

A decorative rectangular box with a dark, ornate background and a thin white border. The word "CONTENTS" is centered within the box in a white, serif, all-caps font.

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# The Letter of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth, Commonly Called Clement's First Letter



## *THE TEXT*

**THE CHURCH OF GOD**, living in exile in Rome, to the church of God, exiled in Corinth—to you who are called and sanctified by God's will through our Lord Jesus Christ. Abundant grace and peace be yours from God Almighty through Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Due, dear friends, to the sudden and successive misfortunes and accidents we have encountered, we have, we admit, been rather long in turning our attention to your quarrels. We refer to the abominable and unholy schism, so alien and foreign to those whom God has chosen, which a few impetuous and headstrong fellows have fanned to such a pitch of insanity that your good name, once so famous and dear to us all, has fallen into the gravest ill repute. <sup>2</sup>Has anyone, indeed, stayed with you without attesting the excellence and firmness of your faith? without admiring your

sensible and considerate Christian piety? without broadcasting your spirit of unbounded hospitality? without praising your perfect and trustworthy knowledge? <sup>3</sup>For you always acted without partiality and walked in God's laws. You obeyed your rulers and gave your elders the proper respect. You disciplined the minds of your young people in moderation and dignity. You instructed your women to do everything with a blameless and pure conscience, and to give their husbands the affection they should. You taught them, too, to abide by the rule of obedience and to run their homes with dignity and thorough discretion.

**2** You were all humble and without any pretensions, obeying orders rather than issuing them, more gladly giving than receiving. Content with Christ's rations and mindful of them, you stored his words carefully up in your hearts and held his sufferings before your eyes. <sup>2</sup>In consequence, you were all granted a profound and rich peace and an insatiable longing to do good, while the Holy Spirit was abundantly poured out on you all. <sup>3</sup>You were full of holy counsels, and, with zeal for the good and devout confidence, you stretched out your hands to almighty God, beseeching him to have mercy should you involuntarily have fallen into any sin. <sup>4</sup>Day and night you labored for the whole brotherhood, that by your pity and sympathy the sum of his elect might be saved. <sup>5</sup>You were sincere and guileless and bore no grudges. <sup>6</sup>All sedition and schism were an abomination to you. You wept for the faults of your neighbors, while you reckoned their shortcomings as your own. <sup>7</sup>You never regretted all the good

you did, being “ready for any good deed.” Possessed of an excellent and devout character, you did everything in His fear. The commands and decrees of the Lord were engraven on the tablets of your heart.

**3** You were granted great popularity and growing numbers, so that the word of Scripture was fulfilled: “My beloved ate and drank and filled out and grew fat and started to kick.” <sup>2</sup>From this there arose rivalry and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and anarchy, war and captivity. <sup>3</sup>And so “the dishonored” rose up “against those who were held in honor,” those of no reputation against the notable, the stupid against the wise, “the young against their elders.” <sup>4</sup>For this reason righteousness and peace are far from you, since each has abandoned the fear of God and grown purblind in his faith, and ceased to walk by the rules of his precepts or to behave in a way worthy of Christ. Rather does each follow the lusts of his evil heart, by reviving that wicked and unholy rivalry, by which, indeed, “death came into the world.”

**4** For Scripture runs thus: “And it happened after some days that Cain brought God a sacrifice from the fruits of the earth, while Abel made his offering from the first-born of the sheep and of their fat. <sup>2</sup>And God looked with favor on Abel and on his gifts; but he did not heed Cain and his sacrifices. <sup>3</sup>And Cain was greatly upset and his face fell. <sup>4</sup>And God said to Cain, ‘Why are you so upset, and why has your face fallen? If you have made a correct offering but not divided it correctly, have you not sinned? <sup>5</sup>Keep quiet. Your brother will turn to you and you shall rule over him.’

<sup>6</sup>And Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let us go into the field.' And it happened that while they were in the field Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him."

<sup>7</sup>You see, brothers, rivalry and envy are responsible for fratricide. <sup>8</sup>Because of rivalry our forefather Jacob fled from the presence of his brother Esau. <sup>9</sup>It was rivalry that caused Joseph to be murderously persecuted and reduced to slavery. <sup>10</sup>Rivalry forced Moses to flee from the presence of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, when he heard his fellow clansman say: "Who made you a ruler or judge over us? Do you want to slay me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" <sup>11</sup>By reason of rivalry Aaron and Miriam were excluded from the camp. <sup>12</sup>Rivalry cast Dathan and Abiram alive into Hades because they revolted against Moses, God's servant. <sup>13</sup>Because of rivalry David not only incurred the envy of foreigners but was even persecuted by Saul, the king of Israel.

**5** But, passing from examples in antiquity, let us come to the heroes nearest our own times. Let us take the noble examples of our own generation. <sup>2</sup>By reason of rivalry and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church] were persecuted, and battled to the death. <sup>3</sup>Let us set before our eyes the noble apostles: <sup>4</sup>Peter, who by reason of wicked jealousy, not only once or twice but frequently endured suffering and thus, bearing his witness, went to the glorious place which he merited. <sup>5</sup>By reason of rivalry and contention Paul showed how to win the prize for patient endurance. <sup>6</sup>Seven times he was in chains; he was exiled, stoned, became a herald [of the gospel] in East and West, and won

the noble renown which his faith merited. <sup>7</sup>To the whole world he taught righteousness, and reaching the limits of the West he bore his witness before rulers. And so, released from this world, he was taken up into the holy place and became the greatest example of patient endurance.

**6** To these men who lived such holy lives there was joined a great multitude of the elect who by reason of rivalry were the victims of many outrages and tortures and who became outstanding examples among us. <sup>2</sup>By reason of rivalry women were persecuted in the roles of Danaids and Dircae. Victims of dreadful and blasphemous outrages, they ran with sureness the course of faith to the finish, and despite their physical weakness won a notable prize. <sup>3</sup>It was rivalry that estranged wives from their husbands and annulled the saying of our father Adam, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." <sup>4</sup>Rivalry and contention have overthrown great cities and uprooted mighty nations.

**7** We are writing in this vein, dear friends, not only to admonish you but also to remind ourselves. For we are in the same arena and involved in the same struggle. <sup>2</sup>Hence we should give up empty and futile concerns, and turn to the glorious and holy rule of our tradition. <sup>3</sup>Let us note what is good, what is pleasing and acceptable to Him who made us. <sup>4</sup>Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and let us realize how precious it is to his Father, since it was poured out for our salvation and brought the grace of repentance to the whole world. <sup>5</sup>Let us go through all the generations and observe that from one generation to another the

Master “has afforded and opportunity of repentance” to those who are willing to turn to him. <sup>6</sup>Noah preached repentance and those who heeded him were saved. <sup>7</sup>Jonah preached destruction to the Ninevites; and when they had repented of their sins, they propitiated God with their prayers and gained salvation despite the fact they were not God’s people.

8 The ministers of God’s grace spoke about repentance through the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup>and the Master of the universe himself spoke of repentance with an oath: “For as I live, says the Lord, I do not desire the death of the sinner, but his repentance.” <sup>3</sup>He added, too, this generous consideration: “Repent, O house of Israel, of your iniquity. Say to the sons of my people, Should your sins reach from earth to heaven, and be redder than scarlet and blacker than sackcloth, and should you turn to me with your whole heart and say ‘Father!’ I will heed you as though you were a holy people.” <sup>4</sup>And in another place this is what he says: “Wash and become clean: rid your souls of wickedness before my eyes. Cease from your wickedness, learn to behave well, devote yourselves to justice, rescue the wronged, uphold the rights of the orphan and grant the widow justice. And come, let us reason together, says the Lord; and if your sins are like purple, I will make them white as snow, and if they are like scarlet, I will make them white as wool. And if you are willing and heed me, you shall eat the good things of the earth. But if you are unwilling and do not heed me, the sword shall devour you. For it is the mouth of the Lord that has spoken thus. <sup>5</sup>Since, there, he wanted all

those he loved to have an opportunity to repent, he confirmed this by his almighty will.

**9** So, then, let us fall in with his magnificent and glorious intention, and let us prostrate ourselves before him as suppliants of his mercy and kindness. Let us turn to his compassion and give up useless ventures and strife, and rivalry that leads to death. <sup>2</sup>Let us father our eyes on those who have served his magnificent glory to perfection. <sup>3</sup>Let us take Enoch, for instance, who, because he proved upright by his obedience, was translated and never died. <sup>4</sup>Noah proved faithful in his ministry and preached a new birth to the world. Through him, therefore, the Master saved those living creatures that entered peacefully into the ark.

**10** Abraham, who was called "The Friend," proved faithful in obeying God's words. <sup>2</sup>It was obedience which led him to quit his country, his kindred, and his father's house, so that by leaving a paltry country, a mean kindred, and an insignificant house, he might inherit God's promises. <sup>3</sup>For he told him: "Depart from your country and from your kindred and from the house of your father, and go to a land which I will show you. And I will make you great among the nations and I will bless you and I will make your name great and you will be blessed. And I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you, and all the tribes of the earth will be blessed through you." <sup>4</sup>And again, when he separated from Lot, God told him: "Lift up your eyes and from where you now are look to the North, the South, the East, and the West, for all the land that you see I will give you and your

seed forever. <sup>5</sup>And I will make your seed like the dust of the earth. If anybody can count the dust of the earth, then your seed will be counted." <sup>6</sup>And again he says: "God led Abraham out and told him: Look up to heaven and count the stars, if you can. That is how numerous your seed will be! And Abraham believed God and this was put down to his credit as an upright deed." <sup>7</sup>Because of his faith and hospitality a son was granted to him in his old age, and he obediently offered him as a sacrifice to God on one of the hills which he indicated.

**11** Because of his hospitality and religious devotion, Lot was saved from Sodom, when the whole countryside was condemned to fire and brimstone. In that way the Master made it clear that he does not forsake those who put their hope on him, but delivers to punishment and torment those who turn away from him. <sup>2</sup>Of this latter, to be sure, his wife became an example. After quitting the city with him, she changed her mind and fell out with him, with the result that she became a pillar of salt that exists to this day. In this way it was made evident to all that the double-minded and those who question God's power are condemned and become a warning to all generations.

**12** Because of her faith and hospitality Rahab the harlot was saved. <sup>2</sup>For when the spies were sent to Jericho by Joshua the son of Nun, the king of the land got to know that they had come to spy on his country. Consequently he sent out men to capture them, intending to arrest them and put them to death. <sup>3</sup>The hospitable Rahab, however, took them in and hid them in a room

upstairs under stalks of flax. <sup>4</sup>When the king's men learned of it, they said to her: "The men who are spying on our country went into your house. Bring them out, for this is the king's command." But she at once answered, "The men you seek came into my house, but they immediately departed and are on their way," and she pointed in the opposite direction. <sup>5</sup>And she said to the men: "I am absolutely certain that the Lord God is handing this country over to you; for fear and terror of you have fallen on all its people. When, therefore, you come to take it, rescue me and my father's house." <sup>6</sup>And they said to her: "It shall be exactly as you say. When you learn of our approach, you shall gather together all your family under your roof and they shall be saved. But whoever is found outside the house will perish." <sup>7</sup>And in addition they gave her a sign that she should hang a piece of scarlet from her house. By this they made it clear that it was by the blood of the Lord that redemption was going to come to all who believe in God and hope on him. <sup>8</sup>You see, dear friends, that not only faith but prophecy as well is exemplified in this woman.

**13** Let us then, brothers, be humble and be rid of all pretensions and arrogance and silliness and anger. Let us act as Scripture bids us, for the Holy Spirit says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man of his might or the rich man of his wealth. But let him that boasts boast of the Lord; and so he will seek Him out and act justly and uprightly." Especially let us recall the words of the Lord Jesus, which he uttered to teach considerateness and patience. <sup>2</sup>For this is what he said: "Show mercy,

that you may be shown mercy. Forgive, that you may be forgiven. As you behave to others, so they will behave to you. As you give, so will you get. As you judge, so you will be judged. As you show kindness, so will you receive kindness. The measure you give will be the measure you get.”<sup>3</sup> Let us firmly hold on to this commandment and these injunctions so that in our conduct we may obey his holy words and be humble. <sup>4</sup>For Holy Scripture says, “On whom shall I look except on him who is humble and gentle and who trembles at my words?”

**14** It is right, then, and holy, brothers, that we should obey God rather than follow those arrogant and disorderly fellows who take the lead in stirring up loathsome rivalry. <sup>2</sup>For we shall incur no ordinary harm, but rather great danger, if we recklessly give ourselves over to the designs of men who launch out into strife and sedition to alienate us from what is right. <sup>3</sup>Let us be kind to one another in line with the compassion and tenderness of him who created us. <sup>4</sup>For it is written: “The kind shall inhabit the land, and the innocent shall be left upon it. But those who transgress shall be destroyed from off it.” <sup>5</sup>And again he says: “I saw an ungodly man exalted and elevated like the cedars of Lebanon. But I passed by and, look, he had vanished! And I searched for his place and could not find it. Maintain innocence and have an eye for uprightness, for a man of peace will have descendants.”

**15** Let us, then, attach ourselves to those who are religiously devoted to peace, and not to those who wish for it hypocritically. <sup>2</sup>For somewhere it is said, “This people honors me with its

lips, but its heart is far removed from me.”<sup>3</sup>And again, “They blessed with their mouth, but they cursed with their heart.”<sup>4</sup>And again it says: “They loved him with their mouth, but they lied to him with their tongue. Their heart was not straightforward with him, and they were not faithful to his covenant.<sup>5</sup>Therefore let the deceitful lips that speak evil against the righteous be struck dumb.” And again: “May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips and the tongue that boasts unduly and those who say, ‘We will boast of our tongues; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?’<sup>6</sup>Because of the wretchedness of the poor and the groans of the needy I will now arise, says the Lord. I will place him in safety: I will act boldly in his cause.”

**16** It is to the humble that Christ belongs, not to those who exalt themselves above his flock.<sup>2</sup>The scepter of God’s majesty, the Lord Jesus Christ, did not come with the pomp of pride or arrogance, though he could have done so. But he came in humility just as the Holy Spirit said of him.<sup>3</sup>For Scripture reads: “Lord, who has believed what we heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Before him we announced that he was like a child, like a root in thirsty ground. He has no comeliness or glory. We saw him, and he had neither comeliness nor beauty. But his appearance was ignominious, deficient when compared to man’s stature. He was a man marred by stripes and toil, and experienced in enduring weakness. Because his face was turned away, he was dishonored and disregarded.<sup>4</sup>He it is who bears our sins and suffers pain for us. And we regarded him as subject to toil and

stripes and affliction. <sup>5</sup>But it was for our sins that he was wounded and for our transgressions that he suffered. To bring us peace he was punished: by his stripes we were healed. <sup>6</sup>Like sheep we have all gone astray: each one went astray in his own way. <sup>7</sup>And the Lord delivered him up for our sins; and he does not open his mouth because he is abused. Like a sheep he is led off to be slaughtered; and just as a lamb before its shearers is dumb, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation his condemnation ended. <sup>8</sup>Who shall tell about his posterity? For his life was taken away from the earth. <sup>9</sup>Because of the transgressions of my people he came to his death. <sup>10</sup>And I will give the wicked as an offering for his burial and the rich for his death. For he did no iniquity and no deceit was found in his mouth. And the Lord's will is to cleanse him of his stripes. <sup>11</sup>If you make an offering for sin, your soul will see a long-lived posterity. <sup>12</sup>And the Lord's will is to do away with the toil of his soul, to show him light and to form him with understanding, to justify an upright man who serves many well. And he himself will bear their sins. <sup>13</sup>For this reason he shall have many heirs and he shall share the spoils of the strong, because his life was delivered up to death and he was reckoned among transgressors. <sup>14</sup>And he it was who bore the sins of many and was delivered up because of their sins.

<sup>15</sup>And again he himself says: "I am a worm and not a man, a disgrace to mankind and despised by the people. <sup>16</sup>All those who saw me mocked me, they made mouths at me and shook their heads, saying: 'He hoped on the Lord. Let him rescue him, let him

save him, since he is pleased with him!<sup>17</sup> “You see, dear friends, the kind of example we have been given. And so, if the Lord humbled himself in this way, what should we do who through him have come under the yoke of his grace?

**17** Let us be imitators even of those who wandered around “in the skins of goats and sheep,” and preached the coming of the Christ. We refer to the prophets Elijah and Elisha—yes, and Ezekiel, too—and to the heroes of old as well. <sup>2</sup>Abraham was widely renowned and called the Friend of God. When he gazed on God’s glory, he declared in his humility, “I am only dust and ashes.” <sup>3</sup>This is what is written about Job: “Job was an upright and innocent man, sincere, devout, and one who avoided all evil. <sup>4</sup>But he was his own accuser when he said, “There is none who is free from stain, not even if his life lasts but a single day.” <sup>5</sup>Moses was called “faithful in all God’s house” and God used him to bring His judgment on Egypt with scourges and torments. Yet even he, despite the great glory he was given, did not boast; but when he was granted an oracle from the bush, said: “Who am I that you send me? I have a feeble voice and a slow tongue.” <sup>6</sup>And again he says, “I am but steam from a pot.”

**18** And what shall we say of the famous David? God said of him, “I have discovered a man after my own heart, David the son of Jesse: I have anointed him with eternal mercy. <sup>2</sup>But he too says to God: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your great mercy; and according to the wealth of your compassion wipe out my transgression. <sup>3</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and

cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned; and I have done evil in your sight. The result is that you are right when you speak and are acquitted when you are judged. <sup>5</sup>For, see, I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother bear me. <sup>6</sup>For, see, you have loved the truth: you have revealed to me the mysteries and secrets of your wisdom. <sup>7</sup>You shall sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed. You shall wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. <sup>8</sup>You will make me hear joy and gladness: the bones which have been humbled shall rejoice. <sup>9</sup>Turn your face from my sins and wipe away all my iniquities. <sup>10</sup>Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a right spirit in my very core. <sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit away from me. <sup>12</sup>Give me back the gladness of your salvation, and strengthen me with your guiding spirit. <sup>13</sup>I will teach your ways to the wicked, and the godless shall turn back to you. <sup>14</sup>Save me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation. <sup>15</sup>My tongue will rejoice in your righteousness. You will open my mouth, O Lord, and my lips will proclaim your praise. <sup>16</sup>For if you had wanted sacrifice, I would have given it. You will not find pleasure in burnt offerings. <sup>17</sup>The sacrifice for God is a broken spirit: a broken and a humbled heart, O God, you will not despise."

**19** The humility and obedient submissiveness of so many and so famous heroes have improved not only us but our fathers before us, and all who have received His oracles in fear and sin-

cerity. <sup>2</sup>Since, then, we have benefited by many great and glorious deeds, let us run on to the goal of peace, which was handed down to us from the beginning. Let us fix our eyes on the Father and Creator of the universe and cling to his magnificent and excellent gifts of peace and kindness to us. <sup>3</sup>Let us see him in our minds and look with the eyes of our souls on his patient purpose. Let us consider how free he is from anger toward his whole creation.

**20** The heavens move at his direction and peacefully obey him. <sup>2</sup>Day and night observe the course he has appointed them, without getting in each other's way. <sup>3</sup>The sun and the moon and the choirs of stars roll on harmoniously in their appointed courses at his command, and with never a deviation. <sup>4</sup>By his will and without dissension or altering anything he has decreed the earth becomes fruitful at the proper seasons and brings forth abundant food for men and beasts and every living thing upon it. <sup>5</sup>The unsearchable, abysmal depths and the indescribable regions of the underworld are subject to the same decrees. <sup>6</sup>The basin of the boundless sea is by his arrangement constructed to hold the heaped up waters, so that the sea does not flow beyond the barriers surrounding it, but does just as he bids it. <sup>7</sup>For he said, "Thus far you shall come, and your waves shall break within you." <sup>8</sup>The ocean which men cannot pass, and the worlds beyond it, are governed by the same decrees of the Master. <sup>9</sup>The seasons, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, peacefully give way to each other. <sup>10</sup>The winds from their different points perform their service at the proper time and without hindrance. Perennial springs, created

for enjoyment and health, never fail to offer their life-giving breasts to men. The tiniest creatures come together in harmony and peace. <sup>11</sup>All these things the great Creator and Master of the universe ordained to exist in peace and harmony. Thus, he showered his benefits on them all, but most abundantly on us who have taken refuge in his compassion through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>12</sup>to whom be glory and majesty forever and ever Amen.

**21** Take care, dear friends, that his many blessings do not turn out to be our condemnation, which will be the case if we fail to live worthily of him, to act in concert, and to do what is good and pleasing to him. <sup>2</sup>For he says somewhere, "The Spirit of the Lord is a lamp which searches the hidden depths of the heart." <sup>3</sup>Let us realize how near he is, and that none of our thoughts or of the ideas we have escapes his notice. <sup>4</sup>It is right, therefore, that we should not be deserters disobeying his will. <sup>5</sup>Rather than offend God, let us offend foolish and stupid men who exalt themselves and boast with their pretensions to fine speech. <sup>6</sup>Let us reverence the Lord Jesus Christ whose blood was given for us. Let us respect those who rule over us. Let us honor our elders. Let us rear the young in the fear of God. Let us direct our women to what is good. <sup>7</sup>Let them show a purity of character we can admire. Let them reveal a genuine sense of modesty. By their reticence let them show that their tongues are considerate. Let them not play favorites in showing affection, but in holiness let them love all equally, who fear God. <sup>8</sup>Let our children have a Christian training. Let them learn the value God sets on humili-

ty, what power pure love has with him, how good and excellent it is to fear him, and how this means salvation to everybody who lives in his fear with holiness and a pure conscience. <sup>9</sup>For he is the searcher of thoughts and of desires. It is his breath which is in us; and when he wants to, he will take it away.

**22** Now Christian faith confirms all this. For this is how Christ addresses us through his Holy Spirit: “Come, my children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. <sup>2</sup>What man is there that desires life, and loves to see good days? <sup>3</sup>Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from uttering deceit. <sup>4</sup>Refrain from evil and do good. <sup>5</sup>Seek peace and follow after it. <sup>6</sup>The eyes of the Lord are over the upright and his ears are open to their petitions. But the face of the Lord is turned against those who do evil, to eradicate their memory from the earth. <sup>7</sup>The upright man cried out and the Lord heeded him and delivered him out of all his troubles. <sup>8</sup>Manifold are the plagues of the sinner, but his mercy will enfold those who hope on the Lord.

**23** The all-merciful and beneficent Father has compassion on those who fear him, and with kindness and love he grants his favors to those who approach him with a sincere heart. <sup>2</sup>For this reason we must not be double-minded, and our souls must not harbor wrong notions about his excellent and glorious gifts. <sup>3</sup>Let that verse of Scripture be remote from us, which says: “Wretched are the double-minded, those who doubt in their soul and say, ‘We have heard these things even in our fathers’ times, and, see, we have grown old and none of them has happened to us.’ <sup>4</sup>You

fools! Compare yourselves to a tree. Take a vine: first it sheds its leaves, then comes a bud, then a leaf, then a flower, and after this a sour grape, and finally a ripe bunch." You note that the fruit of the tree reaches its maturity in a short time. <sup>5</sup>So, to be sure, swiftly and suddenly his purpose will be accomplished, just as Scripture, too, testifies: "Quickly he will come and not delay, and the Lord will come suddenly into his temple, even the Holy One whom you expect.

**24** Let us consider, dear friends, how the Master continually points out to us that there will be a future resurrection. Of this he made the Lord Jesus Christ the first fruits by raising him from the dead. <sup>2</sup>Let us take note, dear friends, of the resurrection at the natural seasons. <sup>3</sup>Day and night demonstrate resurrection. Night passes and day comes. Day departs and night returns. <sup>4</sup>Take the crops as examples. How and in what way is the seeding done? <sup>5</sup>The sower goes out and casts each of his seeds in the ground. When they fall on the ground they are dry and bare, and they decay. But then the marvelous providence of the Master resurrects them from their decay, and from a single seed many grow and bear fruit.

**25** Let us note the remarkable token which comes from the East, from the neighborhood, that is, of Arabia. <sup>2</sup>There is a bird which is called a phoenix. It is the only one of its kind and lives five hundred years. When the time for its departure and death draws near, it makes a burial nest for itself from frankincense, myrrh, and other spices; and when the time is up, it gets into it

and dies. <sup>3</sup>From its decaying flesh a worm is produced, which is nourished by the secretions of the dead creature and grows wings. When it is full-fledged, it takes up the burial nest containing the bones of its predecessor, and manages to carry them all the way from Arabia to the Egyptian city called Heliopolis. <sup>4</sup> And in broad daylight, so that everyone can see, it lights at the altar of the sun and puts them down there, and so starts home again. <sup>5</sup>The priests then look up their dated records and discover it has come after a lapse of five hundred years.

**26** Shall we, then, imagine that it is something great and surprising if the Creator of the universe raises up those who have served him in holiness and in the assurance born of a good faith, when he uses a mere bird to illustrate the greatness of his promise? <sup>2</sup>For he says somewhere: "And you shall raise me up and I shall give you thanks" and, "I lay down and slept: I rose up because you are with me." <sup>3</sup>And again Job says, "And you will make this flesh of mine, which has endured all this, to rise up."

**27** With this hope, then, let us attach ourselves to him who is faithful to his promises and just in his judgments. <sup>2</sup>He who bids us to refrain from lying is all the less likely to lie himself. For nothing is impossible to God save lying. <sup>3</sup>Let us, then, rekindle our faith in him, and bear in mind that nothing is beyond his reach. <sup>4</sup>By his majestic word he established the universe, and by his word he can bring it to an end. <sup>5</sup>"Who shall say to him, What have you done? Or who shall resist his mighty strength?" He will do everything when he wants to and as he wants to. And not one

of the things he has decreed will fail. <sup>6</sup>Everything is open to his sight and nothing escapes his will. <sup>7</sup>For “the heavens declare God’s glory and the sky proclaims the work of his hands. Day pours forth words to day; and night imparts knowledge to night. And there are neither words nor speech, and their voices are not heard.”

**28** Since, then, he sees and hears everything, we should fear him and rid ourselves of wicked desires that issue in base deeds. By so doing we shall be sheltered by his mercy from the judgments to come. <sup>2</sup>For where can any of us flee to escape his mighty hand? What world is there to receive anyone who deserts him? <sup>3</sup>For Scripture says somewhere: “Where shall I go and where shall I hide from your presence? If I go up to heaven, you are there. If I go off to the ends of the earth, there is your right hand. If I make my bed in the depths, there is your spirit.” <sup>4</sup>Where, then, can anyone go or where can he flee to escape from him who embraces everything?

**29** We must, then, approach him with our souls holy, lifting up pure and undefiled hands to him, loving our kind and compassionate Father, who has made us his chosen portion. <sup>2</sup>For thus it is written: “When the Most High divided the nations, when he dispersed the sons of Adam, he fixed the boundaries of the nations to suit the number of God’s angels. The Lord’s portion became his people, Jacob: Israel was the lot that fell to him.” <sup>3</sup>And in another place it says: “Behold, the Lord takes for himself a people from among the nations, just as a man takes the first

fruits of his threshing floor; and the Holy of Holies shall come forth from that nation."

**30** Since, then, we are a holy portion, we should do everything that makes for holiness. We should flee from slandering, vile and impure embraces, drunkenness, rioting, filthy lusts, detestable adultery, and disgusting arrogance. <sup>2</sup>"For God," says Scripture, "resists the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble." <sup>3</sup>We should attach ourselves to those to whom God's grace has been given. We should clothe ourselves with concord, being humble, self-controlled, far removed from all gossiping and slandering, and justified by our deeds, not by words. <sup>4</sup>For it says: "He who talks a lot will hear much in reply. Or does the prattler imagine he is right? <sup>5</sup>Blessed is the one his mother bore to be short-lived. Do not indulge in talking overmuch." <sup>6</sup>We should leave God to praise us and not praise ourselves. For God detests self-praisers. <sup>7</sup>Let others applaud our good deeds, as it was with our righteous forefathers. <sup>8</sup>Presumption, audacity, and recklessness are traits of those accursed by God. But considerateness, humility, and modesty are the traits of those whom God has blessed.

**31** Let us, then, cling to his blessing and note what leads to it. <sup>2</sup>Let us unfold the tale of the ancient past. Why was our father Abraham blessed? Was it not because he acted in righteousness and truth, prompted by faith? <sup>3</sup>Isaac, fully realizing what was going to happen, gladly let himself be led to sacrifice. <sup>4</sup>In humility Jacob quit his homeland because of his brother. He went to

Laban and became his slave, and to him there were given the twelve scepters of the tribes of Israel.

**32** And if anyone will candidly look into each example, he will realize the magnificence of the gifts God gives. <sup>2</sup>For from Jacob there came all the priests and the Levites who serve at God's altar. From him comes the Lord Jesus so far as his human nature goes. From him there come the kings and rulers and governors of Judah. Nor is the glory of the other tribes derived from him insignificant. For God promised that "your seed shall be as the stars of heaven." <sup>3</sup>So all of them received honor and greatness, not through themselves or their own deeds or the right things they did, but through his will. <sup>4</sup>And we, therefore, who by his will have been called in Jesus Christ, are not justified of ourselves or by our wisdom or insight or religious devotion or the holy deeds we have done from the heart, but by that faith by which almighty God has justified all men from the very beginning. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**33** What, then, brothers, ought we to do? Should we grow slack in doing good and give up love? May the Lord never permit this to happen at any rate to us! Rather should we be energetic in doing "every good deed" with earnestness and eagerness. <sup>2</sup>For the Creator and Master of the universe himself rejoices in his works. <sup>3</sup>Thus by his almighty power he established the heavens and by his inscrutable wisdom he arranged them. He separated the land from the water surrounding it and fixed it upon the sure foundation of his own will. By his decree he brought into existence the

living creatures which roam on it; and after creating the sea and the creatures which inhabit it, he fixed its boundaries by his power. <sup>4</sup>Above all, with his holy and pure hands he fashioned man, his outstanding and greatest achievement, stamped with his own image. <sup>5</sup>For this is what God said: "Let us make man in our own image and likeness. And God made man: male and female he created." <sup>6</sup>And so, when he had finished all this, he praised it and blessed it and said, "Increase and multiply." <sup>7</sup>We should observe that all the righteous have been adorned with good deeds and the very Lord adorns himself with good deeds and rejoices. <sup>8</sup>Since, then, we have this example, we should unhesitatingly give ourselves to his will, and put all our effort into acting uprightly.

**34** The good laborer accepts the bread he has earned with his head held high; the lazy and negligent workman cannot look his employer in the face. <sup>2</sup>We must, then, be eager to do good; for everything comes from Him. <sup>3</sup>For he warns us: "See, the Lord is coming. He is bringing his reward with him, to pay each one according to his work." <sup>4</sup>He bids us, therefore, to believe on him with all our heart, and not to be slack or negligent in "every good deed." <sup>5</sup>He should be the basis of our boasting and assurance. We should be subject to his will. We should note how the whole throng of his angels stand ready to serve his will. <sup>6</sup>For Scripture says: "Ten thousand times ten thousand stood by him, and thousands of thousands ministered to him and cried out: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts: all creation is full of his glory." <sup>7</sup>We too, then, should gather together for worship in concord and mutual

trust, and earnestly beseech him as it were with one mouth, that we may share in his great and glorious promises. <sup>8</sup>For he says, "Eye has not seen and ear has not heard and man's heart has not conceived what he has prepared for those who patiently wait for him."

**35** How blessed and amazing are God's gifts, dear friends! <sup>2</sup>Life with immortality, splendor with righteousness, truth with confidence, faith with assurance, self-control with holiness! And all these things are within our comprehension. <sup>3</sup>What, then, is being prepared for those who wait for him? The Creator and Father of eternity, the all-holy, himself knows how great and wonderful it is. <sup>4</sup>We, then, should make every effort to be found in the number of those who are patiently looking for him, so that we may share in the gifts he has promised. <sup>5</sup>And how shall this be, dear friends? If our mind is faithfully fixed on God; if we seek out what pleases and delights him; if we do what is in accord with his pure will, and follow in the way of truth. If we rid ourselves of all wickedness, evil, avarice, contentiousness, malice, fraud, gossip, slander, hatred of God, arrogance, pretension, conceit, and inhospitality. <sup>6</sup>God hates those who act in this way; "and not only those who do these things but those who applaud them." <sup>7</sup>For Scripture says: "But God told the sinner: Why do you speak of my statutes and have my covenant on your lips? <sup>8</sup>You hated discipline and turned your back on my words. If you saw a thief you went along with him, and you threw in your lot with adulterers. Your mouth overflowed with iniquity, and your

tongue wove deceit. You sat there slandering your brother and putting a stumbling block in the way of your mother's son. <sup>9</sup>This you did, and I kept silent. You suspected, you wicked man, that I would be like you. <sup>10</sup>I will reproach you and show you your very self. <sup>11</sup>Ponder, then, these things, you who forget God, lest he seize you like a lion and there be no one to save you. <sup>12</sup>A sacrifice of praise will glorify me, and that is the way by which I will show him God's salvation."

**36** This is the way, dear friends, in which we found our salvation, Jesus Christ, the high priest of our offerings, the protector and helper of our weakness. <sup>2</sup>Through him we fix our gaze on the heights of heaven. In him we see mirrored God's pure and transcendent face. Through him the eyes of our hearts have been opened. Through him our foolish and darkened understanding springs up to the light. Through him the Master has willed that we should taste immortal knowledge. For, "since he reflects God's splendor, he is as superior to the angels as his title is more distinguished than theirs." <sup>3</sup>For thus it is written: "He who makes his angels winds, and his ministers flames of fire."<sup>4</sup>But of his son this is what the Master said: "You are my son: today I have begotten you. Ask me and I will give you the nations for you to inherit, and the ends of the earth for you to keep. <sup>5</sup>And again he says to him: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." <sup>6</sup>Who are meant by "enemies"? Those who are wicked and resist his will.

**37** Really in earnest, then, brothers, we must march under

his irreproachable orders. <sup>2</sup>Let us note with what discipline, readiness, and obedience those who serve under our generals carry out orders. <sup>3</sup>Not everybody is a general, colonel, captain, sergeant, and so on. But “each in his own rank” carries out the orders of the emperor and of the generals. <sup>4</sup>The great cannot exist without the small; neither can the small exist without the great. All are linked together; and this has an advantage. <sup>5</sup>Take our body, for instance. The head cannot get along without the feet. Nor, similarly, can the feet get along without the head. “The tiniest parts of our body are essential to it,” and are valuable to the total body. Yes, they all act in concord, and are united in a single obedience to preserve the whole body.

**38** Following this out, we must preserve our Christian body too in its entirety. Each must be subject to his neighbor, according to his special gifts. <sup>2</sup>The strong must take care of the weak; the weak must look up to the strong. The rich must provide for the poor; the poor must thank God for giving him someone to meet his needs. The wise man must show his wisdom not in words but in good deeds. The humble must not brag about his humility; but should give others occasion to mention it. He who is continent must not put on airs. He must recognize that his self-control is a gift from another. <sup>3</sup>We must take to heart, brothers, from what stuff we were created, what kind of creatures we were when we entered the world, from what a dark grave he who fashioned and created us brought us into his world. And we must realize the preparations he so generously made before we were

born. <sup>4</sup>Since, then, we owe all this to him, we ought to give him unbounded thanks. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**39** Thoughtless, silly, senseless, and ignorant folk mock and jeer at us, in an effort, so they imagine, to exalt themselves. <sup>2</sup>But what can a mere mortal do? What power has a creature of earth? <sup>3</sup>For it is written: "There was no shape before my eyes, but I heard a breath and a voice. <sup>4</sup>What! Can a mortal be pure before the Lord? Or can a man be blameless for his actions, if he does not believe in His servants and finds something wrong with His angels? <sup>5</sup>Not even heaven is pure in His sight: let alone those who live in houses of clay—of the very same clay of which we ourselves are made. He smites them like a moth; and they do not last from dawn to dusk. They perish, for they cannot help themselves. <sup>6</sup>He breathes on them, and they die for lack of wisdom. <sup>7</sup>Call out and see if anyone will heed you, or if you will see any of the holy angels. For wrath destroys a stupid man, and rivalry is the death of one in error. <sup>8</sup>I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly their home is swept away. <sup>9</sup>May their sons be far from safety! May they be mocked at the doors of lesser men, and there will be none to deliver them. For what has been prepared by them, the righteous will eat; and they shall not be delivered from troubles.

**40** Now that this is clear to us and we have peered into the depths of the divine knowledge, we are bound to do in an orderly fashion all that the Master has bidden us to do at the proper times he set. <sup>2</sup>He ordered sacrifices and services to be performed; and

required this to be done, not in a careless and disorderly way, but at the times and seasons he fixed. <sup>3</sup>Where he wants them performed, and by whom, he himself fixed by his supreme will, so that everything should be done in a holy way and with his approval, and should be acceptable to his will. <sup>4</sup>Those, therefore, who make their offerings at the time set, win his approval and blessing. For they follow the Master's orders and do no wrong. <sup>5</sup>The high priest is given his particular duties: the priests are assigned their special place, while on the Levites particular tasks are imposed. The layman is bound by the layman's code.

**41** "Each of us," brothers, "in his own rank" must win God's approval and have a clear conscience. We must not transgress the rules laid down for our ministry, but must perform it reverently. <sup>2</sup>Not everywhere, brothers, are the different sacrifices—the daily ones, the freewill offerings, and those for sins and trespasses—offered, but only in Jerusalem. And even there sacrifices are not made at any point, but only in front of the sanctuary, at the altar, after the high priest and the ministers mentioned have inspected the offering for blemishes. <sup>3</sup>Those, therefore, who act in any way at variance with his will, suffer the penalty of death. <sup>4</sup>You see, brothers, the more knowledge we are given, the greater risks we run.

**42** The apostles received the gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus, the Christ, was sent from God. <sup>2</sup>Thus Christ is from God and the apostles from Christ. In both instances the orderly procedure depends on God's will. <sup>3</sup>And so the apostles,

after receiving their orders and being fully convinced by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and assured by God's word, went out in the confidence of the Holy Spirit to preach the good news that God's Kingdom was about to come. <sup>4</sup>They preached in country and city, and appointed their first converts, after testing them by the Spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of future believers. <sup>5</sup>Nor was this any novelty, for Scripture had mentioned bishops and deacons long before. For this is what Scripture says somewhere: "I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith."

**43** And is it any wonder that those Christians whom God had entrusted with such a duty should have appointed the officers mentioned? For the blessed Moses too, "who was a faithful servant in all God's house," recorded in the sacred books all the orders given to him, and the rest of the prophets followed in his train by testifying with him to his legislation. <sup>2</sup>Now, when rivalry for the priesthood arose and the tribes started quarreling as to which of them should be honored with this glorious privilege, Moses bid the twelve tribal chiefs bring him rods, on each of which was written the name of one of the tribes. These he took and bound, sealing them with the rings of the tribal leaders; and he put them in the tent of testimony on God's table. <sup>3</sup>Then he shut the tent and put seals on the keys just as he had on the rods. <sup>4</sup>And he told them: "Brothers, the tribe whose rod puts forth buds is the one God has chosen for the priesthood and for his ministry." <sup>5</sup>Early the next morning he called all Israel together, six

hundred thousand strong, and showed the seals to the tribal chiefs and opened the tent of testimony and brought out the rods. And it was discovered that Aaron's rod had not only budded, but was actually bearing fruit. <sup>6</sup>What do you think, dear friends? Did not Moses know in advance that this was going to happen? Why certainly. But he acted the way he did in order to forestall anarchy in Israel, and so that the name of the true and only God might be glorified. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**44** Now our apostles, thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, knew that there was going to be strife over the title of bishop. <sup>2</sup>It was for this reason and because they had been given an accurate knowledge of the future, that they appointed the officers we have mentioned. Furthermore, they later added a codicil to the effect that, should these die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. <sup>3</sup>In the light of this, we view it as a breach of justice to remove from their ministry those who were appointed either by them [i.e., the apostles] or later on and with the whole church's consent, by others of the proper standing, and who, long enjoying everybody's approval, have ministered to Christ's flock faultlessly, humbly, quietly, and unassumingly. <sup>4</sup>For we shall be guilty of no slight sin if we eject from the episcopate men who have offered the sacrifices with innocence and holiness. <sup>5</sup>Happy, indeed, are those presbyters who have already passed on, and who ended a life of fruitfulness with their task complete. For they need not fear that anyone will remove them from their secure positions. <sup>6</sup>But you, we observe, have removed a number of people,

despite their good conduct, from a ministry they have fulfilled with honor and integrity.

**45** Your contention and rivalry, brothers, thus touches matters that bear on our salvation. <sup>2</sup>You have studied Holy Scripture, which contains the truth and is inspired by the Holy Spirit. <sup>3</sup>You realize that there is nothing wrong or misleading written in it. You will not find that upright people have ever been disowned by holy men. <sup>4</sup>The righteous, to be sure, have been persecuted, but by wicked men. They have been imprisoned, but by the godless. They have been stoned by transgressors, slain by men prompted by abominable and wicked rivalry. <sup>5</sup>Yet in such sufferings they bore up nobly. <sup>6</sup>What shall we say, brothers? Was Daniel cast into a den of lions by those who revered God? <sup>7</sup>Or was Ananias, Azarias, or Mishael shut up in the fiery furnace by men devoted to the magnificent and glorious worship of the Most High? Not for a moment! Who, then, was it that did such things? Detestable men, thoroughly and completely wicked, whose factiousness drove them to such a pitch of fury that they tormented those who resolutely served God in holiness and innocence. They failed to realize that the Most High is the champion and defender of those who worship his excellent name with a pure conscience. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. <sup>8</sup>But those who held out with confidence inherited glory and honor. They were exalted, and God inscribed them on his memory forever and ever. Amen.

**46** Brothers, we must follow such examples. <sup>2</sup>For it is written: "Follow the saints, because those who follow them will

become saints.”<sup>3</sup> Again, it says in another place: “In the company of the innocent, you will be innocent; in the company of the elect, you will be elect; and in a crooked man’s company you will go wrong.”<sup>4</sup> Let us, then, follow the innocent and the upright. They, it is, who are God’s elect.<sup>5</sup> Why is it that you harbor strife, bad temper, dissension, schism, and quarreling? <sup>6</sup>Do we not have one God, one Christ, one Spirit of grace which was poured out on us? And is there not one calling in Christ? <sup>7</sup>Why do we rend and tear asunder Christ’s members and raise a revolt against our own body? Why do we reach such a pitch of insanity that we are oblivious of the fact we are members of each other? Recall the words of our Lord Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For he said: “Woe to that man! It were better for him not to have been born than to be the occasion of one of my chosen ones stumbling. It were better for him to have a millstone around his neck and to be drowned in the sea, than to pervert one of my chosen.” <sup>9</sup>Your schism has led many astray; it has made many despair; it has made many doubt; and it has distressed us all. Yet it goes on!

**47** Pick up the letter of the blessed apostle Paul. <sup>2</sup>What was the primary thing he wrote to you, “when he started preaching the gospel?” <sup>3</sup>To be sure, under the Spirit’s guidance, he wrote to you about himself and Cephas and Apollos, because even then you had formed cliques. <sup>4</sup>Factionousness, however, at that time was a less serious sin, since you were partisans of notable apostles and of a man they endorsed. <sup>5</sup>But think now who they are who have led you astray and degraded your honorable and celebrated love of

the brethren. <sup>6</sup>It is disgraceful, exceedingly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian upbringing, to have it reported that because of one or two individuals the solid and ancient Corinthian Church is in revolt against its presbyters. <sup>7</sup>This report, moreover, has reached not only us, but those who dissent from us as well. The result is that the Lord's name is being blasphemed because of your stupidity, and you are exposing yourselves to danger.

**48** We must, then, put a speedy end to this. We must prostrate ourselves before the Master, and beseech him with tears to have mercy on us and be reconciled to us and bring us back to our honorable and holy practice of brotherly love. <sup>2</sup>For it is this which is the gate of righteousness, which opens the way to life, as it is written: "Open the gates of righteousness for me, so that I may enter by them and praise the Lord. <sup>3</sup>This is the Lord's gate: the righteous shall enter by it." <sup>4</sup>While there are many gates open, the gate of righteousness is the Christian gate. Blessed are all those who enter by it and direct their way "in holiness and righteousness," by doing everything without disorder. <sup>5</sup>Let a man be faithful, let him be capable of uttering "knowledge," let him be wise in judging arguments, let him be pure in conduct. <sup>6</sup>But the greater he appears to be, the more humble he ought to be, and the more ready to seek the common good in preference to his own.

**49** Whoever has Christian love must keep Christ's commandments. <sup>2</sup>Who can describe the bond of God's love? <sup>3</sup>Who is

capable of expressing its great beauty? <sup>4</sup>The heights to which love leads are beyond description. 'Love unites us to God. "Love hides a multitude of sins." Love puts up with everything and is always patient. There is nothing vulgar about love, nothing arrogant. Love knows nothing of schism or revolt. Love does everything in harmony. By love all God's elect were made perfect. Without love nothing can please God. <sup>6</sup>By love the Master accepted us. Because of the love he had for us, and in accordance with God's will, Jesus Christ our Lord gave his blood for us, his flesh for our flesh, and his life for ours.

**50** You see, brothers, how great and amazing love is, and how its perfection is beyond description. <sup>2</sup>Who is able to possess it save those to whom God has given the privilege? Let us, then, beg and implore him mercifully to grant us love without human bias and to make us irreproachable. <sup>3</sup>All the generations from Adam to our day have passed away, but those who, by the grace of God, have been made perfect in love have a place among the saints, who will appear when Christ's Kingdom comes. <sup>4</sup>For it is written: "Go into your closets for a very little while, until my wrath and anger pass, and I will remember a good day and I will raise you up from your graves." <sup>5</sup>Happy are we, dear friends, if we keep God's commandments in the harmony of love, so that by love our sins may be forgiven us. <sup>6</sup>For it is written: "Happy are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Happy is the man whose sin the Lord will not reckon, and on whose lips there is no deceit." <sup>7</sup>This is the blessing which was given to those

whom God chose through Jesus Christ our Lord. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**51** Let us, then, ask pardon for our failings and for whatever we have done through the prompting of the adversary. And those who are the ringleaders of the revolt and dissension ought to reflect upon the common nature of our hope. <sup>2</sup>Those, certainly, who live in fear and love would rather suffer outrages themselves than have their neighbors do so. They prefer to endure condemnation themselves rather than bring in reproach our tradition of noble and righteous harmony. <sup>3</sup>It is better for a man to confess his sins than to harden his heart in the way those rebels against God's servant Moses hardened theirs. The verdict against them was made very plain. <sup>4</sup>For "they went down to Hades alive," and "death will be their shepherd." Pharaoh and his host and all the princes of Egypt and "the chariots and their riders" were engulfed in the Red Sea and perished, for no other reason than that they hardened their foolish hearts after Moses, God's servant, had done signs and wonders in Egypt.

**52** The Master, brothers, has no need of anything. He wants nothing of anybody save that he should praise him. <sup>2</sup>For his favorite, David, says: "I will praise the Lord; and this will please him more than a young calf with horns and hoofs. Let the poor observe this and rejoice. <sup>3</sup>And again he says: "Offer to God the sacrifice of praise, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call on me in the day of your affliction and I will rescue you, and you will glorify me. <sup>4</sup>For the sacrifice God wants is a broken spirit."

53 You know the Holy Scriptures, dear friends—you know them well—and you have studied God's oracles. It is to remind you of them that we write the way we do. <sup>2</sup>When Moses ascended the mountain and spent forty days and forty nights in fasting and humiliation, God said to him: "Get quickly down from here, for your people, whom you led out of the land of Egypt, have broken the law. They have quickly turned from the way you bid them take. They have cast idols for themselves." <sup>3</sup>And the Lord told him: "I have spoken to you once, yes, twice, saying, I have looked at this people and, see, it is obstinate. Let me exterminate them, and I will wipe out their name from under heaven, and I will make you into a great and wonderful nation, much larger than this one." <sup>4</sup>And Moses answered: "No, no, Lord. Pardon my people's sin, or else eliminate me too from the roll of the living." <sup>5</sup>O great love! O unsurpassed perfection! The servant speaks openly to his Lord. He begs pardon for his people or requests that he too will be wiped out along with them.

54 Well, then, who of your number is noble, large-hearted, and full of love? <sup>2</sup>Let him say: "If it is my fault that revolt, strife, and schism have arisen, I will leave, I will go away wherever you wish, and do what the congregation orders. Only let Christ's flock live in peace with their appointed presbyters." <sup>3</sup>The man who does this will win for himself great glory in Christ; and will be welcome everywhere. "For the earth and its fullness belong to the Lord." <sup>4</sup>This has been the conduct and will always be the conduct of those who have no regrets that they belong to the city of God.

**55** Let us take some heathen examples: In times of plague many kings and rulers, prompted by oracles, have given themselves up to death in order to rescue their subjects by their own blood. Many have quit their own cities to put an end to sedition. <sup>2</sup>We know many of our own number who have had themselves imprisoned in order to ransom others. Many have sold themselves into slavery and given the price to feed others. <sup>3</sup>Many women, empowered by God's grace, have performed deeds worthy of men. <sup>4</sup>The blessed Judith, when her city was under siege, begged of the elders to be permitted to leave it for the enemy's camp. <sup>5</sup>So she exposed herself to danger and for love of her country and of her besieged people, she departed. And the Lord delivered Holofernes into the hands of a woman. <sup>6</sup>To no less danger did Esther, that woman of perfect faith, expose herself in order to rescue the twelve tribes of Israel when they were on the point of being destroyed. For by her fasting and humiliation she implored the all-seeing Master, the eternal God; and he beheld the humility of her soul and rescued her people for whose sake she had faced danger.

**56** So we too must intercede for any who have fallen into sin, that considerateness and humility may be granted to them and that they may submit, not to us, but to God's will. For in that way they will prove fruitful and perfect when God and the saints remember them with mercy. <sup>2</sup>We must accept correction, dear friends. No one should resent it. Warnings we give each other are good and thoroughly beneficial. For they bind us to God's will.

<sup>3</sup>This is what the Holy Word says about it: "The Lord has disciplined me severely and has not given me up to death. <sup>4</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and punishes every son he accepts." <sup>5</sup>For, it says, "the upright man will discipline me with mercy and reprove me. But let not the oil of sinners anoint my head." <sup>6</sup>And again it says: "Happy is the man the Lord reproves. Do not refuse the Almighty's warning. For he inflicts pain, and then makes all well again. <sup>7</sup>He smites, but his hands heal. <sup>8</sup>Six times will he rescue you from trouble; and on the seventh evil will not touch you. <sup>9</sup>In famine he will rescue you from death; in war he will deliver you from the edge of the sword. <sup>10</sup>From the scourge of the tongue he will hide you, and you will not be afraid of evils when they come. <sup>11</sup>You will ridicule the wicked and lawless, and not be afraid of wild beasts; <sup>12</sup>for wild beasts will leave you in peace. <sup>13</sup>Then you will discover that your house will be peaceful, and the tent in which you dwell will be safe. <sup>14</sup>You will find, too, that your seed will be numerous, and your children like the grass of the fields. <sup>15</sup>You will come to your tomb like ripe wheat harvested at the appropriate season, or like a heap on the threshing floor gathered together at the right time. <sup>16</sup>You see, dear friends, how well protected they are whom the Master disciplines. Yes, he is like a good Father, and disciplines us so that the outcome of his holy discipline may mean mercy for us.

**57** And that is why you who are responsible for the revolt must submit to the presbyters. You must humble your hearts and be disciplined so that you repent. <sup>2</sup>You must learn obedience, and

be done with your proud boasting and curb your arrogant tongues. For it is better for you to have an insignificant yet creditable place in Christ's flock than to appear eminent and be excluded from Christ's hope. <sup>3</sup>For this is what the excellent Wisdom says: "See, I will declare to you the utterance of my Spirit: I will teach you my word. <sup>4</sup>Since I called and you did not listen, since I poured out words and you did not heed, but disregarded my plans and disobeyed my reproofs, therefore I will laugh at your destruction. And I will rejoice when ruin befalls you and when confusion suddenly overtakes you, and catastrophe descends like a hurricane, or when persecution and siege come upon you. <sup>5</sup>Yes, it will be like this: when you call upon me, I will not heed you. The wicked shall look for me and shall not find me. For they detested wisdom, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They had no desire to heed my counsels, and mocked at my reproofs. <sup>6</sup>For this reason they shall eat the fruit of their ways and fill themselves with impiety. <sup>7</sup>Because they wronged babes, they will be slain; and by being searched out the impious shall be destroyed. But he that listens to me will dwell in confident hope and live quietly, free from the fear of any misfortune."

**58** So, then, let us obey his most holy and glorious name and escape the threats which Wisdom has predicted against the disobedient. In that way we shall live in peace, having our confidence in his most holy and majestic name. <sup>2</sup>Accept our advice, and you will never regret it. For as God lives, and as the Lord Jesus Christ lives and the Holy Spirit (on whom the elect believe

and hope), the man who with humility and eager considerateness and with no regrets does what God has decreed and ordered will be enlisted and enrolled in the ranks of those who are saved through Jesus Christ. Through him be the glory to God forever and ever. Amen.

59 If, on the other hand, there be some who fail to obey what God has told them through us, they must realize that they will enmesh themselves in sin and in no insignificant danger. <sup>2</sup>We, for our part, will not be responsible for such a sin. But we will beg with earnest prayer and supplication that the Creator of the universe will keep intact the precise number of his elect in the whole world, through his beloved Child Jesus Christ. It was through him that he called us "from darkness to light," from ignorance to the recognition of his glorious name <sup>3</sup>to hope on Your name, which is the origin of all creation. You have opened "the eyes of our hearts" so that we realize you alone are "highest among the highest, and ever remain holy among the holy?" "You humble the pride of the arrogant, overrule the plans of the nations, raise up the humble and humble the haughty. You make rich and make poor; you slay and bring to life; you alone are the guardian of spirits and the God of all flesh." You see into the depths: you look upon men's deeds; you aid those in danger and "save those in despair." You are the creator of every spirit and watch over them. You multiply the nations on the earth, and from out of them all you have chosen those who love you through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son.

Through him you have trained us, made us saints, and honored us.

<sup>4</sup>We ask you, Master, be our “helper and defender.” Rescue those of our number in distress; raise up the fallen; assist the needy; heal the sick; turn back those of your people who stray; feed the hungry; release our captives; revive the weak; encourage those who lose heart. “Let all the nations realize that you are the only God,” that Jesus Christ is your Child, and “that we are your people and the sheep of your pasture.”

**60** You brought into being the everlasting structure of the world by what you did. You, Lord, made the earth. You who are faithful in all generations, righteous in judgment, marvelous in strength and majesty, wise in creating, prudent in making creation endure, visibly good, kind to those who trust in you, “merciful and compassionate,” —forgive us our sins, wickedness, trespasses, and failings. <sup>2</sup>Do not take account of every sin of your slaves and slave girls, but cleanse us with the cleansing of your truth, and “guide our steps so that we walk with holy hearts and do what is good and pleasing to you” and to our rulers.

<sup>3</sup>Yes, Master, “turn your radiant face toward us” in peace, “for our good, that we may be shielded “by your powerful hand” and rescued from every sin “by your uplifted arm.” <sup>4</sup>Deliver us, too, from all who hate us without good reason. Give us and all who live on the earth harmony and peace, just as you did to our fathers when they reverently “called upon you in faith and truth.” And grant that we may be obedient to your almighty and glorious name, and to our rulers and governors on earth.

**61** You, Master, gave them imperial power through your majestic and indescribable might, so that we, recognizing it was you who gave them the glory and honor, might submit to them, and in no way oppose your will. Grant them, Lord, health, peace, harmony, and stability, so that they may give no offense in administering the government you have given them. <sup>2</sup>For it is you, Master, the heavenly “King of eternity,” who give the sons of men glory and honor and authority over the earth’s people. Direct their plans, O Lord, in accord with “what is good and pleasing to you,” so that they may administer the authority you have given them, with peace, considerateness, and reverence, and so win your mercy. <sup>3</sup>We praise you, who alone are able to do this and still better things for us, through the high priest and guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ. Through him be the glory and the majesty to you now and for all generations and forevermore. Amen.

**62** We have written enough to you, brothers, about what benefits our religion and is most helpful to those who want reverently and uprightly to lead a virtuous life. <sup>2</sup>We have, indeed, touched on every topic—faith, repentance, genuine love, self-control, sobriety, and patience. We have reminded you that you must reverently please almighty God by your uprightness, truthfulness, and long-suffering. You must live in harmony, bearing no grudges, in love, peace, and true considerateness, just as our forefathers, whom we mentioned, won approval by their humble attitude to the Father, God the Creator, and to all men. <sup>3</sup>We were, moreover, all the

more delighted to remind you of these things, since we well realized we were writing to people who were real believers and of the highest standing, and who had made a study of the oracles of God's teaching.

**63** Hence it is only right that, confronted with such examples and so many of them, we should bow the neck and adopt the attitude of obedience. Thus, by giving up this futile revolt, we may be free from all reproach and gain the true goal ahead of us. <sup>2</sup>Yes, you will make us exceedingly happy if you prove obedient to what we, prompted by the Holy Spirit, have written, and if, following the plea of our letter for peace and harmony, you rid yourselves of your wicked and passionate rivalry.

<sup>3</sup>We are sending you, moreover, trustworthy and discreet persons who from youth to old age have lived irreproachable lives among us. They will be witnesses to mediate between us. <sup>4</sup>We have done this to let you know that our whole concern has been, and is, to have peace speedily restored among you.

**64** And now may the all-seeing God and Master "of spirits" and Lord "of all flesh," who chose the Lord Jesus Christ and us through him "to be his own people," grant to every soul over whom His magnificent and holy name has been invoked, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering, self-control, purity, and sobriety. So may we win his approval through our high priest and defender, Jesus Christ. Through him be glory, majesty, might, and honor to God, now and forevermore. Amen.

**65** Be quick to return our delegates in peace and joy,

Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito, along with Fortunatus. In that way they will the sooner bring us news of that peace and harmony we have prayed for and so much desire, and we in turn will the more speedily rejoice over your healthy state.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all everywhere whom God has called through him. Through him be glory, honor, might, majesty, and eternal dominion to God, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.