

ST ISIDORE OF PELUSIUM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

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Chapter I

ST ISIDORE AND THE SCRIPTURES IN GENERAL*

I. Preliminary note.

In guiding the souls of his contemporaries to the true Christian life, Isidore had as his main means the Scriptures which he considered the highest authority and the perfect revealed truth. It was the interpretation of the Scriptures in general and of difficult passages in particular that established Isidore's excellent fame as one of the most important Figures of the age. Laymen, Monks, Clergymen of all degrees, well educated and in some cases people of the highest standing were constantly asking Isidore to solve their Biblical problems.

Isidore did not write any systematic commentary on any sacred book of Scripture. What he wrote concerning exegesis is hidden here and there and is simply an answer to a question or an admonition for the edifying of Christians in their particular needs. He not only learned the *ἱερὰ γράμματα τῆς ἔσω γραφῆς*¹, but through this knowledge he enlightened the Church of Pelusium² in his time and countless number of Christians from his time onwards.

It is characteristic that «the most numerous group of the older

* This article is the first of a series which aims at presenting one side only of a great saint of our Church, i. e. of St. Isidore of Pelusium. The series of articles which are to be published in «Theology», thanks to a kind commendation of Prof. J. Karimiris and to a very kind permission of the Committee, is the second part of our doctoral thesis submitted to the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Glasgow and approved by the Senate (1961).

We are grateful to the Committee of «Theology», for giving us the excellent opportunity to present the «Saint of Egypt», and we hope we shall be able to publish the first part of the thesis, in order that a hidden treasure will be in everyone's possession.

1. Menologium Graecorum MG 117, 293D-296B and 'Life' in E 436.

2. Anastasius Sinaita: Guide chap. X MG 89, 156D and Menologium, loc. cit.

mediaeval MSS»¹ and three edition² of Isidore's letters show him to be mainly an interpreter. After the Reformation many Scholars who dealt with Isidore, pointed out his excellence in Exegesis. It is, however, a pity, that today a few specialists know and avail themselves of Isidore's interpretations.

In this second part of our Thesis we try to give as complete a picture as possible of everything relating to the N.T., as Isidore used and interpreted it. In more detail, we examine Isidore's general position towards the Scriptures, the text of the N.T. he used, corrected or commented upon, and especially the rules, methods and types of his interpretation of the N.T. In addition we have a chapter assessing Isidore's capacity in criticism and interpretation and, to conclude, we have a chapter entitled 'Isidore's doctrinal teaching' which derives mostly from his interpretations.

It remains here to add that two special monographs on Isidore's Exegesis have already appeared: a) L. Bober: *De Arte hermeneutica S. Isidori Pelusiotae, Cracoviae 1878*. pp 112, which Edm. Bouvy³ did not assess as a noteworthy book. It is our opinion also that the first chapter of this monograph giving a historical account of Isidore's life, is not good. The other three chapters however, dealing with Isidore's Exegesis are better than the first, although they do not cover sufficiently the whole subject. b) Joasaph: *St Isidore of Pelusium as a Commentator of Holy Scripture* (in Russian) in *Bogoslovski Vrem.* I (1915) pp. 535-561 and 728-834. This we were not able to consult.

2. St Isidore's profound knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

By reading Isidore's letters one thing is easily understood; this is his deep knowledge of the Scriptures and his facility to use them. Moreover, the fact that Isidore never dealt especially with the Scriptures but only occasionally and in many cases without any preparation, obliges us to increase our esteem concerning this knowledge of him.

To illustrate Isidore's profundity with regard to the Scriptures it would be enough to cite only a few examples. Thus, interpreting John

1. M. Smith, *HThR* 47, p. 209.

2. V. *Supra*: Editions 2, 6, 8 cf. *Suidas, loc. cit.* II 450 N. *Kallistus, loc cit.* MG 146, 1352 and MG 78, 178.

3. *loc. cit.* p. 203-4: «*Librum ab omni fastu eruditionis remotissimum, ad res theologicas totum pertinere dicerem, nisi obiter et tanquam in transu historicas quaestiones movisset. Opere enim in quatuor capita distributo, tria, et haec posteriora, artem Isidori hermeneuticam satis dilucide explanat*»

21,25 to Aphrodisio¹, he quotes six references from the Scriptures (Dan. 3,5; Exod. 3,18; Ps. 106,12; John 8,37; ii Cor. 7,2; and John 1,10) for the strengthening of his opinion. Again, he cites thirteen quotations from the Bible (Ps. 16,8; Zach. 4,10; Is. 40,15-18; Deut. 4,15. i Cor. 11, 7; Gen. 1,26; Gen. 3,16; Ps. 8,6-7; Ps. 36; Ps. 40,2; Gen. I,27; and Matt. 5,8) when writing to a friend of his, the namesake deacon Isidore². Finally, omitting other examples, Isidore when writing to a presbyter named Archivius³ and explaining Colos. 2,19 refers also to Matt. 5,22f; Mark 1,41; Matt. 15,28; Mk. 4,39; Matt. 21,38; i Pet. 4,1; Hebr. 10,5; Phil. 2,6; Rom. 8,3; Ps. 39,7. Zach. 4,11; i Cor. 2,8; John 1,14; and Hebr. 1,1, that is he cites fourteen quotations from the Bible in order to make his opinion clearer and all this takes place in a rather short letter.

In many cases the main text of Isidore's letters consists of Biblical quotations⁴ and even when he does not cite passages from the Scriptures he, by all means, writes according to their spirit. Isidore loved the Scriptures, considered everything of less importance⁵ and became a faithful, obedient and fruitful disciple of them; and that is why he so much delights in meditation of the Psalms, Prophets and especially the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles.

This profound knowledge of Isidore concerning Scripture enables us to understand that he was not merely a monk or an ordinary exegete but an important expert of Scripture and a skilful exponent of it.

3. The Holy Scriptures in General.

Being convinced that the exposition of Isidore's opinions concerning the Scriptures in general would be useful and would help us to understand better his whole position towards the Scriptures, we try to cite the main points of his conceptions.

We have classified the material appropriate for this paragraph and we have put the proper headings. Since we do not think as necessary to comment much on these passages, there are only a few comments.

a) The H. Scriptures are called *Διαθήκη* and the reason.

«The divine Scriptures call the 'treaty', *συνθήκη* that is the 'promise', *ἐπαγγελίαν* 'testament' *διαθήκη* because of its certainty

1. II 99, 541B-44B.

2. III 95, 800B-804.

3. IV 166, 1256B-1260A.

4. e.g. II 175:I 416:II 143; III 335 e'c.

5. III 130; cf. Bouvy loc. cit. p. 47.

and because it does not admit of transgression: *διὰ τὸ βέβαιον καὶ ἀπαράβατον*. For treaties are many times overturned whereas legal covenants are never»¹.

b) Why have the Holy Scriptures been written?

Isidore says that God finding the thoughts of the ancient men pure and thinking them worthy of being taught without any mediator was speaking to them (e. g. to Noah, Abraham, Job) not by writings, but by Himself. But when the miserable Jews reached the depths of malice, then the writings and the teaching by them seemed to be necessary². The same is valid for the N.T. also. For nothing written had been given to the divine Apostles, but only the grace of the Holy Spirit had been promised to them; for Christ said that the Holy Ghost «shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance»³. But as time was flying and since some people went astray concerning dogmas and others strayed concerning the right life, it seemed again necessary⁴ that the corrections of men would come by writings⁵.

In other words and in short, Isidore accepts that the Scriptures had been written because of the sins of men and for their help and correction; and this is true. Compare Is. 54,13; Jer. 32,39-40 and ii Cor. 3,3.

c) Metaphorical expressions for the H. Scriptures.

- i. The Scriptures are the rule of the truth⁶ and the truth which is contained in the Scriptures is without any pride⁷.
- ii. To those who do not like the 'Good' the Scriptures seem to be simple and mere letters, but for those who are supermundane and *φιλοθεάμονες*⁸, the Scriptures are flourishing meadows which bloom with pure flowers from heavenly honey⁹.
- iii. The divine Scriptures are a spiritual mirror where the story

1. II 196, 641D.

2. II 106, 812A; cf. IV 53, 1104BC.

3. John 14,26.

4. cf. Chysostom in Matthew I a MG 57, 13.

5. III 106, 812AD.

6. IV 114, 1185B.

7. II 243, 656A.

8. cf. Basil the Great in Psalmun XLIV 6, Garnier I 235E; «Μακάριοι οὖν οἱ τοῦ

ἀληθινοῦ κάλλους φιλοθεάμονες...».

9. III 388, 1029AB.

of good¹ men and God's salutary laws are found. This mirror does not only show the ugliness, but, if we wish, it changes this ugliness to an inexpressible beauty².

iv. The divine Scriptures are steps for the ascension to God³.

d) Authority of the Holy Scriptures.

What Isidore says in his III 6 letter is certainly related to the Scriptures which are put by him in the highest rank as God's will. Thus Isidore says: «When God speaks or promises, all thoughts and probabilities of words must vanish. For all these compared with the office of him who speaks are nothing»⁴. It is easy to understand that Isidore in his letters gives the highest esteem to the Scriptures, because they are the word of God. Thus, interpreting Matt. 10,28 he says among other things: «We have to consider that the Lord's determination is stronger than any other proof»⁵. Again, referring to Lk 7,28 he says: «John was the greater prophet among those that are born of women, because the Lord said that»⁶. And Isidore concludes: «Therefore one must not object or contradict the Scriptures; but must promise in advance that he will do what he will hear. For, the fact that God is he who orders, banishes every contradiction and establishes every obedience»⁷. Isidore does not exclude syllogisms in elucidating the meaning of the Scriptures; but he is always ready to sum up his ideas and to strengthen them by the authority of the Bible, by words like these: «Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἀπὸ λογισμῶν εἰρήσθω· ἐπιφερέσθω δ' ἤδη ἡ τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ ψῆφος, ἐπισφραγίζουσα τὸ εἰρημένον καὶ λέγουσα...»⁸. For, as L. Bayer also remarks, Isidore's «Ziel ist immer die Wahrheit und das Leben nach der Wahrheit und dem Gesetz Christi. Daher kannte er nichts Hoheres als die Heilige Schrift»⁹.

1. Isidore does not think that the Scriptures contain only the stories of good men, but also that God in the Scriptures did not keep silent about the lives of those who had transgressed (II 3 457B).

2. II 435, 577C.

3. I 369 392B.

4. III 6, 732A.

5. III 295, 969BC-972A.

6. I 33, 204A. cf. also I 59, 221B; 'Ο Κύριος ἀπεφῆνατο. I 109, 256C: «We must obey Christ who is the accurate *δογματιστής* and who teaches accurately those truths which refer to his own essence. II 85, 529A; «Ἐὼλος γὰρ πᾶς λόγος μετὰ τὸν θεῖον ψῆφον.

7. II 249, 688A.

8. IV 125, 1204A.

9. Isidors von Pelusium *Klassische Bildung*, Paderborn 1915, p. 102.

e) Arrangement and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

«The divine and pure Power, the Spring of wisdom, the Cause and the Beginning and the Root of prudence and of every virtue, having wished to plot the prediction of things to come with the more ancient writings, did it wisely and with the highest of every reason and praise»¹. Although this passage does not tell us clearly about the inspiration of the Scriptures, it nevertheless shows Isidore's conception of God's direct inspection and arrangement of the Scriptures. Similar to this passage is the next one. «See the divine Wisdom which has been joined with poor words and examples. For if God was taking care of His own dignity only and not of the profit of those who would hear, He would use heavenly and divine words and examples. But because He was legislating to men who are weak and who need human words (for in such a way they could easily understand what is superior of them) He joined the divine lessons with poor words, in order that even every woman and every child and the most illiterate of all men could gain something from them and from their hearing»². Compare also II,3, 457B in which Isidore exposes a similar idea. The new thought in this letter is that God in the Scriptures did not keep silent about the lives of those who had transgressed, so that one learning by all the examples might keep the good and avoid the wicked ones.

Apart from the above mentioned passages we must take into account the fact that Isidore attributes to the H. Scriptures such names as show that he believed their divine inspiration. Among these names are: Ἱερὰ Γραφή³, Ἱερὰ Γραφαί⁴, θεία Γραφή⁵, θεῖαι Γραφαί⁶, θεία παιδευσίς⁷, θεῖοι χρησμοί⁸, θεῖοι καὶ οὐράνιοι χρησμοί⁹, Δεσποτικοὶ χρησμοί¹⁰, θεῖαι Δέλτοι¹¹, θεῖα Λόγια¹², etc. Moreover there are in his letters some

1. II 63, 505D.
2. II 5, 461C.
3. II 135, 577A.
4. I 369, 392B; II 3, 457B; II 43, 485A; II 73, 516D; II 299, 725C; III 37, 757A; III 71, 780C; III 112, 817A; IV 17, 1064C.
5. I 24, 197A; I 168, 293A; I 212, 316D; I 259, 337C; I 370, 392C; I 379, 396D; III 130, 829C; IV 67, 1124C.
6. II 135, 577C; III 203, 865A; IV 444, 4485B and 4488C; IV 118, 1193A; IV 130, 1212C; IV 133, 1216A; V 257, 1485D.
7. I 148, 280A.
8. II 3, 457C; II 249, 688A; III 27, 748D.
9. III 388, 4029A.
10. IV 73, 1132C.
11. III 95, 804B.
12. IV 117, 1192B.

extracts which clearly declare that Isidore believed and taught the inspiration of the Scriptures. These extracts say that the divine Spirit spoke in the Psalms¹, that St. John the Evangelist ὑπὸ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκινεῖτο² and that the Apostles, the uneducated and illiterate men, were educated by the inexpressible Wisdom and then they announced the divine message³. In another of his letters Isidore declares that «it was Christ, the King of heaven who taught through the Law and who preached through the Prophets»⁴. The word θεόπνευστος occurs in Isidore⁵ and means both those who understand what is written in the Scriptures and who are the «pure in mind»⁶ and those who understood the divine truths and exposed them in the Scriptures, i.e. the sacred authors. All these extracts along with Isidore's general attitude and position towards the Scriptures prove that he believed that Scripture was the word of God, that it has its origin in God, that God arranged everything in it, or the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostles and the prophets to write what they wrote. L. Bober⁷, Ba-reill⁸ and others agree with this conception.

f) The simplicity and lucidity of the Holy Scriptures.

In this paragraph we cite both what Isidore says concerning the simplicity and the lucidity of the Scriptures, since there are relations between them and since Isidore gives us ground for it. Thus he writes: «The divine and heavenly Oracles had been joined with lucidity, since they had been said and written for the profit of all mankind. For those who have other virtues related to words (these men are just a few) are not at all harmed by the lucidity of Scripture because they at once understand what Scripture says. On the contrary all others who deal with agriculture and other arts and with the other occupations of life avail themselves of the lucidity; and because of this lucidity they quickly and immediately learn what is right and what is beneficial»⁹.

1. I 416, 413B. cf IV 182, 1273C; Τοῦ θεοῦ Πνεύματος ἐκάστῳ τὸ πρόσοφρον ἀπονέμεντος.

2. III 402, 1037C.

3. IV 30, 1084A.

4. IV 53, 1104B. cf IV 203, 1289AB: Ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἀκήρατος Νοῦς... οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἔρριπτε τὴν προφητείαν...

5. I 59, 220C.

6. *ibid.* 221A.

7. *loc. cit.* p. 17.

8. DTC VIII 89.

9. IV 94, 1152C.

By IV 67 Isidore replies to those who accuse the Scripture for using humble and simple words and he tells why it happened so. He says: The Scriptures interpreted the truth by humble and simple words in order that wise men and children and women might learn... If the Scriptures ought to take care of something they ought to care for the multitudes. But since they took care of all, they brilliantly proved themselves divine and heavenly. Therefore we do not find any fault in the Scriptures because they did not take care of their own glory, but they cared for the salvation of those who could hear¹.

In spite of the lucidity and plainness of the Scriptures, the 'world' did not understand many truths. Thus in explaining John 21,25. Isidore says: «The Apostles, as Peter the chief of their college in his acts explicitly declared, wrote what they understood. But the 'world' did not understand even these which have been written. For he who was avaricious did not understand the teaching of poverty. Neither the lewd man understood the teaching concerning chastity, nor the greedy man the teaching concerning righteousness, nor the cruel man the teaching concerning philanthropy, nor the irascible man the teaching concerning calmness... This world does not understand (οὐ χωρεῖ), not because of its area but because of its mode. Not for the multitude of the letters, but for the magnitude of the things»².

By reason of the simplicity of the Scriptures and of some mistakes which slipped into them, Greeks accuse them³. But, «the Greeks are wrong when they accuse the Scriptures because they used some foreign words and contain many mistakes concerning conjunctions etc. For, let the Greeks tell us: How did the Scriptures with their mistakes urge eloquence to accept their teaching? Let the wise men tell us, how did the Scriptures with their multitude of mistakes vanquish the error found in the Attic Dialect? How not Plato, the chief of the outside Philosophers conquer any tyrant whereas the Scriptures prevailed over the earth and the sea?»⁴.

In other words Isidore says that the simplicity of the Scriptures is intentional and it serves their lucidity and both benefit every people. So the simplicity is not disadvantage, but a great accomplishment.

1. IV 67, 4124C-25A. cf. V. 281, 1500D. «Τῆς θείας σοφίας ἡ μὲν λέξις πεζή, ἡ ἔννοια δὲ οὐρανομήκης· τῆς δὲ ἕξωθεν λαμπρὰ μὲν ἡ φράσις χαμαιπετής δὲ ἡ πράξις».

2. II 99, 544AB.

3. cf. I, 21. I 96, II 98, IV 28.

4. IV 28, 1080D-81A.

g) The reading of the Holy Scriptures.

i. Exhortation; «Give yourself throughout all your life to the divine Oracles»¹.

ii. Presuppositions: «Go hunting for the sacred Scriptures' meanings which sharpen our prudence to more sharpness, having begun with pains and prayers»². And since the Scriptures are the highest authority, the word of God, one must promptly obey them. «One must not dare to oppose or contradict the divine Sayings. But before hearing what he must do he must promise to do it»³.

iii. Profits: a) «If you would wish to deal with the sacred Scriptures gratefully and prudently, you would urge yourself on not only the love of the divine philosophy but also the desire of doctrines from which the heaven-worthy life has its foundation»⁴. b) «Think of the reading of the sacred Scriptures as supplying the salvation, for, it, furnishing good examples, strengthens and helps the good feelings and the virility of those who hear it»⁵. c) A more general profit of the Scriptures exists because «the Scriptures give the proper food to everyone. Thus they promise good hope to those in danger, encourage those who do good works, provide comfort to those who suffer and threaten those who sin»⁶. d) «Many other outside writers and philosophers have written many things which neither profit the obedient men nor harm the disobedient ones. But on the contrary the divine Scriptures give great benefit to those who obey and harm much those who disobey. Why is there this difference? Because the other writers wrote hunting for glory whereas the Scriptures care for the salvation of hearers»⁷.

iv. Hearing: Similar to the reading of the Scriptures is the hearing of them, the neglect of which, says Isidore, is a machination of the Devil who does not wish us to see the treasure, in order that we may not gain the riches. The Devil says that the hearing of the divine meanings is nothing so that he will not see the act being committed after the hearing. Therefore do not neglect the honeyed hearing of the divine Scriptures⁸.

1. II 3, 457C and II 135, 577C.

2. II 106, 548C.

3. II 249, 688A.

4. IV 33, 1085A.

5. II 73, 516D.

6. II 299, 725D.

7. IV 140, 1220C.

8. IV 208, 1301C.

4. Relations between the two Testaments.

a) One Authority for both.

Isidore making the event according to which God was speaking from inside the fire of the smoking mount Sinai¹ parallel with that of the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles² says that it happened so «in order that one God in both Testaments would be known, although there is a great difference between these two events»³. We can find a clearer declaration in relation to the Authority for both Testaments in another of Isidore's letters. Thus he says: «As there is one creator of the moon which is good and of the sun which is better, thus of the Old and of the New Testament there is one Authority who legislated wisely and very wisely and properly to the times⁴». Compare also IV 209, 1304A. where Isidore once again declares that for both Testaments there is one Authority, and I 147, 281B, where explainig Matt. 8,11 he says: «The Lord is building up the stones of Grace on the foundation stone of the Law and putting patriarchs and the divine people together»⁵.

b) Agreements between both.

Isidore teaches clearly the interior concord of both Testaments as a result of the fact that one Authority is for both Testaments: «The Son of God did not bring any new doctrine from what the Law and the Prophets brought, but he had put the end to these truths which had been aforsaid of him. And if you ingeniously interpret the Old Testament you will find in it all the teachings of the N. Testament. For the N.T. renders the truths of the doctrines in the era of Grace clear from the teachings of the Law to those who rely upon the Law and consider the evangelical way foreign to that of the Law. Thus you will see the interior accord of both Testamets»⁶. The superiority of the N.T. over the O.T. does not mean difference⁷. See also the fifth paragraph of this section and compare I 147, 281B. «This is why, writes Isidore, Christ ordered the leper to offer the gift that Moses commanded, that the concord of the two Testaments be proved»⁸.

1. Exod. 19, 19f.

2. Acts 2, 1f.

3. I 494, 452A.

4. II 133, 576C.

5. cf. I, 146.

6. I 107, 256A.

7. I 458, 433D.

8. I 146, 281A.

c) The preparatory character of the O.T.

As many Fathers who dealt with this special point of doctrine accepted that the O.T. became a παιδαγωγὸς εἰς Χριστὸν so Isidore preached the preparatory character of the O.T. «The lessons from the Law and from the Prophets, he says, are a preparation for the new and evangelical philosophy. For the O.T. legislates to the body whereas the N.T. legislates to the soul. The former directs acts and the latter directs thoughts. The former tells truths appropriate for beginners whereas the latter tells truths appropriate for the very philosophers»¹.

d) Differences in instruction given by both.

Although there is one Authority for both Testaments and in spite of the interior accord we find in both, there are also some differences depending on the preparatory character of the O.T., on the more perfect purpose of the N.T. and on the recipients of it. Accordingly Isidore says: «The Law was separating holiness from wickedness... Christ was giving his philanthropic grace more perfectly than the judgment of the Law did. For the Law was cutting off that which was bad, whereas Christ was changing it»². In other words this is a difference concerning the method of instruction.

The second difference concerns the content of instruction; and this is indicated in Isidore's Letter to the Reader Timothy: «The O.T. was using symbolic orders, whereas the N.T. radiated with true things and doctrines»³.

There is another difference concerning the extent of instruction. The O.T. only corrects those who sin; the N.T. stimulates the desire for virtue. «The Law correcting not those who live rightly but preventing the passions of those who disobey is a fine education of accuracy. But the Gospel, not by fear but by encouraging the desire of those who love virtue is an exhortation of philosophy»⁴.

e) The superiority of the New Testament.

On the superiority of the N.T. over the O.T., Isidore speaks very clearly and he confines himself rather to two points: The superiority

1. IV 134, 1216C.
2. IV 189, 1280A.
3. I 494, 452A.
4. II 288, 717C.

of the N.T. over the O.T. concerning philanthropy and love on the one hand, and concerning punishment on the other. The superiority of the Gospel over the Law, he says, is great: «For the Law includes philanthropy only for those of the same race whereas the Gospel extends it also to those belonging to foreign tribes or nations. The Law commands us to love the friends whereas the Gospel orders us to love the enemies as well. The Law legislates as if it was applying to children, whereas the Gospel exposes divine doctrines as if it was applying to philosophers»¹. Both Testaments speak about certain truths, but they speak differently. «The meaning of love is found in the O.T. also. Christ added 'as I have loved you' and for that reason he called it a new commandment. For it is different for someone to love the neighbour as himself and to neglect his own things in order to rectify his neighbour's things»². Again, referring to Rom. 12,20 he says: «The commandment 'if thine enemy hunger, fed him' is not so great and new, but it is a kind of malediction. For I consider that if someone fell in such great need as to need the necessities of life and if he has to take alms from his enemy, this misfortune exceeds every suffering and every punishment. The new commandment 'love your enemies' is greater...»³.

The superiority of the Gospel is certain also with regard to punishments. «The Law, says Isidore, punishes the murderers but Christ punishes also those who are angry»⁴. Compare also II 243, 684B where a similar idea is found. Also, referring to Hebr. 10,29. Isidore teaches the same thing. «Grace menaced and punished more bitterly than the Law those who sinned and did not repent. And this is certified by what Paul said: He that desposes Moses Law, dies, i. e. is stoned, without mercy, i.e. without pity, without the possibility to ask for remission, without forgiveness, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who insults Christ Who delivered and honoured him?»⁵. Let us cite one more noteworthy extract of Isidore's related to this paragraph. He says: «There is one Authority for both Testaments, but the Law was forbidding only the bad actions because the Jews were disobedient, whereas the Gospel, legislating, as it were, to Philosophers, also prevents in advance the thoughts which look like bad springs from which

1. III 53, 765D-768A.

2. III 410, 1044B.

3. IV 44, 1057D-1060AB.

4. III 254, 933B.

5. IV 168, 1260C-1261A.

bad actions spring. The Gospel not only punishes accurately the sins done, but it safely prevents them from being done»¹.

These superiorities - one hardly can call them differences of the N.T. over the O.T., do not mean a kind of abolition of the Law by overturning it, but they mean a completion of it by «Christ who included it in a higher philosophy. Because the commandment concerning the lust sight includes certainly the commandment concerning adultery. And the commandment concerning anger includes also the commandment concerning murder»².

After all these notes and with regard to the whole subject of this paragraph we can better understand why Isidore says: «It is right to found an idea by the O.T. and to crown it by the N.T.»³.

(Continued)

1. IV 209, 1304A.
2. III 53, 768A.
3. III 335, 993A.