

On Genesis.<sup>1139</sup>

**Gen. i. 5** And it was evening, and it was morning, one day.

Hippolytus. He did not say<sup>1140</sup> “night and day,” but “one day,” with reference to the name of the light. He did not say the “first day,” for if he had said the “first” day, he would also have had to say that the “second” day was made. But it was right to speak not of the “first day,” but of “one day,” in order that by saying “one,” he might show that it returns on its orbit and, while it remains one, makes up the week.

**Gen. i. 6** And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water.

Hipp. On the first day God made what He made out of nothing. But on the other days He did not make out of nothing, but out of what He had made on the first day, by moulding it according to His pleasure.

**Gen. i. 6, 7.** And let it divide between water and water: and it was so. And God made the firmament; and God divided between the water which was under the firmament, and the water above the firmament: and it was so.

Hipp. As the excessive volume of water bore along over the face of the earth, the earth was by reason thereof “invisible” and “formless.” When the Lord of all designed to make the invisible visible, He fixed then a third part of the waters in the midst; and another third part He set by itself on high, raising it together with the firmament by His own power; and the remaining third He left beneath, for the use and benefit of men. Now at<sup>1141</sup> this point we have an asterisk. The words are found in the Hebrew, but do not occur in the Septuagint.

**Gen. iii. 8** And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden at even.

Hipp. Rather they discerned the approach of the Lord by a certain breeze. As soon, therefore, as they had sinned, God appeared to them, producing consciousness of their sin, and calling them to repentance.

**Gen. xlix. 3** Reuben, my first-born, thou art my strength, and the first of my children; hard to bear with, and hard and self-willed: thou hast waxed wanton as water; boil not over.<sup>1142</sup>

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1139 These fragments are excerpts from a *Commentary on Genesis*, compiled from eighty-eight fathers, which is extant in manuscript in the Vienna library. They are found also in a *Catena* on Matthew, issued at Leipsic in 1772.

1140 i.e., νυχθήμερον.

1141 This must refer, I suppose, to the words, “And it was so.”

1142 μη ἐκζέσῃς.

Aquila. Reuben, my first-born, thou art my strength, and the sum of my sorrow: excelling in dignity and excelling in might: thou hast been insensate as water; excel not.<sup>1143</sup>

Symmachus. Reuben, my first-born, and beginning of my<sup>1144</sup> pain: above measure grasping, and above measure hot as water, thou shalt not more excel.<sup>1145</sup>

Hipp. For there was a great display of strength made by God in behalf of His first-born people from Egypt. For in very many ways was the land of the Egyptians chastised. That first people of the circumcision is meant by “my strength, and the first of my children:” even as God gave the promise to Abraham and to his seed. But “hard to bear with,” because the people hardened itself against the obedience of God. And “hard, self-willed,” because it was not only hard against the obedience of God, but also self-willed so as to set upon the Lord. “Thou hast waxed wanton,” because in the instance of our Lord Jesus Christ the people waxed wanton against the Father. But “boil not over,” says the Spirit, by way of comfort, that it might not, by boiling utterly over, be spilt abroad,—giving it hope of salvation. For what has boiled over and been spilt is lost.

**Gen. xlix. 4** For thou wentest up to thy father’s bed.

Hipp. First he mentions the event,—that in the last days the people will assault the bed of the Father, that is, the bride,<sup>1146</sup> the Church, with intent to corrupt her; which thing, indeed, it does even at this present day, assaulting her by blasphemies.

**Gen. xlix. 5.** Simeon and Levi, brethren.

Hipp. Since from Simeon sprang the scribes, and from Levi the priests. For the scribes and priests fulfilled iniquity<sup>1147</sup> of their own choice, and with one mind they slew the Lord.

**Gen. xlix. 5** Simeon and Levi, brethren, fulfilled iniquity of their own choice. Into their counsel let not my soul enter, and in their assembly let not my heart contend; for in their anger they slew men, and in their passion they houghed a bull.

Hipp. This he says regarding the conspiracy into which they were to enter against the Lord. And that he means this conspiracy, is evident to us. For the blessed David sings, “Rulers have taken counsel together against the Lord,”<sup>1148</sup> and so forth. And of this conspiracy the Spirit prophesied, saying, “Let not my soul contend,” desiring to draw them off, if possible, so that that future crime might not happen through them. “They slew men, and

1143 μη περισευης .

1144 “My” (μου) is wanting in Origen’s *Hexapla*.

1145 οὐκ ἔσῃ περισσότερος.

1146 [He makes the curse of Reuben applicable to the Church’s truth and purity.]

1147 ἐξαίρέσεως αὐτῶν, “of set purpose.”

1148 **Ps. ii. 2.**

houghed the bull;” by the “strong bull” he means Christ. And “they houghed,” since, when He was suspended on the tree, they pierced through His sinews. Again, “in their anger they houghed a bull.” And mark the nicety of the expression: for “they slew men, and houghed a bull.” For they killed the saints, and they remain dead, awaiting the time of the resurrection. But as a young bull, so to speak, when houghed, sinks down to the ground, such was Christ in submitting voluntarily to the death of the flesh; but He was not overcome of death. But though as man He became one of the dead, He remained alive in the nature of divinity. For Christ is the bull,—an animal, above all, strong and neat and devoted to sacred use. And the Son is Lord of all power, who did no sin, but rather offered Himself for us, a savour of a sweet smell to His God and Father. Therefore let those hear who houghed this august bull: “Cursed be their anger, for it was stubborn; and their wrath, for it was hardened.”<sup>1149</sup> But this people of the Jews dared to boast of houghing the bull: “Our hands shed this.”<sup>1150</sup> For this is nothing different, I think, from the word of folly: “His blood” (be upon us), and so forth.<sup>1151</sup> Moses recalls<sup>1152</sup> the curse against Levi, or, rather converts it into a blessing, on account of the subsequent zeal of the tribe, and of Phinehas in particular, in behalf of God. But that against Simeon he did not recall. Wherefore it also was fulfilled in deed.<sup>1153</sup> For Simeon did not obtain an inheritance like the other tribes, for he dwelt in the midst of Judah. Yet his tribe was preserved, although it was small in number.<sup>1154</sup>

[Gen. xlix. 11](#) Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt to the choice vine,—the tendril of the vine,—he will wash his garment in wine, and his clothes in the blood of the grape.

Hipp. By the “foal” he means the calling of the Gentiles; by the other, that of the circumcision: “one ass,” moreover, that is to signify that the two colts are of one faith; in other words, the two callings. And one colt is bound to the “vine,” and the other to the “vine tendril,” which means that the Church of the Gentiles is bound to the Lord, but he who is of the circumcision to the oldness of the law. “He will wash his garment in wine;” that is, by the Holy Spirit and the word of truth, he will cleanse the flesh, which is meant by the garment. And “in the blood of the grape,” trodden and giving forth blood, which means the flesh of the Lord, he cleanses the whole calling of the Gentiles.

1149 [Gen. xlix. 7.](#)

1150 After “this” (τοῦτο) the word “blood” (τὸ αἷμα) seems to have been dropped.

1151 [Matt. xxvii. 25.](#)

1152 [Deut. xxxiii. 8.](#)

1153 [By the sin of Annas and Caiaphas, with others, the tribe of Levi became *formally* subject to this curse again, and with Simeon (absorbed into Judah) inherited it. But compare [Acts iv. 36](#) and [vi. 7.](#)]

1154 [[Luke ii. 25.](#)]

**Gen. xlix. 12–15** His eyes are gladsome with wine, and his teeth white as milk. Zabulun shall dwell by the sea, and he shall be by a haven of ships, and he shall extend to Sidon. Issachar desired the good part, resting in the midst of the lots. And seeing that rest was good, and that the land was fat, he set his shoulder to toil, and became a husbandman.

Hipp. That is, his eyes are brilliant as with the word of truth; for they regard all who believe upon him. And his teeth are white as milk;—that denotes the luminous power of his words: for this reason he calls them white, and compares them to milk, as that which nourishes the flesh and the soul. And Zabulun is, by interpretation, “*fragrance*” and “*blessing*.”

Then, after something from Cyril:—

Hipp. Again, I think, it mystically signifies the<sup>1155</sup> sacraments of the New Testament of our Saviour; and the words, “his teeth are white as milk,” denote the excellency and purity of the sacramental food. And again, these words, “his teeth are white as milk,” we take in the sense that His words give light to those who believe on Him.

And in saying, moreover, that Zabulun will dwell by the sea, he speaks prophetically of his territory as bordering on the sea, and of Israel as mingling with the Gentiles, the two nations being brought as it were into one flock. And this is manifest in the Gospel. “The land of Zabulun, and the land of Nephthalim,” etc. And you will mark more fully the richness of his lot as having both inland territory and seaboard.

“And he is by a haven of ships;” that is, as in a safe anchorage, referring to Christ, the anchor of hope. And this denotes the calling of the Gentiles—that the grace of Christ shall go forth to the whole earth and sea. For he says, “And (he is) by a haven of ships, and shall extend as far as Sidon.” And that this is said prophetically of the Church of the Gentiles, is made apparent to us in the Gospel: “The land of Zabulun, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light.”<sup>1156</sup> In saying, then, that he, namely Zabulun, would inhabit a territory bordering on the sea, he plainly confirmed that, just as if he had said that in the future Israel would mingle with the Gentiles, the two peoples being brought together into one fold and under the hand of one chief Shepherd, the good (Shepherd) by nature, that is, Christ. In blessing him Moses said, “Zabulun shall rejoice.”<sup>1157</sup> And Moses prophesies, that in the allocation of the land he should have abundance ministered of the good things both of land and sea, under the hand of One. “By a haven of ships;” that is, as in an anchorage that proves safe, referring to Christ, the anchor of hope. For by His grace he shall come forth out of many a tempest, and shall be brought hereafter to land, like ships secure in harbours. Besides, he said that “he extends as far even as Sidon,” indicating, as it seems, that so complete a

1155 τὰ μυστήρια.

1156 Matt. iv. 15, 16.

1157 Deut. xxxiii. 18.

unity will be effected in the spirit's course between the two peoples, that those of the blood of Israel shall occupy those very cities which once were exceeding guilty in the sight of God.<sup>1158</sup>

After something from Cyril:—

Hipp. And “that the land was fat;” that is, the flesh of our Lord: “fat,” that is, “rich;” for it flows with honey and milk. The parts of the land are marked off for an inheritance and possession to him—that means the doctrine of the Lord. For this is a pleasant rest, as He says Himself: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,”<sup>1159</sup> etc. For they who keep the commandments, and do not disclaim the ordinances of the law, enjoy rest both in them and in the doctrine of our Lord; and that is the meaning of “in the midst of the lots.” As the Lord says, “I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them.”<sup>1160</sup> For even our Lord, in the fact that He keeps the commandments, does not destroy the law and the prophets, but fulfils them, as He says in the Gospels. “He set his shoulder to toil, and became a husbandman.” This the apostles did. Having received power from God, and having set themselves to labour, they became husbandmen of the Lord, cultivating the earth—that is, the human race—with the preaching of our Lord.

**Gen. xlix. 16–20** Dan shall judge his people, as himself also one tribe in Israel. And let Dan become a serpent by the way, lying on the path, stinging the horse's heel; and the horseman shall fall backward, waiting for the salvation of the Lord. Gad—a robber's troop shall rob him; and he shall spoil it<sup>1161</sup> at the heels. Aser—his bread shall be fat, and he shall furnish dainties to princes.

After something from Cyril, Apollinaris, and Diodorus:—

Hipp. The Lord is represented to us as a horseman; and the “heel” points us to the “last times.” And His “falling” denotes His death; as it is written in the Gospel: “Behold, this (child) is set for the fall and rising again of many.”<sup>1162</sup> We take the “robber” to be the traitor. Nor was there any other traitor to the Lord save the (Jewish) people. “Shall rob him,” i.e., shall plot against him. At the heels: that refers to the help of the Lord against those who lie in wait against Him. And again, the words “at the heels” denote that the Lord will take vengeance swiftly. He shall be well armed in the foot<sup>1163</sup> (heel), and shall overtake and rob the robber's troop.



1158 [In thus spiritualizing, the Fathers do not deny a literal sense also, as in “Aser,” p. 166, *infra*; only they think that geography, history, etc., should pay tribute to a higher meaning.]

1159 [Matt. xi. 28.](#)

1160 [Matt. v. 17.](#)

1161 [κατὰ πόδας](#), “quickly,” “following close.”

1162 [Luke ii. 34.](#)

1163 [An important hint that by “heel,” in [Gen. iii. 15](#), the “foot” is understood, by rhetorical figure.]

Aquila. “Girded, he shall gird himself;” that means that as a man of arms and war he shall arm himself. “And he shall be armed in the heel:” he means this rather, that Gad shall follow behind his brethren in arms. For though his lot was beyond Jordan, yet they (the men of that tribe) were enjoined to follow their brethren in arms until they too got their lots. Or perhaps he meant this, that Gad’s tribesmen were to live in the manner of robbers, and that he was to take up a confederacy of freebooters, which is just a “robber’s troop,” and to follow them, practising piracy, which is robbery, along with them.

Whereas, on the abolition of the shadow in the law, and the introduction of the worship in spirit and truth, the world had need of greater light, at last, with this object, the inspired disciples were called, and put in possession of the lot of the teachers of the law. For thus did God speak with regard to the mother of the Jews—that is to say, Jerusalem—by the voice of the Psalmist: “Instead of thy fathers were thy sons;”<sup>1164</sup> that is, to those called thy sons was given the position of fathers. And with regard to our Lord Jesus Christ in particular: “Thou wilt appoint them rulers over all the earth.” Yet presently their authority will not be by any means void of trouble to them. Nay rather, they were to experience unnumbered ills and they were to be in perplexity; and the course of their apostleship they were by no means to find free of peril, as he intimated indeed by way of an example, when he said, “Let (Dan) be,” meaning by that, that there shall be a multitude of persecutors in Dan like a “serpent lying by the way on the path, stinging the horse’s heel,” i.e., giving fierce and dangerous bites; for the bites of snakes are generally very dangerous. And they were “in the heel” in particular, for “he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”<sup>1165</sup> And some did persecute the holy apostles in this way even to the death of the flesh. And thus we may say that their position was something like that when a horse stumbles and flings out his heels. For in such a case the horseman will be thrown, and, falling to the ground, I suppose, he waits<sup>1166</sup> thus for some one alive. And thus, too, the inspired apostles survive and wait for the time of their redemption, when they shall be called into a kingdom which cannot be moved, when Christ addresses them with the word, “Come, ye blessed of my Father,”<sup>1167</sup> etc.

And again, if any one will take the words as meaning, not that there will be some lying in wait against Dan like serpents, but that this Dan himself lies in wait against others, we may say that those meant thereby are the scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites who, while in possession of the power of judgment and instruction among the people, fastened like snakes

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1164 Ps. xlv. 17 (English, xlv. 16).

1165 Gen. iii 15. [The rhetoric here puts the heel for the foot to emphasize the other part of the prophecy, i.e., the wounded heel coming down on the biter’s head.]

1166 περιμένει τὸν ζῶντα.

1167 Matt. xxv. 34.

upon Christ, and strove impiously to compass His fall, vexing Him with their stings as He held on in His lofty and gentle course. But if that horseman did indeed fall, He fell at least of His own will, voluntarily enduring the death of the flesh. And, moreover, it was destined that He should come to life again, having the Father as His helper and conductor. For the Son, being the power of God the Father, endued the temple of His own body again with life. Thus is He said to have been saved by the Father, as He stood in peril as a man, though by nature He is God, and Himself maintains the whole creation, visible and invisible, in a state of wellbeing. In this sense, also, the inspired Paul says of Him: “Though He was crucified in weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.”<sup>1168</sup>

Aser obtained the parts about Ptolemais and Sidon. Wherefore he says, “His bread shall be fat, and he shall furnish dainties to princes.” This we take to be a figure of our calling; for “fat” means “rich.” And whose bread is rich, if not ours? For the Lord is our bread, as He says Himself: “I am the bread of life.”<sup>1169</sup> And who else will furnish dainties to princes but our Lord Jesus Christ?—not only to the believing among the Gentiles, but also to those of the circumcision, who are first in the faith, to wit, to the fathers, and the patriarchs, and the prophets, and to all who believe in His name and passion.

**Gen. xlix. 21–26** Nephthalim is a slender<sup>1170</sup> thing, showing beauty in the shoot. Joseph is a goodly son; my goodly, envied son; my youngest son. Turn back to me. Against him the archers took counsel together, and reviled him, and pressed him sore. And their bows were broken with might, and the sinews of the arms of their hands were relaxed by the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob. Thence is he who strengthened Israel from the God of thy father. And my God helped thee, and blessed thee with the blessing of heaven above, and with the blessing of the earth which possesseth all things, with the blessing of the breasts and womb, with the blessing of thy father and thy mother. It prevailed above the blessings of abiding mountains, and above the blessings of everlasting hills; which (blessings) shall be upon the head of Joseph, and upon the temples of his brothers, whose chief he was.

Hipp. Who is the son goodly and envied, even to this day, but our Lord Jesus Christ? An object of envy is He indeed to those who choose to hate Him, yet He is not by any means to be overcome. For though He endured the cross, yet as God He returned to life, having trampled upon death, as His God and Father addresses Him, and says, “Sit Thou at my right hand.”<sup>1171</sup> And that even those are brought to nought who strive with the utmost possible madness against Him, he has taught us, when he says, “Against Him the archers took counsel together, and reviled Him.” For the “archers”—that is, the leaders of the people—did

1168 [2 Cor. xiii. 4.](#)

1169 [John vi. 35.](#)

1170 [στέλεχος ἀνειμένον.](#)

1171 [Ps. cx. 1.](#)



convene their assemblies, and take bitter counsel. “But their bows were broken, and the sinews of their arms were relaxed, by the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob,” that is to say, by God the Father, who is the Lord of power, who also made His Son blessed in heaven and on earth. And he (Naphtali) is adopted as a figure of things pertaining to us, as the Gospel shows: “The land of Zabulun, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan,”<sup>1172</sup> etc.; and, “To them that sat in darkness light has arisen.”<sup>1173</sup> And what other light was this but the calling of the Gentiles, which is the trunk, i.e., the tree of the Lord, in whom engrafted it bears fruit? And the word, “giving increase of beauty in the case of the shoot,” expresses the excellency of our calling. And if the words, “giving increase of beauty in the case of the shoot,” are understood, as perhaps they may, with reference to us, the clause is still quite intelligible. For, by progressing in virtue, and attaining to better things, “reaching forth to those things which are before,”<sup>1174</sup> according to the word of the blessed Paul, we rise ever to the higher beauty. I mean, however, of course, spiritual beauty, so that to us too it may be said hereafter, “The King greatly desired thy beauty.”<sup>1175</sup>

After something from Apollinaris:—

Hipp. The word of prophecy passes again to Immanuel Himself. For, in my opinion, what is intended by it is just what has been already stated in the words, “giving increase of beauty in the case of the shoot.” For he means that He increased and grew up into that which He had been from the beginning, and indicates the return to the glory which He had by nature.<sup>1176</sup> This, if we apprehend it correctly, is (we should say) just “restored” to Him. For<sup>1177</sup> as the only begotten Word of God, being God of God,<sup>1178</sup> emptied Himself, according to the Scriptures, humbling Himself of His own will to that which He was not before, and took unto Himself this vile flesh, and appeared<sup>1179</sup> in the “form of a servant,” and “became obedient to God the Father, even unto death,” so hereafter He is said to be “highly exalted;” and as if well-nigh He had it not by reason of His humanity, and as if it were in the way of grace, He “receives the name which is above every name,”<sup>1180</sup> according to the word of the

1172 [Matt. iv. 15.](#)

1173 [Matt. iv. 17.](#)

1174 [Phil. iii. 15.](#)

1175 [Ps. xlv. 11.](#)

1176 The text is τοῦτο πάντως κατάγεται ὀρθῶς ἔχειν ὑπειλημμένον.

1177 This passage, down to the word “inseparably,” was transcribed by Isaac Vossius at Rome, and first edited by Grabe in the *Annotations to Bull’s Defens. fid. Nic.*, p. 103.

1178 “God of God,” Θεὸς ὑπάρχων ἐκ Θεοῦ. Hippolytus uses here the exact phrase of the Nicene Council. So, too, in his *Contra Noetum*, chap. x., he has the exact phrase, “light of light” (φῶς ἐκ φωτός). [See my concluding remarks (note 9) on the last chapters of the *Philosophumena*, p. 153, *supra*.]

1179 The words from “and appeared” down to “so hereafter” are given by Grebe, but omitted in Fabricius.

1180 [Phil. ii. 7–9.](#)



blessed Paul. But the matter, in truth, was not a “giving,” as for the first time, of what He had not by nature; far otherwise. But rather we must understand a return and restoration to that which existed in Him at the beginning, essentially and inseparably. And it is for this reason that, when He had assumed, by divine arrangement,<sup>1181</sup> the lowly estate of humanity, He said, “Father, glorify me with the glory which I had,”<sup>1182</sup> etc. For He who was co-existent with His Father before all time, and before the foundation of the world, always had the glory proper to Godhead. “He” too may very well be understood as the “youngest (son).” For He appeared in the last times, after the glorious and honourable company of the holy prophets, and simply once, after all those who, previous to the time of His sojourn, were reckoned in the number of sons by reason of excellence. That Immanuel, however, was an “object of envy,”<sup>1183</sup> is a somewhat doubtful phrase. Yet He is an “object of envy” or “emulation” to the saints, who aspire to follow His footsteps, and conform themselves to His divine beauty, and make Him the pattern of their conduct, and win thereby their highest glory. And again, He is an “object of envy” in another sense,—an “object of ill-will,” namely, to those who are declared not to love Him. I refer to the leading parties among the Jews,—the scribes, in sooth, and the Pharisees,—who travailed with bitter envy against Him, and made the glory of which He could not be spoiled the ground of their slander, and assailed Him in many ways. For Christ indeed raised the dead to life again, when they already stank and were corrupt; and He displayed other signs of divinity. And these should have filled them with wonder, and have made them ready to believe, and to doubt no longer. Yet this was not the case with them; but they were consumed with ill-will, and nursed its bitter pangs in their mind.

After something from Cyril:—

Hipp. Who else is this than as is shown us by the apostle, “the second man, the Lord from heaven?”<sup>1184</sup> And in the Gospel,<sup>1185</sup> He said that he who did the will of the Father was “the last.”<sup>1186</sup> And by the words, “Turn back to me,” is meant His ascension to His Father in heaven after His passion. And in the phrase, “Against Him they took counsel together, and reviled Him,” who are intended but just the people in their opposition to our



1181 οἰκονομικῶς.

1182 John xvii. 5.

1183 ζηλωτός.

1184 1 Cor. xv. 47.

1185 Matt. xxi. 31.

1186 ὁ ἔσχατος. Several manuscripts and versions and Fathers read ἔσχατος with Hippolytus instead of πρῶτος. Jerome *in loc.* remarks on the fact, and observes that with that reading the interpretation would be quite intelligible; the sense then being, that “the Jews understand the truth indeed, but evade it, and refuse to acknowledge what they perceive.” Wetstein, in his *New Test.*, i. p. 467, also cites this reading, and adds the conjecture,

Lord? And as to the words, “they pressed Him sore,” who pressed Him, and to this day still press Him sore? Those—these “archers,” namely—who think to contend against the Lord. But though they prevailed to put Him to death, yet “their bows were broken with might.” This plainly means, that “after the resurrection” their bows were broken with might. And those intended are the leaders of the people, who set themselves in array against Him, and, as it were, sharpened the points of their weapons. But they failed to transfix Him, though they did what was unlawful, and dared to assail Him even in the manner of wild beasts.

“Thou didst prevail above the blessings of abiding mountains.” By “eternal and abiding mountains and everlasting hills,” he means the saints, because they are lifted above the earth, and make no account of the things that perish, but seek the things that are above, and aspire earnestly to rise to the highest virtues. After the glory of Christ, therefore, are those of the Fathers who were most illustrious, and reached the greatest elevation in virtue. These, however, were but servants; but the Lord, the Son, supplied them with the means by which they became illustrious. Wherefore also they acknowledge (the truth of this word), “Out of His fulness have all we received.”<sup>1187</sup>

“And my God helped thee.” This indicates clearly that the aid and support of the Son came from no one else but our God and Father in heaven. And by the word “my God,” is meant that the Spirit speaks by Jacob.<sup>1188</sup>

Euseb. “The sinews of the arms.” He could not say, of “the hands” or “shoulders;” but since the broad central parts of the bow are termed “arms,” he says appropriately “arms.”

Hipp. “Blessings of the breasts and womb.” By this is meant that the true blessing from heaven is the Spirit descending through the Word upon flesh. And by “breasts and womb” he means the blessings of the Virgin. And by that of “thy father and thy mother,”<sup>1189</sup> he means also the blessing of the Father which we have received in the Church through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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that “some, remembering what is said in [Matt. xx. 16](#), viz., ‘the last shall be first,’ thought that the ‘publican’ would be called more properly ‘the last,’ and that then some one carried out this emendation so far as to transpose the replies too.”

1187 [John i. 16](#).

1188 [Gen. xlviii. 3, 4](#).

1189 Grabe adduces another fragment of the comments of Hippolytus on this passage, found in some leaves deciphered at Rome. It is to this effect: Plainly and evidently the generation of the Only-begotten, which is at once from God the Father, and through the holy Virgin, is signified, even as He is believed and manifested to be a man. For being by nature and in truth the Son of God the Father, on our account He submitted to birth by woman and the womb, and sucked the breast. For He did not, as some fancy, become man only in appearance, but He manifested Himself as in reality that which we are who follow the laws of nature, and supported Himself by food, though Himself giving life to the world.

**Gen. xlix. 27** “Benjamin is a ravening wolf; in the morning he shall devour still, and till evening he apportions food.”

Hipp. This thoroughly suits Paul, who was of the tribe of Benjamin. For when he was young, he was a ravening wolf; but when he believed, he “apportioned” food. This also is shown us by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the tribe of Benjamin is among the first persecutors, which is the sense of “in the morning.” For Saul, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, persecuted David, who was appointed to be a type of the Lord.

II.

From the Commentary of the Holy Hippolytus of Rome Upon Genesis.<sup>1190</sup>

**Gen. ii. 7** “And God formed man of the dust of the ground.” And what does this import? Are we to say, according to the opinion of some, that there were three men made, one spiritual, one animal, and one earthy? Not such is the case, but the whole narrative is of one man. For the word, “Let us make,” is about the man that was to be; and then comes the word, “God made man of the dust of the ground,” so that the narrative is of one and the same man. For then He says, “Let him be made,” and now He “makes him,” and the narrative tells “how” He makes him.

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1190 From the Second Book of the *Res Sacrae* of Leontius and Joannes, in Mai, *Script. vet.*, vii. p. 84.

III.

Quoted in Jerome, Epist. 36, ad Damasum, Num. xviii. (from Galland).

<sup>1191</sup>Isaac conveys a figure of God the Father; Rebecca of the Holy Spirit; Esau of the first people and the devil; Jacob of the Church, or of Christ. That Isaac was *old*, points to the end of the world; that his eyes were dim, denotes that faith had perished from the world, and that the light of religion was neglected before him; that the elder son is called, expresses the Jews' possession of the law; that the father loves his meat and venison, denotes the saving of men from error, whom every righteous man seeks to gain (lit. *hunt for*) by doctrine. The word of God here is the promise anew of the blessing and the hope of a kingdom to come, in which the saints shall reign with Christ, and keep the true Sabbath. Rebecca is full of the Holy Spirit, as understanding the word which she heard before she gave birth, "For the elder shall serve the younger."<sup>1192</sup> As a figure of the Holy Spirit, moreover, she cares for Jacob in preference. She says to her younger son, "Go to the flock and fetch me two kids,"<sup>1193</sup> prefiguring the Saviour's advent in the flesh to work a mighty deliverance for them who were held liable to the punishment of sin; for indeed in all the Scriptures kids are taken for emblems of sinners. His being charged to bring "two," denotes the reception of two peoples: by the "tender and good," are meant teachable and innocent souls. The robe or raiment of Esau denotes the faith and Scriptures of the Hebrews, with which the people of the Gentiles were endowed. The skins which were put upon his arms are the sins of both peoples, which Christ, when His hands were stretched forth on the cross, fastened to it along with Himself. In that Isaac asks of Jacob why he came so soon,<sup>1194</sup> we take him as admiring the quick faith of them that believe. That savoury meats are offered, denotes an offering pleasing to God, the salvation of sinners. After the eating follows the blessing, and he delights in his smell. He announces with clear voice the perfection of the resurrection and the kingdom, and also how his brethren who believe in Israel adore him and serve him. Because iniquity is opposed to righteousness, Esau is excited to strife, and meditates death deceitfully, saying in his heart, "Let the days of the mourning for my father come on, and I will slay my brother Jacob."<sup>1195</sup> The devil, who previously exhibited the fratricidal Jews by anticipation in Cain, makes the



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1191 Jerome introduces this citation from the Commentary of Hippolytus on Genesis in these terms: "Since, then, we promised to add what that (concerning Isaac and Rebecca, Gen. xxvii.) signifies figuratively, we may adduce the words of the martyr Hippolytus, with whom our Victorinus very much agrees: not that he has made out everything quite fully, but that he may give the reader the means for a broader understanding of the passage."

1192 Gen. xxv. 23.

1193 Gen. xxvii. 9.

1194 Gen. xxvii. 20.

1195 Gen. xxvii. 41.

most manifest disclosure of them now in Esau, showing also the time of the murder: “Let the days,” says he, “of the mourning for my father come on, that I may slay my brother.” Wherefore Rebecca—that is, patience—told her husband of the brother’s plot: who, summoning Jacob, bade him go to Mesopotamia and thence take a wife of the family of Laban the Syrian, his mother’s brother. As therefore Jacob, to escape his brother’s evil designs, proceeds to Mesopotamia, so Christ, too, constrained by the unbelief of the Jews, goes into Galilee, to take from thence to Himself a bride from the Gentiles, His Church.