

DESIGN IN THE BIBLE &
THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

The idea that human beings can observe signs of intelligent design in nature reaches back to the foundations of both science and civilization. In the Greco-Roman tradition, Plato and Cicero both espoused early versions of intelligent design. In the history of science, most scientists until the latter part of the nineteenth century accepted some form of intelligent design, including Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer with Charles Darwin of the theory of evolution by natural selection. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, meanwhile, the idea that design can be observed in nature can be found not only in the Bible but among Jewish philosophers such as Philo and in the writings of the Early Church Fathers. This sourcebook contains a collection of some of the main texts on design from both the Bible and the writings of the early church.

PASSAGES FROM THE BIBLE

ABOUT DESIGN IN NATURE

Both the Jewish and Christian scriptures teach that the natural world reflects God's design, and that this design can be clearly discerned in nature. Below are some of the key passages.

PROVERBS 8:1-3, 22-35 [NKJV]

- 1 Does not wisdom cry out,
And understanding lift up her voice?
2 She takes her stand on the top of the high hill,
Beside the way, where the paths meet.
3 She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the entrance of the doors...
22 "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
23 I have been established from everlasting,
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills, I was brought forth;
26 While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields,
Or the primal dust of the world.
27 When He prepared the heavens, I was there,
When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,
And obtains favor from the LORD;
36 But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul;
All those who hate me love death."
- 28 When He established the clouds above,
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,
29 When He assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters would not transgress His command,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman;
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,
31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world,
And my delight was with the sons of men.
32 "Now therefore, listen to me, my children,
For blessed are those who keep my ways.
33 Hear instruction and be wise,
And do not disdain it.
34 Blessed is the man who listens to me,
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors.
35 For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD.

JOB 38-42 [NIV]

Chapter 38

- 1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said:
2 "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?
3 Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.
4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?

Tell me, if you understand.
 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
 Who stretched a measuring line across it?
 6 On what were its footings set,
 or who laid its cornerstone—
 7 while the morning stars sang together
 and all the angels shouted for joy?
 8 “Who shut up the sea behind doors
 when it burst forth from the womb,
 9 when I made the clouds its garment
 and wrapped it in thick darkness,
 10 when I fixed limits for it
 and set its doors and bars in place,
 11 when I said, ‘This far you may come and
 no farther; here is where your proud waves
 halt’?
 12 “Have you ever given orders to the
 morning, or shown the dawn its place,
 13 that it might take the earth by the edges
 and shake the wicked out of it?
 14 The earth takes shape like clay under a
 seal; its features stand out like those of a
 garment.
 15 The wicked are denied their light,
 and their upraised arm is broken.
 16 “Have you journeyed to the springs of the
 sea or walked in the recesses of the deep?
 17 Have the gates of death been shown to
 you?
 Have you seen the gates of the shadow
 of death?
 18 Have you comprehended the vast
 expanses of the earth?
 Tell me, if you know all this.
 19 “What is the way to the abode of light?
 And where does darkness reside?
 20 Can you take them to their places?
 Do you know the paths to their
 dwellings?
 21 Surely you know, for you were already
 born!
 You have lived so many years!
 22 “Have you entered the storehouses of the
 snow or seen the storehouses of the hail,
 23 which I reserve for times of trouble,
 for days of war and battle?
 24 What is the way to the place where the
 lightning is dispersed,
 or the place where the east winds are
 scattered over the earth?

25 Who cuts a channel for the torrents of
 rain, and a path for the thunderstorm,
 26 to water a land where no man lives,
 a desert with no one in it,
 27 to satisfy a desolate wasteland
 and make it sprout with grass?
 28 Does the rain have a father?
 Who fathers the drops of dew?
 29 From whose womb comes the ice? Who
 gives birth to the frost from the heavens
 30 when the waters become hard as stone,
 when the surface of the deep is frozen?
 31 “Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades?
 Can you loose the cords of Orion?
 32 Can you bring forth the constellations in
 their seasons or lead out the Bear with its
 cubs?
 33 Do you know the laws of the heavens?
 Can you set up God’s dominion over the
 earth?
 34 “Can you raise your voice to the clouds
 and cover yourself with a flood of
 water?
 35 Do you send the lightning bolts on their
 way?
 Do they report to you, ‘Here we are’?
 36 Who endowed the heart with wisdom
 or gave understanding to the mind?
 37 Who has the wisdom to count the clouds?
 Who can tip over the water jars of the
 heavens
 38 when the dust becomes hard
 and the clods of earth stick together?
 39 “Do you hunt the prey for the lioness
 and satisfy the hunger of the lions
 40 when they crouch in their dens
 or lie in wait in a thicket?
 41 Who provides food for the raven
 when its young cry out to God
 and wander about for lack of food?

Chapter 39

1 “Do you know when the mountain goats
 give birth?
 Do you watch when the doe bears her
 fawn?
 2 Do you count the months till they bear?
 Do you know the time they give birth?
 3 They crouch down and bring forth their
 young;
 their labor pains are ended.

4 Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds;
they leave and do not return.
5 “Who let the wild donkey go free?
Who untied his ropes?
6 I gave him the wasteland as his home,
the salt flats as his habitat.
7 He laughs at the commotion in the town;
he does not hear a driver's shout.
8 He ranges the hills for his pasture
and searches for any green thing.
9 “Will the wild ox consent to serve you?
Will he stay by your manger at night?
10 Can you hold him to the furrow with a harness?
Will he till the valleys behind you?
11 Will you rely on him for his great strength?
Will you leave your heavy work to him?
12 Can you trust him to bring in your grain
and gather it to your threshing floor?
13 “The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully,
but they cannot compare with the pinions and feathers of the stork.
14 She lays her eggs on the ground
and lets them warm in the sand,
15 unmindful that a foot may crush them,
that some wild animal may trample them.
16 She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers;
she cares not that her labor was in vain,
17 for God did not endow her with wisdom
or give her a share of good sense.
18 Yet when she spreads her feathers to run,
she laughs at horse and rider.
19 “Do you give the horse his strength
or clothe his neck with a flowing mane?
20 Do you make him leap like a locust,
striking terror with his proud snorting?
21 He paws fiercely, rejoicing in his strength,
and charges into the fray.
22 He laughs at fear, afraid of nothing;
he does not shy away from the sword.
23 The quiver rattles against his side,
along with the flashing spear and lance.
24 In frenzied excitement he eats up the ground;
he cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds.

25 At the blast of the trumpet he snorts,
‘Aha!’
He catches the scent of battle from afar,
the shout of commanders and the battle cry.
26 “Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom
and spread his wings toward the south?
27 Does the eagle soar at your command
and build his nest on high?
28 He dwells on a cliff and stays there at night;
a rocky crag is his stronghold.
29 From there he seeks out his food;
his eyes detect it from afar.
30 His young ones feast on blood,
and where the slain are, there is he.”

Chapter 40

1 The LORD said to Job:
2 “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?
Let him who accuses God answer him!”
3 Then Job answered the LORD :
4 “I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?
I put my hand over my mouth.
5 I spoke once, but I have no answer—
twice, but I will say no more.”
6 Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm:
7 “Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.
8 “Would you discredit my justice?
Would you condemn me to justify yourself?
9 Do you have an arm like God's,
and can your voice thunder like his?
10 Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor,
and clothe yourself in honor and majesty.
11 Unleash the fury of your wrath,
look at every proud man and bring him low,
12 look at every proud man and humble him,
crush the wicked where they stand.
13 Bury them all in the dust together;
shroud their faces in the grave.
14 Then I myself will admit to you
that your own right hand can save you.
15 “Look at the behemoth,
which I made along with you
and which feeds on grass like an ox.

16 What strength he has in his loins,
 what power in the muscles of his belly!
 17 His tail sways like a cedar;
 the sinews of his thighs are close-knit.
 18 His bones are tubes of bronze,
 his limbs like rods of iron.
 19 He ranks first among the works of God,
 yet his Maker can approach him with
 his sword.
 20 The hills bring him their produce,
 and all the wild animals play nearby.
 21 Under the lotus plants he lies,
 hidden among the reeds in the marsh.
 22 The lotuses conceal him in their shadow;
 the poplars by the stream surround him.
 23 When the river rages, he is not alarmed;
 he is secure, though the Jordan should
 surge against his mouth.
 24 Can anyone capture him by the eyes,
 or trap him and pierce his nose?

Chapter 41

1 “Can you pull in the leviathan with a
 fishhook
 or tie down his tongue with a rope?
 2 Can you put a cord through his nose
 or pierce his jaw with a hook?
 3 Will he keep begging you for mercy?
 Will he speak to you with gentle words?
 4 Will he make an agreement with you
 for you to take him as your slave for
 life?
 5 Can you make a pet of him like a bird
 or put him on a leash for your girls?
 6 Will traders barter for him?
 Will they divide him up among the
 merchants?
 7 Can you fill his hide with harpoons
 or his head with fishing spears?
 8 If you lay a hand on him,
 you will remember the struggle and
 never do it again!
 9 Any hope of subduing him is false;
 the mere sight of him is overpowering.
 10 No one is fierce enough to rouse him.
 Who then is able to stand against me?
 11 Who has a claim against me that I must
 pay?
 Everything under heaven belongs to me.
 12 “I will not fail to speak of his limbs,
 his strength and his graceful form.

13 Who can strip off his outer coat?
 Who would approach him with a bridle?
 14 Who dares open the doors of his mouth,
 ringed about with his fearsome teeth?
 15 His back has rows of shields
 tightly sealed together;
 16 each is so close to the next
 that no air can pass between.
 17 They are joined fast to one another;
 they cling together and cannot be
 parted.
 18 His snorting throws out flashes of light;
 his eyes are like the rays of dawn.
 19 Firebrands stream from his mouth;
 sparks of fire shoot out.
 20 Smoke pours from his nostrils
 as from a boiling pot over a fire of
 reeds.
 21 His breath sets coals ablaze,
 and flames dart from his mouth.
 22 Strength resides in his neck;
 dismay goes before him.
 23 The folds of his flesh are tightly joined;
 they are firm and immovable.
 24 His chest is hard as rock,
 hard as a lower millstone.
 25 When he rises up, the mighty are
 terrified;
 they retreat before his thrashing.
 26 The sword that reaches him has no effect,
 nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin.
 27 Iron he treats like straw
 and bronze like rotten wood.
 28 Arrows do not make him flee;
 slingstones are like chaff to him.
 29 A club seems to him but a piece of straw;
 he laughs at the rattling of the lance.
 30 His undersides are jagged potsherds,
 leaving a trail in the mud like a
 threshing sledge.
 31 He makes the depths churn like a boiling
 caldron
 and stirs up the sea like a pot of
 ointment.
 32 Behind him he leaves a glistening wake;
 one would think the deep had white hair.
 33 Nothing on earth is his equal—
 a creature without fear.
 34 He looks down on all that are haughty;
 he is king over all that are proud.”

Job 42

1 Then Job replied to the LORD :
2 “I know that you can do all things;
no plan of yours can be thwarted.
3 You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my
counsel without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke
of things I did not understand, things too
wonderful for me to know.

4 “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.’
5 My ears had heard of you
but now my eyes have seen you.
6 Therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes.”

PSALM 19: 1-6 [NIV]

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,
which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is hidden from its heat.

MATTHEW 5:44-45, 48 [NIV]

[44] But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [45] that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous... [48] Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

MATTHEW 6:26-30 [NKJV]

[26] Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? [27] Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? [28] “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; [29] and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [30] Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”

ROMANS 1:19-21 [NKJV]

[19] because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. [20] For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, [21] falls on evil as well as good?

ACTS 14:8-18 [NIV]

[8] In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. [9] He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed [10] and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. [11] When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” [12] Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. [13] The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

[14] But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: [15] “Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. [16] In the past, he let all nations go their own way. [17] Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” [18] Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

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PASSAGES FROM JEWISH THINKERS ABOUT DESIGN IN NATURE

Below are selected passages from Jewish writers outside the Bible who raise the issue of design in nature.

1. WISDOM OF SOLOMON 13:1-9 [NAB]

The Wisdom of Solomon was likely authored at least a century before the birth of Jesus by a Jew living in Alexandria.

- 1 For all men were by nature foolish who were in ignorance of God, and who from the good things seen did not succeed in knowing him who is, and from studying the works did not discern the artisan;
- 2 But either fire, or wind, or the swift air, or the circuit of the stars, or the mighty water, or the luminaries of heaven, the governors of the world, they considered gods.
- 3 Now if out of joy in their beauty they thought them gods, let them know how far more excellent is the Lord than these; for the original source of beauty fashioned them.
- 4 Or if they were struck by their might and energy, let them from these things realize how much more powerful is he who made them.
- 5 For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen.
- 6 But yet, for these the blame is less; For they indeed have gone astray perhaps, though they seek God and wish to find him.
- 7 For they search busily among his works, but are distracted by what they see, because the things seen are fair.
- 8 But again, not even these are pardonable.
- 9 For if they so far succeeded in knowledge that they could speculate about the world, how did they not more quickly find its LORD?

2. PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *ON THE CREATION*

Philo of Alexandria was an influential Jewish thinker and writer who lived from around 20 BC to 50 AD. He wrote an important commentary on the creation account in Genesis. This selection is from On the Creation, I.7-11.

Some men, admiring the world itself rather than the Creator of the world, have represented it as existing without any maker, and eternal; and as impiously as falsely have represented God as existing in a state of complete inactivity, while it would have been right on the other hand to marvel at the might of God as the creator and father of all, and to admire the world in a degree not exceeding the bounds of moderation.

But Moses, who had early reached the very summits of philosophy, and who had learnt from the oracles of God the most numerous and important of the principles of nature, was well aware that it is indispensable that in all existing things there must be an active cause, and a passive

subject; and that the active cause is the intellect of the universe... while the passive subject is something inanimate and incapable of motion by any intrinsic power of its own, but having been set in motion, and fashioned, and endowed with life by the intellect, became transformed into that most perfect work, this world.

And those who describe it as being uncreated, do, without being aware of it, cut off the most useful and necessary of all the qualities which tend to produce piety, namely, providence: for reason proves that the father and creator has a care for that which has been created; for a father is anxious for the life of his children, and a workman aims at the duration of his works, and employs every device imaginable to ward off everything that is pernicious or injurious, and is desirous by every means in his power to provide everything which is useful or profitable for them.

But with regard to that which has not been created, there is no feeling of interest as if it were his own in the breast of him who has not created it. It is then a pernicious doctrine, and one for which no one should contend, to establish a system in this world, such as anarchy is in a city, so that it should have no superintendant, or regulator, or judge, by whom everything must be managed and governed.

3. JOSEPHUS, *AGAINST APION* (BOOK II)

Josephus (37-c. 100 AD) was an influential Jewish historian and apologist in the first century, AD. He eventually became a Roman citizen.

23. ...The first command is concerning God, and affirms that God contains all things, and is a Being every way perfect and happy, self-sufficient, and supplying all other beings; the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things. He is manifest in his works and benefits, and more conspicuous than any other being whatsoever; but as to his form and magnitude, he is most obscure. All materials, let them be ever so costly, are unworthy to compose an image for him, and all arts are unartful to express the notion we ought to have of him. We can neither see nor think of any thing like him, nor is it agreeable to piety to form a resemblance of him. We see his works, the light, the heaven, the earth, the sun and the moon, the waters, the generations of animals, the productions of fruits. These things hath God made, not with hands, nor with labor, nor as wanting the assistance of any to cooperate with him; but as his will resolved they should be made and be good also, they were made and became good immediately. All men ought to follow this Being, and to worship him in the exercise of virtue; for this way of worship of God is the most holy of all others.

PASSAGES FROM THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS ABOUT DESIGN IN NATURE

Below are some of the most important passages from the writings of the Early Church Fathers that discuss how God's design can be clearly discerned in nature. These selections come from The Early Church Fathers collection edited by Philip Schaff et. al.

1. THEOPHILUS, *THEOPHILUS TO AUTOLYCUS* (BOOK I)

Theophilus (c. 115-188 AD) was Bishop of Antioch.

Chapter IV.—Attributes of God.

And He is without beginning, because He is unbegotten; and He is unchangeable, because He is immortal. And he is called God [*Theos*] on account of His having placed [*tetheikenai*] all things on security afforded by Himself; and on account of [*theein*], for *theein* means running, and moving, and being active, and nourishing, and foreseeing, and governing, and making all things alive. But he is Lord, because He rules over the universe; Father, because he is before all things; Fashioner and Maker, because He is creator and maker of the universe; the Highest, because of His being above all; and Almighty, because He Himself rules and embraces all. For the heights of heaven, and the depths of the abysses, and the ends of the earth, are in His hand, and there is no place of His rest. For the heavens are His work, the earth is His creation, the sea is His handiwork; man is His formation and His image; sun, moon, and stars are His elements, made for signs, and seasons, and days, and years, that they may serve and be slaves to man; and all things God has made out of things that were not into things that are, in order that through His works His greatness may be known and understood.

Chapter V.—The Invisible God Perceived Through His Works.

For as the soul in man is not seen, being invisible to men, but is perceived through the motion of the body, so God cannot indeed be seen by human eyes, but is beheld and perceived through His providence and works. For, in like manner, as any person, when he sees a ship on the sea rigged and in sail, and making for the harbor, will no doubt infer that there is a pilot in her who is steering her; so we must perceive that God is the governor [pilot] of the whole universe, though He be not visible to the eyes of the flesh, since He is incomprehensible. For if a man cannot look upon the sun, though it be a very small heavenly body, on account of its exceeding heat and power, how shall not a mortal man be much more unable to face the glory of God, which is unutterable? For as the pomegranate, with the rind containing it, has within it many cells and compartments which are separated by tissues, and has also many seeds dwelling in it, so the whole creation is contained by the spirit of God, and the containing spirit is along with the creation contained by the hand of God. As, therefore, the seed of the pomegranate, dwelling inside, cannot see what is outside the rind, itself being within; so neither can man, who along with the whole creation is enclosed by the hand of God, behold God. Then again, an earthly king is believed to exist, even though he be not seen by all; for he is recognized by his laws and

ordinances, and authorities, and forces, and statues; and are you unwilling that God should be recognized by His works and mighty deeds?

Chapter VI.—God is Known by His Works.

Consider, O man, His works,—the timely rotation of the seasons, and the changes of temperature; the regular march of the stars; the well-ordered course of days and nights, and months, and years; the various beauty of seeds, and plants, and fruits; and the divers species of quadrupeds, and birds, and reptiles, and fishes, both of the rivers and of the sea; or consider the instinct implanted in these animals to beget and rear offspring, not for their own profit, but for the use of man; and the providence with which God provides nourishment for all flesh, or the subjection in which He has ordained that all things subserve mankind. Consider, too, the flowing of sweet fountains and never-failing rivers, and the seasonable supply of dews, and showers, and rains; the manifold movement of the heavenly bodies, the morning star rising and heralding the approach of the perfect luminary; and the constellation of Pleiades, and Orion, and Arcturus, and the orbit of the other stars that circle through the heavens, all of which the manifold wisdom of God has called by names of their own. He is God alone who made light out of darkness, and brought forth light from His treasures, and formed the chambers of the south wind, and the treasure-houses of the deep, and the bounds of the seas, and the treasuries of snows and hail-storms, collecting the waters in the storehouses of the deep, and the darkness in His treasures, and bringing forth the sweet, and desirable, and pleasant light out of His treasures; “who causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth: He maketh lightnings for the rain;” who sends forth His thunder to terrify, and foretells by the lightning the peal of the thunder, that no soul may faint with the sudden shock; and who so moderates the violence of the lightning as it flashes out of heaven, that it does not consume the earth; for, if the lightning were allowed all its power, it would burn up the earth; and were the thunder allowed all its power, it would overthrow all the works that are therein.

2. ATHENAGORAS, *A PLEA FOR THE CHRISTIANS*

Athenagoras of Athens (c. 133-190 AD) was a Christian philosopher and apologist.

Chapter XV.—The Christians Distinguish God from Matter.

...For as is the potter and the clay (matter being the clay, and the artist the potter), so is God, the Framers of the world, and matter, which is subservient to Him for the purposes of His art. But as the clay cannot become vessels of itself without art, so neither did matter, which is capable of taking all forms, receive, apart from God the Framers, distinction and shape and order. And as we do not hold the pottery of more worth than him who made it, nor the vessels of glass and gold than him who wrought them; but if there is anything about them elegant in art we praise the artificer, and it is he who reaps the glory of the vessels: even so with matter and God—the glory and honour of the orderly arrangement of the world belongs of right not to matter, but to God, the Framers of matter. So that, if we were to regard the various forms of matter as gods, we should seem to be without any sense of the true God, because we should be putting the things which are dissoluble and perishable on a level with that which is eternal.

3. IRENAEUS, *AGAINST HERESIES* (BOOK I)

Irenaeus (c. 130-200) was Bishop of Lyons.

Chapter IX.—There is but one Creator of the world, God the Father: this the constant belief of the Church.

That God is the Creator of the world is accepted even by those very persons who in many ways speak against Him, and yet acknowledge Him, styling Him the Creator...—all men, in fact, consenting to this truth: the ancients on their part preserving with special care, from the tradition of the first-formed man, this persuasion, while they celebrate the praises of one God, the Maker of heaven and earth; others, again, after them, being reminded of this fact by the prophets of God, while the very heathen learned it from creation itself. For even creation reveals Him who formed it, and the very work made suggests Him who made it, and the world manifests Him who ordered it. The Universal Church, moreover, through the whole world, has received this tradition from the apostles.

4. DIONYSIUS, *THE BOOKS ON NATURE* (PART II)

Dionysius (200-265 AD) was Bishop of Alexandria.

I. In Opposition to Those of the School of Epicurus Who Deny the Existence of a Providence, and Refer the Constitution of the Universe to Atomic Bodies.

Is the universe one coherent whole, as it seems to be in our own judgment, as well as in that of the wisest of the Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Pythagoras, and the Stoics and Heraclitus? or is it a duality, as some may possibly have conjectured? or is it indeed something manifold and infinite, as has been the opinion of certain others who, with a variety of mad speculations and fanciful usages of terms, have sought to divide and resolve the essential matter of the universe, and lay down the position that it is infinite and unoriginated, and without the sway of Providence? For there are those who, giving the name of atoms to certain imperishable and most minute bodies which are supposed to be infinite in number, and positing also the existence of a certain vacant space of an unlimited vastness, allege that these atoms, as they are borne along casually in the void, and clash all fortuitously against each other in an unregulated whirl, and become commingled one with another in a multitude of forms, enter into combination with each other, and thus gradually form this world and all objects in it; yea, more, that they construct infinite worlds. This was the opinion of Epicurus and Democritus; only they differed in one point, in so far as the former supposed these atoms to be all most minute and consequently imperceptible, while Democritus held that there were also some among them of a very large size. But they both hold that such atoms do exist, and that they are so called on account of their indissoluble consistency. There are some, again, who give the name of atoms to certain bodies which are indivisible into parts, while they are themselves parts of the universe, out of which in their undivided state all things are made up, and into which they are dissolved again. And the allegation is, that Diodorus was the person who gave them their names as bodies indivisible into parts. But it is also said that Heraclides attached another name to them, and called them “weights;” and from him the physician Asclepiades also derived that name.

II. A Refutation of This Dogma on the Ground of Familiar Human Analogies.

How, shall we bear with these men who assert that all those wise, and consequently also noble, constructions (in the universe) are only the works of common chance? those objects, I

mean, of which each taken by itself as it is made, and the whole system collectively, were seen to be good by Him by whose command they came into existence. For, as it is said, “God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.” But truly these men do not reflect on the analogies even of small familiar things which might come under their observation at any time, and from which they might learn that no object of any utility, and fitted to be serviceable, is made without design or by mere chance, but is wrought by skill of hand, and is contrived so as to meet its proper use. And when the object falls out of service and becomes useless, then it also begins to break up indeterminately, and to decompose and dissipate its materials in every casual and unregulated way, just as the wisdom by which it was skillfully constructed at first no longer controls and maintains it.

For a cloak, for example, cannot be made without the weaver, as if the warp could be set aright and the woof could be entwined with it by their own spontaneous action; while, on the other hand, if it is once worn out, its tattered rags are flung aside. Again, when a house or a city is built, it does not take on its stones, as if some of them placed themselves spontaneously upon the foundations, and others lifted themselves up on the several layers, but the builder carefully disposes the skillfully prepared stones in their proper positions; while if the structure happens once to give way, the stones are separated and cast down and scattered about. And so, too, when a ship is built, the keel does not lay itself, neither does the mast erect itself in the centre, nor do all the other timbers take up their positions casually and by their own motion. Nor, again, do the so-called hundred beams in the wain fit themselves spontaneously to the vacant spaces they severally light on. But the carpenter in both cases puts the materials together in the right way and at the right time. And if the ship goes to sea and is wrecked, or if the wain drives along on land and is shattered, their timbers are broken up and cast abroad anywhere,—those of the former by the waves, and those of the latter by the violence of the impetus.

In like manner, then, we might with all propriety say also to these men, that those atoms of theirs, which remain idle and unmanipulated and useless, are introduced vainly. Let them, accordingly, seek for themselves to see into what is beyond the reach of sight, and conceive what is beyond the range of conception; unlike him who in these terms confesses to God that things like these had been shown him only by God Himself: “Mine eyes did see Thy work, being till then imperfect.” But when they assert now that all those things of grace and beauty, which they declare to be textures finely wrought out of atoms, are fabricated spontaneously by these bodies without either wisdom or perception in them, who can endure to hear them talk in such terms of those unregulated atoms, than which even the spider, that plies its proper craft of itself, is gifted with more sagacity?

III. A Refutation on the Ground of the Constitution of the Universe.

Or who can bear to hear it maintained, that this mighty habitation, which is constituted of heaven and earth, and which is called “Cosmos” on account of the magnitude and the plenitude of the wisdom which has been brought to bear upon it, has been established in all its order and beauty by those atoms which hold their course devoid of order and beauty, and that that same state of disorder has grown into this true Cosmos, Order? Or who can believe that those regular movements and courses are the products of a certain unregulated impetus? Or who can allow that the perfect concord subsisting among the celestial bodies derives its harmony from instruments destitute both of concord and harmony? Or, again, if there is but one and the same substance in all things, and if there is the same incorruptible nature in all,—the only elements of difference being, as they aver, size and figure,—how comes it that there are some bodies divine and perfect, and eternal, as they would phrase it, or lasting, as some one may prefer to express it; and among these some that are visible and others that are invisible,—the visible including such as sun, and moon,

and stars, and earth, and water; and the invisible including gods, and demons, and spirits? For the existence of such they cannot possibly deny however desirous to do so.

And again, there are other objects that are long-lived, both animals and plants. As to animals, there are, for example, among birds, as they say, the eagle, the raven, and the phoenix; and among creatures living on land, there are the stag, and the elephant, and the dragon; and among aquatic creatures there are the whales, and such like monsters of the deep. And as to trees, there are the palm, and the oak, and the persea; and among trees, too, there are some that are evergreens, of which kind fourteen have been reckoned up by some one; and there are others that only bloom for a certain season, and then shed their leaves. And there are other objects, again—which indeed constitute the vast mass of all which either grow or are begotten—that have an early death and a brief life. And among these is man himself, as a certain holy scripture says of him: “Man that is born of woman is of few days.” Well, but I suppose they will reply that the varying conjunctions of the atoms account fully for differences so great in the matter of duration. For it is maintained that there are some things that are compressed together by them, and firmly interlaced, so that they become closely compacted bodies, and consequently exceedingly hard to break up; while there are others in which more or less the conjunction of the atoms is of a looser and weaker nature, so that either quickly or after some time they separate themselves from their orderly constitution. And, again, there are some bodies made up of atoms of a definite kind and a certain common figure, while there are others made up of diverse atoms diversely disposed.

But who, then, is the sagacious discriminator, that brings certain atoms into collocation, and separates others; and marshals some in such wise as to form the sun, and others in such a way as to originate the moon, and adapts all in natural fitness, and in accordance with the proper constitution of each star? For surely neither would those solar atoms, with their peculiar size and kind, and with their special mode of collocation, ever have reduced themselves so as to effect the production of a moon; nor, on the other hand, would the conjunctions of these lunar atoms ever have developed into a sun. And as certainly neither would Arcturus, resplendent as he is, ever boast his having the atoms possessed by Lucifer, nor would the Pleiades glory in being constituted of those of Orion. For well has Paul expressed the distinction when he says: “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.”

And if the coalition effected among them has been an unintelligent one, as is the case with soulless objects, then they must needs have had some sagacious artificer; and if their union has been one without the determination of will, and only of necessity, as is the case with irrational objects, then some skilful leader must have brought them together and taken them under his charge. And if they have linked themselves together spontaneously, for a spontaneous work, then some admirable architect must have apportioned their work for them, and assumed the superintendence among them; or there must have been one to do with them as the general does who loves order and discipline, and who does not leave his army in an irregular condition, or suffer all things to go on confusedly, but marshals the cavalry in their proper succession, and disposes the heavy-armed infantry in their due array, and the javelin-men by themselves, and the archers separately, and the slingers in like manner, and sets each force in its appropriate position, in order that all those equipped in the same way may engage together...

...But inconsiderate men do not see even things that are apparent, and certainly they are far from being cognisant of things that are unapparent. For they do not seem even to have any notion of those regulated risings and settings of the heavenly bodies,—those of the sun, with all their wondrous glory, no less than those of the others; nor do they appear to make due application of the aids furnished through these to men, such as the day that rises clear for man’s work, and the night that overshadows earth for man’s rest. “For man,” it is said, “goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour, until the evening.” Neither do they consider that other revolution, by which the sun

makes out for us determinate times, and convenient seasons, and regular successions, directed by those atoms of which it consists. But even though men like these—and miserable men they are, however they may believe themselves to be righteous—may choose not to admit it, there is a mighty Lord that made the sun, and gave it the impetus for its course by His words. O ye blind ones, do these atoms of yours bring you the winter season and the rains, in order that the earth may yield food for you, and for all creatures living on it? Do they introduce summertime, too, in order that ye may gather their fruits from the trees for your enjoyment? And why, then, do ye not worship these atoms, and offer sacrifices to them as the guardians of earth's fruits? Thankless surely are ye, in not setting solemnly apart for them even the most scanty first-fruits of that abundant bounty which ye receive from them.

...Moreover, those stars which form a community so multitudinous and various, which these erratic and ever self-dispersing atoms have constituted, have marked off by a kind of covenant the tracts for their several possessions, portioning these out like colonies and governments, but without the presidency of any founder or house-master; and with pledged fealty and in peace they respect the laws of vicinity with their neighbors, and abstain from passing beyond the boundaries which they received at the outset, just as if they enjoyed the legislative administration of true princes in the atoms. Nevertheless these atoms exercise no rule. For how could these, that are themselves nothing, do that? But listen to the divine oracles: "The works of the Lord are in judgment; from the beginning, and from His making of them, He disposed the parts thereof. He garnished His works for ever, and their principles unto their generations."

...what phalanx ever traversed the plain in such perfect order, no trooper outmarching the others, or falling out of rank, or obstructing the course, or suffering himself to be distanced by his comrades in the array, as is the case with that steady advance in regular file, as it were, and with close-set shields, which is presented by this serried and unbroken and undisturbed and unobstructed progress of the hosts of the stars? Albeit by side inclinations and flank movements certain of their revolutions become less clear. Yet, however that may be, they assuredly always keep their appointed periods, and again bear onward determinately to the positions from which they have severally risen, as if they made that their deliberate study. Wherefore let these notable anatomizers of atoms, these dividers of the indivisible, these compounders of the uncompoundable, these adepts in the apprehension of the infinite, tell us whence comes this circular march and course of the heavenly bodies, in which it is not any single combination of atoms that merely chances all unexpectedly to swing itself round in this way; but it is one vast circular choir that moves thus, ever equally and concordantly, and whirls in these orbits. And whence comes it that this mighty multitude of fellow-travelers, all unmarshalled by any captain, all ungifted with any determination of will, and all unendowed with any knowledge of each other, have nevertheless held their course in perfect harmony? Surely, well has the prophet ranked this matter among things which are impossible and undemonstrable,—namely, that two strangers should walk together. For he says, "Shall two come to the same lodging unless they know each other?"

IV. A Refutation of the Same on the Grounds of the Human Constitution.

Further, those men understand neither themselves nor what is proper to themselves. For if any of the leaders in this impious doctrine only considered what manner of person he is himself, and whence he comes, he would surely be led to a wise decision, like one who has obtained understanding of himself, and would say, not to these atoms, but to his Father and Maker, "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me." And he would take up, too, this wonderful account of his formation as it has been given by one of old: "Hast Thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me as cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit."

For of what quantity and of what origin were the atoms which the father of Epicurus gave forth from himself when he begat Epicurus? And how, when they were received within his mother's womb, did they coalesce, and take form and figure? and how were they put in motion and made to increase? And how did that little seed of generation draw together the many atoms that were to constitute Epicurus, and change some of them into skin and flesh for a covering, and make bone of others for erectness and strength, and form sinews of others for compact contexture? And how did it frame and adapt the many other members and parts—heart and bowels, and organs of sense, some within and some without—by which the body is made a thing of life?

For of all these things there is not one either idle or useless: not even the meanest of them—the hair, or the nails, or such like—is so; but all have their service to do, and all their contribution to make, some of them to the soundness of bodily constitution, and others of them to beauty of appearance. For Providence cares not only for the useful, but also for the seasonable and beautiful. Thus the hair is a kind of protection and covering for the whole head, and the beard is a seemly ornament for the philosopher. It was Providence, then, that formed the constitution of the whole body of man, in all its necessary parts, and imposed on all its members their due connection with each other, and measured out for them their liberal supplies from the universal resources. And the most prominent of these show clearly, even to the uninstructed, by the proof of personal experience, the value and service attaching to them: the head, for example, in the position of supremacy, and the senses set like a guard about the brain, as the ruler in the citadel; and the advancing eyes, and the reporting ears; and the taste which, as it were, is the tribute-gatherer; and the smell, which tracks and searches out its objects: and the touch, which manipulates all put under it.

Hence we shall only run over in a summary way, at present, some few of the works of an all-wise Providence; and after a little we shall, if God grant it, go over them more minutely, when we direct our discourse toward one who has the repute of greater learning. So, then, we have the ministry of the hands, by which all kinds of works are wrought, and all skilful professions practised, and which have all their various faculties furnished them, with a view to the discharge of one common function; and we have the shoulders, with their capacity for bearing burdens; and the fingers, with their power of grasping; and the elbows, with their faculty of bending, by which they can turn inwardly, upon the body, or take an outward inclination, so as to be able either to draw objects toward the body, or to thrust them away from it. We have also the service of the feet, by which the whole terrestrial creation is made to come under our power, the earth itself is traversed thereby, the sea is made navigable, the rivers are crossed, and intercourse is established for all with all things. The belly, too, is the storehouse of meats, with all its parts arranged in their proper collocations, so that it apportions for itself the right measure of aliment, and ejects what is over and above that.

And so is it with all the other things by which manifestly the due administration of the constitution of man is wisely secured. Of all these, the intelligent and the unintelligent alike enjoy the same use; but they have not the same comprehension of them. For there are some who refer this whole economy to a power which they conceive to be a true divinity, and which they apprehend as at once the highest intelligence in all things, and the best benefactor to themselves, believing that this economy is all the work of a wisdom and a might which are superior to every other, and in themselves truly divine. And there are others who aimlessly attribute this whole structure of most marvelous beauty to chance and fortuitous coincidence. And in addition to these, there are also certain physicians, who, having made a more effective examination into all these things, and having investigated with utmost accuracy the disposition of the inward parts in especial, have been struck with astonishment at the results of their inquiry, and have been led to deify nature itself. The notions of these men we shall review afterwards, as far as we may be able, though we may only touch the surface of the subject. Meantime, to deal with this matter generally

and summarily, let me ask who constructed this whole tabernacle of ours, so lofty, erect, graceful, sensitive, mobile, active, and apt for all things? Was it, as they say, the irrational multitude of atoms?

Nay, these, by their conjunctions, could not mould even an image of clay, neither could they hew and polish a statue of stone; nor could they cast and finish an idol of silver or gold; but arts and handicrafts calculated for such operations have been discovered by men who fabricate these objects. And if, even in these, representations and models cannot be made without the aid of wisdom, how can the genuine and original patterns of these copies have come into existence spontaneously? And whence have come the soul, and the intelligence, and the reason, which are born with the philosopher? Has he gathered these from those atoms which are destitute alike of soul, and intelligence, and reason? and has each of these atoms inspired him with some appropriate conception and notion? And are we to suppose that the wisdom of man was made up by these atoms, as the myth of Hesiod tells us that Pandora was fashioned by the gods? Then shall the Greeks have, to give up speaking of the various species of poetry, and music, and astronomy, and geometry, and all the other arts and sciences, as the inventions and instructions of the gods, and shall have to allow that these atoms are the only muses with skill and wisdom for all subjects. For this theogony, constructed of atoms by Epicurus, is indeed something extraneous to the infinite worlds of order, and finds its refuge in the infinite disorder.

5. LACTANTIUS, *THE DIVINE INSTITUTES* (BOOK I)

Known as the "Christian Cicero," Lactantius (c. 240-320 AD) was a professor of rhetoric who converted to Christianity. He influenced Emperor Constantine's policy of religious toleration as well as becoming tutor to Constantine's son.

Chapter II

For there is no one so uncivilized, and of such an uncultivated disposition, who, when he raises his eyes to heaven, although he knows not by the providence of what God all this visible universe is governed, does not understand from the very magnitude of the objects, from their motion, arrangement, constancy, usefulness, beauty, and temperament, that there is some providence, and that that which exists with wonderful method must have been prepared by some greater intelligence.

Chapter IX

But now the conclusion, with which Tully [Cicero] finished the sentiment, is much more absurd. "But if matter," he says, "was not made by God, the earth indeed, and water, and air, and fire, were not made by God." How skillfully he avoided the danger! For he stated the former point as though it required no proof, whereas it was much more uncertain than that on account of which the statement was made. If matter, he says, was not made by God, the world was not made by God. He preferred to draw a false inference from that which is false, than a true one from that which is true. And though uncertain things ought to be proved from those which are certain, he drew a proof from an uncertainty, to overthrow that which was certain. For, that the world was made by divine providence (not to mention Trismegistus, who proclaims this; not to mention the verses of the Sibyls, who make the same announcement; not to mention the prophets, who with one impulse and with harmonious voice bear witness that the world was made, and that it was the workmanship of God), even the philosophers almost universally agree; for this is the opinion of the Pythagoreans, the Stoics, and the Peripatetics, who are the chief of every sect. In short, from those first seven wise men, even to Socrates and Plato, it was held as an acknowledged and

undoubted fact; until many ages afterwards the crazy Epicurus lived, who alone ventured to deny that which is most evident, doubtless through the desire of discovering novelties, that he might found a sect in his own name. And because he could find out nothing new, that he might still appear to disagree with the others, he wished to overthrow old opinions. But in this all the philosophers who snarled around him, refuted him. It is more certain, therefore, that the world was arranged by providence, than that matter was collected by providence. Wherefore he ought not to have supposed that the world was not made by divine providence, because its matter was not made by divine providence; but because the world was made by divine providence, he ought to have concluded that matter also was made by the Deity. For it is more credible that matter was made by God, because He is all-powerful, than that the world was not made by God, because nothing can be made without mind, intelligence, and design...

If you had been brought up in a well-built and ornamented house, and had never seen a workshop, would you have supposed that that house was not built by man, because you did not know how it was built? You would assuredly ask the same question about the house which you now ask about the world—by what hands, with what implements, man had contrived such great works; and especially if you should see large stones, immense blocks, vast columns, the whole work lofty and elevated, would not these things appear to you to exceed the measure of human strength, because you would not know that these things were made not so much by strength as by skill and ingenuity?

But if man, in whom nothing is perfect, nevertheless effects more by skill than his feeble strength would permit, what reason is there why it should appear to you incredible, when it is alleged that the world was made by God, in whom, since He is perfect, wisdom can have no limit, and strength no measure?

6. ATHANASIUS, *CONTRA GENTES* (PART III)

Athanasius (c. 296-373) was Archbishop of Alexandria.

§35. Creation a revelation of God; especially in the order and harmony pervading the whole.

For God, being good and loving to mankind, and caring for the souls made by Him,—since He is by nature invisible and incomprehensible, having His being beyond all created existence, for which reason the race of mankind was likely to miss the way to the knowledge of Him, since they are made out of nothing while He is unmade,—for this cause God by His own Word gave the Universe the Order it has, in order that since He is by nature invisible, men might be enabled to know Him at any rate by His works. For often the artist even when not seen is known by his works.

2. And as they tell of Phidias the Sculptor that his works of art by their symmetry and by the proportion of their parts betray Phidias to those who see them although he is not there, so by the order of the Universe one ought to perceive God its maker and artificer, even though He be not seen with the bodily eyes. For God did not take His stand upon His invisible nature (let none plead that as an excuse) and leave Himself utterly unknown to men; but as I said above, He so ordered Creation that although He is by nature invisible He may yet be known by His works.

3. And I say this not on my own authority, but on the strength of what I learned from men who have spoken of God, among them Paul, who thus writes to the Romans: “for the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made;” while to the Lycaonians he speaks out and says: “We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, to turn from these vain things unto a Living God, Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is, Who in the generations gone by

suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.”

4. For who that sees the circle of heaven and the course of the sun and the moon, and the positions and movements of the other stars, as they take place in opposite and different directions, while yet in their difference all with one accord observe a consistent order, can resist the conclusion that these are not ordered by themselves, but have a maker distinct from themselves who orders them? or who that sees the sun rising by day and the moon shining by night, and waning and waxing without variation exactly according to the same number of days, and some of the stars running their courses and with orbits various and manifold, while others move without wandering, can fail to perceive that they certainly have a creator to guide them?

§36. This the more striking, if we consider the opposing forces out of which this order is produced.

Who that sees things of opposite nature combined, and in concordant harmony, as for example fire mingled with cold, and dry with wet, and that not in mutual conflict, but making up a single body, as it were homogeneous, can resist the inference that there is One external to these things that has united them? Who that sees winter giving place to spring and spring to summer and summer to autumn, and that these things contrary by nature (for the one chills, the other burns, the one nourishes, the other destroys), yet all make up a balanced result beneficial to mankind,—can fail to perceive that there is One higher than they, Who balances and guides them all, even if he see Him not?

2. Who that sees the clouds supported in air, and the weight of the waters bound up in the clouds, can but perceive Him that binds them up and has ordered these things so? Or who that sees the earth, heaviest of all things by nature, fixed upon the waters, and remaining unmoved upon what is by nature mobile, will fail to understand that there is One that has made and ordered it, even God? Who that sees the earth bringing forth fruits in due season, and the rains from heaven, and the flow of rivers, and springing up of wells, and the birth of animals from unlike parents, and that these things take place not at all times but at determinate seasons,—and in general, among things mutually unlike and contrary, the balanced and uniform order to which they conform,—can resist the inference that there is one Power which orders and administers them, ordaining things well as it thinks fit?

4. For left to themselves they could not subsist or ever be able to appear, on account of their mutual contrariety of nature. For water is by nature heavy, and tends to flow downwards, while the clouds are light and belong to the class of things which tend to soar and mount upwards. And yet we see water, heavy as it is, borne aloft in the clouds. And again, earth is very heavy, while water on the other hand is relatively light; and yet the heavier is supported upon the lighter, and the earth does not sink, but remains immoveable. And male and female are not the same, while yet they unite in one, and the result is the generation from both of an animal like them. And to cut the matter short, cold is opposite to heat, and wet fights with dry, and yet they come together and are not at variance, but they agree, and produce as their result a single body, and the birth of everything...

§38. The Unity of God shewn by the Harmony of the order of Nature.

Since then, there is everywhere not disorder but order, proportion and not disproportion, not disarray but arrangement, and that in an order perfectly harmonious, we needs must infer and be led to perceive the Master that put together and compacted all things, and produced harmony in them. For though He be not seen with the eyes, yet from the order and harmony of things contrary it is possible to perceive their Ruler, Arranger, and King.

2. For in like manner as if we saw a city, consisting of many and diverse people, great and small, rich and poor, old and young, male and female, in an orderly condition, and its inhabitants,

while different from one another, yet at unity among themselves, and not the rich set against the poor, the great against the small, nor the young against the old, but all at peace in the enjoyment of equal rights,—if we saw this, the inference surely follows that the presence of a ruler enforces concord, even if we do not see him; (for disorder is a sign of absence of rule, while order shews the governing authority: for when we see the mutual harmony of the members in the body, that the eye does not strive with the hearing, nor is the hand at variance with the foot, but that each accomplishes its service without variance, we perceive from this that certainly there is a soul in the body that governs these members, though we see it not); so in the order and harmony of the Universe, we needs must perceive God the governor of it all, and that He is one and not many.

3. So then this order of its arrangement, and the concordant harmony of all things, shews that the Word, its Ruler and Governor, is not many, but One. For if there were more than one Ruler of Creation, such an universal order would not be maintained, but all things would fall into confusion because of their plurality, each one biasing the whole to his own will, and striving with the other. For just as we said that polytheism was atheism, so it follows that the rule of more than one is the rule of none. For each one would cancel the rule of the other, and none would appear ruler, but there would be anarchy everywhere. But where no ruler is, there disorder follows of course.

4. And conversely, the single order and concord of the many and diverse shews that the ruler too is one. For just as though one were to hear from a distance a lyre, composed of many diverse strings, and marvel at the concord of its symphony, in that its sound is composed neither of low notes exclusively, nor high nor intermediate only, but all combine their sounds in equal balance,—and would not fail to perceive from this that the lyre was not playing itself, nor even being struck by more persons than one, but that there was one musician, even if he did not see him, who by his skill combined the sound of each string into the tuneful symphony; so, the order of the whole universe being perfectly harmonious, and there being no strife of the higher against the lower or the lower against the higher, and all things making up one order, it is consistent to think that the Ruler and King of all Creation is one and not many, Who by His own light illumines and gives movement to all...

§47. Necessity of a return to the Word if our corrupt nature is to be restored.

Who then, who can declare the Father by number, so as to discover the powers of His Word? For like as He is the Father's Word and Wisdom, so too condescending to created things, He becomes, to impart the knowledge and apprehension of Him that begot Him, His very Brightness and very Life, and the Door, and the Shepherd, and the Way, and King and Governor, and Saviour over all, and Light, and Giver of Life, and Providence over all. Having then such a Son begotten of Himself, good, and Creator, the Father did not hide Him out of the sight of His creatures, but even day by day reveals Him to all by means of the organisation and life of all things, which is His work.

2. But in and through Him He reveals Himself also, as the Saviour says: "I in the Father and the Father in Me:" so that it follows that the Word is in Him that begat Him, and that He that is begotten lives eternally with the Father. But this being so, and nothing being outside Him, but both heaven and earth and all that in them is being dependent on Him, yet men in their folly have set aside the knowledge and service of Him, and honoured things that are not instead of things that are: and instead of the real and true God deified things that were not, "serving the creature rather than the Creator," thus involving themselves in foolishness and impiety.

3. For it is just as if one were to admire the works more than the workman, and being awestruck at the public works in the city, were to make light of their builder, or as if one were to praise a musical instrument but to despise the man who made and tuned it. Foolish and sadly disabled in eyesight! For how else had they known the building, or ship, or lyre, had not the ship-builder made it, the architect built it, or the musician fashioned it?

4. As then he that reasons in such a way is mad, and beyond all madness, even so affected in mind, I think, are those who do not recognise God or worship His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour of all, through Whom the Father orders, and holds together all things, and exercises providence over the Universe; having faith and piety towards Whom, my Christ-loving friend, be of good cheer and of good hope, because immortality and the kingdom of heaven is the fruit of faith and devotion towards Him, if only the soul be adorned according to His laws. For just as for them who walk after His example, the prize is life everlasting, so for those who walk the opposite way, and not that of virtue, there is great shame, and peril without pardon in the day of judgment, because although they knew the way of truth their acts were contrary to their knowledge.

7. CHRYSOSTOM, *HOMILIES ON ROMANS* (HOMILY 3)

Archbishop of Constantinople at the beginning of the fifth century, John Chrysostom (347?-407 AD) is known as the greatest of the Greek church fathers.

Ver. 19. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them."

But this glory they invested stocks and stones with. As then he which is entrusted with the goods of the king, and is ordered to spend them upon the king's glory, if he waste these upon robbers, and harlots, and witches, and make these splendid out of the king's stores, he is punished as having done the kingdom the greatest wrong. Thus they also who after having received the knowledge of God and of His glory, invested idols therewith, "held the truth in unrighteousness," and, at least as far as was in their power, dealt unrighteously by the knowledge, by not using it upon fitting objects. Now, has what was said become clear to you, or must one make it still clearer? Perhaps it were needful to say somewhat more. What then is it which is here said? The knowledge of Himself God placed in men from the beginning. But this knowledge they invested stocks and stones with, and so dealt unrighteously to the truth, as far at least as they might. For it abideth unchanged, having its own glory immutable. "And whence is it plain that He placed in them this knowledge, O Paul?" "Because," saith he, "that which may be known of Him is manifest in them." This, however, is an assertion, not a proof. But do thou make it good, and show me that the knowledge of God was plain to them, and that they willingly turned aside. Whence was it plain then? did He send them a voice from above? By no means. But what was able to draw them to Him more than a voice, that He did, by putting before them the Creation, so that both wise, and unlearned, and Scythian, and barbarian, having through sight learned the beauty of the things which were seen, might mount up to God. Wherefore he says,

Ver. 20. "For the invisible things of Him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made."

Which also the prophet said, "The heavens declare the glory of God." (Ps. xix. 1.) For what will the Greeks (i.e. Heathen) say in that day? That "we were ignorant of Thee?" Did ye then not hear the heaven sending forth a voice by the sight, while the well-ordered harmony of all things spake out more clearly than a trumpet? Did ye not see the hours of night and day abiding unmoved continually, the goodly order of winter, spring, and the other seasons remaining both sure and unmoved, the tractableness (*eugnomenon*) of the sea amid all its turbulence and waves? All things abiding in order and by their beauty and their grandeur, preaching aloud of the Creator? For all these things and more than these doth Paul sum up in saying, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even His eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."