will not die since their bodies which have been raised are incorruptible. Irenaeus is not clear about this.

We notice that Irenaeus quotes the Scriptures accurately, though his interpretation is sometimes a little dysfunctional. We still need to know more of his teaching before we can state accurately what he believed regarding future events.

**Book 5: Chapter XXXVI.—Men shall be actually raised: the world shall not be annihilated; but there shall be various mansions for the saints, according to the rank allotted to each individual. All things shall be subject to God the Father, and so shall He be all in all.**

1. For since there are real men, so must there also be a real establishment (*plantationem*), that they vanish not away among non-existent things, but progress among those which have an actual existence. For neither is the substance nor the essence of the creation annihilated (for faithful and true is He who has established it), but “the *fashion* of the world passeth away;” 4784 **1 Cor. vii. 31.** that is, those things among which transgression has occurred, since man has grown old in them. And therefore this [present] fashion has been formed temporary, God foreknowing all things; as I have pointed out in the preceding book, 4785 Lib. iv. 5, 6. and have also shown, as far as was possible, the cause of the creation of this world of temporal things. But when this [present] fashion [of things] passes away, and man has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, [then] there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new man shall remain [continually], always holding fresh converse with God. And since (or, that) these things shall ever continue without end, Isaiah declares, “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I do make, continue in my sight, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.” 4786 **Isa. lxvi. 22.** And as the presbyters say, Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour 4787 **Thus in a Greek fragment; in the Old Latin, Deus.** shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy.

2. [They say, moreover], that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, “In My Father’s house are many mansions.” 4788 **John xiv. 2.** For all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place; even as His Word says, that a share is allotted to all by the Father, according as each person is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch on which the guests shall recline, having been invited to the wedding. 4789 **Matt. xxii. 10.** The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; also that they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the apostle, “For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” 4790 **1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.** For in the times of the kingdom, the righteous man who is upon the earth shall then forget to die. “But when He saith, All things shall be subdued unto Him, it is manifest that He is excepted who did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.” 4791 **1 Cor. xv. 27, 28.**

3. John, therefore, did distinctly foresee the first “resurrection of the just,” 4792 **Luke xiv. 14.** and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth; and what the prophets have prophesied concerning it harmonize [with his vision]. For the Lord also taught these things, when He promised that He would have the mixed cup new with His disciples in the kingdom. The apostle, too, has confessed that the creation shall be free from the bondage of corruption, [so as to pass] into the liberty of the sons of God. 4793 **Rom. viii. 21.** And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned man, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers, who brought it (the creature) forth [from bondage] at the resurrection of the just, and fulfils the promises for the kingdom of His Son; subsequently bestowing in a paternal manner those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has [thought concerning them] arisen within the heart of

man, 4794 1 Cor. ii. 9; Isa. Ixiv. 4. For there is the one Son, who accomplished His Father's will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are wrought, "which the angels desire to look into;" 4795 1 Pet. i. 12. and they are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which His handiwork, confirmed and incorporated with His Son, is brought to perfection; that His offspring, the First-begotten Word, should descend to the creature (*facturam*), that is, to what had been moulded (*plasma*), and that it should be contained by Him; and, on the other hand, the creature should contain the Word, and ascend to Him, passing beyond the angels, and be made after the image and likeness of God. 4796 Grabe and others suppose that some part of the work has been lost, so that the above was not its original conclusion.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues, "For since there are real men, so must there also be a real establishment (plantationem), that they vanish not away among non-existent things, but progress among those which have an actual existence. For neither is the substance nor the essence of the creation annihilated (for faithful and true is He who has established it), but "the fashion of the world passeth away," referring to 1 Corinthians 7:31, "that is, those things among which transgression has occurred, since man has grown old in them." Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "And therefore this [present] fashion has been formed temporary, God foreknowing all things; as I have pointed out in the preceding book, and have also shown, as far as was possible, the cause of the creation of this world of temporal things." Irenaeus affirms further, "But when this [present] fashion [of things] passes away, and man has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, [then] there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new man shall remain [continually], always holding fresh converse with God." Irenaeus then continues as he again affirms, "And since (or, that) these things shall ever continue without end, Isaiah declares, "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I do make, continue in my sight, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain," referring to Isaiah 66:22. Irenaeus then affirms the tradition of the Church in his time as he states, "And as the presbyters say, Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues as he records, "[They say, moreover], that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold," referring to Matthew 13:23. Irenaeus continues as he explains, "for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, "In My Father's house are many mansions," referring to John 14:2. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "For all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place; even as His Word says, that a share is allotted to all by the Father, according as each person is or shall be worthy." Irenaeus then also affirms, "And this is the couch on which the guests shall recline, having been invited to the wedding," referring to Matthew 22:10. Irenaeus continues as he again affirms the tradition of the Church in his time, stating that "The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; also that they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the apostle, "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:25-26. Irenaeus then asserts, "For in the times of the kingdom, the righteous man who is upon the earth shall then forget to die." Irenaeus then testifies, "But when He saith, All things shall be subdued unto Him, it is manifest that He is excepted who did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:27-28.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies to the apostle John as he affirms, "John, therefore, did distinctly foresee the first "resurrection of the just," referring to Jesus' words in Luke 14:14, "and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth," referring to Revelation 20:5-6. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, "and what the prophets have prophesied concerning it harmonize [with his vision]." Irenaeus then testifies, "For the Lord also taught these things, when He promised that He would have the mixed cup new with His disciples in the kingdom,"

referring to Matthew 26:29. Irenaeus then testifies to Paul as he affirms, “The apostle, too, has confessed that the creation shall be free from the bondage of corruption, [so as to pass] into the liberty of the sons of God,” referring to Romans 8:21. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned man, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers, who brought it (the creature) forth [from bondage] at the resurrection of the just, and fulfills the promises for the kingdom of His Son; subsequently bestowing in a paternal manner those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has [thought concerning them] arisen within the heart of man,” referring to 1 Corinthians 2:9, and Isaiah 64:4. Again Irenaeus testifies, “For there is the one Son, who accomplished His Father’s will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are wrought, “which the angels desire to look into,” referring to 1 Peter 1:12. Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “and they are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which His handiwork, confirmed and incorporated with His Son, is brought to perfection; that His offspring, the First-begotten Word, should descend to the creature (facturam), that is, to what had been moulded (plasma), and that it should be contained by Him,” drawing possibly from Ecclesiastes 3:11. Irenaeus then asserts, “and, on the other hand, the creature should contain the Word, and ascend to Him, passing beyond the angels, and be made after the image and likeness of God.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus argues against Gnosticism as he states, “For since there are real men, so must there also be a real establishment (plantationem), that they vanish not away among non-existent things, but progress among those which have an actual existence. For neither is the substance nor the essence of the creation annihilated (for faithful and true is He who has established it), but “the fashion of the world passeth away,” referring again to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):31** And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

In other words, we are real human beings, and we have an actual existence. Therefore it makes sense that the real God would make a way for us to continue, that is, to have eternal life. Irenaeus then explains as he continues and affirms, “that is, those things among which transgression has occurred, since man has grown old in them. And therefore this [present] fashion has been formed temporary, God foreknowing all things; as I have pointed out in the preceding book, and have also shown, as far as was possible, the cause of the creation of this world of temporal things.” Irenaeus sees ahead in the future as he then further affirms, “But when this [present] fashion [of things] passes away, and man has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, [then] there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new man shall remain [continually], always holding fresh converse with God.”

The Scripture states that at the resurrection of the just, the dead are raised incorruptible. The resurrection of the just will occur when Jesus returns. However, man as flesh and blood will continue in the Kingdom age, and give birth as before. But those who have been raised from the dead will be as the angels in heaven, neither marrying nor giving in marriage. Those who are saved during the Kingdom Age will live hundreds of years, but the sinner shall die at a hundred as we shall see that the Scripture says.

Irenaeus continues as he again affirms, “And since (or, that) these things shall ever continue without end, Isaiah declares, “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I do make, continue in my sight, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain,” referring to **Isaiah 66 (KJV):22** For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

Irenaeus then affirms the tradition of the Church in his time as he states, “And as the presbyters say, Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus continues as he records, “[They say, moreover], that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold,” referring to **Matthew 13 (KJV):23** But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Irenaeus explains as he states, “for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, “In My Father’s house are many mansions,” referring to **John 14 (KJV):2** In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Irenaeus did not know that paradise is heaven itself as we saw in our discussion of **Book 5: Chapter V** in **Chapter 6: His Teaching on the Resurrection**. Irenaeus thought paradise was the intermediate place where the righteous dead went until the resurrection. We will discuss the rewards of the righteous shortly.

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “For all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place; even as His Word says, that a share is allotted to all by the Father, according as each person is or shall be worthy.” Irenaeus then also affirms, “And this is the couch on which the guests shall recline, having been invited to the wedding,” referring to **Matthew 22 (KJV):10** So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

Irenaeus continues as he again affirms the tradition of the Church in his time as he records that “The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; also that they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the apostle, “For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death,” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):25** For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

However Jesus Himself does not speak specifically about these dwelling places, nor does He mention any difference as of a gradation based on rewards. Whether the presbyters affirmed this or not, it is not in the word of God. Let us not forget that the Lord also told a parable of the laborers in the vineyard, which is not mentioned by Irenaeus in these chapters of his writing. Each agreed to be paid a certain wage, and at the end of the day they all came to collect their wages. Listen to what the Lord taught in **Matthew 20 (KJV):8** So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, 12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

So we see that each will receive the same wage, that is, eternal life. But we know that there will be differences in glory as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):41** There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

Then Daniel also alludes to this in **Daniel 12 (KJV):2** And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Irenaeus then asserts, “For in the times of the kingdom, the righteous man who is upon the earth shall then forget to die.” However, there will still be death in the kingdom as Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 65 (KJV):20** There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

That is, the one who lives only a hundred years and dies in the Kingdom age will be thought a child. Man in the Kingdom age shall again live several hundred years just as Adam, who lived 930 years as we read in **Genesis 5 (KJV):5** And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

Irenaeus then testifies to Paul as he quotes him saying, “But when He saith, All things shall be subdued unto Him, it is manifest that He is excepted who did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him who put all things under Him, that God

may be all in all,” referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):27** For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. **28** And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies to the apostle John as he affirms, “John, therefore, did distinctly foresee the first “resurrection of the just,” referring to John’s words in context in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. **5** But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

And this reference also reminds us of Jesus’ words in **Luke 14 (NASB):13** But when you give a reception, invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,* **14** and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Another translation has it as in **Luke 14 (KJV):13** But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: **14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Irenaeus continues as he says, “and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth,” referring in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

That is, they shall reign with Him for a thousand years on earth. This relates to our inheritance in the Kingdom. Irenaeus then continues as he affirms, “and what the prophets have prophesied concerning it harmonize [with his vision].” Again, Irenaeus affirms, “For the Lord also taught these things, when He promised that He would have the mixed cup new with His disciples in the kingdom,” referring to **Matthew 26 (KJV):29** But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.

Irenaeus then testifies to Paul as he affirms, “The apostle, too, has confessed that the creation shall be free from the bondage of corruption, [so as to pass] into the liberty of the sons of God,” referring in context again to **Romans 8 (KJV):18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. **19** For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. **20** For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, **21** Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaleth in pain together until now. **23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. **24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? **25** But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned man, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers, who brought it (the creature) forth [from bondage] at the resurrection of the just, and fulfills the promises for the kingdom of His Son; subsequently bestowing in a paternal manner those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has [thought concerning them] arisen within the heart of man,” referring to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

And in **Isaiah 64 (KJV):4** For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

Again Irenaeus testifies, “For there is the one Son, who accomplished His Father’s will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are wrought, “which the angels desire to look into,” referring to **1 Peter 1 (KJV):12** Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things,

which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “and they are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which His handiwork, confirmed and incorporated with His Son, is brought to perfection; that His offspring, the First-begotten Word, should descend to the creature (facturam), that is, to what had been moulded (plasma), and that it should be contained by Him,” drawing possibly from **Ecclesiastes 3 (NASB):11** He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

Irenaeus then asserts, “and, on the other hand, the creature should contain the Word, and ascend to Him, passing beyond the angels, and be made after the image and likeness of God.”

The Scriptures do say that man was made a little lower than God and the angels as we read in **Psalm 8 (KJV):3** When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; **4** What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

And in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):5** For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. **6** But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? **7** Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: **8** Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. **9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Jesus was made for a little while lower than the angels because he was made a man. And He will ascend above the angels because He is God. But we of the human race will not ascend above the angels since we will always be human and not God.

## Commentary Summary

It is important to understand Irenaeus’ thinking as we try to summarize what he believed would happen in the end times.

Ireneaus’ Timeline:

Irenaeus believed that the Antichrist will come.

- **Book3: Chapter VII, paragraph 2,** “And again, in the Second to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he says, “And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the presence of his coming; [even him] whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.””
- **Book 3: Chapter XVI, paragraphs 5,** “...as John, the disciple of the Lord, verifies, saying: “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have eternal life in His name,”—foreseeing these blasphemous systems which divide the Lord, as far as lies in their power, saying that He was formed of two different substances. For this reason also he has thus testified to us in his Epistle: “Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist doth come, now have many antichrists appeared; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but [they departed], that they might be made manifest that they are not of us. Know ye therefore, that every lie is from without, and is not of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist,”” referring to 1 John 2:18-22.
- **Book 3: Chapter XVI, paragraphs 8,** “These are they against whom the Lord has cautioned us beforehand; and His disciple, in his Epistle already mentioned, commands us to avoid them,

when he says: “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Take heed to them, that ye lose not what ye have wrought.” And again does he say in the Epistle: “Many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which separates Jesus Christ is not of God, but is of antichrist.””

- **Book 5: Chapter XXV, paragraph 1,** “And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God; and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king. For he (Antichrist) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e., one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: “Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.” The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped—that is, above every idol—for these are indeed so called by men, but are not [really] gods; and that he will endeavor in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.”
- **Book 5: Chapter XXV, paragraph 4,** “The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him: “I have come in my Father’s name, and ye have not received Me: when another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive,” calling Antichrist “the other,” because he is alienated from the Lord. This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one “who feared not God, neither regarded man,” to whom the widow fled in her forgetfulness of God,—that is, the earthly Jerusalem,—to be avenged of her adversary. Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom: he shall remove his kingdom into that [city], and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ. To this purpose Daniel says again: “And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin has been given for a sacrifice, and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active (fecit), and gone on prosperously.” And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision, states with regard to this person: “And towards the end of their kingdom a king of a most fierce countenance shall arise, one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonders; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence (faciet), and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand, and he shall be lifted up in his heart: he shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs.” And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: “And in the midst of the week,” he says, “the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete.” Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.”
- **Book 5: Chapter XXVIII, paragraph 2,** “For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly “be cast into the lake of fire:” [this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, “that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged

who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness;" whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: "And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might. And one of his heads was as it were slain unto death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto this beast, and who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemy and power was given to him during forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation. And all who dwell upon the earth worshipped him, [every one] whose name was not written in the book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any one have ears, let him hear. If any one shall lead into captivity, he shall go into captivity. If any shall slay with the sword, he must be slain with the sword. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.””

- **Book 5: Chapter XXIX, paragraph 2**, “And there is therefore in this beast, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire. Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels. For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah. And [Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just.””

Irenaeus believed that there will be a time of great tribulation.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXV, paragraph 2**, “...”in which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: “But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: for there shall then be great hardship, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.””
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 1**, “...and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one.””

Irenaeus believed that the Church will go through this tribulation but suddenly be caught up from it. He does not say when during the tribulation this will happen, or whether it is after or just before.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXIX, paragraph 1**; “And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, “There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.” For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.””

Irenaeus believed in the “resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule.””

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 1**, “For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him

they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one.”

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph 1**, “Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God’s dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards.”
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXIV, paragraph 1**, “Then, too, Isaiah himself has plainly declared that there shall be joy of this nature at the resurrection of the just, when he says: “The dead shall rise again; those, too, who are in the tombs shall arise, and those who are in the earth shall rejoice. For the dew from Thee is health to them.” And this again Ezekiel also says: “Behold, I will open your tombs, and will bring you forth out of your graves; when I will draw my people from the sepulchers, and I will put breath in you, and ye shall live; and I will place you on your own land, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.””

Irenaeus believed that the creation would be renovated to its primeval condition during the kingdom reign of the righteous.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph 1**, “...when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards.”
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph 2**, “But in the times of the kingdom, the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above, of which the prophet Isaiah says, “Behold, I have depicted thy walls upon my hands, and thou art always in my sight.””
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXIII, paragraph 4**, “When prophesying of these times, therefore, Esaias says: “The wolf also shall feed with the lamb, and the leopard shall take his rest with the kid; the calf also, and the bull, and the lion shall eat together; and a little boy shall lead them. The ox and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall agree together; and the lion shall eat straw as well as the ox. And the infant boy shall thrust his hand into the asp’s den, into the nest also of the adder’s brood; and they shall do no harm, nor have power to hurt anything in my holy mountain.” And again he says, in recapitulation, “Wolves and lambs shall then browse together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the serpent earth as if it were bread; and they shall neither hurt nor annoy anything in my holy mountain, saith the Lord,” referring to Isaiah 11:6-9.

Irenaeus believed that there will be a new heaven and a new earth after the times of the kingdom and the reign of the righteous.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 2** “For after the times of the kingdom, he says, “I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them.””
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 2**, “And after this, he says, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth have passed away; also there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband.””
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 2**, “And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth.””

Irenaeus believed that there will be a judgment after the kingdom reign of the righteous is over.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph 1**, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards.”
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 2**, “For after the times of the kingdom, he says, “I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them.” And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment, mentioning “the dead, great and small.” “The sea,” he says, “gave up the dead which it had in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead that they contained; and the books were opened. Moreover,” he says, “the book of life was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; and death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death.”

Irenaeus believed that rewards for the righteous differ.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXVI, paragraph 2**; “there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, “In My Father’s house bare many mansions.””
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXVI, paragraph 2**, “this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature;

So we see that Irenaeus believed in the following timeline:

- The coming of the Antichrist;
- The great tribulation;
- The coming of the Lord;
- The destruction of the Antichrist and the nations under his rule;
- The renovation of the earth to its primeval condition;
- The resurrection of the righteous and the commencement of incorruption;
- The reign of the righteous in the earth during the times of the kingdom;
- The judgment at the great white throne and the general resurrection after the times of the Kingdom;
- The new heaven and the new earth;
- The rewards of the righteous;

Irenaeus clearly believed in the resurrection of the just. Irenaeus sees eternity with God for the redeemed in a sinless and incorruptible state in which “the new man shall remain [continually], always holding fresh converse with God,” as he says in **Book 5: Chapter XXXVI**. What a beautiful picture of eternal life with the Father.

However, Irenaeus does not mention Israel as restored and made the head of the nations in the end times as Isaiah prophesies in **Isaiah 60 (KJV):1** Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. 5 Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

Then in **Isaiah 60 (KJV):12** For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

That Irenaeus believed that the Church has replaced Israel in God’s plans and purposes, there can be no doubt as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XXI, paragraph 3**, “If any one, again, will look into Jacob’s actions, he shall find them not destitute of meaning, but full of import with regard to the dispensations. Thus, in the first place, at his birth, since he laid hold on his brother’s heel, he was called Jacob, that is, the supplanter—one who

holds, but is not held; binding the feet, but not being bound; striving and conquering; grasping in his hand his adversary's heel, that is, victory. For to this end was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: "He went forth conquering, that He should conquer." In the next place, [Jacob] received the rights of the first-born, when his brother looked on them with contempt; even as also the younger nation received Him, Christ, the first-begotten, when the elder nation rejected Him, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar." But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father, just as Jacob took away the blessing of this Esau. For which cause his brother suffered the plots and persecutions of a brother, just as the Church suffers this self-same thing from the Jews."

Irenaeus continues in the same paragraph as he says, "But he (Jacob) did all things for the sake of the younger, she who had the handsome eyes, Rachel, who prefigured the Church, for which Christ endured patiently; who at that time, indeed, by means of His patriarchs and prophets, was prefiguring and declaring beforehand future things, fulfilling His part by anticipation in the dispensations of God, and accustoming His inheritance to obey God, and to pass through the world as in a state of pilgrimage, to follow His word, and to indicate beforehand things to come. For with God there is nothing without purpose or due signification."

In this way, Irenaeus believed that all the promises in the Old Testament that relate to Israel now relate to the Church. Therefore, when Irenaeus states in **Book 5: Chapter XXXIV, paragraph 1**, "And this again Ezekiel also says: "Behold, I will open your tombs, and will bring you forth out of your graves; when I will draw my people from the sepulchers, and I will put breath in you, and ye shall live; and I will place you on your own land, and ye shall know that I am the Lord," referring to Ezekiel 37:12, he is asserting that this relates to the Church.

Again, as Irenaeus continues in the same paragraph, he says, "And again the same speaks thus: "These things saith the Lord, I will gather Israel from all nations whither they have been driven, and I shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the sons of the nations: and they shall dwell in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell in it in peace; and they shall build houses, and plant vineyards, and dwell in hope, when I shall cause judgment to fall among all who have dishonoured them, among those who encircle them round about; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and the God of their fathers," referring to Ezekiel 38:25-26. Here Irenaeus sees Israel as the Church, gathered from all nations.

Irenaeus again continues as he says, "Now I have shown a short time ago that the church is the seed of Abraham; and for this reason, that we may know that He who in the New Testament "raises up from the stones children unto Abraham," referring to Matthew 3:9, "is He who will gather, according to the Old Testament, those that shall be saved from all the nations, Jeremiah says: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, who led the children of Israel from the north, and from every region whither they had been driven; He will restore them to their own land which He gave to their fathers," referring to Jeremiah 23:6-7.

And Irenaeus continues in **Book 5: Chapter XXXIV, paragraph 3**, "Now, that the promises were not announced to the prophets and the fathers alone, but to the Churches united to these from the nations, whom also the Spirit terms "the islands" (both because they are established in the midst of turbulence, suffer the storm of blasphemies, exist as a harbour of safety to those in peril, and are the refuge of those who love the height [of heaven], and strive to avoid Bythus, that is, the depth of error), Jeremiah thus declares: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye nations, and declare it to the isles afar off; say ye, that the Lord will scatter Israel, He will gather him, and keep him, as one feeding his flock of sheep. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and rescued him from the hand of one stronger than he. And they shall come and rejoice in Mount Zion, and shall come to what is good, and into a land of wheat, and wine, and fruits, of animals and of sheep; and their soul shall be as a tree bearing fruit, and they shall hunger no more. At that time also shall the virgins rejoice in the company of the young men: the old men, too, shall be glad, and I will turn their sorrow into joy; and I will make them exult, and will magnify them, and satiate the souls of the priests the sons of Levi; and my people shall be satiated with my goodness," referring to Jeremiah 31:10-14.

Again, Irenaeus shows how the Church has taken Israel's place as he continues in the same paragraph, "Now, in the preceding book I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests, they who used in the temple to profane the Sabbath, but are blameless," referring to Matthew 12:4.

We have already discussed Irenaeus' arguments that the Church has supplanted Israel, and refuted them in **Chapter 21: The Church** under the heading, **Book 4: Chapter XXI**. There we found that Irenaeus freely joined disparate passages of Scripture to defend what was most probably the position of the Church in his time.

Now here in this chapter on Future Events, it is important to remember that the Bible does not teach that Israel will supplant the Church permanently. When we understand that the Church has taken Israel's place only until the fullness of the Gentiles is come into the Kingdom, and that God will again deal with Israel as a nation, we will see that prophecy begins to all fall in place, and future events then appear in their proper sequence.

Now in order to understand the correct sequence of events that the Scriptures teach, we look to the prophet Daniel. In chapter 9 of the book of Daniel, we see that Daniel is in Babylon which is now ruled by the Mede, Darius. Daniel has read Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a prophet of Israel, as we read in **Jeremiah 25 (KJV)**:1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; 2 The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 3 From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.

Jeremiah told the Israelites by the word of the Lord that the Lord was going to place Israel into captivity for seventy years as we read in **Jeremiah 25 (KJV)**:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

It is by these words in Jeremiah that Daniel understood that the years of their captivity were almost over as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV)**:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

Daniel began to seek the Lord about what should happen next for Israel. As he was praying, he was visited by the angel Gabriel as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV)**:20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; 21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

The angel Gabriel then told Daniel that seventy weeks have been determined upon Israel as we read in **Daniel 9 (NASB)**:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Though this is not immediately apparent from this passage, the seventy weeks in this Scripture are seventy weeks of years. That is, each week is a period of seven years. Daniel was interceding for his people, Israel, and he received revelation as to what would take place in the future for Israel after the 70 years in captivity in Babylon were over.

Dr. Albert Grimes explains the seventy weeks in his book, **Future Events, Part 2:**

"These seventy weeks would be separated into four different events. The first event would relate to the building of the city and temple Daniel 9:25,26 which would take seven weeks, or forty-nine years. Then added would be another period of sixty-two more weeks, or 434 years which would bring Israel to the next event, the death of Christ.

Then the next event would be the scattering of Israel amongst the nations which took place in 70 A.D. After these three events sixty-nine of the seventy would be fulfilled. Israel would be amongst the nations out of favour with God, and in blindness, as stated in Romans 11:25, "That blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

At the sixty-ninth week when Israel was scattered among the nations, the church Age came in and God left off dealing with Israel, until the Church Age would be completed, and the church taken out of the world. Then the seventieth week will begin.

This last week, which would be the fourth event spoken of in this period of time in which the tribulation will take place, is also spoken of in relation to the Antichrist who will rule during that same period, which is mentioned as one week in Daniel 9:27, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week..."

This tribulation spoken of is a period of seven years, or one week and it is divided into two periods of three and a half years.

The division in the seven years is brought out in Daniel 9:27, "...and in the midst of the week..." or the middle of the week."

This same period of three and a half years is mentioned in other scriptures. Revelation 11:2, "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" or "three and a half years." Then in Revelation 11:3, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days clothed in sackcloth," same period of time. Then also in Revelation 13:5 "And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

The period of tribulation is seven years and these seven years are divided into two shorter periods of three and a half years. The Great Tribulation will take place in the second three and a half years.

This whole period of seven years is described to us in Revelation 6:1 to Revelation 19:21. Chapters 6 to 10 describe the first three and a half years. Chapters 11 to 19 describe the second three and a half years. Chapter 12 describes what takes place in the middle of the week, in relation to Daniel 9:27 "in the midst of the week.""

So according to Dr. Albert Grimes, we see that there will be four events related to the seventy weeks.

- 1.) The city of Jerusalem and the temple will be rebuilt relating to the first seven weeks.
- 2.) Messiah will be cut off, speaking of the death of Christ after the completion of the first seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks, or after 49 years plus 434 years which equal a total of 483 years.
- 3.) The scattering of Israel among the nations in 70 A.D.
- 4.) The final week of seven years relates to the tribulation period, a time of great distress.

In regards to the first event, we read in **Ezra 1 (KJV):1** Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

The book of Ezra describes the rebuilding of the temple that Zerubbabel lead. And also in the book of Ezra is described in minute detail the return from captivity as we read in **Ezra 2 (KJV):1** Now these are the

children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city; 2 Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mizpar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: 3 The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

This refers to the return of Israel to their land from the first scattering of Israel which took place when Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried them away to Babylon in about 586 B.C.

Then also we read in **Nehemiah 1 (KJV)**:1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

Then we read Nehemiah's prayer in **Nehemiah 1 (KJV)**:8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: 9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

The Lord scattered Israel the first time when He deported the ten tribes to Assyria in 723 B.C., and the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, to Babylon in 586 B.C. And He brought them back to the land for the first time after the seventy years of captivity that Jeremiah had prophesied. The Book of Nehemiah describes the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem which was the first step in rebuilding the city.

Now, in regards to the second event, we read that a shepherd would be raised up in Israel. However this Shepherd would be wounded by the very people He was sent to heal as we read in **Zechariah 13 (KJV)**:6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. 7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

That shepherd was Jesus as we read in **Matthew 26 (KJV)**:31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

This is confirmed in **Matthew 27 (KJV)**:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

And now although the third event, the second scattering of Israel, is not mentioned specifically in Daniel, it is mentioned in other Scriptures as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV)**:11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

And in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV)**:10 Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

This second regathering of Israel is also mentioned in **Isaiah 11 (KJV)**:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Again, regarding the second scattering of Israel, Jesus states in **Luke 21 (KJV)**:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall

be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

This scattering of Israel, Jesus says, will last until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Now the fourth event, the final week of Daniel's seventy weeks relating to the tribulation period, is mentioned in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Again, this final week is mentioned in **Daniel 9 (NASB):27** "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Again, to repeat what Dr. Albert Grimes in his book, **Future Events, Part 2**, states, we read the following:

"This tribulation spoken of is a period of seven years, or one week and it is divided into two periods of three and a half years.

The division in the seven years is brought out in Daniel 9:27, "...and in the midst of the week..." or the middle of the week.

This same period of three and a half years is mentioned in other scriptures. Revelation 11:2, "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" or "three and a half years." Then in Revelation 11:3, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days clothed in sackcloth," same period of time. Then also in Revelation 13:5 "And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

The period of tribulation is seven years and these seven years are divided into two shorter periods of three and a half years. The Great Tribulation will take place in the second three and a half years.

This whole period of seven years is described to us in Revelation 6:1 to Revelation 19:21. Chapters 6 to 10 describe the first three and a half years. Chapters 11 to 19 describe the second three and a half years. Chapter 12 describes what takes place in the middle of the week, in relation to Daniel 9:27 "in the midst of the week."'''

Now note that this time of distress will be so great that it is such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time, and so it is known as the "great tribulation" which is also mentioned by Jesus Himself in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

This will be a time of trouble so great that if it were not cut short by the Lord, no life would be saved as Jesus reveals in **Matthew 24 (KJV):22** And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Again, the time that this great tribulation will occur is revealed to Daniel as "the end time" as in **Daniel 12 (KJV):8** And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

And Jeremiah speaks of that great day of Jacob's distress when Israel will be rescued, just as Daniel prophesied in Daniel 12:1, as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):1** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. 3 For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. 4 And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto

them. 10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

Notice that the Lord said in verse three that He would bring Israel back to the land that He gave their forefathers and that they shall possess it. God has in no way forgotten His plans for Israel. It is true that the meek will inherit the earth, but it is also true that Israel will one day inherit the land of Canaan as their inheritance. This has been God's plan all along, even from the time of Abraham.

The world will go through a time of distress so great that it will be unequalled since the beginning of the world. Israel also will go through this time of great distress, but will be rescued out of it by the Lord. This understanding is critical to an analysis of what the Bible teaches concerning future events. It is this understanding that is missing from Irenaeus' thinking. He does not understand that Israel will eventually be saved by the Lord. He believes that the promises in the Old Testament have been taken over and subsumed by the Church. However, the Lord is not done with Israel. He has promised to save Israel, and we know that the Lord is faithful to His word.

Now Paul explains that the coming of the Lord will not precede the apostasy and the revealing of the man of lawlessness as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):1** Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

From this passage we see that the Jewish temple will be rebuilt, for it mentions the temple of God. And there will be a man who will actually set himself up as God in the temple of God displaying himself as being God. Now there have been many antichrists, or false messiahs, but there has never been this man as antichrist before. Paul also reveals by the Spirit of God that this man will be revealed at a specific time in the plan and purpose of God. God is restraining him until the set time He has appointed as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):6** And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

God restrains lawlessness by His Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, all hell will be let loose as it were. Now the Holy Spirit is in the Church, and He fills all believers. The Church as the body of Christ therefore must be taken out of the way as well in order for God to complete His plans and purposes for Israel. This is also mentioned in the letter to the Church at Philadelphia as we read in **Revelation 3 (KJV):7** And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from

my God: and I will write upon him my new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Though this prophecy was written to the Church at Philadelphia which existed in the time of John's writing, it has application in a future sense as well. This is why the Church will not go through the tribulation, for it will be kept from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth, relating to the tribulation period. In order for the man of sin to come to power to begin this period, the Holy Spirit will have to be taken out of the way. This means that the Church will have to be taken out of the way. Then the tribulation period will begin. This tribulation period is the time when the Lord will again deal with Israel. Israel will be born again in one day during this period as we read in **Isaiah 66 (KJV):**7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

The Lord explains how this will happen in the book of Zechariah. Zechariah prophesies that there will come a time when all the nations of the earth will be gathered against Jerusalem. It is at this time that the Lord will save Israel, for this word of the Lord concerns Israel. It is at this time that the Lord will fight for Israel, and Israel will look on Him whom they pierced as we read in **Zechariah 12 (KJV):**1 The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. 2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. 3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. 4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. 5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God. 6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. 7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. 8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. 11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; 14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

Zechariah then continues the Lord's narrative of what He is going to do with Jerusalem as we read in **Zechariah 13 (KJV):**1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. 2 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. 3 And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet

prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieith. 4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: 5 But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

Prophecy will cease in the Kingdom period as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):8** Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Zechariah continues in chapter 13, and describes the scattering of the flock when the Shepherd is slain in **Zechariah 13 (KJV):6** And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. 7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. 8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. 9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

Zechariah tells us that Israel will recognize Jesus by His wounds. By this we know that Israel will answer God one day and say, "The Lord is my God." That day has not come yet, but we have the assurance of the word of God that it will.

Now in chapter 12, verse 3 of Zechariah we saw that "all the nations of the earth will be gathered against" Jerusalem. Irenaeus apparently only tells us that the antichrist will be destroyed and all the nations that followed him as well. He does not mention specifically the battle of Armageddon, which is the final battle before Christ returns, when all the armies of the nations will gather against Jerusalem. Dr. Grimes in his book, **Future Events, Part 2, Lesson 12: The Revelation of Christ**, says this about this battle.

"As the Tribulation upon the earth comes to its close, the sixth angel from heaven will pour out his vial upon the great River Euphrates to dry up the waters in order that the Kings of the East may cross over in their march towards Palestine. Satan will send his demon spirits to gather those nations from all over the world, and they shall gather outside of the city of Jerusalem. Gathered by Satan, but in their blind delusion it is God Himself that has gathered them, that He might destroy them. This is referred to in Revelation 16:16, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. This is further described in Joel 3:2,12,14, "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great." "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

They gather in their own hate against Christ, but only for their own destruction. Revelation 19:19, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."

The Lord with his armies of heaven will meet them in battle and will overcome them.

There is never any doubt as to the outcome of this great battle. Christ IS the victor. The armies of the Antichrist are destroyed, and both the beast, the leader of this great host, and the false prophet are taken captive. Revelation 19:20, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." The battle will be so dreadful that blood will flow for two hundred miles. Revelation 14:20, "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood

came out of the winepress, even unto the horse's bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." (By angel from heaven the birds will be invited to come and feast upon the bodies of the slain). Revelation 19:17,18, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."

After this great battle, Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit, and the beast and false prophet in the Lake of fire."

So indeed, according to Scripture, all nations under the rule of the Antichrist will be destroyed. Now Irenaeus states correctly that the earth will be restored to its primeval condition which existed before the flood. And the righteous will be resurrected when Jesus comes as Paul reveals in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):13** But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Therefore the commencement of incorruption shall indeed begin at this time, for this is how the dead in Christ are raised, that is, incorruptible. This is the first resurrection as stated in **Revelation 20 (KJV):5** But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Now since the righteous dead are resurrected at this time, the Scriptures seem to indicated that they will be rewarded at the commencement of the kingdom age of one thousand years. That is, the judgment of the righteous will occur at this time as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Irenaeus does not mention this judgment as a separate judgment from the White Throne judgment in his writing. However, Jesus states that the apostles will reign in the kingdom with Him in the regeneration in **Matthew 19 (NASB):28** And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The reward of position in the kingdom implies that the righteous have already been before the judgment seat of Christ, and recompensed for the deeds done in the body. This judgment is not about salvation but of rewards as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The fire Paul speaks of relates to this life. If we build wood, hay, or straw, we will reap what we have sown, and suffer the consequences in this life. Yet we will still be saved. However, unfortunately, we will have no rewards.

Now the reign of the righteous is also described in **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they

sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Irenaeus does state correctly that the judgment at the great white throne and the general resurrection will occur after the times of the kingdom. This is clearly stated in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This judgment is the judgment of the wicked dead. It is after the second or general resurrection, and it is a judgment about works in this sense, that if anyone was found still in their sin, that is, they have not accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, they are then responsible for their sin and will be judged accordingly. The penalty is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire.

Again, Irenaeus describes correctly the new heaven and the new earth which will be after the times of the kingdom. This is also mentioned in **Revelation 21 (KJV):**1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

There will be no more sorrow or pain in the new heaven and the new earth. John continues to describe the new earth as we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):**5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. 9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Now the Lord warns us in **Revelation 3 (NASB):**11 I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

And again in **Revelation 22 (NASB):3** "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

And in **Revelation 22 (NASB):12** "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Let us say "Amen" with John in **Revelation 22 (NASB):20** He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Now I have only given a brief sketch of the teaching of the word of God about future events, and for that matter, any other teaching of the word of God that Irenaeus has touched on. There is much more in the word of God about each of the themes we have discussed. Irenaeus did not concern himself with stating the complete doctrine of the word of God about future events, or any other doctrine in the word of God. His intent was to refute the Gnostic teaching of his day, and in so much as his arguments carried him to this end, he includes the references we have examined in this **Chapter 31: Future Events.**

## Chapter 32: Faith and Love

### Fragment XXXVIII.

The 4876 Taken apparently from the *Epistle to Blastus, de Schismate*. Compare a similar passage, lib. iv. chap. xxxiii. 7. apostles ordained, that “we should not judge any one in respect to meat or drink, or in regard to a feast day, or the new moons, or the sabbaths.” 4877 Col. ii. 16. Whence then these contentions? whence these schisms? We keep the feast, but in the leaven of malice and wickedness, cutting in pieces the Church of God; and we preserve what belongs to its exterior, that we may cast away these better things, faith and love. We have heard from the prophetic words that these feasts and fasts are displeasing to the Lord. 4878 Isa. i. 14.

**Summary:** Irenaeus here testifies that “The apostles ordained, that “we should not judge any one in respect to meat or drink, or in regard to a feast day, or the new moons, or the Sabbaths,” referring to Colossians 2:16. Irenaeus asks, “Whence then these contentions? whence these schisms?” Irenaeus then testifies, “We keep the feast, but in the leaven of malice and wickedness, cutting in pieces the Church of God; and we preserve what belongs to its exterior, that we may cast away these better things, faith and love.” Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “We have heard from the prophetic words that these feasts and fasts are displeasing to the Lord.”

**Commentary:** Irenaeus here records that the Church of God is getting cut in pieces because they were judging one another one in respect to meat or drink, or in regard to a feast day, or the new moons, or the Sabbaths.” There were contentions and schisms about meat, drink, feast days, new moons, and Sabbaths. Irenaeus testifies that “The apostles ordained, that “we should not judge any one in respect to meat or drink, or in regard to a feast day, or the new moons, or the Sabbaths,” referring to **Colossians 2 (KJV):16** Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Irenaeus then asks, “Whence then these contentions? whence these schisms?” This reminds of Paul when he was rebuking the Corinthians as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):10** Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Paul further describes the contentions among the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

Paul states this again in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):18** For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Irenaeus then testifies, “We keep the feast, but in the leaven of malice and wickedness, cutting in pieces the Church of God; and we preserve what belongs to its exterior, that we may cast away these better things, faith and love.” Irenaeus correctly states that these things, that is, the “contentions about meat, drink, feast days, new moons, and Sabbaths,” properly belong to the exterior of the Church, but that the “better things” are “faith and love.” Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “We have heard from the prophetic words that these feasts and fasts are displeasing to the Lord,” reminding us of Isaiah’s words in **Isaiah 1 (NASB):14** “I hate your new moon *festivals* and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing *them*.

And the fast the Lord chooses is described in **Isaiah 58 (KJV):6** Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break

every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? 8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. 9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; 10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: 11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. 12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

The Church evidently did not heed Irenaeus' warning here in this fragment as Church History informs us that feast days, fasts, and Sabbaths were requirements of faith until the Reformation when the Church was once again freed from these things for the most part. Irenaeus rightly calls these things "what belongs to the exterior," reminding us of Jesus' words in **Matthew 23 (KJV):**23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. 25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Cleansing the inside of the cup relates to receiving forgiveness for our sins by being born again through faith in Jesus Christ. It is only then that we can have the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, and so on.

## Chapter 33: Repentance

### Book 3: Chapter IX.—One and the same God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is He whom the prophets foretold, and who was declared by the Gospel. Proof of this, at the outset, from St. Matthew's Gospel.

1. This, therefore, having been clearly demonstrated here (and it shall yet be so still more clearly), that neither the prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in His own person, did acknowledge any other Lord or God, but the God and Lord supreme: the prophets and the apostles confessing the Father and the Son; but naming no other as God, and confessing no other as Lord: and the Lord Himself handing down to His disciples, that He, the Father, is the only God and Lord, who alone is God and ruler of all; —it is incumbent on us to follow, if we are their disciples indeed, their testimonies to this effect. For Matthew the apostle— knowing, as one and the same God, Him who had given promise to Abraham, that He would make his seed as the stars of heaven,  
3373 Gen. xv. 5. and Him who, by His Son Christ Jesus, has called us to the knowledge of Himself, from the worship of stones, so that those who were not a people were made a people, and she beloved who was not beloved 3374 Rom. ix. 25. —declares that John, when preparing the way for Christ, said to those who were boasting of their relationship [to Abraham] according to the flesh, but who had their mind tinged and stuffed with all manner of evil, preaching that repentance which should call them back from their evil doings, said, “O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [to our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” 3375 Matt. iii. 7. He preached to them, therefore, the repentance from wickedness, but he did not declare to them another God, besides Him who made the promise to Abraham; he, the forerunner of Christ, of whom Matthew again says, and Luke likewise, “For this is he that was spoken of from the Lord by the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough into smooth ways; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” 3376 Matt. iii. 3. There is therefore one and the same God, the Father of our Lord, who also promised, through the prophets, that He would send His forerunner; and His salvation—that is, His Word —He caused to be made visible to all flesh, [the Word] Himself being made incarnate, that in all things their King might become manifest. For it is necessary that those [beings] which are judged do see the judge, and know Him from whom they receive judgment; and it is also proper, that those which follow on to glory should know Him who bestows upon them the gift of glory.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “This, therefore, having been clearly demonstrated here (and it shall yet be so still more clearly), that neither the prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in His own person, did acknowledge any other Lord or God, but the God and Lord supreme: the prophets and the apostles confessing the Father and the Son; but naming no other as God, and confessing no other as Lord: and the Lord Himself handing down to His disciples, that He, the Father, is the only God and Lord, who alone is God and ruler of all; —it is incumbent on us to follow, if we are their disciples indeed, their testimonies to this effect.” Irenaeus then testifies, “For Matthew the apostle— knowing, as one and the same God, Him who had given promise to Abraham, that He would make his seed as the stars of heaven,” referring to Genesis 15:5, “and Him who, by His Son Christ Jesus, has called us to the knowledge of Himself, from the worship of stones, so that those who were not a people were made a people, and she beloved who was not beloved,” referring to Romans 9:25, “—declares that John, when preparing the way for Christ, said to those who were boasting of their relationship [to Abraham] according to the flesh, but who had their mind tinged and stuffed with all manner of evil, preaching that repentance which should call them back from their evil doings, said, “O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [to our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of

these stones to raise up children unto Abraham," referring to Matthew 3:7-9. Irenaeus then testifies, "He preached to them, therefore, the repentance from wickedness, but he did not declare to them another God, besides Him who made the promise to Abraham; he, the forerunner of Christ, of whom Matthew again says, and Luke likewise, "For this is he that was spoken of from the Lord by the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough into smooth ways; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God," referring to Matthew 3:3. Irenaeus then affirms, "There is therefore one and the same God, the Father of our Lord, who also promised, through the prophets, that He would send His forerunner; and His salvation—that is, His Word—He caused to be made visible to all flesh, [the Word] Himself being made incarnate, that in all things their King might become manifest. For it is necessary that those [beings] which are judged do see the judge, and know Him from whom they receive judgment; and it is also proper, that those which follow on to glory should know Him who bestows upon them the gift of glory."

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, "This, therefore, having been clearly demonstrated here (and it shall yet be so still more clearly), that neither the prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in His own person, did acknowledge any other Lord or God, but the God and Lord supreme: the prophets and the apostles confessing the Father and the Son; but naming no other as God, and confessing no other as Lord: and the Lord Himself handing down to His disciples, that He, the Father, is the only God and Lord, who alone is God and ruler of all; —it is incumbent on us to follow, if we are their disciples indeed, their testimonies to this effect." Irenaeus debunks the Gnostics here, clearly showing their teaching to be false, and an invention.

Irenaeus then testifies, "For Matthew the apostle— knowing, as one and the same God, Him who had given promise to Abraham, that He would make his seed as the stars of heaven," referring to **Genesis 15 (KJV):5** And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

Irenaeus then continues, "and Him who, by His Son Christ Jesus, has called us to the knowledge of Himself, from the worship of stones, so that those who were not a people were made a people, and she beloved who was not beloved," referring **Romans 9 (NASB):25** As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"

Irenaeus then continues further, "—declares that John, when preparing the way for Christ, said to those who were boasting of their relationship [to Abraham] according to the flesh, but who had their mind tinged and stuffed with all manner of evil, preaching that repentance which should call them back from their evil doings, said, "O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [to our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham," referring to **Matthew 3 (KJV):7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Irenaeus then testifies, "He preached to them, therefore, the repentance from wickedness, but he did not declare to them another God, besides Him who made the promise to Abraham; he, the forerunner of Christ, of whom Matthew again says, and Luke likewise, "For this is he that was spoken of from the Lord by the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough into smooth ways; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God," referring in context to **Matthew 3 (KJV):1** In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Luke also says as much as we read in **Luke 3 (KJV):1** Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he came

into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Irenaeus then affirms, “There is therefore one and the same God, the Father of our Lord, who also promised, through the prophets, that He would send His forerunner; and His salvation—that is, His Word—He caused to be made visible to all flesh, [the Word] Himself being made incarnate, that in all things their King might become manifest. For it is necessary that those [beings] which are judged do see the judge, and know Him from whom they receive judgment; and it is also proper, that those which follow on to glory should know Him who bestows upon them the gift of glory.”

Irenaeus shows the unity of the Scripture testimony that there is only one God, who spoke through the prophets that He would send His forerunner who would prepare the way for His Son who became flesh for man’s salvation. Bravo Irenaeus!

Clearly Matthew’s gospel shows the unity of God’s purpose as we see that he also records the genealogy of the Christ in **Matthew 1 (NASB):1** The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham: 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.

And he concludes in **Matthew 1 (HCSB):17** So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, 14 generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Messiah, 14 generations.

Matthew also refers to Abraham again in **Matthew 8 (HCSB):11** I tell you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

And in **Matthew 22 (HCSB):31** Now concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven’t you read what was spoken to you by God: 32 I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

Our God is the God of the living.

## **Book 4: Chapter XL.—One and the same God the Father inflicts punishment on the reprobate, and bestows rewards on the elect.**

1. It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord **1777 Matt. xxv. 41.** has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand. And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, “I am a jealous God, making peace, and creating evil things;” **1778 Isa. xlvi. 7.** thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand,” referring to Matthew 25:41. Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, “I am a jealous God, making peace, and creating evil things,” referring to Isaiah 45:7, “thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.”

**Commentary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms, “It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand,” referring to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, “I am a jealous God, making peace, and creating evil things **Isaiah 45 (Septuagint):7** I am he that prepared light, and formed darkness; who make peace, and create evil; I am the Lord God, that does all these things.

Note the same verse is translated as in **Isaiah 45 (KJV):7** I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

Irenaeus then concludes as he affirms, “thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.”

The message of repentance was foremost in Jesus’ preaching as we see in **Mark 1 (KJV):14** Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, **15** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Jesus also made repentance a condition of salvation as we read in **Luke 13 (KJV):1** There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. **2** And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? **3** I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. **4** Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? **5** I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

It was also foremost in Peter’s preaching as we read in **Acts 2 (HCSB):38** “Repent,” Peter said to them, “and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Irenaeus does well to include it in his teaching as well.

## Fragment XLIII.

In 4887 Most probably from a homily upon the third and fourth chapters of Ezekiel. It is found repeated in Stieren’s and Migne’s edition as Fragment xlviii. extracted from a *Catena on the Book of Judges*. these things there was signified by prophecy that the people, having become transgressors, shall be bound by the chains of their own sins. But the breaking of the bonds of their own accord indicates that, upon repentance, they shall be again loosed from the shackles of sin.

**Summary:** In this fragment, Irenaeus affirms, “In these things there was signified by prophecy that the people, having become transgressors, shall be bound by the chains of their own sins. But the breaking of the bonds of their own accord indicates that, upon repentance, they shall be again loosed from the shackles of sin.”

**Commentary:** Here we see that Irenaeus believed in repentance, and saw it in the Old Testament when the people turned from their sin, even after they had faith, and were “again loosed from the shackles of sin.” Sin is a shackle as Irenaeus says. Jesus also said as much as we read in **John 8 (NASB):34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

And Peter likewise tells us as much in **2 Peter 2 (NASB):18** For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, **19** promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

## Commentary Summary: Repentance

Irenaeus also mentions repentance in **Book 3: Chapter XXXIII, paragraph 3** of his writing as we read here, “And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels;” referring to Matthew 25:41, “indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him; which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.”

We have already discussed this paragraph in **Chapter 8: On the Nature of Man**. It is sufficient to note here that in paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, “And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels,” referring to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

And Irenaeus continues as he explains, “indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him;” Irenaeus then affirms, “which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.”

It is interesting that Irenaeus mentions repentance here, and that he adds “without retracing their steps.” Irenaeus seems to imply some need for making amends in regards to repentance. Irenaeus does say in **Book 3: Chapter IX, paragraph one**, that John the Baptist was “preaching that repentance which should call them back from their evil doings, said, “O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [to our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,” referring to Matthew 3:7-9.

And in **Book 3: Chapter X, paragraph one**, Irenaeus testifies “that every tongue should confess to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send “spiritual wickednesses,” and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.”

Irenaeus seems to allow for repentance even after baptism which in his thinking is when a Christian begins his course.

And in **Book 4: Chapter XL, paragraph one**, Irenaeus affirms that God makes “peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.”

And in **Book 1: Chapter XXXI, paragraph three**, Irenaeus allows for repentance from Gnostic beliefs as he affirms, “It was necessary clearly to prove, that, as their very opinions and regulations exhibit them, those who are of the school of Valentinus derive their origin from such mothers, fathers, and ancestors, and also to bring forward their doctrines, with the hope that perchance some of them, exercising repentance and returning to the only Creator, and God the Former of the universe, may obtain salvation, and that others may not henceforth be drawn away by their wicked, although plausible, persuasions, imagining that they will obtain from them the knowledge of some greater and more sublime mysteries.

And in **Book 2: Chapter XXXII, paragraph one**, Irenaeus testifies that the Lord taught that we are “not only not to injure their neighbours, nor to do them any evil, but also, when themselves wickedly dealt with, to be long-suffering, and to show kindness towards those [that injured them], and to pray for them, that by means of repentance they might be saved—so that we should in no respect imitate the arrogance, lust, and pride of others.”

And in **Book 3: Chapter V, paragraph two**, Irenaeus reasons, “Or what medical man, anxious to heal a sick person, would prescribe in accordance with the patient’s whims, and not according to the requisite medicine? But that the Lord came as the physician of the sick, He does Himself declare saying, “They that are

whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." How then shall the sick be strengthened, or how shall sinners come to repentance? Is it by persevering in the very same courses? or, on the contrary, is it by undergoing a great change and reversal of their former mode of living, by which they have brought upon themselves no slight amount of sickness, and many sins? But ignorance, the mother of all these, is driven out by knowledge. Wherefore the Lord used to impart knowledge to His disciples, by which also it was His practice to heal those who were suffering, and to keep back sinners from sin. He therefore did not address them in accordance with their pristine notions, nor did He reply to them in harmony with the opinion of His questioners, but according to the doctrine leading to salvation, without hypocrisy or respect of person."

And in **Book 3: Chapter X, paragraph one**, Irenaeus affirms, "For whom, then, did he prepare the people, and in the sight of what Lord was he made great? Truly of Him who said that John had something even "more than a prophet," and that "among those born of women none is greater than John the Baptist;" who did also make the people ready for the Lord's advent, warning his fellow-servants, and preaching to them repentance, that they might receive remission from the Lord when He should be present, having been converted to Him, from whom they had been alienated because of sins and transgressions. As also David says, "The alienated are sinners from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born." And it was on account of this that he, turning them to their Lord, prepared, in the spirit and power of Elias, a perfect people for the Lord."

And in Irenaeus' defense of the Church against the Gnostics, Irenaeus in **Book 3: Chapter XII, paragraph nine**, quotes Paul in Acts, chapter 17, when he spoke to the Greeks in Athens saying, "Therefore God, winking at the times of ignorance, does now command all men everywhere to turn to Him with repentance; because He hath appointed a day, on which the world shall be judged in righteousness by the man Jesus; whereof He hath given assurance by raising Him from the dead."

And in **Book 3: Chapter XVI, paragraph five**, Irenaeus quotes Jesus' words in Luke, chapter 24, as he says, "Then opened He their understanding, that they should understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, and that repentance for the remission of sins be preached in His name among all nations."

And in **Book 3: Chapter XXIII, paragraph five**, Irenaeus affirms, "The case of Adam, however, had no analogy with this, but was altogether different. For, having been beguiled by another under the pretext of immortality, he is immediately seized with terror, and hides himself; not as if he were able to escape from God; but, in a state of confusion at having transgressed His command, he feels unworthy to appear before and to hold converse with God. Now, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" the sense of sin leads to repentance, and God bestows His compassion upon those who are penitent. For [Adam] showed his repentance by his conduct, through means of the girdle [which he used], covering himself with fig-leaves, while there were many other leaves, which would have irritated his body in a less degree.

And in **Book 4: Chapter XXXIX, paragraph one**, Irenaeus states, "For just as the tongue receives experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognises the distinctions of sounds by hearing; so also does the mind, receiving through the experience of both the knowledge of what is good, become more tenacious of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God: in the first place, casting away, by means of repentance, disobedience, as being something disagreeable and nauseous; and afterwards coming to understand what it really is, that it is contrary to goodness and sweetness, so that the mind may never even attempt to taste disobedience to God."

And in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph three**, Irenaeus affirms, referring to Isaiah, chapter 1, "Thus, no doubt, since they had transgressed and sinned in the same manner, so did they receive the same reproof as did the Sodomites. But when they should be converted and come to repentance, and cease from evil, they should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him."

We see in Irenaeus' thinking that repentance had to do with turning from sin, and ceasing from evil. It has to do with having a "sense of sin" that "leads to repentance." Repentance is "for the remission of sins." It had to do with being "converted to Him, from whom they had been alienated because of sins and transgressions." It has to do with "undergoing a great change and reversal of" our "former mode of living, by which" we "have brought upon" ourselves "no slight amount of sickness, and many sins." It is "by means of

repentance” that we are “saved.” It is by “exercising repentance and returning to the only Creator, and God the Former of the universe,” that we “may obtain salvation.” It is by repentance that God makes “peace and friendship” with those who “turn to Him.”

Now Jesus stated in the Gospel of John, chapter three, that unless we are born again we cannot see or enter the Kingdom of God. Irenaeus believed that this event occurred at baptism. The Scriptures teach us that repentance is required in order to be born again. Repentance is turning away from sin, and turning to God. Indeed, the Bible teaches us that it is in continuous repentance that we will be saved as we read in **Isaiah 30 (NASB):15** For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, “In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength.” But you were not willing.

In the New Testament we would call this type of repentance “walking in the light,” or progressive sanctification. When we come to Christ, our spirit is made new, but our souls may have a lot of baggage from the past. We may have a lot of old ways of thinking, or unresolved feelings that need to be cleansed. Our conscience must have right standards by which to judge right and wrong. Though we are saved and born again the moment we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, our souls are not immediately cleansed. This happens when we are taught in the word as Jesus reveals in **John 15 (NASB):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

As we walk in the light of His word, we become aware of sin in our lives. As we then confess these sins, we are free of them and cleansed by the blood of Christ as we read in **1 John 1 (NASB):6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

As we are taught in the word of God, and walk in the light of it every day, we enter into more and more truth of God’s plan for our lives. And in this way we learn how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honor as Paul says in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):3** For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

So although in our standing with God we are sons and daughters when we are born again, our fellowship with Him is dependent on our walking in the light of His word. As we are taught, and as we read and study His word, we gain more and more knowledge of Him. And as we do so, we learn the truth in His word, and the truth about our lives. He does not expect us to be perfect right away, but only to strive for perfection. That is, to be obedient to all that we know of His word. So even gross immorality can be forgiven and repented of, as in the case of the man in Corinth who had his father’s wife. Paul, with the Church in Corinth, turned this man over to Satan until he repented. The result of such discipline was that the man did repent, and Paul entreated the Church at Corinth to receive him back into fellowship. The man’s sin is recorded in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):1** It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And his repentance is recorded in **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):5** But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. 6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it,

for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

The apostle John tells us that if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father as in **1 John 2 (NASB):1** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.

The thought here is that the blood of Jesus is always there for our cleansing of sin. John here is writing to his children in the Lord, for he says, "My little children." John is giving them, and us, the way to deal with our sin after we have had a bath. John says that "we" have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. John included himself in the place of "anyone" who sins. We are to walk in the light, confessing our sins, and progressively becoming more and more like our Lord. This is what is expressed in **Proverbs 4 (NASB):18** But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

God has made provision for the child of God as the need arises to turn to Him in repentance, and confess our sins so that we might walk in continuous fellowship with our Lord. He is with us always.

## Chapter 34: Gnosticism

### Book 3, Chapter XI—Proofs in continuation, extracted from St. John's Gospel. The Gospels are four in number, neither more nor less. Mystic reasons for this.

1. John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that "knowledge" falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word; and not, as they allege, that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another; and that the Son of the Creator was, forsooth, one, but the Christ from above another, who also continued impassible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma; and that Monogenes was the beginning, but Logos was the true son of Monogenes; and that this creation to which we belong was not made by the primary God, but by some power lying far below Him, and shut off from communion with the things invisible and ineffable. The disciple of the Lord therefore desiring to put an end to all such doctrines, and to establish the rule of truth in the Church, that there is one Almighty God, who made all things by His Word, both visible and invisible; showing at the same time, that by the Word, through whom God made the creation, He also bestowed salvation on the men included in the creation; thus commenced His teaching in the Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made."

3429 Irenæus frequently quotes this text, and always uses the punctuation here adopted. Tertullian and many others of the Fathers follow his example. What was made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

3430 **John i. 1**, etc. "All things," he says, "were made by Him;" therefore in "all things" this creation of ours is [included], for we cannot concede to these men that [the words] "all things" are spoken in reference to those within their Pleroma. For if their Pleroma do indeed contain these, this creation, as being such, is not outside, as I have demonstrated in the preceding book; 3431 See ii. 1, etc. but if they are outside the Pleroma, which indeed appeared impossible, it follows, in that case, that their Pleroma cannot be "all things:" therefore this vast creation is not outside [the Pleroma].

2. John, however, does himself put this matter beyond all controversy on our part, when he says, "He was in this world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own [things], and His own [people] received Him not." 3432 **John i. 10, 11**. But according to Marcion, and those like him, neither was the world made by Him; nor did He come to His own things, but to those of another. And, according to certain of the Gnostics, this world was made by angels, and not by the Word of God. But according to the followers of Valentinus, the world was not made by Him, but by the Demiurge. For he (Soter) caused such similitudes to be made, after the pattern of things above, as they allege; but the Demiurge accomplished the work of creation. For they say that he, the Lord and Creator of the plan of creation, by whom they hold that this world was made, was produced from the Mother; while the Gospel affirms plainly, that by the Word, which was in the beginning with God, all things were made, which Word, he says, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

3433 **John i. 14**.

3. But, according to these men, neither was the Word made flesh, nor Christ, nor the Saviour (Soter), who was produced from [the joint contributions of] all [the Æons]. For they will have it, that the Word and Christ never came into this world; that the Saviour, too, never became incarnate, nor suffered, but that He descended like a dove upon the dispensational Jesus; and that, as soon as He had declared the unknown Father, He did again ascend into the Pleroma. Some, however, make the assertion, that this dispensational Jesus did become incarnate, and suffered, whom they represent as having passed through Mary just as water through a tube; but others allege him to be the Son of the Demiurge, upon whom the dispensational Jesus descended; while others, again, say that Jesus was

born from Joseph and Mary, and that the Christ from above descended upon him, being without flesh, and impassible. But according to the opinion of no one of the heretics was the Word of God made flesh. For if anyone carefully examines the systems of them all, he will find that the Word of God is brought in by all of them as not having become incarnate (*sine carne*) and impassible, as is also the Christ from above. Others consider Him to have been manifested as a transfigured man; but they maintain Him to have been neither born nor to have become incarnate; whilst others [hold] that He did not assume a human form at all, but that, as a dove, He did descend upon that Jesus who was born from Mary. Therefore the Lord's disciple, pointing them all out as false witnesses, says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." 3434 John i. 14.

4. And that we may not have to ask, Of what God was the Word made flesh? he does himself previously teach us, saying, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came as a witness, that he might bear witness of that Light. He was not that Light, but [came] that he might testify of the Light." 3435 John i. 6. By what God, then, was John, the forerunner, who testifies of the Light, sent [into the world]? Truly it was by Him, of whom Gabriel is the angel, who also announced the glad tidings of his birth: [that God] who also had promised by the prophets that He would send His messenger before the face of His Son, 3436 Mal. iii. 1. who should prepare His way, that is, that he should bear witness of that Light in the spirit and power of Elias. 3437 Luke i. 17. But, again, of what God was Elias the servant and the prophet? Of Him who made heaven and earth, 3438 This evidently refers to 1 Kings xviii. 36, where Elijah invokes God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc. as he does himself confess. John, therefore, having been sent by the founder and maker of this world, how could he testify of that Light, which came down from things unspeakable and invisible? For all the heretics have decided that the Demiurge was ignorant of that Power above him, whose witness and herald John is found to be. Wherefore the Lord said that He deemed him "more than a prophet." 3439 Matt. xi. 9; Luke vii. 26. For all the other prophets preached the advent of the paternal Light, and desired to be worthy of seeing Him whom they preached; but John did both announce [the advent] beforehand, in a like manner as did the others, and actually saw Him when He came, and pointed Him out, and persuaded many to believe on Him, so that he did himself hold the place of both prophet and apostle. For this is to be more than a prophet, because, "first apostles, secondarily prophets;" 3440 1 Cor. xii. 28. but all things from one and the same God Himself.

5. That wine, 3441 The transition here is so abrupt, that some critics suspect the loss of part of the text before these words. which was produced by God in a vineyard, and which was first consumed, was good. None 3442 John ii. 3. of those who drank of it found fault with it; and the Lord partook of it also. But that wine was better which the Word made from water, on the moment, and simply for the use of those who had been called to the marriage. For although the Lord had the power to supply wine to those feasting, independently of any created substance, and to fill with food those who were hungry, He did not adopt this course; but, taking the loaves which the earth had produced, and giving thanks, 3443 John vi. 11. and on the other occasion making water wine, He satisfied those who were reclining [at table], and gave drink to those who had been invited to the marriage; showing that the God who made the earth, and commanded it to bring forth fruit, who established the waters, and brought forth the fountains, was He who in these last times bestowed upon mankind, by His Son, the blessing of food and the favour of drink: the Incomprehensible [acting thus] by means of the comprehensible, and the Invisible by the visible; since there is none beyond Him, but He exists in the bosom of the Father.

6. For "no man," he says, "hath seen God at any time," unless "the only-begotten Son of God, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared [Him]." 3444 John i. 18. For He, the Son who is in His bosom, declares to all the Father who is invisible. Wherefore *they* know Him to whom the Son reveals Him; and again, the Father, by means of the Son, gives knowledge of His Son to those who love Him. By whom also Nathanael, being taught, recognized [Him], he to whom also the Lord bare witness, that he was "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." 3445 John i. 47. The Israelite recognized his King, therefore did he cry out to Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the

King of Israel." By whom also Peter, having been taught, recognized Christ as the Son of the living God, when [God] said, "Behold My dearly beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, until He send forth judgment into contention; 3446 The reading νεῖκος having been followed instead of νίκος, victory. and in His name shall the Gentiles trust." 3447 John i. 49, John vi. 69; Matt. xii. 18.

7. Such, then, are the first principles of the Gospel: that there is one God, the Maker of this universe; He who was also announced by the prophets, and who by Moses set forth the dispensation of the law,—[principles] which proclaim the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ignore any other God or Father except Him. So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and, starting from these [documents], each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine. For the Ebionites, who use Matthew's Gospel 3448 Harvey thinks that this is the Hebrew Gospel of which Irenæus speaks in the opening of this book; but comp. Dr. Robert's *Discussions on the Gospels*, part ii. chap. iv. only, are confuted out of this very same, making false suppositions with regard to the Lord. But Marcion, mutilating that according to Luke, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those [passages] which he still retains. Those, again, who separate Jesus from Christ, alleging that Christ remained impassible, but that it was Jesus who suffered, preferring the Gospel by Mark, if they read it with a love of truth, may have their errors rectified. Those, moreover, who follow Valentinus, making copious use of that according to John, to illustrate their conjunctions, shall be proved to be totally in error by means of this very Gospel, as I have shown in the first book. Since, then, our opponents do bear testimony to us, and make use of these [documents], our proof derived from them is firm and true.

8. It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, 3449 Literally, "four catholic spirits;" Greek, τέσσαρα καθολικὰ πνεύματα: Latin, "quatuor principales spiritus." while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" 3450 1 Tim. iii. 15. of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh. From which fact, it is evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the cherubim, and contains all things, He who was manifested to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As also David says, when entreating His manifestation, "Thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth." 3451 Ps. lxxx. 1. For the cherubim, too, were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God. For, [as the Scripture] says, "The first living creature was like a lion," 3452 Rev. iv. 7. symbolizing His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power; the second [living creature] was like a calf, signifying [His] sacrificial and sacerdotal order; but "the third had, as it were, the face as of a man,"—an evident description of His advent as a human being; "the fourth was like a flying eagle," pointing out the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church. And therefore the Gospels are in accord with these things, among which Christ Jesus is seated. For that according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." 3453 John i. 1. Also, "all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made." For this reason, too, is that Gospel full of all confidence, for such is His person. 3454 The above is the literal rendering of this very obscure sentence; it is not at all represented in the Greek here preserved. But that according to Luke, taking up [His] priestly character, commenced with Zacharias the priest offering sacrifice to God. For now was made ready the fatted calf, about to be immolated for 3455 The Greek is ύπέρ: the Latin, "pro." the finding again of the younger son. Matthew, again, relates His generation as a man, saying, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;" 3456 Matt. i. 1, 18. and also, "The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise." This, then, is the Gospel of His humanity; 3457 The Greek text of this clause, literally

rendered, is, "This Gospel, then, is anthropomorphic." for which reason it is, too, that [the character of] a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel. Mark, on the other hand, commences with [a reference to] the prophetical spirit coming down from on high to men, saying, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet,"—pointing to the winged aspect of the Gospel; and on this account he made a compendious and cursory narrative, for such is the prophetical character. And the Word of God Himself used to converse with the ante-Mosaic patriarchs, in accordance with His divinity and glory; but for those under the law he instituted a sacerdotal and liturgical service.<sup>3458</sup> Or, "a sacerdotal and liturgical order," following the fragment of the Greek text recovered here. Harvey thinks that the old Latin "actum" indicates the true reading of the original πρᾶξιν, and that τάξιν is an error. The earlier editors, however, are of a contrary opinion. Afterwards, being made man for us, He sent the gift of the celestial Spirit over all the earth, protecting us with His wings. Such, then, as was the course followed by the Son of God, so was also the form of the living creatures; and such as was the form of the living creatures, so was also the character of the Gospel.<sup>3459</sup> That is, the appearance of the Gospel taken as a whole; it being presented under a fourfold aspect. For the living creatures are quadriform, and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by the Lord. For this reason were four principal (καθολικαὶ) covenants given to the human race:<sup>3460</sup> A portion of the Greek has been preserved here, but it differs materially from the old Latin version, which seems to represent the original with greater exactness, and has therefore been followed. The Greek represents the first covenant as having been given to Noah, at the deluge, under the sign of the rainbow; the second as that given to Abraham, under the sign of circumcision; the third, as being the giving of the law, under Moses; and the fourth, as that of the Gospel, through our Lord Jesus Christ. [Paradise with the *tree of life*, Adam with *Shechinah* (*Gen. iii. 24, Gen. iv. 16*), Noah with the *rainbow*, Abraham with *circumcision*, Moses with the *ark*, Messiah with the *sacraments*, and heaven with the *river of life*, seem the complete system.] one, prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second, that after the deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the law, under Moses; the fourth, that which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel, raising and bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly kingdom.

9. These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those, [I mean,] who represent the aspects of the Gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer. The former class [do so], that they may seem to have discovered more than is of the truth; the latter, that they may set the dispensations of God aside. For Marcion, rejecting the entire Gospel, yea rather, cutting himself off from the Gospel, boasts that he has part in the [blessings of] the Gospel.<sup>3461</sup> The old Latin reads, "partem gloriatur se habere Evangelii." Massuet changed *partem* into *pariter*, thinking that *partem* gave a sense inconsistent with the Marcionite curtailment of St. Luke. Harvey, however, observes: "But the *Gospel*, here means the *blessings of the Gospel*, in which Marcion certainly claimed a share." Others, again (the Montanists), that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete;<sup>3462</sup> *John xiv. 16, etc.* but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitæ)<sup>3463</sup> Slighting, as did some later heretics, the Pauline Epistles, who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren. We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians,<sup>3464</sup> *1 Cor. xi. 4, 5.* he speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church. Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God,<sup>3465</sup> *Matt. xii. 31.* they fall into the irremissible sin. But those who are from Valentinus, being, on the other hand, altogether reckless, while they put forth their own compositions, boast that they possess more Gospels than there really are. Indeed, they have arrived at such a pitch of audacity, as to entitle their comparatively recent

writing “the Gospel of Truth,” though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the Apostles, so that they have really no Gospel which is not full of blasphemy. For if what they have published is the Gospel of truth, and yet is totally unlike those which have been handed down to us from the apostles, any who please may learn, as is shown from the Scriptures themselves, that that which has been handed down from the apostles can no longer be reckoned the Gospel of truth. But that these Gospels alone are true and reliable, and admit neither an increase nor diminution of the aforesaid number, I have proved by so many and such [arguments]. For, since God made all things in due proportion and adaptation, it was fit also that the outward aspect of the Gospel should be well arranged and harmonized. The opinion of those men, therefore, who handed the Gospel down to us, having been investigated, from their very fountainheads, let us proceed also to the remaining apostles, and inquire into their doctrine with regard to God; then, in due course we shall listen to the very words of the Lord.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that “knowledge” falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word;” Irenaeus continues as he records, “and not, as they allege,” as follows:

- “that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another;”
- “and that the Son of the Creator was, forsooth, one, but the Christ from above another, who also continued impassible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma;”
- “and that Monogenes was the beginning, but Logos was the true son of Monogenes;”
- “and that this creation to which we belong was not made by the primary God, but by some power lying far below Him, and shut off from communion with the things invisible and ineffable.”

Irenaeus then testifies that, “The disciple of the Lord therefore desiring to put an end to all such doctrines, and to establish the rule of truth in the Church, that there is one Almighty God, who made all things by His Word, both visible and invisible; showing at the same time, that by the Word, through whom God made the creation, He also bestowed salvation on the men included in the creation; thus commenced His teaching in the Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made. What was made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not,” referring to John 1:1-5.

Irenaeus then argues, “All things,” he says, “were made by Him;” therefore in “all things” this creation of ours is [included], for we cannot concede to these men that [the words] “all things” are spoken in reference to those within their Pleroma. For if their Pleroma do indeed contain these, this creation, as being such, is not outside, as I have demonstrated in the preceding book; but if they are outside the Pleroma, which indeed appeared impossible, it follows, in that case, that their Pleroma cannot be “all things;” therefore this vast creation is not outside [the Pleroma].”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies that “John, however, does himself put this matter beyond all controversy on our part, when he says, “He was in this world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own [things], and His own [people] received Him not,” referring to John 1:10-11. Irenaeus then lists the errors of the Gnostics:

- “But according to Marcion, and those like him, neither was the world made by Him; nor did He come to His own things, but to those of another.”
- “And, according to certain of the Gnostics, this world was made by angels, and not by the Word of God.”

- “But according to the followers of Valentinus, the world was not made by Him, but by the Demiurge.”
- “For he (Soter) caused such similitudes to be made, after the pattern of things above, as they allege; but the Demiurge accomplished the work of creation.”
- “For they say that he, the Lord and Creator of the plan of creation, by whom they hold that this world was made, was produced from the Mother;”

Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, “while the Gospel affirms plainly, that by the Word, which was in the beginning with God, all things were made, which Word, he says, “was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” referring to John 1:14.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus lists more Gnostic beliefs as we read:

- “But according to these men, neither was the Word made flesh, nor Christ, nor the Saviour (Soter), who was produced from [the joint contributions of] all [the Æons].”
- “For they will have it, that the Word and Christ never came into this world;”
- “that the Saviour, too, never became incarnate, nor suffered, but that He descended like a dove upon the dispensational Jesus;”
- “and that, as soon as He had declared the unknown Father, He did again ascend into the Pleroma.”
- “Some, however, make the assertion, that this dispensational Jesus did become incarnate, and suffered, whom they represent as having passed through Mary just as water through a tube;”
- “but others allege him to be the Son of the Demiurge, upon whom the dispensational Jesus descended;”
- “while others, again, say that Jesus was born from Joseph and Mary, and that the Christ from above descended upon him, being without flesh, and impassible;”
- “But according to the opinion of no one of the heretics was the Word of God made flesh;”
- “For if anyone carefully examines the systems of them all, he will find that the Word of God is brought in by all of them as not having become incarnate (*sine carne*) and impassible, as is also the Christ from above;”
- “Others consider Him to have been manifested as a transfigured man; but they maintain Him to have been neither born nor to have become incarnate;”
- “whilst others [hold] that He did not assume a human form at all, but that, as a dove, He did descend upon that Jesus who was born from Mary.”

Irenaeus then concludes, “Therefore the Lord’s disciple, pointing them all out as false witnesses, says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” referring again to John 1:14.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “And that we may not have to ask, Of what God was the Word made flesh? he does himself previously teach us, saying, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came as a witness, that he might bear witness of that Light. He was not that Light, but [came] that he might testify of the Light,” referring to John 1:6-8.

Irenaeus then argues, “By what God, then, was John, the forerunner, who testifies of the Light, sent [into the world]? Truly it was by Him, of whom Gabriel is the angel, who also announced the glad tidings of his birth: [that God] who also had promised by the prophets that He would send His messenger before the face of His Son, who should prepare His way, that is, that he should bear witness of that Light in the spirit and power of Elias,” referring to Malachi 3:1, Luke 1:17. Irenaeus then affirms, “But, again, of what God was Elias the servant and the prophet? Of Him who made heaven and earth, as he does himself confess,” referring to 1 Kings 18:36.

Irenaeus then argues convincingly, “John, therefore, having been sent by the founder and maker of this world, how could he testify of that Light, which came down from things unspeakable and invisible?” Again, Irenaeus then records, “For all the heretics have decided that the Demiurge was ignorant of that Power above him.” To refute this Irenaeus points out, “Wherfore the Lord said that He deemed him “more than a prophet,” referring to Matthew 11:9.

Irenaeus then testifies, “For all the other prophets preached the advent of the paternal Light, and desired

to be worthy of seeing Him whom they preached; but John did both announce [the advent] beforehand, in a like manner as did the others, and actually saw Him when He came, and pointed Him out, and persuaded many to believe on Him, so that he did himself hold the place of both prophet and apostle.” Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “For this is to be more than a prophet, because, “first apostles, secondarily prophets,” referring to 1 Corinthians 12:28, “but all things from one and the same God Himself.”

And in paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “That wine, which was produced by God in a vineyard, and which was first consumed, was good. None of those who drank of it found fault with it; and the Lord partook of it also,” referring to John 2:1-3. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But that wine was better which the Word made from water, on the moment, and simply for the use of those who had been called to the marriage. For although the Lord had the power to supply wine to those feasting, independently of any created substance, and to fill with food those who were hungry, He did not adopt this course; but, taking the loaves which the earth had produced, and giving thanks, and on the other occasion making water wine, He satisfied those who were reclining [at table], and gave drink to those who had been invited to the marriage,” referring to John 2:4-11, John 6:5-14. Irenaeus continues as he explains that the Lord Jesus was “showing that the God who made the earth, and commanded it to bring forth fruit, who established the waters, and brought forth the fountains, was He who in these last times bestowed upon mankind, by His Son, the blessing of food and the favour of drink: the Incomprehensible [acting thus] by means of the comprehensible, and the Invisible by the visible; since there is none beyond Him, but He exists in the bosom of the Father.”

Then in paragraph six, Irenaeus testifies, “For “no man,” he says, “hath seen God at any time,” unless “the only-begotten Son of God, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared [Him],” referring to John 1:18. Irenaeus then affirms, “For He, the Son who is in His bosom, declares to all the Father who is invisible.” Irenaeus then testifies, “Wherefore they know Him to whom the Son reveals Him,” referring to Matthew 11:27, “and again, the Father, by means of the Son, gives knowledge of His Son to those who love Him.” Irenaeus continues as he again testifies, “By whom also Nathanael, being taught, recognized [Him], he to whom also the Lord bare witness, that he was “an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile,” referring to John 1:47. Irenaeus then points out, “The Israelite recognized his King, therefore did he cry out to Him, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel,” referring to John 1:49. Irenaeus then testifies that “Peter, having been taught, recognized Christ as the Son of the living God,” referring to Matthew 16:18, “when [God] said, “Behold My dearly beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” referring to Matthew 3:17. Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, until He send forth judgment into contention and in His name shall the Gentiles trust,” referring to Matthew 12:18-21.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, “Such, then, are the first principles of the Gospel: that there is one God, the Maker of this universe; He who was also announced by the prophets, and who by Moses set forth the dispensation of the law,—[principles] which proclaim the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ignore any other God or Father except Him.” Irenaeus then testifies, “So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and, starting from these [documents], each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine.” Irenaeus then records:

- “For the Ebionites, who use Matthew’s only, are confuted out of this very same, making false suppositions with regard to the Lord.”
- “But Marcion, mutilating that according to Luke, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those [passages] which he still retains.”
- “Those, again, who separate Jesus from Christ, alleging that Christ remained impassible, but that it was Jesus who suffered, preferring the Gospel by Mark, if they read it with a love of truth, may have their errors rectified.”
- “Those, moreover, who follow Valentinus, making copious use of that according to John, to illustrate their conjunctions, shall be proved to be totally in error by means of this very Gospel, as I have shown in the first book.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “Since, then, our opponents do bear testimony to us, and make use of these [documents], our proof derived from them is firm and true.”

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus testifies that, “It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the “pillar and ground” of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh.” Irenaeus then affirms, “From which fact, it is evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the cherubim, and contains all things, He who was manifested to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As also David says, when entreating His manifestation, “Thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth,” referring to Psalm 80:1.

Irenaeus then testifies, “For the cherubim, too, were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God. For, [as the Scripture] says,”

- “The first living creature was like a lion,” symbolizing His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power;”
- “the second [living creature] was like a calf, signifying [His] sacrificial and sacerdotal order”;
- “the third had, as it were, the face as of a man,”—an evident description of His advent as a human being;”
- “the fourth was like a flying eagle,” pointing out the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “And therefore the Gospels are in accord with these things, among which Christ Jesus is seated.” Irenaeus then describes a distinct focus of each Gospel as he continues:

- “For that according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” referring to John 1:1. “Also, “all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made,” referring to John 1:3. “For this reason, too, is that Gospel full of all confidence, for such is His person.””
- “But that according to Luke, taking up [His] priestly character, commenced with Zacharias the priest offering sacrifice to God,” referring to Luke 1:5-25. “For now was made ready the fatted calf, about to be immolated for the finding again of the younger son,” referring to Luke 15:11-32.
- “Matthew, again, relates His generation as a man, saying, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,” referring to Matthew 1:1, “and also, “The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise,” referring to Matthew 1:18. “This, then, is the Gospel of His humanity; for which reason it is, too, that [the character of] a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel.””
- “Mark, on the other hand, commences with [a reference to] the prophetic spirit coming down from on high to men, saying, “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet,” referring freely to Mark 1:1-2, “—pointing to the winged aspect of the Gospel; and on this account he made a compendious and cursory narrative, for such is the prophetic character.””

Irenaeus then affirms, “And the Word of God Himself used to converse with the ante-Mosaic patriarchs, in accordance with His divinity and glory; but for those under the law he instituted a sacerdotal and liturgical service.” Irenaeus then continues as he testifies, “Afterwards, being made man for us, He sent the gift of the celestial Spirit over all the earth, protecting us with His wings.” Irenaeus then explains that, “Such, then, as was the course followed by the Son of God, so was also the form of the living creatures; and such as was the form of the living creatures, so was also the character of the Gospel.” Irenaeus then notes, “For the living creatures are quadriform, and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by the Lord.”

Irenaeus then asserts, “For this reason were four principal covenants given to the human race.” He enumerates them as follows:

- “one, prior to the deluge, under Adam”;
- “the second, that after the deluge, under Noah”;
- “the third, the giving of the law, under Moses”;
- “the fourth, that which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel, raising and bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly kingdom.”

In paragraph nine, Irenaeus concludes, “These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those, [I mean,] who represent the aspects of the Gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer.” Irenaeus continues as he summarizes:

- “The former class [do so], that they may seem to have discovered more than is of the truth; the latter, that they may set the dispensations of God aside.”
- “For Marcion, rejecting the entire Gospel, yea rather, cutting himself off from the Gospel, boasts that he has part in the [blessings of] the Gospel.”
- “The Montanists, that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John’s Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitae) who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren. We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church. Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, they fall into the irremissible sin.”
- “But those who are from Valentinus, being, on the other hand, altogether reckless, while they put forth their own compositions, boast that they possess more Gospels than there really are. Indeed, they have arrived at such a pitch of audacity, as to entitle their comparatively recent writing “the Gospel of Truth,” though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the Apostles, so that they have really no Gospel which is not full of blasphemy. For if what they have published is the Gospel of truth, and yet is totally unlike those which have been handed down to us from the apostles, any who please may learn, as is shown from the Scriptures themselves, that that which has been handed down from the apostles can no longer be reckoned the Gospel of truth.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “But that these Gospels alone are true and reliable, and admit neither an increase nor diminution of the aforesaid number, I have proved by so many and such [arguments]. For, since God made all things in due proportion and adaptation, it was fit also that the outward aspect of the Gospel should be well arranged and harmonized.” And Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, “The opinion of those men, therefore, who handed the Gospel down to us, having been investigated, from their very fountainheads, let us proceed also to the remaining apostles, and inquire into their doctrine with regard to God; then, in due course we shall listen to the very words of the Lord.”

**Commentary:** Philip P. Schaff, a noted Christian historian, says, “We need not wonder, then, that the ante-Nicene fathers held the gnostic heretics of their days in the greatest abhorrence, and called them servants of Satan, beasts in human shape, dealers in deadly poison, robbers, and pirates. Polycarp (Ad Phil.c. 7), Ignatius (Ad Smyrn. c. 4), Justin M. (Apol. I. c. 26), Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. III. 3, 4) Hippolytus, Tertullian, even Clement of Alexandria, and Origen occupy essentially the same position of uncompromising hostility towards heresy as the fathers of the Nicene and post-Nicene ages. **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 514, Philip P. Schaff.**

In paragraph one, Irenaeus says that “John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith.” “By “this faith,” Irenaeus is referring to the faith that he mentions in **Book 1: Chapter X, paragraph 1:**

1. The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father “to gather all things in one,” and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess” to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send “spiritual wickednesses,” and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.

It is this faith that Irenaeus is standing up for. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that “knowledge” falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word;”

It is this faith that Irenaeus is contending for against the Gnostics and all “who are an offset of that “knowledge” falsely so called.” Irenaeus would remove all error from the Church. And so Irenaeus seeks now by John’s Gospel to refute the errors of Cerinthus, of the Nicolaitans, of Marcion, of the Ebionites, of Valentinus, and any others who would rise up in opposition to “this faith.” Irenaeus continues as he records, “and not, as they allege...” Irenaeus encapsulates the errors of the Gnostics as follows:

- “that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another;”
- “and that the Son of the Creator was, forsooth, one, but the Christ from above another, who also continued impassible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma;”
- “and that Monogenes was the beginning, but Logos was the true son of Monogenes;”
- “and that this creation to which we belong was not made by the primary God, but by some power lying far below Him, and shut off from communion with the things invisible and ineffable.”

The Gnostics reasoned that the God of the Old Testament could not be the same as the God of the New Testament because they saw the God of the Old Testament as an angry, vengeful God. The God of the New Testament was the loving Father of the Son, Jesus Christ. Irenaeus shows very handily why the God of the Old Testament has to be the same as the God of the New Testament.

Irenaeus then testifies that, “The disciple of the Lord therefore desiring to put an end to all such doctrines, and to establish the rule of truth in the Church, that there is one Almighty God, who made all things by His Word, both visible and invisible; showing at the same time, that by the Word, through whom God made the creation, He also bestowed salvation on the men included in the creation; thus commenced His teaching in the Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made. What was made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not,” referring to **John 1 (NASB):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him,

and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Irenaeus then argues, “All things,” he says, “were made by Him;” therefore in “all things” this creation of ours is [included], for we cannot concede to these men that [the words] “all things” are spoken in reference to those within their Pleroma. For if their Pleroma do indeed contain these, this creation, as being such, is not outside, as I have demonstrated in the preceding book; but if they are outside the Pleroma, which indeed appeared impossible, it follows, in that case, that their Pleroma cannot be “all things;” therefore this vast creation is not outside [the Pleroma].”

That is, Irenaeus is arguing that if the Gospel says that “all things were made by Him,” this means that all things came into being through Him. Therefore, if the Gnostics are part of this very creation created by Him, there can be nothing outside of Him that He did not create. They themselves may claim to be outside the Pleroma, but Irenaeus saw this as impossible, and rightly so. The fact that they all died just like others of this creation proves his point ipso facto, that is, by the fact itself.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies that “John, however, does himself put this matter beyond all controversy on our part, when he says, “He was in this world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own [things], and His own [people] received Him not,” referring to **John 1 (NASB):10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. **11** He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

Irenaeus then lists the errors of the Gnostics:

- “But according to Marcion, and those like him, neither was the world made by Him; nor did He come to His own things, but to those of another.”
- “And, according to certain of the Gnostics, this world was made by angels, and not by the Word of God.”
- “But according to the followers of Valentinus, the world was not made by Him, but by the Demiurge.”
- “For he (Soter) caused such similitudes to be made, after the pattern of things above, as they allege; but the Demiurge accomplished the work of creation.”
- “For they say that he, the Lord and Creator of the plan of creation, by whom they hold that this world was made, was produced from the Mother;”

Irenaeus then concludes as he testifies, “while the Gospel affirms plainly, that by the Word, which was in the beginning with God, all things were made, which Word, he says, “was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” referring to **John 1 (NASB):14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus lists more Gnostic beliefs. It is very tedious to study the Gnostic doctrines which do not even agree with each other, but which all oppose the Gospel. It is helpful to note Irenaeus’ listing of their errors, point by point, as we read:

- “But according to these men, neither was the Word made flesh, nor Christ, nor the Saviour (Soter), who was produced from [the joint contributions of] all [the Æons].”
- “For they will have it, that the Word and Christ never came into this world;”
- “that the Saviour, too, never became incarnate, nor suffered, but that He descended like a dove upon the dispensational Jesus;”
- “and that, as soon as He had declared the unknown Father, He did again ascend into the Pleroma.”
- “Some, however, make the assertion, that this dispensational Jesus did become incarnate, and suffered, whom they represent as having passed through Mary just as water through a tube;”
- “but others allege him to be the Son of the Demiurge, upon whom the dispensational Jesus descended;”
- “while others, again, say that Jesus was born from Joseph and Mary, and that the Christ from above descended upon him, being without flesh, and impassible;”
- “But according to the opinion of no one of the heretics was the Word of God made flesh;”

- “For if anyone carefully examines the systems of them all, he will find that the Word of God is brought in by all of them as not having become incarnate (*sine carne*) and impassible, as is also the Christ from above;”
- “Others consider Him to have been manifested as a transfigured man; but they maintain Him to have been neither born nor to have become incarnate;”
- “whilst others [hold] that He did not assume a human form at all, but that, as a dove, He did descend upon that Jesus who was born from Mary.”

Irenaeus then concludes, “Therefore the Lord’s disciple, pointing them all out as false witnesses, says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” referring again to **John 1 (New ASV):14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

It is important for us to note that Irenaeus testifies in paragraph three that an examination of all the Gnostic systems of belief reveals that “the Word of God is brought in by all of them as not having become incarnate (*sine carne*) and impassible, as is also the Christ from above.” That is, the one unifying thread of Gnostic teaching is that Jesus did not come in the flesh.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “And that we may not have to ask, Of what God was the Word made flesh? he does himself previously teach us, saying, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came as a witness, that he might bear witness of that Light. He was not that Light, but [came] that he might testify of the Light,” referring to **John 1 (KJV):6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

Irenaeus points out that God identifies Himself with His signature by foretelling things before they come to pass so that we do not “have to ask, Of what God was the Word made flesh?”

Irenaeus then argues, “By what God, then, was John, the forerunner, who testifies of the Light, sent [into the world]? Truly it was by Him, of whom Gabriel is the angel, who also announced the glad tidings of his birth: [that God] who also had promised by the prophets that He would send His messenger before the face of His Son, who should prepare His way, that is, that he should bear witness of that Light in the spirit and power of Elias,” referring to **Malachi 3 (KJV):1** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

And to **Luke 1 (KJV):17** And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And we might add that this same John, the “forerunner,” was the one prophesied by the prophet Isaiah, who lived in the eighth century B.C., to prepare the way before the Lord as we read in **Isaiah 40 (KJV):3** The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

And also in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter nine, Jesus tells us that John was the messenger who would come in the Spirit of Elijah as we read in **Matthew 17 (KJV):10** And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? 11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. 12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. 13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

And in **Mark 9 (KJV):11** And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? 12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. 13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Now, that Elijah was the servant and prophet of the one true God, and that it was He who made heaven and earth is proven from the Scriptures as we read in **Genesis 14 (KJV):22** And Abram said to the king of

Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, 23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

And in **Exodus 31 (KJV)**:17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

And in **2 Kings 19 (KJV)**:15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

And in **2 Chronicles 2 (KJV)**:11 Then Huram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them. 12 Huram said moreover, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.

And the universal testimony of the Psalms is that it was the God of Israel who made heaven and earth as in **Psalm 115 (KJV)**:15 Ye are blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

And in **Psalm 121 (KJV)**:2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

And in **Psalm 124 (NASB)**:8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

And in **Psalm 134 (KJV)**:3 The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

And in **Psalm 146 (KJV)**:6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:

And in Isaiah we read in **Isaiah 37 (KJV)**:16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

There is no doubt that Elijah was the servant of the one true God as revealed in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Irenaeus then argues convincingly, “John, therefore, having been sent by the founder and maker of this world, how could he testify of that Light, which came down from things unspeakable and invisible?” Irenaeus then records, “For all the heretics have decided that the Demiurge was ignorant of that Power above him.” To refute this Irenaeus points out, “Wherefore the Lord said that He deemed him “more than a prophet,” referring in context to **Matthew 11 (KJV)**:7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? 8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. 15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Irenaeus then testifies, “For all the other prophets preached the advent of the paternal Light, and desired to be worthy of seeing Him whom they preached; but John did both announce [the advent] beforehand, in a like manner as did the others, and actually saw Him when He came, and pointed Him out, and persuaded many to believe on Him, so that he did himself hold the place of both prophet and apostle.” Irenaeus concludes as he asserts, “For this is to be more than a prophet, because, “first apostles, secondarily prophets, but all things from one and the same God Himself,” referring to **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB)**:28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

However, John the Baptist was never called an apostle in the Scriptures. John was more than a prophet in that he had the privilege of being the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ. No other prophet could say they had done so.

In this paragraph four, we see that Irenaeus is arguing that the Gnostics believed the “Light” to be from the “unspeakable and invisible” God who is the “Power” above the Demiurge, who is the maker of heaven and

earth. Irenaeus shows us the contradiction of this belief by the Scriptures, for they state that John is His “witness and herald.” The Son then, by the Gnostics, is only made out to be “the Light” from this unknowable god above the God who made heaven and earth. The Son then, as only light, cannot be flesh, according to the Gnostics.

So what Irenaeus is arguing from the Scriptures is that the God, who made all things, is the same God who sent His Son into the world. This same God also sent a messenger before His Son to prepare the way before Him. In this Son was life, and this life was the light of men. And this messenger sent by the God who made all things bore witness to that Light. And the prophets in the Old Testament who predicted that this messenger would come were prophets of the one true God who made heaven and earth. Therefore Irenaeus is right to call all those teachers of Gnostic doctrines heretics for that is what they are. Irenaeus has defended the Church here. He has contended for the faith once delivered to the saints.

As for John being both an apostle and a prophet, John was not in the Church, but was associated by Jesus as being with the rest of the prophets of the Old Testament as Jesus spoke in **Matthew 11 (HCSB):13** For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John;

John was not just a prophet but was more than a prophet in the sense that he was given a special place as the forerunner of the Messiah, the Christ. I believe Jesus also pointed out his obedience to the will of God and his humility as He says in **Matthew 11 (HCSB):11** “I assure you: Among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

And in paragraph five, Irenaeus testifies, “That wine, which was produced by God in a vineyard, and which was first consumed, was good. None of those who drank of it found fault with it; and the Lord partook of it also,” referring to **John 2 (HCSB):1** On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and 2 Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding as well. 3 When the wine ran out, Jesus’ mother told Him, “They don’t have any wine.”

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “But that wine was better which the Word made from water, on the moment, and simply for the use of those who had been called to the marriage. For although the Lord had the power to supply wine to those feasting, independently of any created substance, and to fill with food those who were hungry, He did not adopt this course; but, taking the loaves which the earth had produced, and giving thanks, and on the other occasion making water wine, He satisfied those who were reclining [at table], and gave drink to those who had been invited to the marriage,” referring to **John 2 (KJV):4** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

And, referring to the other occasion when the Lord filled those who were hungry, in **John 6 (KJV):5** When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, saith unto him, 9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? 10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. 12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

Irenaeus continues as he explains the meaning of these miracles as he says that the Lord Jesus was

"showing that the God who made the earth, and commanded it to bring forth fruit, who established the waters, and brought forth the fountains, was He who in these last times bestowed upon mankind, by His Son, the blessing of food and the favour of drink: the Incomprehensible [acting thus] by means of the comprehensible, and the Invisible by the visible; since there is none beyond Him, but He exists in the bosom of the Father." Irenaeus is testifying that these miracles show us that "there is none beyond Him, but He exists in the bosom of the Father."

Then in paragraph six, Irenaeus testifies, "For "no man," he says, "hath seen God at any time," unless "the only-begotten Son of God, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared [Him]," referring to **John 1 (KJV)**:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

In rebuking Gnostic beliefs about the unknown invisible God, Irenaeus affirms, "For He, the Son who is in His bosom, declares to all the Father who is invisible." Irenaeus then testifies, "Wherefore they know Him to whom the Son reveals Him," referring to **Matthew 11 (HCSB)**:27 All things have been entrusted to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal Him.

Irenaeus then continues, "and again, the Father, by means of the Son, gives knowledge of His Son to those who love Him." Irenaeus again testifies, "By whom also Nathanael, being taught, recognized [Him], he to whom also the Lord bare witness, that he was "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile," referring to **John 1 (KJV)**:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Irenaeus then points out, "The Israelite recognized his King, therefore did he cry out to Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel," referring in context to **John 1 (KJV)**:48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

Nathanael recognized Jesus as the King of Israel when Jesus, by the Spirit, revealed to him that he was under a fig tree before Philip called him.

Irenaeus then testifies that "Peter, having been taught, recognized Christ as the Son of the living God," referring to **Matthew 16 (NASB)**:15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And Irenaeus continues, "when [God] said, "Behold My dearly beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," referring in context to **Matthew 17 (KJV)**:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

It is recorded in Matthew's Gospel that the Father also spoke the words "Behold My dearly beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," when Jesus was baptized by John as we read in **Matthew 3 (KJV)**:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Irenaeus concludes as he testifies, "I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, until He send forth judgment into contention and in His name shall the Gentiles trust," referring to **Matthew 12 (KJV)**:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well

pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, “Such, then, are the first principles of the Gospel: that there is one God, the Maker of this universe; He who was also announced by the prophets, and who by Moses set forth the dispensation of the law,—[principles] which proclaim the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ignore any other God or Father except Him.” Irenaeus then testifies, “So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and, starting from these [documents], each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine.” Irenaeus then records:

- “For the Ebionites, who use Matthew’s only, are confuted out of this very same, making false suppositions with regard to the Lord.”
- “But Marcion, mutilating that according to Luke, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those [passages] which he still retains.”
- “Those, again, who separate Jesus from Christ, alleging that Christ remained impassible, but that it was Jesus who suffered, preferring the Gospel by Mark, if they read it with a love of truth, may have their errors rectified.”
- “Those, moreover, who follow Valentinus, making copious use of that according to John, to illustrate their conjunctions, shall be proved to be totally in error by means of this very Gospel, as I have shown in the first book.”

Irenaeus then testifies, “Since, then, our opponents do bear testimony to us, and make use of these [documents], our proof derived from them is firm and true.”

It is interesting to compare Irenaeus’ first principles with what Paul thought was of first importance as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB)**:1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. 11 Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

The difference is that Paul is writing to those who had believed his message, and was confirming their faith. Irenaeus on the other hand is defending the Church against those who oppose it. Irenaeus is contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the simplicity of the Gospel message as Paul preached it at first, for it is the heretics who need to hear it most of all.

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus testifies that, “It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the “pillar and ground” of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh.”

Irenaeus is emphatic here that the Gospels are four in number, and no more and no less. Irenaeus points out that, just as there are four points to the compass, that it is fitting that the Church should have four pillars. The Scriptures also speak of these four principle winds as we read in **Jeremiah 49 (KJV)**:36 And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come.

And in **Daniel 7 (KJV):2** Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

And in **Matthew 24 (HCSB):31** He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

So the Gospels are for the whole world. In this world the Church is scattered with this same message of the Gospel to all who would receive it. Irenaeus asserts here that “the Gospel and the spirit of life” are “the “pillar and ground” of the Church.” However the Gospel is never stated in Scripture to be the “pillar and ground” of the Church, but the Church is spoken of as the pillar and support of the truth as we read in **1 Timothy 3 (NASB):14** I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; 15 but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

The words “the Gospel and the spirit of life” remind us of Jesus words in **John 6 (NASB):63** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

His words are Spirit and life to His body, and life to anyone who would receive Him. Certainly the Gospel is the vehicle of conveying Jesus’ words of Spirit and life to the lost, and there is no doubt that His words are spiritual food for His body. However, based on this assertion that “the pillar and ground of the Church is the Gospel,” and since there are four Gospels, Irenaeus then proceeds to portray the Church as resting on the four pillars of the Gospels. To repeat, he states, “It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the “pillar and ground” of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh.” The Scriptures simply do not speak of the Church as resting on the four pillars of the Gospel. The Church is said to be resting on the “chief cornerstone,” Jesus Christ, who is also its foundation and the “rock” upon which the Church is built. We must be careful how we interpret the Scriptures, and not to exceed what is written, lest we invent another Gospel.

The message of the Church is the Gospel, and in as much as the Gospel is preached, the Church will breathe out “immortality on every side,” and make men alive to God afresh through the Gospel. But the Church does not have an identity of its own, apart from the body of Christ. The Church is not an institution, but a body. It is not a building standing apart from its members. It is bound together by loving relationship in the Spirit. We must be careful that our vision of what the Church is does not go beyond what the Scriptures teach. We must not exceed what is written as Paul commands us in **1 Corinthians 4 (NASB):6** Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

Irenaeus then affirms, ”From which fact, it is evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the cherubim, and contains all things, He who was manifested to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As also David says, when entreating His manifestation, “Thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth,” referring to **Psalm 80 (Septuagint):1** Attend, O Shepherd of Israel, who guidest Joseph like a flock; thou who sittest upon the cherubs, manifest thyself;

This is also translated as in **Psalm 80 (NASB):1** Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned *above* the cherubim, shine forth!

Irenaeus refers to this Psalm as if it was a direct reference to the Son of God. Irenaeus then asserts, “For the cherubim, too, were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God.” Irenaeus then correlates each face of the cherubim to “images of the dispensation of the Son of God” as follows:

- “The first living creature was like a lion,” symbolizing His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power;”
- “the second [living creature] was like a calf, signifying [His] sacrificial and sacerdotal order”;
- “but the third had, as it were, the face as of a man,”—an evident description of His advent as a human being;”
- “the fourth was like a flying eagle,” pointing out the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the

Church."

The Scripture he is referring to here is found in Revelation 4:7. This is easier to visualize if we read Revelation, chapter four, verse seven, in context as in **Revelation 4 (KJV)**:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. 6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The "One sitting on the throne" in Revelation, chapter four, verse 2, is the same who sits on the throne in Revelation, chapter five as we read in **Revelation 5 (KJV)**:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Jesus is the "Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David." In Revelation, chapter five, we see that Jesus is standing between the throne with the four living creatures and the elders as we continue to read in **Revelation 5 (KJV)**:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

All the angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders praised Him who sits on the throne and the Lamb as we continue to read in **Revelation 5 (KJV)**:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. 14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Irenaeus then continues as he asserts, "And therefore the Gospels are in accord with these things, among which Christ Jesus is seated." However, as we saw in Revelation, chapter five, it was God who was portrayed as on the throne, while Jesus was portrayed as a Lamb, slain, and standing between the throne and the elders in verse six above. The language is highly symbolic in the book of Revelation, for we see that the Lamb is said to

have “seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth,” in Revelation 5:6. The same “Lamb” is said to have come and taken “the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne,” in Revelation 5:7. There is not space here to unpack all of the symbolism. But at least we see that Irenaeus’ assertion that it is Jesus on seated on the throne in Revelation, chapter 4, does not agree with the Scriptures. The one sitting on the throne is God Himself. All of these attributes of the images then relate to God Himself. This does not mean, however, that they do not apply to Jesus as well, but we must be careful what we teach as Paul also directed Timothy in **1 Timothy 4 (NASB):16** Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

In his next sentence, Irenaeus continues as he states, “For that according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” referring to **John 1 (NASB):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Also, “all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made,” referring to **John 1 (NASB):3** All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

And Irenaeus continues as he affirms, “For this reason, too, is that Gospel full of all confidence, for such is His person.” Irenaeus relates John’s Gospel to the first living creature which was like a lion, and which symbolizes His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power. Yet, Irenaeus does not amplify how this symbolism is reflected in John, chapter one, verses one to three. It is true that God created all things and that the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. It is also true that God’s plan of salvation has been effectively carried out, possibly symbolising His effectual working. And John’s Gospel relates to us that Jesus has come and died and rose again for us, possibly symbolizing His leadership and royal power. But the verses of John 1:1-3 do not mention any of these things. Neither do they mention a “glorious generation from the Father,” as if Jesus somehow had a beginning. Jesus’ humanity had a beginning, and this is more probably what Irenaeus is referring to. There is no question that Irenaeus believed in the deity of Jesus Christ.

Irneaeus then continues as he asserts, “But that according to Luke, taking up [His] priestly character, commenced with Zacharias the priest offering sacrifice to God. For now was made ready the fatted calf, about to be immolated for the finding again of the younger son.” Irenaeus asserts here that the theme of Luke’s Gospel was the “priestly character” of Jesus Christ. He bases this in part on the fact that in chapter one of the Gospel of Luke, Luke describes how Zacharias, a Levitical priest, received the revelation that he and his wife would have a son in their old age who would be great in the sight of the Lord, and go before Him to prepare His way as we read in **Luke 1 (KJV):13** But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

This passage mentions the priesthood of Zacharias, but nothing is said in this passage about the priestly character of the Christ, the Messiah. The fact that the Gospel opens with these words says nothing about Jesus’ priesthood. The Lord Jesus did tell the parable of the prodigal son in Luke, chapter fifteen, which includes the immolation of the fatted calf when the prodigal son returned as we read in **Luke 15 (KJV):11** And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and

before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

But Luke tells us absolutely nothing in regards to Jesus' priestly character here either. For that matter, none of the Gospels say anything about His priestly character. They only speak of His offering Himself on the cross for our sins. Luke does tell us that He is Lord of the Sabbath as we read in **Luke 6 (KJV):5** And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

This is also mentioned in Matthew's Gospel as we read in **Matthew 12 (KJV):8** For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Jesus functioned as a priest for He taught the people the word of God correctly. This was a priestly function under the law of Moses. However, he always referred them to go to the priest and perform the requirements of the law of Moses rather than take any of these duties as His own.

It is not that Jesus was not a priest. He was a great high priest as we see in **Hebrews 3 (NASB):1** Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;

And in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):14** Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.

Jesus was not a priest according to the law of Moses, but according to Melchizedek as we see in **Hebrews 5 (NASB):4** And no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"; 6 just as He says also in another *passage*, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

And in **Hebrews 5 (NASB):9** And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

And in **Hebrews 6 (NASB):19** This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

However, His priesthood was not revealed or understood until after His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. The reason this is so is because He is the mediator of the New Covenant which did not go into effect until after He ascended into heaven by His own blood to obtain eternal redemption for us. So nothing in the Gospels speaks of His priesthood. The theme of the Gospel of Luke could be more characterized by His manhood since His birth and childhood is given more space in this Gospel than in any other. In chapter two of Luke the details of Jesus' childhood are mentioned as we read in **Luke 2 (KJV):40** And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. 41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. 43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. 44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

Jesus was later found in the temple teaching the teachers. When His parents found Him, they asked Him why He had treated them this way. He responded as in **Luke 2 (KJV):49** And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “Matthew, again, relates His generation as a man, saying, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,” referring to **Matthew 1 (NASB):1** The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Again Irenaeus continues and testifies, “and also, “The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise,” referring in context to **Matthew 1 (NASB):18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

Irenaeus then asserts, “This, then, is the Gospel of His humanity; for which reason it is, too, that [the character of] a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel.” Matthew’s Gospel does mention in chapter one His generation as a man, but the theme of this Gospel would more relate to Christ as King. The genealogy is given to show that He was descended from the line of David as prophesied. Matthew describes the visit of the magi from the east looking for the King of the Jews in great detail in Matthew, chapter two, verses 1 to 16, beginning as we read in **Matthew 2 (HCSB):1** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived unexpectedly in Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

And also Matthew describes Jesus as the humble king as we read in **Matthew 21 (KJV):1** And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. 3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. 4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. 6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. 8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

Irenaeus then continues as he asserts, “Mark, on the other hand, commences with [a reference to] the prophetic spirit coming down from on high to men, saying, “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet,” referring to Mark 1:1, “—pointing to the winged aspect of the Gospel; and on this account he made a compendious and cursory narrative, for such is the prophetic character.”

Mark’s Gospel does begin as Irenaeus says as we read in **Mark 1 (NASB):1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way. 3 A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make His paths straight!

However, again, no mention is made of Jesus Christ as the prophet. Isaiah is said to be a prophet. Jesus is mentioned as a prophet in Matthew’s Gospel in **Matthew 21 (HCSB):10** When He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken, saying, “Who is this?” 11 And the crowds kept saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee!”

Mark is just showing us that John the Baptist was the one who was prophesied by Isaiah to come and prepare the way before the Lord. The mark of the signature of God is fulfilled prophecy. All of the Gospels show how prophecy was fulfilled in the different events in Jesus’ life. This is the greatest testimony to the truth of the Gospels.

Mark does record the time when Jesus was baptized by John as we see in **Mark 1 (HCSB):9** In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. 10 As soon as He came up out of the water, He saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending to Him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: You are My beloved Son; I take delight in You!

Jesus is clearly anointed by the Spirit here in Mark. And I suppose this fits with Irenaeus words that it points “to the winged aspect of the Gospel.” Jesus was definitely a prophet in His ministry. And Jesus was, and is also a priest and a King. Jesus also became a man for us. These things are without dispute in the Scriptures.

Irenaeus then affirms, “And the Word of God Himself used to converse with the ante-Mosaic patriarchs, in accordance with His divinity and glory; but for those under the law he instituted a sacerdotal and liturgical service.” By his words “used to converse with the ante-Mosaic patriarchs,” Irenaeus is referring to the

theophanies, that is, the divine appearances in human form to the patriarchs before Moses' time. One of the most prominent of these is God's visitation to Abraham as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV)**:1 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3 And said, My LORD, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: 4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: 5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

During this visitation, the Lord actually ate with Abraham as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV)**:6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. 7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. 8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

The Lord then tells Abraham that he will indeed have a son in the next year. The Lord then turns His attention toward Sodom and Gomorrah and decides to tell Abraham what He is about to do as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV)**:16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; 18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. 20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

The Lord and Abraham at this time did converse as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV)**:22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the LORD. 23 Abraham came near and said, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep *it* away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are *treated* alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" 26 So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account."

The rest of the story is well known. The Lord would not relent of His judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin was so great, and there were no righteous persons living there except for Lot, Abraham's nephew, and his daughters. These were saved by the angels of the Lord, except for Lot's wife who looked back after being commanded not to look back by the angels, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

The Lord also appeared to Isaac, Abraham's son as we read in **Genesis 26 (KJV)**:1 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. 2 And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;

The Lord also appeared to Jacob in **Genesis 35 (KJV)**:1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

The time of the visitation he refers to is mentioned in **Genesis 28 (KJV)**:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west,

and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 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.

The Lord appeared to Jacob again, and gave him the name Israel as we read in **Genesis 35 (KJV)**:9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. 10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. 11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; 12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. 13 And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

Jacob refers again to God's visitation in **Genesis 48 (KJV)**:3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

Ever after in the Scriptures the appearances of the Lord are stated using the following form: The angel of the LORD appeared to...." This is first stated in **Exodus 3 (KJV)**:1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

However, that this was an appearance of God is confirmed by the words of the Lord as we read in **Exodus 3 (KJV)**:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:

And these same appearances occurred after the time of Moses as well as we read in **Judges 6 (KJV)**:12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. 14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

The Lord also is said to have appeared to Samson's mother and father in Judges, chapter thirteen, and to Samuel in 1 Samuel, chapter three, as well as to Solomon in 1 Kings, chapter three. All this to say that the Lord did converse with the "ante-Mosaic patriarchs," but He also continued to converse with others as well before His advent. And He did institute "a sacerdotal and liturgical service" for those under the law, but that says nothing about His own priesthood which was according to the order of Melchizedek and not that of Aaron.

Irenaeus then continues in paragraph eight as he testifies, "Afterwards, being made man for us, He sent the gift of the celestial Spirit over all the earth, protecting us with His wings." It is clear in the Gospels that Jesus was made man for us. However, the Holy Spirit is never referred to as "the gift of the celestial Spirit over all the earth, protecting us with His wings." The Holy Spirit is never spoken of in Scripture in this way. The Holy Spirit was sent after Jesus rose and ascended to heaven, and He was sent to fill all those who repented and believed in Jesus Christ as Peter tells us in **Acts 2 (HCSB)**:37 When they heard this, they came under deep conviction and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Brothers, what must we do?" 38 "Repent," Peter said to them, "and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will

receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

The Holy Spirit was sent to indwell believers as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

And if we do not have the Spirit, we are not His as is stated in **Romans 8 (NASB):9** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

The Scriptures do refer to the refuge that the Lord provides for every child of God who trusts in Him as we read in **Psalm 17 (KJV):8** Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

This is also related in **Psalm 91 (KJV):4** He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy shield and buckler*.

But the Holy Spirit protects those who trust in Him. He is not sent in some physical way “over all the earth, protecting us with His wings.” The Holy Spirit was sent to be our Helper in this life. That is why He indwells us.

Irenaeus then continues in paragraph eight, “Such, then, as was the course followed by the Son of God, so was also the form of the living creatures; and such as was the form of the living creatures, so was also the character of the Gospel.” By the “course followed by the Son of God,” we are to understand that Irenaeus means, as he stated, that Jesus Christ conversed with the patriarchs before Moses, that He instituted the Sacerdotal order for those under the law, that He was Himself a priest, that He was made a man for us, and that He sent the Holy Spirit over all the earth to protect us with His wings.

All of this is true in part, but the relationship of the four living creatures to the Gospels that Irenaeus tries to show is very weak, and not really proven by his arguments or by the Scriptures. As for the course of the Lord, His ways are inscrutable as we read in **Romans 11 (NASB):33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

Now, Irenaeus is trying to show the veracity of the Gospels by showing a unity in the Scriptures of related themes. However, he is yielding more to his own imagination in his attempt than he is to the actual statements of the Scriptures. His method of interpretation lacks discipline. His intentions are good, and Irenaeus is a defender of the faith. But not all of his interpretations of Scripture are sound.

He then continues in paragraph eight, “For the living creatures are quadriform, and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by the Lord. For this reason were four principal covenants given to the human race:”

- “one, prior to the deluge, under Adam”;
- “the second, that after the deluge, under Noah”;
- “the third, the giving of the law, under Moses”;
- “the fourth, that which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel, raising and bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly kingdom.”

He seems to have left out the one under Abraham as he did not seem to think it was a “principal” covenant. It is stated in **Genesis 15 (KJV):18** On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

However, it is very important to note that the covenant of the law is in accordance with the covenant of Abraham as we read in **Exodus 6 (KJV):2** God also said to Moses, “I am the LORD. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them. 4 I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. 5 Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. 6 “Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from

under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. 7 I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.””

Irenaeus then concludes in paragraph nine, “These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those, [I mean,] who represent the aspects of the Gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer.” Bravo Irenaeus! We salute your tenacious defense of the Gospels even though your method of interpretation is not perfect. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, “The former class [do so], that they may seem to have discovered more than is of the truth; the latter, that they may set the dispensations of God aside.”

Irenaeus continues as he summarizes:

- “For Marcion, rejecting the entire Gospel, yea rather, cutting himself off from the Gospel, boasts that he has part in the [blessings of] the Gospel.”
- “The Montanists, that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John’s Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitæ) who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren. We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks expressly of prophetical gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church. Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, they fall into the irremissible sin.”
- “But those who are from Valentinus, being, on the other hand, altogether reckless, while they put forth their own compositions, boast that they possess more Gospels than there really are. Indeed, they have arrived at such a pitch of audacity, as to entitle their comparatively recent writing “the Gospel of Truth,” though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the Apostles, so that they have really no Gospel which is not full of blasphemy. For if what they have published is the Gospel of truth, and yet is totally unlike those which have been handed down to us from the apostles, any who please may learn, as is shown from the Scriptures themselves, that that which has been handed down from the apostles can no longer be reckoned the Gospel of truth.”

Irenaeus refers to the Marcion who was a Gnostic leader in the time of Irenaeus around 144 A.D. Philip Schaff, the notable Christian historian, comments on what Marcion and the Gnostics were doing in the early church period.

“The highest source of knowledge, with these heretics was a secret tradition, in contrast with the open, popular tradition of the Catholic church. In this respect, they differ from Protestant sects, which generally discard tradition altogether and appeal to the Bible only, as understood by themselves. They appealed also to apocryphal documents, which arose in the second century in great numbers, under eminent names of apostolic or pre-Christian times. Epiphanius, in his 26<sup>th</sup> Heresy, counts the apocrypha of the Gnostics by thousands, and Irenaeus found among the Valentinians alone a countless multitude of such writings. Adv. Haer.l.c. 20. §1: Αμύθητον πλῆθος ἀποκρύφων καὶ νόθων γραφῶν, ἃς αὐτοὶ ἐπλασαν, παρεισφέρουσιν εἰς κατάπληξιν τῶν ἀνοήτων καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας μὴ ἐπισταμένων γράμματα. And finally, when it suited their purpose, the Gnostics employed single portions of the Bible, without being able to agree either as to the extent or the interpretation of the same. The Old Testament they generally rejected, either entirely, as in the case of the Marcionites and the Manichaeans, or at least in great part; and in the New Testament they preferred certain books or portions, such as the Gospel of John, with its profound spiritual intuitions, and either rejected the other

books, or wrested them to suit their ideas. Marcion, for example, thus mutilated the Gospel of Luke, and received in addition to it only ten of Paul's Epistles, thus substituting an arbitrary canon of eleven books for the catholic Testament of twenty-seven. In interpretation they adopted, even with far less moderation than Philo, the most arbitrary and extravagant allegorical principles; despising the letter as sensuous, and the laws of language and exegesis as fetters of the mind. The number 30 in the New Testament, for instance, particularly in the life of Jesus, is made to denote the number of the Valentinian aeons; and the lost sheep in the parable is Achamoth. Even to heathen authors, to the poems of Homer, Aratus, Anacreon, they applied this method, and discovered in these works the deepest Gnostic mysteries. | Hippol. Philos. IV. 46, V. 8, 13, 20. They gathered from the whole field of ancient mythology, astronomy, physics, and magic, everything which could, serve in any way to support their fancies." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 451-452.**

Irenaeus not only defended the Church against the Gnostic doctrines. We see here in paragraph nine that Irenaeus was against all heresy. He names Montanus and his followers, namely the Montanists, who were not Gnostics but were those who, according to Irenaeus, "set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race" and who "do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit." These he says are "Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitæ) who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren."

Irenaeus concludes that "these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks expressly of prophetical gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church. Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, they fall into the irremissible sin."

To understand what Irenaeus is saying, it is helpful to know a little about the history of Montanism as it has come down to us. Schaff also comments on Montanism, whose originator was Montanus. Schaff says in Volume II, page 417, that "Montanism was not, originally, a departure from the faith, but a morbid overstraining of the practical morality and discipline of the early church. It was an excessive supernaturalism and puritanism against Gnostic rationalism and Catholic laxity. It is the first example of an earnest and well-meaning, but gloomy and fanatical hyper-Christianity, which, like all hyper-spiritualism, is apt to end in the flesh." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 417.**

Again Schaff says in Volume II, page 417-18, "Montanism originated in Asia Minor, the theatre of many movements of the church in this period; yet not in Ephesus or any large city, but in some insignificant villages of the province of Phrygia, once the home of a sensuously mystic and dreamy nature-religion, where Paul and his pupils had planted congregations at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. The movement was started about the middle of the second century during the reign of Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius, by a certain Montanus. He was, according to hostile accounts, before his conversion, a mutilated priest of Cybele, with no special talents nor culture, but burning with fanatical zeal." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 417-418.**

Schaff also states in Volume II, page 418 that, "Connected with him were two prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla, who left their husbands. During the bloody persecutions under the Antonines, which raged in Asia Minor, and caused the death of Polycarp (155), all three went forth as prophets and reformers of the Christian life, and proclaimed the near approach of the age of the Holy Spirit and of the millennial reign in Pepuza, a small village of Phrygia, upon which the new Jerusalem was to come down. Scenes took place similar to those under the preaching of the first Quakers, and the glossolalia and prophesying in the Irvingite congregations." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 418.**

Schaff says in Volume II, page 419 that "They called themselves spiritual Christians πνευματικοί (pneumatikoi), in distinction from the psychic or carnal Christians ψυχικοί (sudzikoi). The bishops and synods of Asia Minor, though not with one voice, declared the new prophecy the work of demons, applied exorcism, and cut off the Montanists from the fellowship of the church." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 419.**

Schaff continues by stating in Volume II, on page 419-420 that, "The Gallic Christians, then severely tried by persecution, took a conciliatory posture, and sympathized at least with the moral earnestness, the enthusiasm for martyrdom, and the chiliastic hopes of the Montanists. They sent their presbyter (afterwards bishop) Irenaeus to Eleutherus in Rome to intercede in their behalf. This mission seems to have induced him or his successor to issue letters of peace, but they were soon afterwards recalled. This sealed the fate of the party." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 419-420.**

Again Schaff states in Volume II, on page 420 that, "Their greatest conquest was the gifted and fiery, but eccentric and rigoristic Tertullian. He became in the year 201 or 202, from ascetic sympathies, a most energetic and influential advocate of Montanism, and helped its dark feeling towards a twilight of philosophy, without, however, formally seceding from the Catholic Church, whose doctrines he continued to defend against the heretics. At all events, he was not excommunicated, and his orthodox writings were always highly esteemed. He is the only theologian of this schismatic movement, which started in purely practical questions, and we derive the best of our knowledge of it from his works." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 420.**

And in Volume II, on page 421, Schaff states that "As a separate sect, the Montanists or Tertullianists, as they were also called in Africa, run down into the sixth century. At the time of Epiphanius the sect had many adherents in Phrygia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and in Constantinople. The successors of Constantine, down to Justinian (530), repeatedly enacted laws against them. Synodical legislation about the validity of Montanist baptism is inconsistent." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 421.**

As to their doctrine, Schaff states in Volume II, on page 421 that, "Montanism agreed in all essential points with the Catholic Church, and held very firmly to the traditional rule of faith. Tertullian was thoroughly orthodox according to the standard of his age. He opposed infant baptism on the assumption that mortal sins could not be forgiven after baptism; but infant baptism was not yet a catholic dogma, and was left to the discretion of parents. He contributed to the development of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, by asserting against Patripassianism a personal distinction in God, and the import of the Holy Spirit. Montanism was rooted neither, like Ebionism, in Judaism, nor, like Gnosticism, in heathenism, but in Christianity; and its errors consist in a morbid exaggeration of Christian ideas and demands. Tertullian says, that the administration of the Paraclete consists only in the reform of discipline, in deeper understanding of the Scriptures, and in effort after higher perfection; that it has the same faith, the same God, the same Christ, and the same sacraments with the Catholics. The sect combated the Gnostic heresy with all decision, and forms the exact counterpart of that system, placing Christianity chiefly in practical life instead of theoretical speculation, and looking for the consummation of the kingdom of God on this earth, though not till the millennium, instead of transferring it into an abstract ideal world." Yet between these two systems, as always between opposite extremes, there were also points of contact; a common antagonism, for example, to the present order of the world, and the distinction of a pneumatic and a psychical church." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 421.**

Schaff states in Volume II, on page 422, that "Tertullian, however, was by no means rationalistic in his view. On the contrary, he demanded for all new revelations the closest agreement with the traditional faith of the church, the *regula fidei*, which, in a genuine Montanistic work, he terms "immobilis et irreformabilis." Nevertheless he gave the revelations of the Phrygian prophets on matters of practice an importance which interfered with the sufficiency of the Scriptures." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 422.**

Again in Volume II, on page 423, Schaff states that "Montanism, in the first place, sought a forced continuance of the MIRACULOUS GIFTS of the apostolic church, which gradually disappeared as Christianity became settled in humanity, and its supernatural principle was naturalized on earth. It asserted, above all, the continuance of prophecy, and hence it went generally under the name of the *nova prophetia*." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 423.**

Schaff states in Volume II, on page 423-424, that "The Catholic church did not deny, in theory, the continuance of prophecy and the other miraculous gifts, but was disposed to derive the Montanistic revelations from satanic inspirations, and mistrusted them all the more for their proceeding not from the regular clergy, but in great part from unauthorized laymen and fanatical women." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 423-424.**

Schaff continues in Volume II, on page 424, by stating, "This brings us to another feature of the Montanistic movement, the assertion of the UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD of Christians, even of females, against the special priesthood in the Catholic church. Under this view it may be called a democratic reaction against the clerical aristocracy, which from the time of Ignatius had more and more monopolized all ministerial privileges and functions. The Montanists found the true qualification and appointment for the office of teacher in direct endowment by the Spirit of God, in distinction from outward ordination and episcopal succession. They everywhere proposed the supernatural element and the free motion of the Spirit against the mechanism of a fixed ecclesiastical order." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 424.**

Schaff also states in Volume II, on page 425 that, "It raised a zealous protest against the growing looseness of the Catholic penitential discipline, which in Rome particularly, under Zephyrinus and Callistus, to the great grief of earnest minds, established a scheme of indulgence for the grossest sins, and began, long before Constantine, to obscure the line between the church and the world. Tertullian makes the restoration of a rigorous discipline the chief office of the new prophecy." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 425.**

However, Schaff states in Volume II, on page 425-426, "But Montanism certainly went to the opposite extreme, and fell from evangelical freedom into Jewish legalism; while the Catholic church in rejecting the new laws and burdens defended the cause of freedom. Montanism turned with horror from all the enjoyments of life, and held even art to be incompatible with Christian soberness and humility. It forbade women all ornamental clothing, and required virgins to be veiled. It courted the blood-baptism of martyrdom, and condemned concealment or flight in persecution as a denial of Christ. It multiplied fasts and other ascetic exercises, and carried them to extreme severity, as the best preparation for the millennium. It prohibited second marriage as adultery, for laity as well as clergy, and inclined even to regard a single marriage as a mere concession on the part of God to the sensuous infirmity of man. It taught the impossibility of a second repentance, and refused to restore the lapsed to the fellowship of the church. Tertullian held all mortal sins (of which he numbers seven), committed after baptism, to be unpardonable, at least in this world, and a church, which showed such lenity towards gross offenders, as the Roman church at that time did, according to the corroborating testimony of Hippolytus, he called worse than a den of thieves," even a "spelunca maechorum et fornicatorum."'" **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 425-426.**

With the above history in mind, we can now examine Irenaeus' statements in paragraph nine concerning Montanism with more clarity. Again, Irenaeus states in paragraph nine, "Others, again (the Montanists), that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitæ) who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren. We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church. Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, they fall into the irremissible sin."

However, history seems to tell us that the Montanists did not really set aside the gift of the Spirit or the Gospel of John or the prophetic Spirit. They were reportedly exercising the gift of prophecy and speaking in tongues, so they obviously did not reject Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. So we may well ask how could Irenaeus call them "wretched men indeed?"

It seems to me that the key to understanding Irenaeus' statements about the Montanists in paragraph nine are his words asserting that the Montanists "hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren." Irenaeus held that all meetings that were not under the auspices of a church in apostolic succession were unauthorized. And Irenaeus states that all the churches should be in agreement with "that tradition derived from the apostles," and that the Church in Rome, since it was founded by "the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul," has preserved this tradition continuously by faithful men everywhere. Irenaeus states this clearly in **Book 3: Chapter III, Paragraph 2:** "Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an

evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.”

Again, it is important to note that Irenaeus forbade “unauthorized meetings,” that is, meetings that were not assembled under the auspices of an apostolic successor. Again he states this clearly in **Book 4: Chapter XXVI, Paragraph 2:** “Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God—namely, strange doctrines—shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud. But such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, [shall] remain among those in hell (apud inferos), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron. But those who cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church, [shall] receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did.”

Irenaeus’ statement that the Montanists “set at naught the gift of the Spirit,” and that they “do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John’s Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit,” seems to be an exaggeration from all that we know about the Montanists. In addition, Irenaeus also says, “We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church.” Irenaeus does not quote any statements of the Montanists themselves but instead he says, “We must conclude....” The reason Irenaeus “must conclude” that the Montanists “can not admit the Apostle Paul” and his epistle to the Corinthians is because they “hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren.” Though he doesn’t say it outright, Irenaeus did not count their prophesying as from the Holy Spirit because it was not done in an authorized meeting under the auspices of the ecclesiastical order. And so he says that they “set at naught the gift of the Spirit.” Also, the Montanists, according to Schaff in Volume II, on page 421, “agreed in all essential points with the Catholic Church, and held very firmly to the traditional rule of faith.” **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 421.** How then can Irenaeus say that they set aside the Gospel of John or the epistle to the Corinthians unless it is because they did not do it under the auspices of the clergy of his day?

Also, Philip Schaff states in Volume II, on page 419-420 that, “The Gallic Christians, then severely tried by persecution, took a conciliatory posture, and sympathized at least with the moral earnestness, the enthusiasm for martyrdom, and the chiliastic hopes of the Montanists. They sent their presbyter (afterwards bishop) Irenaeus to Eleutherus in Rome to intercede in their behalf. This mission seems to have induced him or his successor to issue letters of peace, but they were soon afterwards recalled. This sealed the fate of the party.” **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 419-420.**

Schaff also states that Irenaeus “was sent by the Gallican confessors to the Roman bishop Eleutherus (who ruled A.D. 177–190), as a mediator in the Montanistic disputes.” **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 419-420.**

With this understanding of Irenaeus’ thinking, and the fact that he was sent to Rome, and to the Roman bishop Eleutherus as a mediator in the Montanistic disputes, and the fact that he himself was the presbyter of the Gallic Christians who were “then severely tried by persecution,” it seems to me that Irenaeus may have been sympathetic at first to the Montanists, but after the letters of peace were recalled by Eleutherus or his successor, he felt it necessary to reject Montanism. When we consider the totality of his writing, Irenaeus, in the

desperation of the times, seems to have felt that alignment with Rome was a safeguard to the faithful in the Church. Therefore, he would have regarded, and did regard, any meetings outside of the authorization of an apostolic successor as unauthorized, and those who attended such meetings as schismatics. Certainly the Montanists fit the description of schismatics according to Irenaeus since, as Schaff states in Volume II, on page 424, “The Montanists found the true qualification and appointment for the office of teacher in direct endowment by the Spirit of God, in distinction from outward ordination and episcopal succession.” **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 424.**

The Montanists then did not regard outward ordination and episcopal succession but “they everywhere proposed the supernatural element and the free motion of the Spirit against the mechanism of a fixed ecclesiastical order.” **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 424.**

This being the case, the only reasons left for Irenaeus to reject the Montanists was that their meetings were not authorized by apostolic succession, and their extreme asceticism.

Now it is not that Irenaeus was against the manifestation of spiritual gifts. In fact, he boasted of them. Irenaeus states in **Book 2: Chapter XXXII, Paragraph 4:** “If, however, they maintain that the Lord, too, performed such works simply in appearance, we shall refer them to the prophetic writings, and prove from these both that all things were thus predicted regarding Him, and did take place undoubtedly, and that He is the only Son of God. Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practising deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them [on account of such miraculous interpositions]. For as she has received freely from God, freely also does she minister [to others].”

Yet, Irenaeus did not believe that these gifts were valid outside of the authorized apostolic succession. He insisted that in order for them to be valid, they had to be operated within the existing ecclesiastical order. He states, speaking of the one who is spiritual in **Book 4: Chapter XXXIII, Paragraph 6:** “He shall also judge false prophets, who, without having received the gift of prophecy from God, and not possessed of the fear of God, but either for the sake of vainglory, or with a view to some personal advantage, or acting in some other way under the influence of a wicked spirit, pretend to utter prophecies, while all the time they lie against God.”

And continues in **Book 4: Chapter XXXIII, Paragraph 7:** “He shall also judge those who give rise to schisms, who are destitute of the love of God, and who look to their own special advantage rather than to the unity of the Church; and who for trifling reasons, or any kind of reason which occurs to them, cut in pieces and divide the great and glorious body of Christ, and so far as in them lies, [positively] destroy it,—men who prize of peace while they give rise to war, and do in truth strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel. For no reformation of so great importance can be effected by them, as will compensate for the mischief arising from their schism. He shall also judge all those who are beyond the pale of the truth, that is, who are outside the Church; but he himself shall be judged by no one. For to him all things are consistent: he has a full faith in one God Almighty, of whom are all things; and in the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things, and in the dispensations connected with Him, by means of which the Son of God became man; and a firm belief in the Spirit of God, who furnishes us with a knowledge of the truth, and has set forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, in virtue of which He dwells with every generation of men according to the will of the Father.”

Notwithstanding, Schaff says that the references to Montanism in **Book 3: Chapter XI, paragraph 9** are “somewhat doubtful.” **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 416.** And Schaff includes paragraphs 6 and 7 above as a reference to Montanism.

However, we can see that throughout Irenaeus’ writing he was desperate to defend the Church against the Gnostics who were insidiously working to destroy the Church. We applaud him for this. And we can certainly sympathize with Irenaeus as to why he would count Montanism as a deviation from the norm when we

understand that the Church was being overwhelmed all over by the insidious attacks of the Gnostics who were claiming the authority of a prophetic spirit. And disunity or disagreement would only add to the burden of earnestly contending for the faith, which Irenaeus was valiantly doing by his writing. In all of this we see God's hand working to build the Church. He certainly used the Montanists to bring attention to the spiritual laxity in the Church. Yet, it is evident that extreme asceticism is not what God wants either. Certainly Paul fled from persecution, which Tertullian forbade. Paul was let down in a basket at Damascus as we read in **Acts 9 (KJV)**:23 After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, 24 but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. 25 But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. 26 When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

And again we read in **Acts 9 (KJV)**:27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. 28 So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. 30 When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

By advocating such austerity for women, and the prohibition by Tertullian against second marriages, and the prohibition by Tertullian of repentance after certain mortal sins he lists, the Montanists exceeded the Scriptures. However, the Montanists' desire to restore the Spirit's place in their worship is commendable, even if somewhat unbalanced. At least they wanted to give Him place in their meetings. Their desire to institute the priesthood of all believers and to recognize the "supernatural element and the free motion of the Spirit against the mechanism of a fixed ecclesiastical order" was also commendable, and in accordance with Scripture. Again, the Montanists recognition of "the true qualification and appointment for the office of teacher in direct endowment by the Spirit of God, in distinction from outward ordination and episcopal succession" was, and is, also valid according to Scripture.

Also, I cannot agree with Schaff when he states in Volume II, on page 423, that 'Montanism, in the first place, sought a forced continuance of the MIRACULOUS GIFTS of the apostolic church, which gradually disappeared as Christianity became settled in humanity, and its supernatural principle was naturalized on earth.' **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 423.**

It is true that Christianity apparently did become "settled in humanity," and as the Church grew in the Middle Ages, it does appear that "its supernatural principle was naturalized on earth." However, this was not God's intent for the very words "settled in humanity" and "naturalized on earth" speak not of spiritually minded men and women, but of carnality in the Church. Paul tell us that the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit as we read again in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB)**:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

I do not believe Montanism "sought a forced continuance of the MIRACULOUS GIFTS of the apostolic church." I believe the presence of the Spirit in believers insures that there will be manifestations of the Spirit for they are given as He wills to "all who are afar off, as many as the Lord will call." Spiritual gifts, that is, miraculous gifts, are necessary in the Church even today. It is their neglect that has caused such carnality in our churches. We have quenched the Spirit. We must understand what the Scriptures teach about spiritual gifts, and operate them accordingly. They must be done decently and in order, and in accordance with the guidelines that are given in the Scriptures. And love must direct their operation. Without love, they profit me nothing. But they are given for the benefit of others.

Schaff further states in Volume II, page 423, that Montanism "asserted, above all, the continuance of prophecy, and hence it went generally under the name of the nova prophetia. It appealed to Scriptural examples, John, Agabus, Judas, and Silas, and for their female prophets, to Miriam and Deborah, and especially to the four daughters of Philip, who were buried in Hierapolis, the capital of Phrygia. Ecstatic oracular utterances were mistaken for divine inspirations. Tertullian calls the mental status of those prophets an "amentia," an "excidere

sensu," and describes it in a way which irresistibly reminds one of the phenomena of magnetic clairvoyance. Montanus compares a man in the ecstasy with a musical instrument, on which the Holy Spirit plays his melodies. "Behold," says he in one of his oracles, in the name of the Paraclete, "the man is as a lyre, and I sweep over him as a plectrum. The man sleeps; I wake. Behold, it is the Lord who puts the hearts of men out of themselves, and who gives hearts to men." As to its matter, the Montanistic prophecy related to the approaching heavy judgments of God, the persecutions, the millennium, fasting, and other ascetic exercises, which were to be enforced as laws of the church." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 423.**

From what Schaff says above, Montanism was a reaction to the lack of spiritual manifestation in the churches. Schaff says above that, "It asserted, above all, the continuance of prophecy," which implies that prophecy was not in continuance in the churches at that time. This seems to contradict Irenaeus' testimony in paragraph 4 of **Book 2, Chapter XXXII**, for he says there that prophecy and spiritual manifestation had been in continuance from apostolic times. Irenaeus there states that "those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles]," and that "some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church," and that others "have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions," and that others "still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole," and that even the dead have "been raised up" and have been "among us for many years."

Irenaeus continues in paragraph 4 of **Book 2, Chapter XXXII**, by stating that these gifts and benefits are happening daily as he says, "And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practicing deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them [on account of such miraculous interpositions]. For as she has received freely from God, freely also does she minister [to others]."

Irenaeus mentions an innumerable number of gifts which the Church exerts "day by day." Although spiritual gifts are implied by the context, he is not specific as to which gifts in particular he is referring to. The one very noticeable omission by Irenaeus is any first hand testimony in his writing, either from his own personal experience of exercising the gifts of the Spirit himself, or from his own personal experience of having observed others exercising the gifts of the Spirit. The impression he leaves us with in his writing is that he himself, a bishop in the Church of Lyons, has never exercised spiritual gifts, and has no first hand knowledge of them, but that the Church is continuing to benefit others as it has all along.

Also, Schaff says above that Tertullian describes his experience of prophecy "in a way which irresistibly reminds one of the phenomena of magnetic clairvoyance." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 423.**

Schaff states that "Montanus compares a man in the ecstasy with a musical instrument, on which the Holy Spirit plays his melodies." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 423.**

Schaff also quotes one of Montanus' oracles to say that Montanus says in the name of the Paraclete that "the man is as a lyre, and I sweep over him as a plectrum. The man sleeps; I wake. Behold, it is the Lord who puts the hearts of men out of themselves, and who gives hearts to men." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 423.**

However, these statements by Schaff intimate his own lack of personal experience in the exercise of spiritual gifts as well. If the Montanists were protesting "Catholic laxity" and the lack of spiritual manifestation in the church, and were opposing "outward ordination and episcopal succession," but instead "found the true qualification and appointment for the office of teacher in direct endowment by the Spirit of God, in distinction from outward ordination and episcopal succession," and were everywhere proposing "the supernatural element and the free motion of the Spirit against the mechanism of a fixed ecclesiastical order," and on top of all this "agreed in all essential points with the Catholic Church, and held very firmly to the traditional rule of faith," it seems to me that the Montanists were on the right track in many ways. This is not to say that their asceticism did not become extreme, or that their prophecies were all from the Spirit of God. But it does tell us that the Church had received some leaven in their teaching which lead to the starvation of many saints for spiritual expression which had largely been taken over by the "fixed ecclesiastical order."

We can look back with understanding that, if the spiritual expression of the early church had become

strangled by the clergy, and all spiritual expression had been taken over by the “fixed ecclesiastical order,” and in consideration of the fact that most of the saints in the early church did not have an Old Testament of their own, let alone a complete New Testament which we all take for granted in our day, the spiritual expression coming from such neediness might not look very pretty but could still be valid. I myself have been in many groups today where the spiritual expression, that is the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit, is very undeveloped, and some good teaching from the Scriptures would really help them. But that does not mean that their spiritual expressions are invalid.

At this point, we might ask ourselves what we should expect in the experience of prophecy. It is good to know what the word of God teaches in this regard. The Scriptures teach us that the gifts of the Spirit are spoken of as manifestations as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):6** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

The gifts of the Spirit are not natural abilities. One of us might be a good singer, the other a good baseball pitcher, the other good at math, another good at accounting, and another good at managing people. These are natural abilities. Having the Holy Spirit may enhance each of these things for the glory of God. But they are still natural abilities. We do not need the Holy Spirit to do them. A manifestation of the Spirit on the other hand is a divine enablement by the Spirit. When a gift of the Spirit is exercised, the presence of God is made known, or revealed, and His presence may touch our minds and emotions in a way that can be seen, heard, or felt.

The manifestations of the Spirit are mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):8** For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

These gifts, or manifestations of the Spirit, may be grouped together as follows:

- utterance gifts: prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues
- revelation gifts: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits
- power gifts: faith, gifts of healings, working of miracles

The spiritual gifts of prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues, are utterances through human speech organs. With these gifts of the Spirit, we are enabled to speak what the Spirit gives us to speak. Prophecy is an enablement by the Spirit to speak in a known language words given by the Spirit. The gift of speaking in tongues is the enablement by the Spirit to speak in the tongues of angels or of men, and that which is given by the Spirit to speak is not known or understood by the one who speaks it. The gift of interpretation of tongues is the enablement by the Spirit to interpret either a tongue of angels or a tongue of men. This also is an enablement by the Spirit to understand a language not known to the speaker. The one who speaks the interpretation merely speaks the words the Spirit gives them to speak as prophecy in his or her own language.

The spiritual gifts of word of wisdom, word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits correspond to the revealing to the intellect of supernatural wisdom, the revealing to the intellect of a fact of knowledge that we could not know on our own, and the ability to know the difference between an evil spirit and the Spirit of God, respectively.

The spiritual gifts of faith, gifts of healings, and working of miracles correspond to the spiritual enablement to wait on God for a miracle, the spiritual enablement to heal, and the spiritual enablement to work miracles.

These spiritual gifts, or enablements, were given on the day of Pentecost to the 120 disciples in the upper room as stated in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Notice that they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. Though the disciples were all Galileans, each nationality heard them speaking in their own language the wonderful works of God as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):5** Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, " Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." 12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine."

This was the fulfillment of Jesus' promise in **Acts 2 (KJV):4** And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Now some thought that the disciples were drunk with sweet wine. But Peter states that this was what was also promised by the prophet Joel, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):14** But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

Peter then explains to the crowd that the Scriptures teach that God backed up Jesus of Nazareth by signs and wonders and miracles in their midst, but that He was crucified by godless men. God raised him from the dead as He foretold He would in the prophets when the Lord said that He would not allow His holy one to see decay, as David spoke in the Psalms. Peter ends His preaching with **Acts 2 (KJV):36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. When the crowd heard this they were pierced to the heart, and Peter then told them what they must now do to be saved as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):37** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

Peter states that the promise of the Holy Spirit was for them as well as their children and even for all who are far off, "as many as the Lord our God will call." The Holy Spirit is a gift given to all believers. The number that day was about 3,000 souls.

The fact that these enablements by the Spirit are still valid today may be understood by the fact that the Spirit of God was poured out upon all flesh as promised by the prophet Joel. And the apostle Peter's words in Acts 2:39 indicate that the Holy Spirit is a gift for all believers. When the Scripture are rightly divided, everything will be done decently and in order. We must let the Scriptures be our guide, and the Holy Spirit will lead us into all the truth about His gifts.

Now Paul identifies the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. And in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians, Paul tells us that the gifts are to be exercised with love. If we exercise the gifts without love, we are nothing and they profit us nothing as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):1** If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of

prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

In chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians, Paul gives us instruction as to the operation of the gifts. He tells us to pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, especially prophecy. Speaking in tongues is good he says because it edifies the one speaking in tongues. However, prophecy is especially good because it edifies the hearers as well as the speaker as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):2** For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. 4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

Notice that the one who speaks in a tongue speaks mysteries to God, and no one understands him. He himself does not know what he is saying. This is why he is encouraged to pray for the interpretation as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):5** Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even more* that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

And in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):13** Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

Again, notice that the mind of the one who prays in a tongue is unfruitful. This is because he does not understand what he is saying. However, his spirit prays and is edified, or built up, that is strengthened, in this way. So praying in a tongue in private prayer edifies our spirit. That is, it strengthens our inner man.

Paul instructs us to seek a balance as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):15** What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

It is evident that in the Corinthian church, not all were versed in spiritual gifts for Paul speaks of the ungifted as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):16** Otherwise if you bless in the spirit *only*, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? 17 For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified. 18 I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; 19 however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Paul differentiates here between speaking in the church, and speaking in his private devotion to the Lord. This is why he says he spoke with tongues more than all of them, but not in the church so much as in his private devotion. In the church, Paul wants to instruct others to build them up and strengthen them in their walk with the Lord. However, Paul built himself up by praying in the spirit alone, that is praying in tongues. This is especially helpful to us when we do not now how to pray. The Lord knows.

Now the word in Greek translated "ungifted" here in the NASB is *iδιώτου* (pronounced *idiotou*), genitive, singular of *iδιώτης* (pronounced *idiotes*), which means one devoid of special learning or gifts, a plain person. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton.**

The thought here is not that the "ungifted" one was an unbeliever, for Paul says that this one is not edified. We have to believe before we can be edified. Again Paul makes a difference between an unbeliever and the ungifted as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):24** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all.

So the "ungifted" one is one who was not versed in spiritual gifts as many are not today. That is, he has never had the experience of exercising the gifts himself, nor has he, in all likelihood, observed them exercised. Paul is pointing out here that we need to be taught in these things before we can exercise them. I myself wanted to prophecy very badly when I was first saved, but I didn't know how. Finally the Lord lead me to someone well versed in the Scriptures and in spiritual gifts. She was able to guide me in the Scriptures, as she had been taught by a former Assembly of God pastor, Dr. Albert Grimes, so that I understood how the gifts should be operated decently and in order as Paul says they should be exercised. She had a small group of believers, and she taught them the principles in the word of God that she had learned from Dr. Grimes. This teaching and order made me also feel safe, and enabled me to take that first step in faith, and speak what I felt the Lord by His Holy Spirit was giving me to say. In this way, I learned to prophesy as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):31**

For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

My prophecy was judged by the other believers, and this also made me feel safe. I knew if I said something that was not in accordance with the Scriptures, someone would say something. Not all believers have had this experience. On the other hand, many who have exercised the gifts of the Spirit in one way or another, have not been taught the correct order of operation of the gifts of the Spirit. We must give earnest heed to the Scriptures so that we have a safe place to learn how to operate the gifts of the Spirit. The prophecies I have given were simply for edification, exhortation, or consolation. No new revelation did I receive from the Lord as if it were an addition to Scripture. Rather, I judged everything I received by the Scriptures before I gave it. Then I allowed others to judge what I prophesied. If there was no one to judge, I kept my prophecy to myself, and waited on the Lord for the proper time when it could be given decently and in order and judged by others who know the Scriptures.

The meaning of the word “prophecy” is brought out more fully if we study the Hebrew and the Greek words. The meaning in the Hebrew word נָבָא (pronounced naba) is “to cause to bubble up, hence to pour forth words abundantly, as is done by those who speak with ardour or divine emotion of mind.” **Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D., page 525.** The idea is that prophecy comes forth like water from a fountain, relating to the inspirational element of prophecy. Prophecy is speaking inspirationally from the Spirit. Dr. Albert Grimes in his book, Spiritual Gifts, says of prophecy that it also “means “to let drop,” as refreshing dew upon the grass and flowers. Prophecy is to have a refreshing influence upon believers. Again, it means “to lift up,” and “to strengthen.”” **Spiritual Gifts, Lesson 9: The Gift of Prophecy, Dr. Albert Grimes.**

In the Greek, the word is προφητεύω (pronounced profetuo) meaning “to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, James Strong, 1890.** Kittel says that the idea in ancient Greece was that “It denotes appointed men and women and their work, which is to declare something whose content is not derived from themselves but from the god who reveals his will at the particular site.” **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Volume VI, Page 791.**

The Greek word προφητεύω (pronounced profetuo) in the New Testament means “to prophesy,” that is “to speak for another,” or “to speak for God.” We are His spokesman or His mouthpiece. In the Old Testament, under the Old Covenant, the prophets spoke the word of God to the people in the form, “thus saith the Lord.” In the New Testament, under the New Covenant, all of the revelation of the Scriptures was given by the foundational apostles. With the last apostle, probably John, the canon of Scripture was closed. We know this to be true because the foundational apostles had a more sure word of prophecy than we do, and we do well to pay attention to them since they were eye-witnesses as Peter explains in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):16** For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. **17** For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **18** And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. **19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: **20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **21** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The principle of being moved by the Holy Spirit is still valid for New Testament believers. And prophecy is for our edification, exhortation, and comfort as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

All may prophesy that all may learn as we again read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. **32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

The thought here is that there would be a time when believers would meet together as in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):26** How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

The one who prophesies has control over when he speaks as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

Paul was looking for whatever would edify the church when they met together as we read in **1**

**Corinthians 14 (NASB):12** Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

There is no thought of clairvoyance in believers meetings. There is no thought of people out of control of their senses, or in an emotional state of ecstasy where the one speaking is out of control, as might be found in occult meetings. There is no thought of any new revelation other than what agrees with Scripture, in both Old and New Testaments. We are to judge prophesy today by these same Scriptures as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

This makes it imperative to know what the Scripture teaches. We must fill ourselves with the word of God as Paul exhorts us in **Colossians 3 (KJV):16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

This is how we will grow up into Him in all things. There is no thought of hyperspirituality, but neither is there a thought of just worship in the natural. We are to worship in Spirit and in truth. An order which is of God is to be followed in all our meetings. Submission to His word in the Scriptures is paramount. All things spiritual today are to be judged by the Scriptures.

Finally, Irenaeus states that, because the Montanists had set at naught the Spirit of God by exercising spiritual gifts in unauthorized meetings, and rejecting the gift of the Spirit in the Gospel of John, and rejecting also Paul's epistle of 1 Corinthians which teaches about spiritual gifts, the Montanists were guilty of the irremissible sin as he says, "Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, they fall into the irremissible sin." The sin Irenaeus is referring to is spoken of in the Gospel of Mark as we read in **Mark 3 (KJV):28** "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: 30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Jesus spoke this in reference to the Jewish scribes as we read in **Mark 3 (KJV):22** And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

But Jesus calls His disciples together and explains to them that for Him to be of Satan and yet cast out demons would make Satan's kingdom divided as we read in **Mark 3 (KJV):23** And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

We do not find the Montanists assigning the Holy Spirit's works to Satan, which is a requirement for them to have committed the irremissible sin. Instead, according to Schaff, they "agreed in all essential points with the Catholic Church, and held very firmly to the traditional rule of faith." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 421.**

The "irremissible sin" could easily be equated here with "mortal sin," for which Tertullian says there is no repentance for. Irenaeus seems to assign the "irremissible sin" to sins of schism, or to sins of prophesying by the work of demons. However, for us to judge an "irremissible sin" is to take the place of God who alone knows if this sin has been committed. When Paul was judged by the Corinthians, he told them to judge nothing before the time. Let God be the judge as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):3** But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Jesus Himself told us not to take the place of God and judge our brother as we read in **Matthew 7 (KJV):1** "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

The statement by Irenaeus, that the Montanists had committed the irremissible sin, is evidence of much confusion in the medieval Church regarding how to deal with sin. In fact, it is odd that this statement would come from Irenaeus since Schaff lists it as one of the defining attributes of Montanism. Montanism, according to Schaff in Volume II, Chapter X, page 426, "taught the impossibility of a second repentance, and refused to restore the lapsed to the fellowship of the church. Tertullian held all mortal sins (of which he numbers seven), committed after baptism, to be unpardonable, at least in this world, and a church, which showed such lenity towards gross offenders, as the Roman church at that time did, according to the corroborating testimony of Hippolytus, he called worse than a den of thieves," even a "spelunca maechorum et fornicatorum." **Philip P. Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Volume II, page 426.**

Now, Schaff states the following in Volume II, Chapter IV: ORGANIZATION AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH, § 57. Church Discipline., page 187-189:

"The ancient church was distinguished for strict discipline. Previous to Constantine the Great, this discipline rested on purely moral sanctions, and had nothing to do with civil constraints and punishments. A person might be expelled from one congregation without the least social injury. But the more powerful the church became, the more serious were the consequences of her censures, and when she was united with the state, ecclesiastical offenses were punished as offenses against the state, in extreme cases even with death. The church always abhorred blood ("ecclesia non sitit sanguinem"), but she handed the offender over to the civil government to be dealt with according to law. The worst offenders for many centuries were heretics or teachers of false doctrine.

The object of discipline was, on the one hand, the dignity and purity of the church, on the other, the spiritual welfare of the offender; punishment being designed to be also correction. The extreme penalty was excommunication, or exclusion from all the rights and privileges of the faithful. This was inflicted for heresy and schism, and all gross crimes, such as, theft, murder, adultery, blasphemy, and the denial of Christ in persecution. After Tertullian, these and like offences incompatible with the regenerate state, were classed as mortal sins, in distinction from venial sins or sins of weakness.

Persons thus excluded passed into the class of penitents, and could attend only the catechumen worship. Before they could be re-admitted to the fellowship of the church, they were required to pass through a process like that of the catechumens, only still more severe, and to prove the sincerity of their penitence by the absence from all pleasures, from ornament in dress, and from nuptial intercourse, by confession, frequent prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other good works. Under pain of a troubled conscience and of separation from the only saving church, they readily submitted to the severest penances. The church teachers did not neglect, indeed, to inculcate the penitent spirit and the contrition of the heart is the main thing. Yet many of them laid too great stress on certain outward exercises. Tertullian conceived the entire church penance as a "satisfaction" paid to God. This view could easily obscure to a dangerous degree the all-sufficient merit of Christ, and lead to that self-righteousness against which the Reformation raised so loud a voice.

The time and the particular form of the penances, in the second century, was left as yet to the discretion of the several ministers and churches. Not till the end of the third century was a rigorous and fixed system of penitential discipline established, and then this could hardly maintain itself a century. Though originating in deep moral earnestness, and designed only for good, it was not fitted to promote the genuine spirit of repentance. Too much formality and legal constraint always deadens the spirit, instead of supporting and regulating it. This disciplinary formalism first appears, as already familiar, in the council of Ancyra, about the year 314." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 187-189.**

Evidently Irenaeus was defending the teaching of the Church in his time. The Church members in his time did not have the resources to verify his statements, and would have to accept them as is because of the "fixed ecclesiastical order" that had crept into the Church which made the rules and interpreted the Scriptures according to their own understanding. This "fixed ecclesiastical order" had the support of Irenaeus who firmly believed in the doctrine of apostolic succession. Irenaeus evidently in his writing is trying to anchor the Church in the Scriptures. But we see him defending many times the teaching of the Church in his time which is not found in the Scriptures. It is leaven that has crept into the Church. Evidence of this leaven in the early Church is

proven by their teaching on the irremissible sin, which interpretation is proven false by the Scriptures.

So the thought that Church tradition was fixed and well established since apostolic times is seen to be false also. We know this from the Scriptures themselves. In Paul's time, all in Asia had forsaken him as he says in **2 Timothy 1 (KJV)**:15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

Later in this epistle to Timothy we find that there is gross error on par with the Gnostics as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV)**:16 But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Not only so, but in the last epistle of John we find that there are those who did not accept the apostle John himself as we read in **3 John (KJV)**:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.

There are numerous other examples in the New Testament of leaven creeping into Churches. The whole epistle to the Galatians was written to correct the legalism of the Galatian Church. Paul even accused them of deserting the grace of Christ for another gospel as we read in **Galatians 1 (KJV)**:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Lastly, Irenaeus addresses the Valentinians as he continues in paragraph nine when he says, "But those who are from Valentinus, being, on the other hand, altogether reckless, while they put forth their own compositions, boast that they possess more Gospels than there really are. Indeed, they have arrived at such a pitch of audacity, as to entitle their comparatively recent writing "the Gospel of Truth," though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the Apostles, so that they have really no Gospel which is not full of blasphemy. For if what they have published is the Gospel of truth, and yet is totally unlike those which have been handed down to us from the apostles, any who please may learn, as is shown from the Scriptures themselves, that that which has been handed down from the apostles can no longer be reckoned the Gospel of truth."

Irenaeus is correct in his statements about the Valentinians. Their teaching was heresy. Wikipedia under the heading Valentinus (Gnostic), reports that "A new field in Valentinian studies opened when the Nag Hammadi library was discovered in Egypt in 1945. Among the very mixed bag of works classified as gnostic was a series of writings which could be associated with Valentinus, particularly the Coptic text called the Gospel of Truth which bears the same title reported by Irenaeus as belonging to a text by Valentinus. It is a declaration of the unknown name of the Father; possession of which enables the knower to penetrate the veil of ignorance that has separated all created beings from the Father, and declares Jesus Christ as Savior has revealed that name through a variety of modes laden with a language of abstract elements."

Schaff gives us a brief history of Valentinus in Volume II, Chapter XI: The Heresies of the Ante-Nicene Age, page 472-3:

"Valentinus or Valentine is the author of the most profound and luxuriant, as well as the most influential and best known of the Gnostic systems. Irenaeus directed his work chiefly against it, and we have made it the basis of our general description of Gnosticism. He founded a large school, and spread his doctrines in the West. He claimed to have derived them from Theodas or Theudas, a pupil of St. Paul. He also pretended to have received revelations from the Logos in a vision. Hippolytus calls him a Platonist and Pythagorean rather than a Christian. He was probably of Egyptian Jewish descent and Alexandrian education. Tertullian reports, perhaps from his own conjecture, that he broke with the orthodox church from disappointed ambition, not being made a bishop. Valentine came to Rome as a public teacher during the pontificate of Hyginus (137–142), and remained there till the pontificate of Anicetus (154). He was then already celebrated; for Justin Martyr, in his lost "Syntagma against all Heresies," which he mentions in his "First Apology" (140), combated the Valentinians among other heretics before A.D. 140. At that time Rome had become the centre of the church and the gathering

place of all sects. Every teacher who wished to exercise a general influence on Christendom naturally looked to the metropolis. Valentine was one of the first Gnostics who taught in Rome, about the same time with Cerdon and Marcion; but though he made a considerable impression by his genius and eloquence, the orthodoxy of the church and the episcopal authority were too firmly settled to allow of any great success for his vagaries. He was excommunicated, and went to Cyprus, where he died about A.D. 160." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume II, page 472-473.**

Schaff says that Valentinus is representative of Gnostic beliefs, and gives us a summary of the teaching of Valentinus as he continues in Volume II, Chapter XI, page 473-477:

"His system is an ingenious theogonic and cosmogonic epos. It describes in three acts the creation, the fall, and the redemption; first in heaven, then on earth. Great events repeat themselves in different stages of being. He derived his material from his own fertile imagination, from Oriental and Greek speculations, and from Christian ideas. He made much use of the Prologue of John's Gospel and the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians; but by a wild exegesis he put his own pantheistic and mythological fancies into the apostolic words, such as Logos, Only Begotten, Truth, Life, Pleroma, Ecclesia.

Valentine starts from the eternal primal Being, which he significantly calls Bythos or Abyss. It is the fathomless depth in which the thinking mind is lost, the ultimate boundary beyond which it cannot pass. The Bythos is unbegotten, infinite, invisible, incomprehensible, nameless, the absolute agnoston; yet capable of evolution and development, the universal Father of all beings. He continues for immeasurable ages in silent contemplation of his own boundless grandeur, glory, and beauty. This "Silence" or "Solitude" ( $\eta$  στήνη) is his Spouse or  $\sigmaύμμαχος$ . It is the silent self-contemplation, the slumbering consciousness of the Infinite. He also calls it "Thought" ( $\epsilon\gammaννούα$ ), and "Grace" ( $\chiάρις$ ). The pre-mundane Bythos includes, therefore, at least according to some members of the school, the female as well as the male principle; for from the male principle alone nothing could spring. According to Hippolytus, Valentine derived this sexual duality from the essential nature of love, and said: "God is all love; but love is not love except there is some object of affection." He grappled here with a pre-mundane mystery, which the Orthodox theology endeavors to solve by the doctrine of the immanent eternal trinity in the divine essence: God is love, therefore God is triune: a loving subject, a beloved object, and a union of the two. "Ubi amor, ibi trinitas."

After this eternal silence, God enters upon a process of evolution or emanation, i.e. a succession of generations of antithetic and yet supplementary ideas or principles. From the Abyss emanate thirty aeons in fifteen pairs, according to the law of sexual polarity, in three generations, the first called the ogdoad, the second the decad, the third the dodecad. The Aeons are the unfolded powers and attributes of the divinity. They correspond to the dynameis in the system of Basilides. God begets first the masculine, productive Mind or Reason ( $\omegaν\eta$  νοῦς), with the feminine, receptive Truth ( $\eta$  ἀλήθεια); these two produce the Word ( $\omegaν\eta$  λόγος) and the Life ( $\eta$  ζωή), and these again the (ideal) Man ( $\omegaν\eta$  ἄνθρωπος) and the (ideal) Church ( $\eta$  ἐκκλησίας). The influence of the fourth Gospel is unmistakable here, though of course the terminology of John is used in a sense different from that of its author. The first two syzygies constitute the sacred *Tetrakty*, the root of all things. The Nous and the Aletheia produce ten aeons (five pairs); the Logos and the Zoë, twelve aeons (six pairs). At last the Nous or Monogenes and the Aletheia bring forth the heavenly Christ ( $\omegaν\eta$  ὁ ἀνω<sup>τ</sup>ος Χριστός) and the (female) Holy Spirit ( $\tauο$  πνεῦμα ἄγιον), and therewith complete the number thirty. These aeons constitute together the *Pleroma*, the plenitude of divine powers, an expression which St. Paul applied to the historical Christ (Col. 2:9). They all partake in substance of the life of the Abyss; but their form is conditioned by the Horos ( $\omegaν\eta$  όρος), the limiting power of God. This genius of limitation stands between the *Pleroma* and the *Hysterema* outside, and is the organizing power of the universe, and secures harmony. If any being dares to transcend its fixed boundaries and to penetrate beyond revelation into the hidden being of God, it is in danger of sinking into nothing. Two actions are ascribed to the Horos, a negative by which he limits every being and sunders from it foreign elements, and the positive by which he forms and establishes it. The former action is emphatically called Horos, the latter is called Stauros (cross, post), because he stands firm and immovable, the guardian of the Aeons, so that nothing can come from the *Hysterema* into the neighborhood of the aeons in the *Pleroma*.

The process of the fall and redemption takes place first in the ideal world of the *Pleroma*, and is then repeated in the lower world. In this process the lower Wisdom or *Sophia*, also called *Achamoth* or *Chakmuth* plays an important part. She is the mundane soul, a female aeon, the weakest and most remote member of the

series of aeons (in number the twenty-eighth), and forms, so to speak, the bridge which spans the abyss between God and the real world. Feeling her loneliness and estrangement from the great Father, she wishes to unite herself immediately, without regard to the intervening links, with him who is the originating principle of the universe, and alone has the power of self-generation. She jumps, as it were by a single bound, into the depth of the eternal Father, and brings forth of herself alone an abortion (*έκτρωμα*), a formless and inchoate substance, of which Moses speaks when he says: "The earth was without form and void." By this sinful passion she introduces confusion and disturbance into the Pleroma. She wanders about outside of it, and suffers with fear, anxiety, and despair on account of her abortion. This is the fall; an act both free and necessary. But Sophia yearns after redemption; the aeons sympathize with her sufferings and aspirations; the eternal Father himself commands the projection of the last pair of aeons, Christ and the Holy Spirit, "for the restoration of Form, the destruction of the abortion, and for the consolation and cessation of the groans of Sophia." They comfort and cheer the Sophia, and separate the abortion from the Pleroma. At last, the thirty aeons together project in honor of the Father the aeon Soter or Jesus, "the great High Priest," "the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma," and "send him forth beyond the Pleroma as a Spouse for Sophia, who was outside, and as a rectifier of those sufferings which she underwent in searching after Christ." After many sufferings, Sophia is purged of all passions and brought back as the bride of Jesus, together with all pneumatic natures, into the ideal world. The demiurge, the fiery and jealous God of the Jews, as "the friend of the bridegroom," with the psychical Christians on the border of the Pleroma, remotely shares the joy of the festival, while matter sinks back into nothing.

In Valentine's Christology, we must distinguish properly three redeeming beings: (1) The ἀνώ Χριστός or heavenly Christ, who, after the fall of Sophia, emanates from the aeon μονογενῆς, and stands in conjunction with the female principle, the πνεῦμα ἄγιον. He makes the first announcement to the aeons of the plan of redemption, whereupon they strike up anthems of praise and thanksgiving in responsive choirs. (2) The σωτήρ or Ἰησοῦ produced by all the aeons together, the star of the Pleroma. He forms with the redeemed Sophia the last and highest syzygy. (3) The κάτω Χριστός, the psychical or Jewish Messiah, who is sent by the Demiurge, passes through the body of Mary as water through a pipe, and is at last crucified by the Jews, but, as he has merely an apparent body, does not really suffer. With him Soter, the proper redeemer, united himself in the baptism in the Jordan, to announce his divine gnosis on earth for a year, and lead the pneumatic persons to perfection." **Philip P. Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Volume II, page 473-477.**

Gnostic belief is very difficult to understand since it does not come from a single source but seems to come from many sources who do not all agree with each other. Yet, Gnostic belief was blowing vehemently as winds of doctrine through the Church. Irenaeus effectively put a stop to them for the most part, by pointing to the four Gospels, and showing that the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy was in effect the signature of God.

Irenaeus concludes paragraph nine as he says, "But that these Gospels alone are true and reliable, and admit neither an increase nor diminution of the aforesaid number, I have proved by so many and such [arguments]. For, since God made all things in due proportion and adaptation, it was fit also that the outward aspect of the Gospel should be well arranged and harmonized."

Finally, Irenaeus testifies, "The opinion of those men, therefore, who handed the Gospel down to us, having been investigated, from their very fountainheads, let us proceed also to the remaining apostles, and inquire into their doctrine with regard to God; then, in due course we shall listen to the very words of the Lord."

## **Book 4: Chapter XXXV.—A refutation of those who allege that the prophets uttered some predictions under the inspiration of the highest, others from the Demiurge. Disagreements of the Valentinians among themselves with regard to these same predictions.**

1. Then again, in opposition to the Valentinians, and the other Gnostics, falsely so called, who maintain that some parts of Scripture were spoken at one time from the Pleroma (*a summitate*) through means of the seed [derived] from that place, but at another time from the intermediate abode

through means of the audacious mother Prunica, but that many are due to the Creator of the world, from whom also the prophets had their mission, we say that it is altogether irrational to bring down the Father of the universe to such straits, as that He should not be possessed of His own proper instruments, by which the things in the Pleroma might be perfectly proclaimed. For of whom was He afraid, so that He should not reveal His will after His own way and independently, freely, and without being involved with that spirit which came into being in a state of degeneracy and ignorance? Was it that He feared that very many would be saved, when more should have listened to the unadulterated truth? Or, on the other hand, was He incapable of preparing for Himself those who should announce the Saviour's advent?

2. But if, when the Saviour came to this earth, He sent His apostles into the world to proclaim with accuracy His advent, and to teach the Father's will, having nothing in common with the doctrine of the Gentiles or of the Jews, much more, while yet existing in the Pleroma, would He have appointed His own heralds to proclaim His future advent into this world, and having nothing in common with those prophecies originating from the Demiurge. But if, when within the Pleroma, He availed Himself of those prophets who were under the law, and declared His own matters through their instrumentality; much more would He, upon His arrival hither, have made use of these same teachers, and have preached the Gospel to us by their means. Therefore let them not any longer assert that Peter and Paul and the other apostles proclaimed the truth, but that it was the scribes and Pharisees, and the others, through whom the law was propounded. But if, at His advent, He sent forth His own apostles in the spirit of truth, and not in that of error, He did the very same also in the case of the prophets; for the Word of God was always the self-same: and if the Spirit from the Pleroma was, according to these men's system, the Spirit of light, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of perfection, and the Spirit of knowledge, while that from the Demiurge was the spirit of ignorance, degeneracy, and error, and the offspring of obscurity; how can it be, that in one and the same being there exists perfection and defect, knowledge and ignorance, error and truth, light and darkness? But if it was impossible that such should happen in the case of the prophets, for they preached the word of the Lord from one God, and proclaimed the advent of His Son, much more would the Lord Himself never have uttered words, on one occasion from above, but on another from degeneracy below, thus becoming the teacher at once of knowledge and of ignorance; nor would He have ever glorified as Father at one time the Founder of the world, and at another Him who is above this one, as He does Himself declare: "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old one, nor do they put new wine into old bottles." **4352 Luke v. 36, 37.**

Let these men, therefore, either have nothing whatever to do with the prophets, as with those that are ancients, and allege no longer that these men, being sent beforehand by the Demiurge, spake certain things under that new influence which pertains to the Pleroma; or, on the other hand, let them be convinced by our Lord, when He declares that new wine cannot be put into old bottles.

3. But from what source could the offspring of their mother derive his knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma, and power to discourse regarding them? Suppose that the mother, while beyond the Pleroma, did bring forth this very offspring; but what is beyond the Pleroma they represent as being beyond the pale of knowledge, that is, ignorance. How, then, could that seed, which was conceived in ignorance, possess the power of declaring knowledge? Or how did the mother herself, a shapeless and undefined being, one cast out of doors as an abortion, obtain knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma, she who was organized outside it and given a form there, and prohibited by Horos from entering within, and who remains outside the Pleroma till the consummation [of all things], that is, beyond the pale of knowledge? Then, again, when they say that the Lord's passion is a type of the extension of the Christ above, which he effected through Horos, and so imparted a form to their mother, they are refuted in the other particulars [of the Lord's passion], for they have no semblance of a type to show with regard to them. For when did the Christ above have vinegar and gall given him to drink? Or when was his raiment parted? Or when was he pierced, and blood and water came forth? Or when did he sweat great drops of blood? And [the same may be demanded] as to the other particulars which happened to the Lord, of which the prophets have

spoken. From whence, then, did the mother or her offspring divine the things which had not yet taken place, but which should occur afterwards?

4. They affirm that certain things still, besides these, were spoken from the Pleroma, but are confuted by those which are referred to in the Scriptures as bearing on the advent of Christ. But what these are [that are spoken from the Pleroma] they are not agreed, but give different answers regarding them. For if any one, wishing to test them, do question one by one with regard to any passage those who are their leading men, he shall find one of them referring the passage in question to the Propator—that is, to Bythus; another attributing it to Arche—that is, to the Only-begotten; another to the Father of all—that is, to the Word; while another, again, will say that it was spoken of that one *Æon* who was [formed from the joint contributions] of the *Æons* in the Pleroma; **4353 Book i. p. 334, this volume.** others [will regard the passage] as referring to Christ, while another [will refer it] to the Saviour. One, again, more skilled than these, **4354 Illorum; following the Greek form of the comparative degree.** after a long protracted silence, declares that it was spoken of Horos; another that it signifies the Sophia which is within the Pleroma; another that it announces the mother outside the Pleroma; while another will mention the God who made the world (the Demiurge). Such are the variations existing among them with regard to one [passage], holding discordant opinions as to the same Scriptures; and when the same identical passage is read out, they all begin to purse up their eyebrows, and to shake their heads, and they say that they might indeed utter a discourse transcendently lofty, but that all cannot comprehend the greatness of that thought which is implied in it; and that, therefore, among the wise the chief thing is silence. For that Sige (*silence*) which is above must be typified by that silence which they preserve. Thus do they, as many as they are, all depart [from each other], holding so many opinions as to one thing, and bearing about their clever notions in secret within themselves. When, therefore, they shall have agreed among themselves as to the things predicted in the Scriptures, then also shall they be confuted by us. For, though holding wrong opinions, they do in the meanwhile, however, convict themselves, since they are not of one mind with regard to the same words. But as we follow for our teacher the one and only true God, and possess His words as the rule of truth, we do all speak alike with regard to the same things, knowing but one God, the Creator of this universe, who sent the prophets, who led forth the people from the land of Egypt, who in these last times manifested His own Son, that He might put the unbelievers to confusion, and search out the fruit of righteousness.

**Summary:** In paragraph one, Irenaeus clearly opposes the Gnostics as he testifies, “Then again, in opposition to the Valentinians, and the other Gnostics, falsely so called, who maintain that,”

- “some parts of Scripture were spoken at one time from the Pleroma (*a summitate*) through means of the seed [derived] from that place,”
- “but at another time from the intermediate abode through means of the audacious mother Prunica,”
- “but that many are due to the Creator of the world, from whom also the prophets had their mission,”

Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “we say that it is altogether irrational to bring down the Father of the universe to such straits, as that He should not be possessed of His own proper instruments, by which the things in the Pleroma might be perfectly proclaimed.” Irenaeus then asks,

- “For of whom was He afraid, so that He should not reveal His will after His own way and independently, freely, and without being involved with that spirit which came into being in a state of degeneracy and ignorance?”
- “Was it that He feared that very many would be saved, when more should have listened to the unadulterated truth?”
- “Or, on the other hand, was He incapable of preparing for Himself those who should announce the Saviour’s advent?”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus argues, “But if, when the Saviour came to this earth, He sent His apostles

into the world to proclaim with accuracy His advent, and to teach the Father's will, having nothing in common with the doctrine of the Gentiles or of the Jews, much more, while yet existing in the Pleroma, would He have appointed His own heralds to proclaim His future advent into this world, and having nothing in common with those prophecies originating from the Demiurge." Irenaeus then concludes, "But if, when within the Pleroma, He availed Himself of those prophets who were under the law, and declared His own matters through their instrumentality; much more would He, upon His arrival hither, have made use of these same teachers, and have preached the Gospel to us by their means." Irenaeus then commands, "Therefore let them not any longer assert that Peter and Paul and the other apostles proclaimed the truth, but that it was the scribes and Pharisees, and the others, through whom the law was propounded." Irenaeus then argues, "But if, at His advent, He sent forth His own apostles in the spirit of truth, and not in that of error, He did the very same also in the case of the prophets; for the Word of God was always the self-same." Irenaeus continues as he argues, "and if the Spirit from the Pleroma was, according to these men's system, the Spirit of light, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of perfection, and the Spirit of knowledge, while that from the Demiurge was the spirit of ignorance, degeneracy, and error, and the offspring of obscurity; how can it be, that in one and the same being there exists perfection and defect, knowledge and ignorance, error and truth, light and darkness?" Irenaeus then argues, "But if it was impossible that such should happen in the case of the prophets, for they preached the word of the Lord from one God, and proclaimed the advent of His Son, much more would the Lord Himself never have uttered words, on one occasion from above, but on another from degeneracy below, thus becoming the teacher at once of knowledge and of ignorance." Irenaeus then concludes, "nor would He ever have glorified as Father at one time the Founder of the world, and at another Him who is above this one, as He does Himself declare: "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old one, nor do they put new wine into old bottles." He refers to Luke 3:36-37.

Irenaeus then commands, "Let these men, therefore, either have nothing whatever to do with the prophets, as with those that are ancients, and allege no longer that these men, being sent beforehand by the Demiurge, spake certain things under that new influence which pertains to the Pleroma; or on the other hand, let them be convinced by our Lord, when He declares that new wine cannot be put into old bottles."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asks, "But from what source could the offspring of their mother derive his knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma, and power to discourse regarding them?" Irenaeus then reasons, "Suppose that the mother, while beyond the Pleroma, did bring forth this very offspring; but what is beyond the Pleroma they represent as being beyond the pale of knowledge, that is, ignorance. How, then, could that seed, which was conceived in ignorance, possess the power of declaring knowledge?" Irenaeus then adds, "Or how did the mother herself, a shapeless and undefined being, one cast out of doors as an abortion, obtain knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma, she who was organized outside it and given a form there, and prohibited by Horos from entering within, and who remains outside the Pleroma till the consummation [of all things], that is, beyond the pale of knowledge?"

Irenaeus then continues as he argues, "Then, again, when they say that the Lord's passion is a type of the extension of the Christ above, which he effected through Horos, and so imparted a form to their mother, they are refuted in the other particulars [of the Lord's passion], for they have no semblance of a type to show with regard to them." Irenaeus then asks,

- "For when did the Christ above have vinegar and gall given him to drink? Or when was his raiment parted?"
- "Or when was he pierced, and blood and water came forth? Or when did he sweat great drops of blood?"
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- "From whence, then, did the mother or her offspring divine the things which had not yet taken place, but which should occur afterwards?"

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, "They affirm that certain things still, besides these, were spoken from the Pleroma, but are confuted by those which are referred to in the Scriptures as bearing on the advent of Christ." Again, Irenaeus testifies, "But what these are [that are spoken from the Pleroma] they are not agreed,

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- "another attributing it to Arche—that is, to the Only-begotten;"
- "another to the Father of all—that is, to the Word;"
- "while another, again, will say that it was spoken of that one *Æon* who was [formed from the joint contributions] of the *Æons* in the Pleroma;"
- "others [will regard the passage] as referring to Christ,"
- "while another [will refer it] to the Saviour."
- "One, again, more skilled than these, after a long protracted silence, declares that it was spoken of Horos;"
- "another that it signifies the Sophia which is within the Pleroma;"
- "another that it announces the mother outside the Pleroma;"
- "while another will mention the God who made the world (the Demiurge)."

Irenaeus then testifies, "Such are the variations existing among them with regard to one [passage], holding discordant opinions as to the same Scriptures; and when the same identical passage is read out, they all begin to purse up their eyebrows, and to shake their heads, and they say that they might indeed utter a discourse transcendently lofty, but that all cannot comprehend the greatness of that thought which is implied in it; and that, therefore, among the wise the chief thing is silence." Irenaeus continues as he further testifies, "For that Sige (*silence*) which is above must be typified by that silence which they preserve. Thus do they, as many as they are, all depart [from each other], holding so many opinions as to one thing, and bearing about their clever notions in secret within themselves." Irenaeus then affirms, "When, therefore, they shall have agreed among themselves as to the things predicted in the Scriptures, then also shall they be confuted by us. For, though holding wrong opinions, they do in the meanwhile, however, convict themselves, since they are not of one mind with regard to the same words." Irenaeus concludes as he again testifies, "But as we follow for our teacher the one and only true God, and possess His words as the rule of truth, we do all speak alike with regard to the same things, knowing but one God, the Creator of this universe, who sent the prophets, who led forth the people from the land of Egypt, who in these last times manifested His own Son, that He might put the unbelievers to confusion, and search out the fruit of righteousness."

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- "but at another time from the intermediate abode through means of the audacious mother Prunica,"
- "but that many are due to the Creator of the world, from whom also the prophets had their mission,"

We see that the Gnostics did not totally deny the Scriptures, but their error led them off in many directions. What Irenaeus is saying is that the Gnostics believe that there are many voices speaking in the Bible, each one speaking in accordance with their individual beliefs. Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, "we say that it is altogether irrational to bring down the Father of the universe to such straits, as that He should not be possessed of His own proper instruments, by which the things in the Pleroma might be perfectly proclaimed."

Irenaeus then asks,

- "For of whom was He afraid, so that He should not reveal His will after His own way and independently, freely, and without being involved with that spirit which came into being in a state of degeneracy and ignorance?"
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unadulterated truth?"

- "Or, on the other hand, was He incapable of preparing for Himself those who should announce the Saviour's advent?"

Irenaeus here reasons why we should think the Father of the Universe couldn't just speak freely without interference from the others, such as the Demiurge. Irenaeus argues that it is irrational to think otherwise. He chides the Gnostics by asking if He was afraid of someone, or if He was concerned that many would be saved, or how he would arrange for those who would herald forth His message? The answer of course is no. The Creator of the Universe can do anything. All things are possible with God.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then argues, "But if, when the Saviour came to this earth, He sent His apostles into the world to proclaim with accuracy His advent, and to teach the Father's will, having nothing in common with the doctrine of the Gentiles or of the Jews, much more, while yet existing in the Pleroma, would He have appointed His own heralds to proclaim His future advent into this world, and having nothing in common with those prophecies originating from the Demiurge."

In other words, Irenaeus is saying that, if the Savior came to this earth and was able to appoint and send "His apostles into the world to proclaim with accuracy His advent, and to teach the Father's will," which had nothing in common with the then current teachings of the Jews, or the Gentiles for that matter, then looking back in time, "much more, while yet existing in the Pleroma, would He have appointed His own heralds to proclaim His future advent into this world," His own heralds being the prophets in the Old Testament. And yet much more, the message of His own heralds would have had "nothing in common with those prophecies originating from the Demiurge," whom the Gnostics claim is the God of the Old Testament.

Irenaeus then concludes, "But if, when within the Pleroma, He availed Himself of those prophets who were under the law, and declared His own matters through their instrumentality; much more would He, upon His arrival hither, have made use of these same teachers, and have preached the Gospel to us by their means." That is, Irenaeus is arguing that it makes sense that Jesus would quote the prophetic words from the prophets of the Old Testament if "when He was within the Pleroma, He availed Himself of those prophets who were under the law, and declared His own matters through their instrumentality."

Irenaeus then commands, "Therefore let them not any longer assert that Peter and Paul and the other apostles proclaimed the truth, but that it was the scribes and Pharisees, and the others, through whom the law was propounded." The scribes and Pharisees were in error and did not teach the law correctly, as Jesus Himself pointed out. Irenaeus then argues, "But if, at His advent, He sent forth His own apostles in the spirit of truth, and not in that of error, He did the very same also in the case of the prophets; for the Word of God was always the self-same." That is, Irenaeus argues that Jesus sent forth His own apostles in the spirit of truth, just as He did the Old Testament prophets whose words He used in His ministry. Therefore, the apostles He sent with His message are in the same Spirit as the prophets in the Old Testament.

Jesus pointed out the error and misinterpretation of the law by the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus told them that they were keeping their traditions instead of the commandments of God as we read in **Mark 7 (HCSB):5** Then the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why don't Your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders, instead of eating bread with ritually unclean hands?" 6 He answered them, "Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites, as it is written: These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 7 They worship Me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commands of men. 8 Disregarding the command of God, you keep the tradition of men." 9 He also said to them, "You completely invalidate God's command in order to maintain your tradition! 10 For Moses said: Honor your father and your mother; and Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death. 11 But you say, 'If a man tells his father or mother: Whatever benefit you might have received from me is Corban'" (that is, a gift committed to the temple), 12 "you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. 13 You revoke God's word by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many other similar things."

Notice that Jesus referred to the Old Testament prophet Isaiah in His chastisement of the Pharisees and scribes. Jesus said that they were hypocrites, invalidating the word of God. The word of God is just that, the word of God. When Jesus quoted the word of God in the Old Testament, He would not have done so if it was

from a degenerate source, as the Gnostics believe the Demiurge, that is, the God of the Old Testament, to be. And Jesus was supposed to be, according to the Gnostics, from the Pleroma which is outside the domain of the Demiurge. Irenaeus then continues as he argues, “and if the Spirit from the Pleroma was, according to these men’s system, the Spirit of light, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of perfection, and the Spirit of knowledge, while that from the Demiurge was the spirit of ignorance, degeneracy, and error, and the offspring of obscurity; how can it be, that in one and the same being there exists perfection and defect, knowledge and ignorance, error and truth, light and darkness?”

Irenaeus’ point is this, that if Jesus was from the Pleroma as the Gnostics believe, and He was speaking from the Spirit of Light and truth and perfection and knowledge, why would He be quoting from the Old Testament which is, according to the Gnostics, written by the Demiurge, the Creator of the world, and a degenerate source. Irenaeus argues that “in one and the same being,” that is, in Jesus the Son of God, there cannot exist “perfection and defect, knowledge and ignorance, error and truth, light and darkness.” There can only exist perfection, knowledge, truth, and light. To assert otherwise is to contradict one’s self.

Irenaeus then argues, “But if it was impossible that such should happen in the case of the prophets, for they preached the word of the Lord from one God, and proclaimed the advent of His Son, much more would the Lord Himself never have uttered words, on one occasion from above, but on another from degeneracy below, thus becoming the teacher at once of knowledge and of ignorance; nor would He have ever glorified as Father at one time the Founder of the world, and at another Him who is above this one, as He does Himself declare: “No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old one, nor do they put new wine into old bottles,” again referring to Luke 5:36-37.

This speaking from two sources, one of truth and light and the other degenerate, was impossible for the prophets since they foretold “the advent of His Son,” and “preached the word of the Lord from one God,” that is the God of the Old Testament. For this very reason, Irenaeus asserts, neither would Jesus, God’s Son, utter “words, on one occasion from above, but another from degeneracy below, thus becoming the teacher at once of knowledge and of ignorance.” Irenaeus argues without contradiction that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, would not “have ever glorified as Father at one time the Founder of the world, and at another Him who is above this one, as He does Himself declare: “No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old one, nor do they put new wine into old bottles.””

In just discussing this, we see how confused and convoluted Gnosticism is. To say that an Old Testament scripture was inspired by the “seed” from the Pleroma, and then at another time it was inspired by the Demiurge, has no support in the Scriptures themselves, but is a figment of the Gnostic teacher’s imagination. Irenaeus’ advice is, “let them be convinced by our Lord, when He declares that new wine cannot be put into old bottles.” Irenaeus’ mention of Jesus’ words in Luke made me think. I did not get it at first. Here is the entire section as background.

**Luke 5 (KJV):**27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. 28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. 30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? 31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. 33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise [the disciples] of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? 34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 36 And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old. 37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. 38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. 39 No man also having drunk old *wine* straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

In Luke’s Gospel we see Jesus calling Levi, that is, Matthew, a Levite and a tax collector, and going to

his house for a meal because Matthew took the call of Jesus to heart and left immediately to follow Jesus. Jesus is very bold, given the Jewish climate of His day. Eating with tax collectors and sinners, as the Pharisees were grumbling about, made Him appear on the side of sinners. But Jesus says plainly what He is doing. He is calling sinners to repentance, and not the righteous. Then the Pharisees bring up fasting of course at a big reception like the one they were all attending. So Jesus tells them a parable about a bridegroom being among them, speaking of Himself, and that they can't fast while the bridegroom is with them. Then He tells them the parable about the wineskins. It seems to me, Jesus was talking about the new birth here, for faith has been the means of salvation in every age. The Jews were to believe in Him who would come. We Christians believe in Him who has come. And we welcome Jews too who will have Jesus as bridegroom. I think Irenaeus here is explaining to us that the wine, whether new or old, is the same.

Irenaeus actually explains himself in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVI**. Here Irenaeus explains the parable of the landowner in Matthew 21:33-46. Since I dealt with this chapter in **Chapter 31: Future Events**, I will just quote from Irenaeus briefly in paragraph 3 of Chapter XXXVI, where Irenaeus said, "It is therefore one and the same Father who planted the vineyard, who led forth the people, who sent the prophets, who sent His own Son, and who gave the vineyard to those other husbandmen that render the fruits in their season." So Irenaeus is saying that it is the same wine, new or old, that the Father gives us.

Now returning to our current topic, **Book 4: Chapter XXXV**, in paragraph three, Irenaeus asks, "But from what source could the offspring of their mother derive his knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma, and power to discourse regarding them?" Prunica is the mother Irenaeus is speaking of here. According to the Gnostics, she was supposed to be outside the Pleroma. This would make her offspring beyond the Pleroma as well. Irenaeus then reasons, "Suppose that the mother, while beyond the Pleroma, did bring forth this very offspring; but what is beyond the Pleroma they represent as being beyond the pale of knowledge, that is, ignorance. How then, could that seed, which was conceived in ignorance, possess the power of declaring knowledge?" Irenaeus continues as he adds, "Or how did the mother herself, a shapeless and undefined being, one cast out of doors as an abortion, obtain knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma, she who was organized outside it and given a form there, and prohibited by Horos from entering within, and who remains outside the Pleroma till the consummation [of all things], that is, beyond the pale of knowledge?"

Irenaeus argues effectively here that if the mother was herself outside the Pleroma, and who was "herself, a shapeless and undefined being, one cast out of doors as an abortion," she could not "obtain knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma," since "she who was organized outside it and given a form there, and prohibited by Horos from entering within," is one "who remains outside the Pleroma till the consummation [of all things], that is, beyond the pale of knowledge."

Irenaeus then continues as he argues, "Then, again, when they say that the Lord's passion is a type of the extension of the Christ above, which he effected through Horos, and so imparted a form to their mother, they are refuted in the other particulars [of the Lord's passion], for they have no semblance of a type to show with regard to them." Irenaeus then asks,

- "For when did the Christ above have vinegar and gall given him to drink? Or when was his raiment parted?"
- "Or when was he pierced, and blood and water came forth? Or when did he sweat great drops of blood?"
- "And [the same may be demanded] as to the other particulars which happened to the Lord, of which the prophets have spoken."
- "From whence, then, did the mother or her offspring divine the things which had not yet taken place, but which should occur afterwards?"

All of these things are mentioned in the Gospels. When Irenaeus adds, "And [the same may be demanded] as to the other particulars which happened to the Lord, of which the prophets have spoken," he is speaking of the other things prophesied of the Christ by the prophets such as Bethlehem, the place of His birth, His entrance into Jerusalem as King riding on a donkey, and many other prophecies that predicted specific things about the Christ hundreds of years before they were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Irenaeus also notes that

there were no prophecies by the mother or her offspring that were fulfilled at a later time. That is, the passion of the Christ was not foretold in any Gnostic writings.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies, “They affirm that certain things still, besides these, were spoken from the Pleroma, but are confuted by those which are referred to in the Scriptures as bearing on the advent of Christ.” Again, Irenaeus testifies, “But what these are [that are spoken from the Pleroma] they are not agreed, but give different answers regarding them. For if any one, wishing to test them, do question one by one with regard to any passage those who are their leading men, he shall find one of them referring the passage in question to”:

- “the Propator—that is, to Bythus;”
- “another attributing it to Arche—that is, to the Only-begotten;”
- “another to the Father of all—that is, to the Word;”
- “while another, again, will say that it was spoken of that one Æon who was [formed from the joint contributions] of the Æons in the Pleroma;”
- “others [will regard the passage] as referring to Christ,”
- “while another [will refer it] to the Saviour.”
- “One, again, more skilled than these, after a long protracted silence, declares that it was spoken of Horos;”
- “another that it signifies the Sophia which is within the Pleroma;”
- “another that it announces the mother outside the Pleroma;”
- “while another will mention the God who made the world (the Demiurge).”

Irenaeus then testifies, “Such are the variations existing among them with regard to one [passage], holding discordant opinions as to the same Scriptures; and when the same identical passage is read out, they all begin to purse up their eyebrows, and to shake their heads, and they say that they might indeed utter a discourse transcendently lofty, but that all cannot comprehend the greatness of that thought which is implied in it; and that, therefore, among the wise the chief thing is silence.” Irenaeus continues as he further testifies, “For that Sige (*silence*) which is above must be typified by that silence which they preserve. Thus do they, as many as they are, all depart [from each other], holding so many opinions as to one thing, and bearing about their clever notions in secret within themselves.” Irenaeus then affirms, “When, therefore, they shall have agreed among themselves as to the things predicted in the Scriptures, then also shall they be confuted by us. For, though holding wrong opinions, they do in the meanwhile, however, convict themselves, since they are not of one mind with regard to the same words.” Irenaeus concludes as he again testifies, “But as we follow for our teacher the one and only true God, and possess His words as the rule of truth, we do all speak alike with regard to the same things, knowing but one God, the Creator of this universe, who sent the prophets, who led forth the people from the land of Egypt, who in these last times manifested His own Son, that He might put the unbelievers to confusion, and search out the fruit of righteousness.”

In paragraph four, Irenaeus states that there are still more things besides what he has mentioned above that the Gnostics say were spoken from the Pleroma. I believe he is saying that the things relating to the Advent of Christ in the Scriptures are sufficient to destroy their assertion that different gods, for that is what they seem to be, spoke the prophecies in the Old Testament. One god is Bythus, the supreme unknown one, and another is Arche, and another Sophia, and another Horos, and another the Demiurge or Creator, and another an Aeon. But the proponents of these deities have no agreement about which passage was spoken by whom in the Scriptures. If you argue the point with them, he says, they will sit in silence, and be quiet in their “wisdom.” I suppose they are waiting for their god to speak. Neither are they “of one mind with regard to the same words,” says Irenaeus. But Irenaeus says that true Christians will “all speak alike with regard to the same things, knowing but one God, the Creator of this universe, who sent the prophets, who led forth the people from the land of Egypt, who in these last times manifested His own Son, that He might put the unbelievers to confusion, and search out the fruit of righteousness.” We will do this only if we “follow for our teacher the one and only true God, and possess His

words as the rule of truth.” Irenaeus did recognize some commonality among Christians of his time for he says “we do all speak alike with regard to the same thing.”

Now, I rely on a series of quotes from **The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia** for insight into this false religious belief system of Gnosticism.

“Gnosticism, though usually regarded as a heresy, was not really such; it was not the perverting of Christian truth; it came, rather, from outside. Having worked its way into the Christian church, it was then heretical. “Although it became a corrupting influence within the church, it was an alien by birth. While the church yet sojourned within the pale of Judaism, it enjoyed immunity from the plague, but as soon as it broke through these narrow bounds, it found itself in a world where the decaying religions and philosophies of the West were in acute fermentation under the influence of a new and powerful leaven from the East; while the infusion of Christianity itself into this fermenting mass only added to the bewildering multiplicity of gnostic sects and systems it brought forth: (Law, *The Test of Life*, 26). **The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Volume II, page 1241.**

This is very descriptive of Gnosticism overall. When we understand that Christianity was a new religion as it were in the milieu of pagan culture, it is easy to understand how it would take time for the pagan mind to be renewed in the knowledge of the Son of God. That it was known through the Jews in part was helpful, but then most of the Jews were in apostasy. Here is another quote which lists the broad characteristics of Gnosticism.

“The following may be regarded as the chief points in the characteristics of the gnostic systems: (1) A claim on the part of the initiated to a special knowledge of the truth, a tendency to regard knowledge as superior to faith, and as the special possession of the more enlightened, for ordinary Christians did not possess this secret and higher doctrine. (2) The essential separation of matter and spirit, the former of these being essentially evil, and the source from which all evil has arisen. (3) An attempt at the solution of the problems of creation and of the origin of evil by the conception of a Demiurge, i.e. a Creator or Artificer of the world as distinct from the Supreme Deity, and also by means of emanations extending between God and the visible universe. It should be observed that this conception merely concealed the difficulties of the problem, and did not solve them. (4) A denial of the true humanity of Christ, a docetic Christology, which looked upon the earthly life of Christ and especially on His sufferings on the cross as unreal. (5) The denial of the personality of the supreme god, and the denial also of the free will of man. (6) The teaching, on the one hand, of asceticism as the means of attaining to spiritual communion with God, and, on the other hand, of an indifference which led directly to licentiousness. (7) A syncretistic tendency which combined certain more or less misunderstood Christian doctrines, various elements from oriental and Jewish and other sources. (8) The Scriptures of the OT were ascribed to the Demiurge or inferior Creator of the world, who was the God of the Jews, but not the true God. Some of these characteristic ideas are more obvious in one, and some of them in others of the gnostic systems.” **The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Volume II, page 1241-2.**

And here is a segment from Philip P. Schaff’s **History of the Christian Church** in Volume II.

### **Meaning, Origin and Character of Gnosticism**

#### *§ 116. Meaning, Origin and Character of Gnosticism.*

The Judaistic form of heresy was substantially conquered in the apostolic age. More important and more widely spread in the second period was the paganizing heresy, known by the name of GNOSTICISM. It was the Rationalism of the ancient church; it pervaded the intellectual atmosphere, and stimulated the development of catholic theology by opposition.

The Greek word *gnosis* may denote all schools of philosophical or religious knowledge, in distinction from superficial opinion or blind belief. The New Testament makes a plain distinction between true and false

gnosis. The true consists in a deep insight into the essence and structure of the Christian truth, springs from faith, is accompanied by the cardinal virtues of love and humility, serves to edify the church, and belongs among the gifts of grace wrought by the Holy Spirit. Λόγος γνώσεως, λόγος σοφίας, 1 Cor. 12:8; Comp. 13:2, 12; Jno. 17:3. In this sense, Clement of Alexandria and Origen aimed at gnosis, and all speculative theologians who endeavor to reconcile reason and revelation, may be called Christian Gnostics. The false gnosis

Ψευδώνυμος γνῶστις 1 Tim. 6:20. on the contrary, against which Paul warns Timothy, and which he censures in the Corinthians and Colossians is a morbid pride of wisdom, an arrogant, self-conceited, ambitious knowledge, which puffs up, instead of edifying, 1 Cor. 8:1. runs into idle subtleties and disputes, and verifies in its course the apostle's word: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Rom. 1:22.

In this bad sense, the word applies to the error of which we now speak, and which began to show itself at least as early as the days of Paul and John. It is a one-sided intellectualism on a dualistic heathen basis. It rests on an over-valuation of knowledge or gnosis, and a depreciation of faith or pistis. The Gnostics contrasted themselves by this name with the Pistics, or the mass of believing Christians. They regarded Christianity as consisting essentially in a higher knowledge; fancied themselves the sole possessors of an esoteric, philosophical religion, which made them genuine, spiritual men, and looked down with contempt upon the mere men of the soul and of the body. They constituted the intellectual aristocracy, a higher caste in the church. They, moreover, adulterated Christianity with sundry elements entirely foreign, and thus quite obscured the true essence of the gospel. Baur takes too comprehensive a view of Gnosticism, and includes in it all systems of Christian philosophy of religion down to Schelling and Hegel.

We may parallelize the true and false, the believing and unbelieving forms of Gnosticism with the two forms of modern Rationalism and modern Agnosticism. There is a Christian Rationalism which represents the doctrines of revelation as being in harmony with reason, though transcending reason in its present capacity; and there is an anti-Christian Rationalism which makes natural reason (ratio) the judge of revelation, rejects the specific doctrines of Christianity, and denies the supernatural and miraculous. And there is an Agnosticism which springs from the sense of the limitations of thought, and recognizes faith as the necessary organ of the supernatural and absolute; Sir William Hamilton and Dean Mansel. while the unbelieving Agnosticism declares the infinite and absolute to be unknown and unknowable and tends to indifferentism and atheism. Hume, Spencer, Comte. As to Kant, he started from Hume, but checked the scepticism of the theoretical reason by the categorical imperative of the practical reason. See Calderwood's article "Agnosticism" in Schaffs "Rel. Encycl." vol. I. We now proceed to trace the origin of Gnosticism.

As to its substance, Gnosticism is chiefly of heathen descent. It is a peculiar translation or transfusion of heathen philosophy and religion into Christianity. This was perceived by the church-fathers in their day. Hippolytus particularly, in his "Philosophumena" endeavors to trace the Gnostic heresies to the various systems of Greek philosophy, making Simon Magus, for example, dependent on Heraclitus, Valentine on Pythagoras and Plato, Basilides on Aristotle, Marcion on Empedocles; and hence he first exhibits the doctrines of the Greek philosophy from Thales down. Of all these systems Platonism had the greatest influence, especially on the Alexandrian Gnostics; though not so much in its original Hellenic form, as in its later orientalized eclectic and mystic cast, of which Neo-Platonism was another fruit. The Platonic speculation yielded the germs of the Gnostic doctrine of aeons, the conceptions of matter, of the antithesis of an ideal and a real world, of all ante-mundane fall of souls from the ideal world, of the origin of sin from matter, and of the needed redemption of the soul from the fetters of the body. We find also in the Gnostics traces of the Pythagorean symbolical use of numbers, the Stoic physics and ethics, and some Aristotelian elements.

But this reference to Hellenic philosophy, with which Massuet was content, is not enough. Since Beausobre and Mosheim the East has been rightly joined with Greece, as the native home of this heresy. This may be inferred from the mystic, fantastic, enigmatic form of the Gnostic speculation, and from the fact, that most of its representatives sprang from Egypt and Syria. The conquests of Alexander, the spread of the Greek language and literature, and the truths of Christianity, produced a mighty agitation in the eastern mind, which reacted on the West. Gnosticism has accordingly been regarded as more or less parallel with the heretical forms of Judaism, with Essenism, Therapeutism, Philo's philosophico-religious system, and with the Cabbala, the origin of which probably dates as far back as the first century. The affinity of Gnosticism also with the Zoroastrian dualism of a kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness is unmistakable, especially in the Syrian

Gnostics. Its alliance with the pantheistic, docetic, and ascetic elements of Buddhism, which had advanced at the time of Christ to western Asia, is equally plain. Parsic and Indian influence is most evident in Manichaeism, while the Hellenic element there amounts to very little.

Gnosticism, with its syncretistic tendency, is no isolated fact. It struck its roots deep in the mighty revolution of ideas induced by the fall of the old religions and the triumph of the new. Philo, of Alexandria, who was a contemporary of Christ, but wholly ignorant of him, endeavored to combine the Jewish religion, by allegorical exposition, or rather imposition, with Platonic philosophy; and this system, according as it might be prosecuted under the Christian or the heathen influence, would prepare the way either for the speculative theology of the Alexandrian church fathers, or for the heretical Gnosis. Still more nearly akin to Gnosticism is Neo-Platonism, which arose a little later than Philo's system, but ignored Judaism, and derived its ideas exclusively from eastern and western heathenism. The Gnostic syncretism, however, differs materially from both the Philonic and the Neo-Platonic by taking up Christianity, which the Neo-Platonists directly or indirectly opposed. This the Gnostics regarded as the highest stage of the development of religion, though they so corrupted it by the admixture of foreign matter, as to destroy its identity.

Gnosticism is, therefore, the grandest and most comprehensive form of speculative religious syncretism known to history. It consists of Oriental mysticism, Greek philosophy, Alexandrian, Philonic, and Cabbalistic Judaism, and Christian ideas of salvation, not merely mechanically compiled, but, as it were, chemically combined. At least, in its fairly developed form in the Valentinian system, it is, in its way, a wonderful structure of speculative or rather imaginative thought, and at the same time all artistic work of the creative fancy, a Christian mythological epic. The old world here rallied all its energies, to make out of its diverse elements some new thing, and to oppose to the real, substantial universalism of the catholic church an ideal, shadowy universalism of speculation. But this fusion of all systems served in the end only to hasten the dissolution of eastern and western heathenism, while the Christian element came forth purified and strengthened from the crucible.

The Gnostic speculation, like most speculative religions, failed to establish a safe basis for practical morals. On the one side, a spiritual pride obscured the sense of sin, and engendered a frivolous antinomianism, which often ended in sensuality and debaucheries. On the other side, an over-strained sense of sin often led the Gnostics, in glaring contrast with the pagan deification of nature, to ascribe nature to the devil, to abhor the body as the seat of evil, and to practice extreme austerities upon themselves.

This ascetic feature is made prominent by Möhler, the Roman Catholic divine. But he goes quite too far, when he derives the whole phenomenon of Gnosticism (which he wrongly views as a forerunner of Protestantism) directly and immediately from Christianity. He represents it as a hyper-Christianity, an exaggerated contempt for the world. He calls Gnosticism a "*Verteufelung der Natur.*" which, when seeking for itself a speculative basis, gathered from older philosophemes, theosophies, and mythologies, all that it could use for its purpose.

The number of the Gnostics it is impossible to ascertain. We find them in almost all portions of the ancient church; chiefly where Christianity came into close contact with Judaism and heathenism, as in Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor; then in Rome, the rendezvous of all forms of truth and falsehood; in Gaul, where they were opposed by Irenaeus; and in Africa, where they were attacked by Tertullian, and afterwards by Augustin, who was himself a Manichaean for several years. They found most favor with the educated, and threatened to lead astray the teachers of the church. But they could gain no foothold among the people; indeed, as esoterics, they stood aloof from the masses; and their philosophical societies were, no doubt, rarely as large as the catholic congregations.

The flourishing period of the Gnostic schools was the second century. In the sixth century, only faint traces of them remained; yet some Gnostic and especially Manichaean ideas continue to appear in several heretical sects of the middle ages, such as the Priscillianists, the Paulicians, the Bogomiles, and the Catharists; and even the history of modern theological and philosophical speculation shows kindred tendencies.

## The System of Gnosticism. Its Theology

### § 117. The System of Gnosticism. Its Theology.

Gnosticism is a heretical philosophy of religion, or, more exactly a mythological theosophy, which reflects intellectually the peculiar, fermenting state of that remarkable age of transition from the heathen to the Christian order of things. If it were merely an unintelligible congeries of puerile absurdities and impious blasphemies, as it is grotesquely portrayed by older historians, Even some of the more recent writers, as Bishop Kaye (Eccl. History of the Second and Third Centuries), and the translators of Irenaeus in the "Ante-Nicene Christian Library" (Edinb. 1868, vol. 1st, Introductory Notice) have the same idea of the Gnostic system as an impenetrable wilderness, of absurdities. But Mansel, Lightfoot, and Salmon show a clear knowledge of the subject, and agree; substantially with Neander's account. It would not have fascinated so many vigorous intellects and produced such a long-continued agitation in the ancient church. It is an attempt to solve some of the deepest metaphysical and theological problems. It deals with the great antitheses of God and world, spirit and matter, idea and phenomenon; and endeavors to unlock the mystery of the creation; the question of the rise, development, and end of the world; and of the origin of evil. Πόθεν τὸ κακόν, or ἡ κακία: unde malum? (See Tertullian, De Praescript. 7; Adv. Marc. I. 2; Euseb. H. E. V. 27; Baur, Gnosis, p. 19. It endeavors to harmonize the creation of the material world and the existence of evil with the idea of an absolute God, who is immaterial and perfectly good. This problem can only be solved by the Christian doctrine of redemption; but Gnosticism started from a false basis of dualism, which prevents a solution.

In form and method it is, as already observed, more Oriental than Grecian. The Gnostics, in their daring attempt to unfold the mysteries of an upper world, disdained the trammels of reason, and resorted to direct spiritual intuition. Hence they speculate not so much in logical and dialectic mode, as in an imaginative, semi-poetic way, and they clothe their ideas not in the simple, clear, and sober language of reflection, but in the many-colored, fantastic, mythological dress of type, symbol, and allegory. Thus monstrous nonsense and the most absurd conceits are chaotically mingled up with profound thoughts and poetic intuitions.

This spurious supernaturalism which substitutes the irrational for the supernatural, and the prodigy for the miracle, pervades the pseudo-historical romances of the Gnostic Gospels and Acts. These surpass the Catholic traditions in luxuriant fancy and incredible marvels. "Demonic possessions," says one who has mastered this literature, Dr. Lipsius, *Die Apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden* (1883), vol. 1. P. 7. "and resurrections from the dead, miracles of healing and punishment are accumulated without end; the constant repetition of similar events gives the long stories a certain monotony, which is occasionally interrupted by colloquies, hymns and prayers of genuine poetic value. A rich apparatus of visions, angelic appearances, heavenly voices, speaking animals, defeated and humbled demons is unfolded, a superterrestrial splendor of light gleams up, mysterious signs from heaven, earthquakes, thunder and lightning frighten the impious; fire, earth, wind and water obey the pious; serpents, lions, leopards, tigers, and bears are tamed by a word of the apostles and turn upon their persecutors; the dying martyrs are surrounded by coronets, roses, lilies, incense, while the abyss opens to swallow up their enemies."

The highest source of knowledge, with these heretics was a secret tradition, in contrast with the open, popular tradition of the Catholic church. In this respect, they differ from Protestant sects, which generally discard tradition altogether and appeal to the Bible only, as understood by themselves. They appealed also to apocryphal documents, which arose in the second century in great numbers, under eminent names of apostolic or pre-Christian times. Epiphanius, in his 26<sup>th</sup> Heresy, counts the apocrypha of the Gnostics by thousands, and Irenaeus found among the Valentinians alone a countless multitude of such writings. Adv. Haer. I. c. 20. §1: Αμύθητον πλῆθος ἀποκρύφων καὶ νόθων γραφῶν, ἃς αὐτοὶ ἔπλασαν, παρεισφέρουσιν εἰς κατάπληξιν τῶν ἀνοήτων καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας μὴ ἐπισταμένων γράμματα. And finally, when it suited their purpose, the Gnostics employed single portions of the Bible, without being able to agree either as to the extent or the interpretation of the same. The Old Testament they generally rejected, either entirely, as in the case of the Marcionites and the Manichaeans, or at least in great part; and in the New Testament they preferred certain books or portions, such as the Gospel of John, with its profound spiritual intuitions, and either rejected the other books, or wrested them to suit their ideas. Marcion, for example, thus mutilated the Gospel of Luke, and received in addition to it only ten of Paul's Epistles, thus substituting an arbitrary canon of eleven books for the catholic Testament of twenty-seven. In interpretation they adopted, even with far less moderation than Philo, the most arbitrary and extravagant allegorical principles; despising the letter as sensuous, and the laws of language and exegesis as

fetters of the mind. The number 30 in the New Testament, for instance, particularly in the life of Jesus, is made to denote the number of the Valentinian aeons; and the lost sheep in the parable is Achamoth. Even to heathen authors, to the poems of Homer, Aratus, Anacreon, they applied this method, and discovered in these works the deepest Gnostic mysteries. Hippol. Philos. IV. 46, V. 8, 13, 20. They gathered from the whole field of ancient mythology, astronomy, physics, and magic, everything which could, serve in any way to support their fancies.

The common characteristics of nearly all the Gnostic systems are (1) Dualism; the assumption of an eternal antagonism between God and matter. (2) The demiurgic notion; the separation of the creator of the world or the demiurgoς from the proper God. (3) Docetism; the resolution of the human element in the person of the Redeemer into mere deceptive appearance. Δόκητις, φάντασμα.

We will endeavor now to present a clear and connected view of the theoretical and practical system of Gnosticism in as it comes before us in its more fully developed forms, especially the Valentinian school.

1. THE GHOSTIC THEOLOGY. The system starts from absolute primal being. God is the unfathomable abyss, Βυθός, locked up within himself, without beginning, unnamable, and incomprehensible; on the one hand, infinitely exalted above every existence; yet, on the other hand, the original aeon, the sum of all ideas and spiritual powers. Basilides would not ascribe even existence to him, and thus, like Hegel, starts from absolute nonentity, which, however, is identical with absolute being. So in the old Hindu philosophy, absolute Being is regarded as the ground of all existence. It is itself devoid of qualities, incapable of definition, inconceivable, neither one thing nor another thing, yet containing in itself the possibilities; of all things; and out from its dark depths the universe was evolved through some mysterious impulse. The Vedas describe it thus: "It is neither Brahma, nor Vishnoo, nor Sivan, but something back of these, without passion, neither great nor small, neither male nor female, but something far beyond." He began where modern Agnosticism ends.

2. KOSMOLOGY. The abyss opens; God enters upon a process of development, and sends forth from his bosom the several aeons; that is, the attributes and unfolded powers of his nature, the ideas of the eternal spirit-world, such as mind, reason, wisdom, power, truth, life. Νοῦς, λόγος, σοφία, δύναμις, ἀλήθεια, ζωή, etc. These emanate from the absolute in a certain order, according to Valentine in pairs with sexual polarity. The further they go from the great source, the poorer and weaker they become. Besides the notion of emanation, Προβολή (from προβάλλω), a putting forward, a projection the Gnostics employed also, to illustrate the self-revelation of the absolute, the figure of the evolution of numbers from an original unit, or of utterance in tones gradually diminishing to the faint echo. Basilides and Saturninus use the former illustration; Marcos uses the latter. The cause of the procession of the aeons is, with some, as with Valentine, the self-limiting love of God; with others, metaphysical necessity. The whole body of aeons forms the ideal world, or light-world, or spiritual foulness, the Pleroma, as opposed to the Kenoma, or the material world of emptiness. The one is the totality of the divine powers and attributes, the other the region of shadow and darkness. Christ belongs to the Pleroma, as the chief of the aeons; the Demiurge or Creator belongs to the Kenoma. In opposition to the incipient form of this heresy, St. Paul taught that Jesus Christ is the whole pleroma of the Godhead (Col. 1:19; 2:9), and the church the reflected pleroma of Christ (Eph. 1:22).

The material visible world is the abode of the principle of evil. This cannot proceed from God; else he were himself the author of evil. It must come from an opposite principle. This is *Matter* (ὕλη), which stands in eternal opposition to God and the ideal world. The Syrian Gnostics, and still more the Manichaeans, agreed with Parsism in conceiving Matter as an intrinsically evil substance, the raging kingdom of Satan, at irreconcilable warfare with the kingdom of light. The Alexandrian Gnostics followed more the Platonic idea of the ὕλη and conceived this as κένωμα, emptiness, in contrast with πλήρωμα, the divine, vital fulness, or as the μὴ ὄν, related to the divine being as shadow to light, and forming the dark limit beyond which the mind cannot pass. This Matter is in itself dead, but becomes animated by a union with the Pleroma, which again is variously described. In the Manichaean system there are powers of darkness, which seize by force some parts of the kingdom of light. But usually the union is made to proceed from above. The last link in the chain of divine aeons, either too weak to keep its hold on the ideal world, or seized with a sinful passion for the embrace of the infinite abyss, falls as a spark of light into the dark chaos of matter, and imparts to it a germ of divine life, but in this bondage feels a painful longing after redemption, with which the whole world of aeons sympathizes. This weakest aeon is called by Valentine the lower Wisdom, or Achamoth, Ή κάτω σοφία, Αχαμώθ (Iren. 1. 4; in Stieren, I. 44), הַחֲמָר or אַפְּיִמוֹת the Chaldaic form of the Hebrew מהַחֲמָר and marks the extreme point, where spirit must

surrender itself to matter, where the infinite must enter into the finite, and thus form a basis for the real world. The myth of Achamoth is grounded in the thought, that the finite is incompatible with the absolute, yet in some sense demands it to account for itself.

Here now comes in the third principle of the Gnostic speculation, namely, the world-maker, commonly called the *Demiurge*, Δημιουργός, a term used by Plato in a similar sense. termed by Basilides "Archon" or world-ruler, by the Ophites. "Jaldabaoth," or son of chaos. He is a creature of the fallen aeon, formed of physical material, and thus standing between God and Matter. He makes out of Matter the visible sensible world, and rules over it. He has his throne in the planetary heavens, and presides over time and over the sidereal spirits. Astrological influences were generally ascribed to him. He is the God of Judaism, the Jehovah, who imagines himself to be the supreme and only God. But in the further development of this idea the systems differ; the anti-Jewish Gnostics, Marcion and the Ophites, represent the Demiurge as an insolent being, resisting the purposes of God; while the Judaizing Gnostics, Basilides and Valentine, make him a restricted, unconscious instrument of God to prepare the way for redemption.

3. CHRISTOLOGY and SOTERIOLOGY. Redemption itself is the liberation of the light-spirit from the chains of dark Matter, and is effected by *Christ*, the most perfect aeon, who is the mediator of return from the sensible phenomenal world to the supersensuous ideal world, just as the Demiurge is the mediator of apostacy from the Pleroma to the Kenoma. This redeeming aeon, called by Valentine σωτήρ or Ἰησοῦς descends through the sphere of heaven, and assumes the ethereal appearance of a body; according to another view, unites himself with the man Jesus, or with the Jewish Messiah, at the baptism, and forsakes him again at the passion. At all events, the redeemer, however conceived in other respects, is allowed no actual contact with sinful matter. His human birth, his sufferings and death, are explained by Gnosticism after the manner of the Indian mythology, as a deceptive appearance, a transient vision, a spectral form, which he assumed only to reveal himself to the sensuous nature of man. Reduced to a clear philosophical definition, the Gnostic Christ is really nothing more than the ideal spirit of himself, as in the mythical gospel-theory of Strauss. The Holy Ghost is commonly conceived as a subordinate aeon. The central fact in the work of Christ is the communication of the Gnosis to a small circle of the initiated, prompting and enabling them to strive with clear consciousness after the ideal world and the original unity. According to Valentine, the heavenly Soter brings Achamoth after innumerable sufferings into the Pleroma, and unites himself with her—the most glorious aeon with the lowest—in an eternal spirit-marriage. With this, all disturbance in the heaven of aeons is allayed, and a blessed harmony and inexpressible delight are restored, in which all spiritual (pneumatic) men, or genuine Gnostics, share. Matter is at last entirely consumed by a fire breaking out from its dark bosom.

4. The ANTHROPOLOGY of the Gnostics corresponds with their theology. Man is a microcosm consisting of spirit, body, and soul reflecting the three principles, God, Matter, and Demiurge, though in very different degrees. There are three classes of men: the *spiritual*, Πενματικοί. in whom the divine element, a spark of light from the ideal world, predominates; the *material*, Σωματικοί, φυσικοί, σαρκικοί, ύλικοί. bodily, carnal, physical, in whom matter, the gross sensuous principle, rules; and the *psychical*, Ψυχικοί. in whom the demiurgic, quasi-divine rules; principle, the mean between the two preceding, prevails. These three classes are frequently identified with the adherents of the three religions respectively; the spiritual with the Christians, the carnal with the heathens, the psychical with the Jews. But they also made the same distinction among the professors of any one religion, particularly among the Christians; and they regarded themselves as the genuine spiritual men in the full sense of the word; while they looked upon the great mass of Christians Οἱ πολλοί. as only psychical, not able to rise from blind faith to true knowledge, too weak for the good, and too tender for the evil, longing for the divine, yet unable to attain it, and thus hovering between the Pleroma of the ideal world and the Kenoma of the sensual.

Ingenious as this thought is, it is just the basis of that unchristian distinction of esoteric and exoteric religion, and that pride of knowledge, in which Gnosticism runs directly counter to the Christian virtues of humility and love.

## Ethics of Gnosticism

### § 118. Ethics of Gnosticism.

All the Gnostic heretics agree in disparaging the divinely created body, and over-rating the intellect. Beyond this, we perceive among them two opposite tendencies: a gloomy asceticism, and a frivolous antinomianism; both grounded in the dualistic principle, which falsely ascribes evil to matter, and traces nature to the devil. The two extremes frequently met, and the Nicolaitan maxim in regard to the abuse of the flesh Δεῖ καταχρῆσθαι τῇ σαρκὶ, the flesh must be abused to be conquered was made to serve asceticism first, and then libertinism.

The ascetic Gnostics, like Marcion, Saturninus, Tatian, and the Manichaeans were pessimists. They felt uncomfortable in the sensuous and perishing world, ruled by the Demiurge, and by Satan; they abhorred the body as formed from Matter, and forbade the use of certain kinds of food and all nuptial intercourse, as an adulteration of themselves with sinful Matter; like the Essenes and the errorists noticed by Paul in the Colossians and Pastoral Epistles. They thus confounded sin with matter, and vainly imagined that, matter being dropped, sin, its accident, would fall with it. Instead of hating sin only, which God has not made, they hated the world, which he has made.

The licentious Gnostics, as the Nicolaitans, the Ophites, the Carpocratians, and the Antitactes, in a proud conceit of the exaltation of the spirit above matter, or even on the diabolical principle, that sensuality must be overcome by indulging it, bade defiance to all moral laws, and gave themselves up to the most shameless licentiousness. It is no great thing, said they, according to Clement of Alexandria, to restrain lust; but it is surely a great thing not to be conquered by lust, when one indulges in it. According to Epiphanius there were Gnostic sects in Egypt, which, starting from a filthy, materialistic pantheism and identifying Christ with the generative powers of nature, practised debauchery as a mode of worship, and after having, as they thought, offered and collected all their strength, blasphemously exclaimed: "I am Christ." From these pools of sensuality and Satanic pride arose the malaria of a vast literature, of which, however, fortunately, nothing more than a few names has come down to us.

## **Book 1: Chapter VI.—The threefold kind of man feigned by these heretics: good works needless for them, though necessary to others: their abandoned morals.**

1. There being thus three kinds of substances, they declare of all that is material (which they also describe as being "on the left hand") that it must of necessity perish, inasmuch as it is incapable of receiving any afflatus of incorruption. As to every animal existence (which they also denominate "on the right hand"), they hold that, inasmuch as it is a mean between the spiritual and the material, it passes to the side to which inclination draws it. Spiritual substance, again, they describe as having been sent forth for this end, that, being here united with that which is animal, it might assume shape, the two elements being simultaneously subjected to the same discipline. And this they declare to be "the salt" and "the light of the world." For the animal substance had need of training by means of the outward senses; and on this account they affirm that the world was created, as well as that the Saviour came to the animal substance (which was possessed of free-will), that He might secure for it salvation. For they affirm that He received the first-fruits of those whom He was to save [as follows], from Achamoth that which was spiritual, while He was invested by the Demiurge with the animal Christ, but was begirt by a [special] dispensation with a body endowed with an animal nature, yet constructed with unspeakable skill, so that it might be visible and tangible, and capable of enduring suffering. At the same time, they deny that He assumed anything material [into His nature], since indeed matter is incapable of salvation. They further hold that the consummation of all things will take place when all that is spiritual has been formed and perfected by Gnosis (knowledge); and by this they mean spiritual men who have attained to the perfect knowledge of God, and been initiated into these mysteries by Achamoth. And they represent themselves to be these persons.

**Summary:** Irenaeus explains basic Gnostic beliefs he is writing against as he testifies in paragraph one, "There being thus three kinds of substances,":

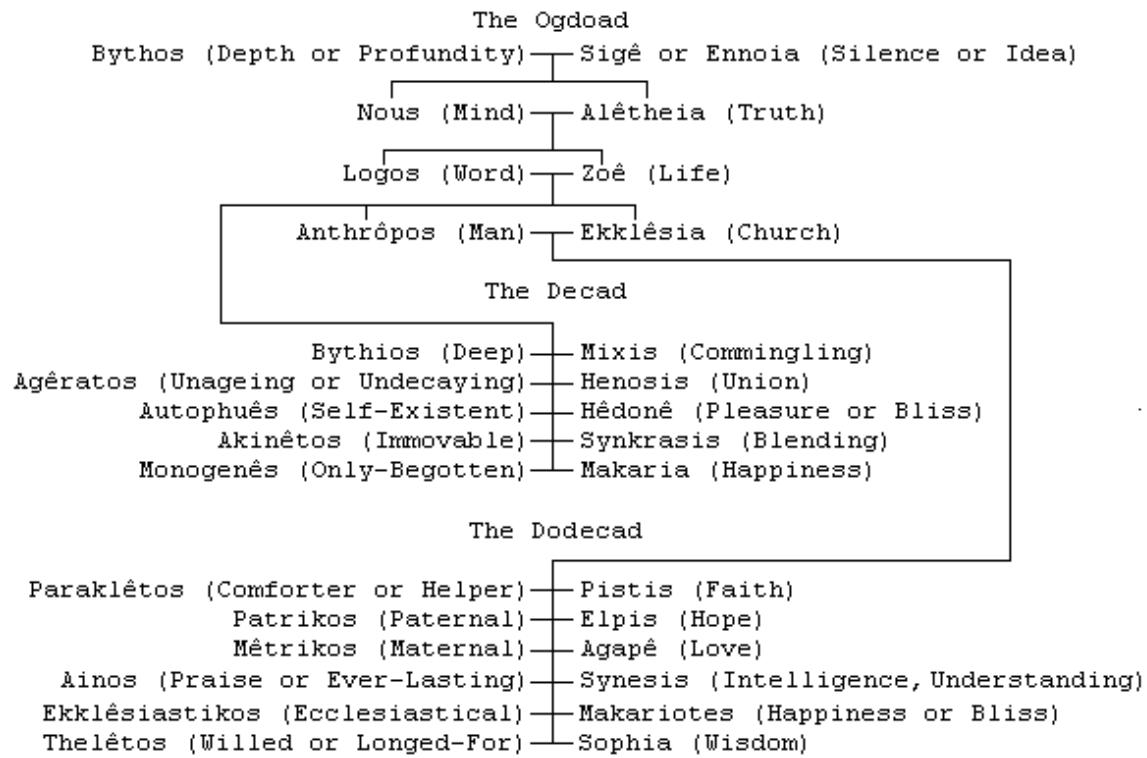
- they declare of all that is material (which they also describe as being “on the left hand”) that it must of necessity perish, inasmuch as it is incapable of receiving any afflatus of incorruption.
- As to every animal existence (which they also denominate “on the right hand”), they hold that, inasmuch as it is a mean between the spiritual and the material, it passes to the side to which inclination draws it.
- Spiritual substance, again, they describe as having been sent forth for this end, that, being here united with that which is animal, it might assume shape, the two elements being simultaneously subjected to the same discipline. And this they declare to be “the salt” and “the light of the world.”

Irenaeus then explains, “For the animal substance had need of training by means of the outward senses; and on this account they affirm that the world was created, as well as that the Saviour came to the animal substance (which was possessed of free-will), that He might secure for it salvation.” Irenaeus continues as he records:

- For they affirm that He received the first-fruits of those whom He was to save [as follows], from Achamoth that which was spiritual, while He was invested by the Demiurge with the animal Christ, but was begirt by a [special] dispensation with a body endowed with an animal nature, yet constructed with unspeakable skill, so that it might be visible and tangible, and capable of enduring suffering.
- At the same time, they deny that He assumed anything material [into His nature], since indeed matter is incapable of salvation.
- They further hold that the consummation of all things will take place when all that is spiritual has been formed and perfected by Gnosis (knowledge); and by this they mean spiritual men who have attained to the perfect knowledge of God, and been initiated into these mysteries by Achamoth. And they represent themselves to be these persons.

## Appendix I: Aeon - Source: Wikipedia

Valentinus assumed, as the beginning of all things, the Primal Being or Bythos, who after ages of silence and contemplation, gave rise to other beings by a process of emanation. The first series of beings, the Aeons, were thirty in number, representing fifteen syzygies or pairs sexually complementary. One common form is outlined below:



The Valentinian system was, until recently, only known through the criticisms of its opponents; however, the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library has given access to Valentinian texts, including sources that have been tentatively identified as written by Valentinus.

Tertullian's *Against the Valentinians* gives a slightly different sequence. The first eight of these Aeons, corresponding to generations one through four below, are referred to as the *Ogdoad*.

- **First generation**
  - *Bythos* (the One) and *Sige* (Silence, Charis, Ennoea, etc.)
- **Second generation**
  - *Nous* (Nus, Mind) and *Aletheia* (Veritas, Truth)
- **Third generation, emanated from Nous and Aletheia**
  - *Sermo* (the Word) and *Vita* (the Life)
- **Fourth generation, emanated from Sermo and Vita**
  - *Anthropos* (Homo, Man) and *Ecclesia* (Church)
- **Fifth generation**
  - **Emanated from Sermo and Vita:**
    - *Bythios* (Profound) and *Mixis* (Mixture)
    - *Ageratos* (Never old) and *Henosis* (Union)
    - *Autophy়েs* (Essential nature) and *Hedone* (Pleasure)

- *Acinetos* (Immovable) and *Syncrasis* (Commixture)
- *Monogenes* (Only-begotten) and *Macaria* (Happiness)
- **Emanated from Anthropos and Ecclesia**
  - *Paracletus* (Comforter) and *Pistis* (Faith)
  - *Patricas* (Paternal) and *Elpis* (Hope)
  - *Metricos* (Maternal) and *Agape* (Love)
  - *Ainos* (Praise) and *Synesis* (Intelligence)
  - *Ecclesiasticus* (Son of Ecclesia) and *Macariotes* (Blessedness)
  - *Theletus* (Perfect) and *Sophia* (Wisdom)

## Epilogue:

It must be said that Irenaeus was a believer in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and a defender of the faith in many ways. Though we may find fault with many of his statements, we must acknowledge that Irenaeus possessed a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He also defended the faith admirably against the Gnostic heresy that, like winds of doctrine, was blowing hard against the Church in his time. However, that being said, we must remember that what we teach is very important as Paul reveals in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):16** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

We must not defend the teaching or doctrine of a Church, or group of believers, because of loyalty to the unity of the Church. We must make sure that the unity we are defending is based on the teaching, or doctrine, of the word of God. Our teaching, or doctrine, must come from the word of God and not from tradition, however old or sacred that may be. Our loyalty must be to God our Father, held fast by fixing our eyes on Jesus Christ, His Son.

We know from his writing that Irenaeus included in his teaching, or doctrine, that which was handed down by word of mouth through the presbyters appointed by the apostles as well as the written word as he says in **Book 3: Chapter II, paragraph 2**, “But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth.” In other words, Irenaeus included tradition as a valid conveyance of the apostle’s teaching, in addition to and alongside of their writings. This reliance on word of mouth allowed traditions to develop in the early Church, which have no foundation or basis in the word of God. Word of mouth was verifiable as long as the foundational apostles were alive to back it up. With the death of the last of the apostles, namely John, their writings became all important. The apostles themselves encourage us not to exceed what is written.

Irenaeus believed that the tradition in the Church in his day originated with the apostles, and that it was preserved by means of the succession of the presbyters who could show their succession back to a foundational apostle. This belief made the tradition of the Church in effect equal to the authority of the written word of God. This tradition included the following beliefs:

- The apostles had handed off their position and ministry to the bishops, the overseers of the Churches, whom they had appointed as we discussed in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession** where Irenaeus said in **Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 1**, “For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.”
- We also noted in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession** that Irenaeus makes the apostles incapable of lying as he says in **Book 3: Chapter V, paragraph one**, where he wrote, “The apostles, likewise, being disciples of the truth, are above all falsehood; for a lie has no fellowship with the truth, just as darkness has none with light, but the presence of the one shuts out that of the other.”
- The presbyters who could show their succession back to the appointment of an apostle had preserved the tradition of the apostles, and had together with the episcopate, that is the bishops, a “certain gift of truth” as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XXVI, paragraph 2**, which we discussed in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**, “Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,— those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession,

and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth.”

- The Church alone has received the truth from the apostles, and preserved it in integrity as he says in **Book 5: Preface**, as we discussed in **Chapter 1: His Purpose in Writing**, “Then I have pointed out the truth, and shown the preaching of the Church, which the prophets proclaimed (as I have already demonstrated), but which Christ brought to perfection, and the apostles have handed down, from whom the Church, receiving [these truths], and throughout all the world alone preserving them in their integrity (*bene*), has transmitted them to her sons.”
- Irenaeus also testifies concerning the Church in **Book 3: Chapter IV, paragraph 1**, “Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life.” We discussed this in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**.
- Irenaeus prohibited unauthorized meetings which were meetings of believers who had not aligned themselves with churches in apostolic succession as he states in **Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 2**, “Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.” We discussed this in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**.
- All the disciples of the Lord were priests. Irenaeus goes to great lengths to establish the validity of a sacerdotal order in the Church as we saw in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood** when we discussed **Book 4: Chapter VIII, paragraphs 1-3**.
- Irenaeus believed in baptismal regeneration. Irenaeus defines baptism as “regeneration to God,” as we saw in **Chapter 10: Baptismal Regeneration** when we discussed **Book 1: Chapter XXI**. Irenaeus also says, “For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: “Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” He mentions this in **Fragment XXXIV**, which we discussed in **Chapter 10: Baptismal Regeneration**.
- Irenaeus describes the Communion meal as if it were a priestly function as he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” We discussed this in **Chapter 22: Communion** under the heading **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraphs 1-6**, but specifically **paragraph 5**.
- Irenaeus believed that one had to keep or observe the Decalogue, the ten commandments to be saved as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XV, paragraph 1**, “For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them.” We discussed this in **Chapter 24: The Law**.

All of these beliefs are traditions. They are not supported by the Scriptures. They may have been handed down by the presbyters, who may have even been appointed by apostles. Irenaeus himself also explained the

difficulty of maintaining such lists of succession, and finally pointed to the Church of Rome as the most trustworthy source of the tradition of the apostles. The Church of Rome may indeed have had the most trustworthy list of a succession of presbyters appointed ultimately at first by an apostle. However, this does not release the Church at Rome from submission to the word of God.

It is well known today what Jesus thought about tradition. The following is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.

**Matthew 15 (HCSB):**1 Then Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to Jesus and asked, 2 “Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they don’t wash their hands when they eat!” 3 He answered them, “And why do you break God’s commandment because of your tradition? 4 For God said: Honor your father and your mother; and, The one who speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death. 5 But you say, ‘Whoever tells his father or mother, “Whatever benefit you might have received from me is a gift committed to the temple”— 6 he does not have to honor his father.’ In this way, you have revoked God’s word because of your tradition.

We must not revoke or invalidate the word of God for the sake of tradition. This is the plain teaching of the Son of God. Jesus also says that when we invalidate the word of God by tradition, we become hypocrites as He continues in **Matthew 15 (HCSB):**7 Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said: 8 These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 9 They worship Me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commands of men.”

Jesus explains to us that it is not ritual that cleanses us, but a change in our heart in **Matthew 15 (HCSB):**10 Summoning the crowd, He told them, “Listen and understand: 11 It’s not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

Now many today do not want to offend anyone lest they cause division in the Church. The apostles were like this at first as Matthew records in **Matthew 15 (HCSB):**12 Then the disciples came up and told Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard this statement?” 13 He replied, “Every plant that My heavenly Father didn’t plant will be uprooted. 14 Leave them alone! They are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

Those who follow tradition as if it were equal with the inspired word of God are destined to walk in blindness, and ultimately, Jesus says, they will fall into a pit.

We must remember that tradition is not inspired by God. The Scripture alone is said to be inspired by God as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (NASB):**16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

We must also remember that there is no precedent for making tradition a source of truth equal to that of the written word. This would never have been allowed to fly in Old Testament times as Jesus proved when He rebuked them for invalidating the word of God by their tradition. Paul also warns us about the traditions of men in **Colossians 2 (KJV):**8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

In the one place where Paul does mention tradition in a positive way, it is only in a general way as a clear example to the Thessalonians, and not for making doctrine as we read in **2 Thessalonians 3 (NASB):**6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we *kept* working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right *to this*, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

Paul uses the word “tradition” in verse 6 above in the sense of pattern. He says in verse 7 that he wanted them to follow their example. Paul was not making their example equal to the written word. That is why he was writing to them in the first place.

We can understand why the early Church began to keep certain traditions when we look at how the Church began. When Jesus was with the disciples, He casually mentioned that there were other sheep as we read in **John 10 (KJV):16** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

Jesus mentions “other sheep” here but he does not say who they were. That He was referring to the Gentiles became clear to the Church only after Peter’s vision and his preaching at the House of the Gentile, Cornelius, in Acts, chapter 10. When during Peter’s preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and those in his household as He had on Peter and the other disciples in the upper room on Pentecost, Peter understood that the Gospel was for the Gentiles as well as Jews. He then informed the other apostles and elders of this at the council of Jerusalem. The council then approved the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles as we read in **Acts 11 (KJV):18** When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

The apostles had to walk by faith. There was no angelic proclamation that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. In just the same way, there was no angelic proclamation or trumpet blown that the apostles should write the Gospels or the Epistles of the New Testament. This was done by faith, in response to a perceived need, and prompting of the Holy Spirit. The Gospels were written as the apostles were moved by the Holy Spirit to do so. In the same way, Paul wrote to the various churches as he perceived the needs of these churches. Some needed correction as in Corinth. Some needed to understand justification as with the Romans. If tradition was something to be included as truth, the apostles would certainly have mentioned this in their writings. In point of fact, the apostle Paul warns the Corinthians, and us by extension, not to exceed what is written as we read in **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):6** And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and *to* Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of *men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

The apostles and early disciples went everywhere preaching the word. The New Testament was not available for them to hand out to new believers. In the absence of the written word, it is understandable then why tradition began to develop. New believers at that time had to rely on what they had heard or perceived the apostles to have spoken to them. When Paul and the other apostles perceived the need for the written word, they began writing their Gospels and epistles. Nevertheless, the early Church went under great persecutions, and it took time for the Canon to be completed. In fact, the last book of the New Testament was probably not written for at least sixty or seventy years after Jesus’ death on the cross. Then these books had to be gathered by the churches. Who knew if they had them all. Gradually though, the canon was realized and affirmed as we saw in Athanasius’ Easter letter in 367 A.D.

When we include tradition in our teaching, we repeat the errors of the past just as Irenaeus did. Error in our doctrine, or teaching, causes confusion in the Church even today. When error gets into our teaching, it causes people to mistrust the word of God. They begin to say that there are contradictions, and they lose trust in it. They then say it is too hard to understand. They then put it on a shelf in their homes, as my family did, and never bother to read it. They may trust in the tradition of their Church for a while, but soon God becomes distant, almost as if He were not there. We then begin to wonder if He was ever there at all as I did. In my case, I finally cried out to Him, and told Him that I needed to hear from Him directly. As I began to seek Him in order to know whether He was really there, He led me to a man who gave me a New Testament and told me to read it. I decided to take him up on the challenge and began to read it for myself. I let Jesus be just who He was. I didn’t try to make Him fit any traditional teaching. As I read, I realized that Jesus was a very good man, and that it would be great if His teaching was the truth. But how was I to know, I asked myself. It was then that He spoke to me personally through His word. It was then that I met Mr. Jesus, and I surrendered my life to Him. I have never looked back.

This surrendering to God I have found is the first step in following Him. It has been a continual surrender as I read His word, and He gives me more light. As I walk in the light of His word, He leads me into more relationship with Him. My behavior changes as my mind is renewed by His word. My thinking begins

more and more to conform to His word as I see things as they really are. My perception changes from ritual to reality.

Now, as I walk in the light of God's word, the errors of tradition are exposed, and the supposed contradictions in the word of God begin to disappear. My confidence in the word of God begins to increase. My faith is now based on reality, and not ritual. My trust is in God Himself, and not in man or hearsay. Jeremiah tells us that the man who trusts in man is cursed in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):5** Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Further, the Book of Proverbs teaches us in **Proverbs 29 (KJV):25** The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

And in the Psalms we find as we read in **Psalms 56 (KJV):11** In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

And in **Psalms 118 (KJV):8** It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

We must give ourselves permission to be more healthy than our parents. This would include the Church fathers, or man in general. We must remember that it is better to put our trust in the Lord than to trust in man. God is able to lead us and guide us into all truth as John reveals in **1 John 2 (NASB):27** As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

That is, we are not dependent on any man to discern truth. This does not mean that we do not need teachers. It just means that we are not dependent on anyone to discern the truth that we are taught. We must learn to listen to the Lord and to know His voice, for we are His sheep. We must take heed how we hear, for those who have a disposition to receive truth will be given more truth. And we must heed Paul's exhortation in **2 Timothy 1 (NASB):13** Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

And in **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

This warning is especially pertinent to elders and overseers today, as Paul tells us that they must refute those who contradict with sound doctrine as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):7** For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

We must defend the teaching of the word of God, and not the teaching of man. We must handle the word of God accurately as Paul commands us in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

This will require study. There are rules for interpreting the word of God that we should follow. For example, we must confine ourselves to the Biblical context in which a verse is written. We can juxtapose verses from different books and chapters as long as we preserve the Biblical context in which the verses are written. A certain theme may be developed in this way, such as the teaching in the word of God about repentance. We may study the Hebrew and Greek words for repentance, and then the Scriptures in which the word is used. This will all help in our understanding of the teaching in the word of God about repentance. As we do this kind of study, our knowledge of the word of God will grow, and we will grow in grace and knowledge as Peter encourages in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

By this study of the word of God, we will grow up into Him in all things. We will grow into maturity. As we grow in this way, we must have grace, and not be quarrelsome with those who oppose us as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):24** And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Many like to quote the phrase, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." But in order to determine the essentials, we must not forget that they are only found in the word of God. We must

rightly divide the word of God in order to know what these essentials are. Let us desire to please God above all, and not man. And let us speak the truth in love.

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