

The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 96

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WRITINGS

Volume 96

Bede: Commentaries on Acts, the Catholic Epistles and
Revelation

c. AD 700 – 735

S E R M O N I N D E X

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Volume 96: Bede: Commentaries on Acts, the Catholic Epistles and Revelation

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CONTENTS

Introduction to This Volume	ix
PART ONE · COMMENTARY ON ACTS	1
Commentary on Acts	3
Preface	3
Chapter 1.....	5
Chapter 2.....	13
Chapter 3.....	20
Chapter 4.....	22
Chapter 5.....	25
Chapter 6.....	28
Chapter 7.....	29
Chapter 8.....	33
Chapter 9.....	37
Chapter 10.....	41
Chapter 11.....	47
Chapter 12.....	49
Chapter 13.....	51
Chapter 14.....	54
Chapter 15.....	55
Chapter 16.....	57
Chapter 17.....	59
Chapter 18.....	62
Chapter 19.....	63
Chapter 20.....	66
Chapter 21.....	69
Chapter 22.....	72
Chapter 23.....	73
Chapter 24.....	74
Chapter 25.....	75
Chapter 26.....	75
Chapter 27.....	76
Chapter 28.....	78
PART TWO · RETRACTIONS ON ACTS	83
Retractions on the Acts of the Apostles.....	85
Preface	85
Chapter 1.....	86
Chapter 2.....	89
Chapter 3.....	97
Chapter 4.....	101

Chapter 6	107
Chapter 7	109
Chapter 8	111
Chapter 9	113
Chapter 10	116
Chapter 11	119
Chapter 12	119
Chapter 13	120
Chapter 14	123
Chapter 15	123
Chapter 16	124
Chapter 17	126
Chapter 18	127
Chapter 19	128
Chapter 20	129
Chapter 21	130
Chapter 22	131
Chapter 23	132
Chapter 24	132
Chapter 25	133
Chapter 26	133
Chapter 27	133
Chapter 28	134

PART THREE · COMMENTARY ON THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES 137

Commentary on the Catholic Epistles	139
Prologue on the Seven Canonical Epistles	139
James 1	140
James 2	151
James 3	160
James 4	169
James 5	174
1 Peter 1	181
1 Peter 2	189
1 Peter 3	200
1 Peter 4	208
1 Peter 5	213
2 Peter 1	217
2 Peter 2	225
2 Peter 3	233
1 John 1	241
1 John 2	246
1 John 3	258
1 John 4	268
1 John 5	277
2 John	287
3 John	290
Jude	292

PART FOUR · COMMENTARY ON REVELATION	301
Commentary on Revelation	303
Preface	303
Chapter 1.....	307
Chapter 2	311
Chapter 3	316
Chapter 4	319
Chapter 5	322
Chapter 6	324
Chapter 7	328
Chapter 8	335
Chapter 9	339
Chapter 10	343
Chapter 11	345
Chapter 12	351
Chapter 13	355
Chapter 14	360
Chapter 15.....	367
Chapter 16	369
Chapter 17	374
Chapter 18.....	377
Chapter 19	381
Chapter 20.....	385
Chapter 21	390
Chapter 22.....	403
Sources and Credits	409

INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME

How this book is arranged

This is the ninety-sixth volume of a series that gathers the writings of the early Church in order of date, from the generation after the apostles down to the eighth century. This volume holds Bede, Commentaries on Acts, the Catholic Epistles and Revelation, from the period about AD 700 – 735.

Within each work the text is divided into chapters and numbered sections, so that any passage can be found again and cited. The small bold figures in the text are the section numbers.

The translations

The text is in English only. Wherever a modern English version has been prepared for SermonIndex it is used here; otherwise the book prints an older public-domain translation. In both cases the wording is the translator's own: older translations have not been altered beyond dividing them into sections. The sources for every work are listed at the back of the book, together with the licence under which each text is released. All the works in this volume are printed in the modern English versions prepared for SermonIndex.

In this volume

Bede was born about AD 673 on land belonging to the monastery of Wearmouth in Northumbria. At seven years old he was given to the abbot Benedict Biscop, and he spent the rest of his life in the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, rarely leaving them. He was made a deacon at nineteen and a priest at thirty. He taught the monks, sang the daily services, and wrote on the Scriptures, on the calendar and on the history of his own people. Most of his books explain the Bible by gathering what Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory had taught, and adding his own lessons for the Church. His Ecclesiastical History of the English People, finished in AD 731, is the chief source for the early English church. He died at Jarrow in AD 735, and the title Venerable was given to him in the centuries after.

The Commentary on Acts and the Retractions on Acts cover the same book: Bede first explained the Latin text, and later went back over it to compare the Latin with the Greek. The Catholic Epistles are divided by letter and chapter, and the Commentary on Revelation by chapter of the Book of Revelation.

Dates and authorship

Dates are approximate and are debated by scholars. Each work begins with a short introduction that states what is known about its author and its date, and what is uncertain.

P A R T O N E

Commentary on Acts

The story of the first Christians, chapter by chapter.

Commentary on Acts

THE VENERABLE BEDE

AD 673–735

Bede's commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, written for Acca, bishop of Hexham. It takes the story of the first Christians chapter by chapter, from the Ascension to Paul's arrival at Rome, and collects what the earlier teachers had said about each place.

PREFACE

To the most desired and truly blessed Lord in Christ, Bishop Acca, Bede, perpetual greetings in the Lord. I have received numerous letters from your blessedness, in which you have deemed it worthy to remind me not to let the sharpness of my mind languish and sleep in idle leisure, but to daily meditate and diligently examine the Scriptures with wakefulness and tireless effort. For after completing the exposition of the Apocalypse of the holy evangelist John, which I composed in three books at the request of our brother Eusebius, and which I immediately intended to transcribe for you, I also exert myself in the explanation of the blessed Evangelist Luke, following the footsteps of the Fathers as much as I can. Since I have not yet been able to do this, both because I am terrified by the vastness of the work and hindered by the necessity of urgent causes which you know better, I have, however, done what I could in the meantime so that the authority of your request might not be disregarded. For I have sent a small work on the Acts of the Apostles, which was published not many days ago, and as speedily corrected as time permitted so that your most sacred will might not be hindered. In this small work, I have attempted to elucidate, as best I could, those things which seemed to have been done mystically or said obscurely.

In this endeavor, I have been greatly aided by many other writers of the Catholic faith, most notably by Arator, the subdeacon of the holy Roman Church, who, traversing the book itself in heroic verse, has intermingled some allegorical flowers in the same meter, providing me with the occasion

either to gather other insights from these or to explain the same more plainly. The Acts of the Apostles, as the blessed Jerome says, seem indeed to sound as pure history and to weave the infancy of the emerging Church; but if we know their writer Luke to be a physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, we perceive that all his words are a medicine for the languishing soul. And to explain to you, within the measure of my smallness, we will first make note that the evangelist Luke, as it has been said according to the tradition of the ancient Church interpreters, was very skilled in the art of medicine and knew Greek letters better than Hebrew. Hence, his speech, both in the Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles, is more polished and exudes a secular eloquence, and he uses Greek testimonies more than Hebrew.

From this, there arises something which I greatly marvel at and, struck by the vehemence of my slow understanding, cannot ascertain why with much reason that while in the Hebrew truth there are found ten generations from the flood to Abraham, Luke himself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which could by no means write falsehoods, chose to place eleven generations, following the Septuagint Interpreters, adding Cainan, in the Gospel. Therefore, in the prologue of the Gospel, he says that it seemed good to him to write an orderly account carefully, because many have attempted this. But we should accept those who have great authority in the Church, because those who attempted were not able to complete it to the fullest. This one, however, not only led his narration up to the resurrection and ascension of the Lord so that he would have a worthy place with the four authors of the Gospel Scripture, but also wrote things that were done by the Apostles afterwards, which he believed were sufficient for building the faith of the readers or listeners, in such a way that his book alone is considered trustworthy in the Church, telling of the acts of the apostles, rejecting all those who dared to write the deeds and words of the apostles not with the faith that was required. Indeed, Mark and Luke wrote at a time when they could not only be approved by the Church of Christ but also by the apostles themselves still living in the flesh.

For it was by the Lord's direction that not only the apostles who had seen, but also the disciples who had learned by hearing, would write down the deeds and words of Christ, in order that the subsequent teachers of the Church might have both the trust and the authority to preach and write about things they had not seen. The Acts of the Apostles and especially those of the blessed Paul, whose inseparable companion in travel the blessed Luke

was, were composed just as he had seen. The entire context of this, as far as we could perceive from other histories, contains twenty-eight years, that is, six years of Tiberius Caesar, four years of Gaius, fourteen years of Claudius. During the reign of this prince, the apostle Peter came to Rome, and in the fourth year a famine occurred; in the eighth year the Jews were expelled from Rome. Also, four years of Nero, during the last two of which the blessed Paul remained at Rome in free custody. From this, we understand that the book was composed in the same city. Furthermore, to distinguish the same times through the kings of the Jews: Herod, Philip, and Lysanias were tetrarchs for six years. Herod the king, also known as Agrippa, who perished at Caesarea, reigned for seven years. Agrippa, his son, under whom Paul was sent to Rome, reigned for fifteen years. Twelve years remained until the destruction of Jerusalem.

I have followed these details closely, so that when reviewing the history of the same book, you can clearly recognize what took place in which time. I have also sent an explication of the Epistle of the most blessed evangelist John, most extensively drawn from the homilies of Saint Augustine, with sweet eloquence spread widely, from which I made a concise summary. However, I also added some notes of my own at the end. In both works, if you find anything useful, credit it to the gifts of God; if anything excessive, bear with my frailty. May the Lord Almighty preserve your blessedness, interceding for us, safe for the governance of the Church perpetually.

CHAPTER 1

Acts 1:1

The first treatise I have made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began to do and teach. He says that he wrote in the Gospel about all the acts and words of Christ, not that he could encompass all, lest he be opposed to John, who says: Indeed Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book (John 20), but that he chose from all to make a treatise on those he judged suitable and congruent to suffice for his dispensation. Theophilus is interpreted as lover of God, or loved by God. Whoever, therefore, is a lover of God, let him believe that it is written for him, and find salvation here for his soul since Luke the physician wrote it. And it is to be noted that he says: What Jesus began to do and teach. To do first, and afterwards to teach. For Jesus, establishing a good teacher, taught nothing except what he did.

Acts 1:2

Until the day on which he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. By hyperbaton it is to be read until the day on which he was taken up, commanding before the assumption, that is, giving precepts to the apostles which are read either here or in the Gospels. The sense therefore is: I wrote about Jesus from the time he began to perform signs and teach until the day on which, having completed these things, he returned to where he had come from. [Acts 1:3] -- Appearing to them during forty days and speaking of the kingdom of God, and eating with them, etc. To strengthen the faith in his resurrection, the Lord often appeared alive to the apostles after his passion, took food, and displayed the same flesh which he had raised from the dead to be touched. But in a higher mystery, by this forty-day conversation with the disciples, he signifies that he would fulfill in secret presence what he had promised. Behold I am with you all days until the end of the world (Matthew 28). For this number designates this temporal and earthly life either because of the four seasons of the year or because of the four winds of heaven. For after we have been buried with Christ through baptism into death, as if having crossed the path of the Red Sea, we have need of the Lord's guidance in this wilderness, who will lead us to heavenly things, and rewarding us with the denarius of his image, will bless us with the presence of the Holy Spirit as with the true rest of jubilee.

Acts 1:5

But you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. The apostles had not yet been baptized, not with water, but with the Holy Spirit, whom we understand they had already been baptized, either with John's baptism (as some suppose), or (what is more credible) with Christ's baptism. For the ministry of baptizing had not been such that it had baptized servants through whom others would be baptized, for the ministry of that memorable humility was not lacking, when He washed their feet. Therefore, when the Lord said: For John indeed baptized with water, He did not add: But you shall baptize, but: But you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. For neither the apostles nor their followers, who baptize even to this day in the Church, can baptize otherwise than John, that is, with water, but only by invoking the name of Christ, the interior power of the Holy Spirit is present, which, with a man providing the water, purifies both the souls and bodies of the

baptized, which was not done in John's baptism. For the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (John VII).

Acts 1:6

Therefore, those who had come together asked Him, saying: Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Since He appeared to them speaking of the kingdom of God, He also promised the coming of the Holy Spirit not many days later, they accordingly inquire about the same kingdom, whether they should believe that it would be restored in the present with the imminent coming of the Holy Spirit, or reserved for the saints in the future. For the disciples, still carnal, after the resurrection of Christ, believed that the kingdom of Israel would come immediately. As Cleopas said: But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. And the evangelist had stated beforehand that as the Lord was coming to Jerusalem, they thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear. But the prophecy was to be fulfilled, which says, singing to the Father: But you have rejected, despised, and delayed your Christ (Psalm LXXXVIII). For the Father rejected and despised the Son when He deserted Him in His passion, saying: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me (Matthew XXVII)? He delayed, however, that those whom the saints thought would reign at that time, they might expect Him to come in His majesty on the day of judgment. Therefore, the Lord Himself, hinting that the spiritual Israel and the heavenly kingdom were promised by the prophets, said:

Acts 1:7

It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has placed in His own authority. He said this, indicating that the time of that (kingdom) is so secret that it lies within the knowledge of the Father alone. And when He says: It is not for you to know, He shows that He Himself knows, whose are all the things that are the Father's, but it is not expedient for mortals to know, so that always uncertain about the coming of the judge, they may live every day as though they were to be judged on another day. [Acts 1:8] -- But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, etc. When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, he says, it will not bring the kingdom of Israel, or the kingdom of God in Israel, as you suppose, but will provide you with the power to testify about me. And so far off are the times of that kingdom, that first not only this city

of Jerusalem, but also all the borders of Judea, and then even the nearby region of Samaria, will be spread by the fame of the Gospel to the ends of the world.

Acts 1:9

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up. Mark, indeed, recounting another discourse of the Lord, says: And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven (Mark 16). But since Luke added more significantly, When he had said these things, he was taken up, indeed showing that when the words he had mentioned were fulfilled, the Lord ascended to heaven. [Acts 1:9] -- And a cloud received him out of their sight. Everywhere the creation obeys its Creator. The stars point out his birth, they cover him when suffering, the clouds receive him as he ascends, and they will accompany him when he returns for judgment. [Acts 1:10] -- Behold, two men stood by them in white apparel. White garments are more fitting for exaltation than for humiliation. And so, as the Lord ascends, angels appear in white garments, who are not said to appear in white clothing at the Lord's birth, because he who appeared humble as a God in his birth, appeared sublime as a man in his ascension. For the location is also fitting, while he, who was born as a man in a humble little city, returned to heaven from a high mountain.

Acts 1:11

This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven. For two reasons the angels are seen: that they might console them in their sorrow of the ascension with the remembrance of his return, and to show that he truly ascends into heaven, and not as it were into heaven like Elijah. [Acts 1:11] -- He will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. That is, he will come to judge in the same form and substance of the flesh in which he came to be judged. To whom certainly immortality was given, but nature was not taken away. Whose divine glory, which once appeared on the mountain to the three disciples, will be seen by all the saints when the judgment is complete, when the impious will be taken away so that they do not see the glory of God. [Acts 1:12] -- Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet. Our Lord and Savior, having conquered the prince of darkness, leads the faithful to a place of peace and light. Rightly he ascended the mount of

blessing, promising the holy Spirit, whose anointing teaches us about everything.

Acts 1:12

He is near Jerusalem, having the distance of a Sabbath journey. According to history, it indicates that the Mount of Olives is separated by about a mile from the city of Jerusalem. For on the Sabbath, according to the law, it was not permitted to go more than a thousand paces. But according to allegory, whoever will be worthy to contemplate within the glory of the Lord ascending to the Father and to be enriched with the promise of the Holy Spirit, this one enters the city of eternal peace by the journey of the Sabbath. And for him, according to Isaiah, there will be a Sabbath from the Sabbath, because whoever here has ceased from perverse work will there rest in celestial recompense. But on the other hand, whoever in this age, as if through the time of six days, has neglected to work for salvation, during that time of perpetual rest, will be excluded from the boundaries of blessed Jerusalem, despising that Gospel: "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath."

Acts 1:13

And when they had entered the upper room, they went up where they were staying. It designates a place on high, because they had already ascended from earthly conversation of the Sabbath to the higher realms of knowledge and virtue.

Acts 1:13

James of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas of James. Some think that there were two apostles called James, namely James of Zebedee and James of Alphaeus, and that the third James, the brother of the Lord, was not an apostle but the bishop of Jerusalem. That is by no means true, but according to the faith of the Gospels, it should be known that this same James, the son of Alphaeus and an apostle, was in charge of Jerusalem, who was called the brother of the Lord, because he was the son of the Lord's maternal aunt, of whom John the evangelist mentions. However, he says, "standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Clopas" (John 19). Naming this Mary of Clopas from her father or family. For how could the brother of the Lord be said to be not an apostle but the third James, when Paul also names him an apostle: "But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the brother of the Lord" (Galatians 1)? And the evan-

gelist Mark calls him the same, not the third but the other, saying: "There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Younger and Joses, and Salome" (Mark 15). For since "greater" and "lesser" usually provide a distinction not among three but between two, the lesser James is called the son of Alphaeus, in distinction from the greater who was the son of Zebedee.

Read the book of blessed Jerome against Helvidius. However, Simon the Zealot is the one who is written in the Gospels as the Canaanite. For Cana interprets as zeal. He was from a village in Galilee, Cana, where the Lord turned water into wine, and after his brother James, he ruled the Church of Jerusalem and at the age of one hundred and twenty ascended the cross under Trajan. He is declared to be according to the flesh a cousin of the Savior, because Hegesippus testified that his father Clopas was the brother of Joseph. And Judas of James, that is, the brother of James, is the same as the one called Thaddeus in the Gospels, and he was sent to Edessa to Abgarus, the king of Osroene, as ecclesiastical history tells. It continues:

Acts 1:14

All these were continually devoting themselves with one accord to prayer. Those who patiently continue in prayer are those who await the arrival of the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit of discipline flees from deceit (Wisdom 1). Therefore, whoever desires to receive the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit must persist diligently in prayers steeped in fraternal love. [Acts 1:15] -- There was, however, a crowd of about a hundred and twenty people together. These hundred and twenty, gradually rising from one to fifteen by increments, form the number of the fifteen steps, which mystically signifies the perfection of both laws in the Psalter, and in which the chosen vessel remains with Peter in Jerusalem. For it was necessary that the mystery, which the legislator exhibited in years, should be designated by the preachers of the new grace in their number.

Acts 1:16

Brethren, it is necessary to fulfill the Scripture which the Holy Spirit foretold, etc. Peter the Apostle feared to remain in the number eleven. For all sin is 'eleven,' because through perverse actions, it transgresses the precepts of the Decalogue. Hence, because none of our justice is innocent by itself, the tabernacle that contained the Ark of the Lord was overlaid inside with eleven

goat-hair curtains. And he restored the number of apostles to twelve, so that by the two parts of seven (for three times four is a fine sum), they would maintain the grace they preached and with the number, and those who were to preach the faith of the Holy Trinity to the fourfold world, as the Lord says: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19), they would also strengthen the perfection of work by the sacrament of the number. According to the higher understanding, the loss that the Church suffers from false brethren persists to the greatest extent unaddressed. But when at the end of the world, the people of the Jews who crucified the Lord are believed to be reconciled to the Church, like on the approaching fiftieth day, the number of the apostles is restored.

Acts 1:18

And he indeed obtained a field from the reward of iniquity. He who sold the Lord of life, having lost the land of the living, possesses a field of blood and eternal death, the memory of his crime and his name. Otherwise, Judas himself did not deserve to possess the potter's field bought with the price of blood, who, having returned the thirty pieces of silver, immediately punished the crime of treachery with a more criminal death. But, according to the manner of sacred speech, it is said he possessed what he caused to be possessed. As the blessed Job says: "And my clothes will abhor me," that is, my corruptible members will render me abominable. [Acts 1:18] -- And he burst asunder in the middle. The mad traitor found a punishment worthy of himself, that is, the noose's knot strangled the throat from which the voice of betrayal had emerged. He also sought a fitting place of destruction, so that he who had delivered the Lord of men and angels to death, hated by heaven and earth, as if only to be associated with the spirits of the air, might perish in the midst of the air, according to the example of Ahithophel and Absalom who persecuted King David. To whom, indeed, the death itself succeeded with a sufficiently fitting outcome, so that the bowels which had conceived the deceit of betrayal were burst open and cast out into the empty air. A similar punishment by which death is reported to have condemned Arius, the heresiarch, so that since the one sought to extinguish the humanity of Christ, the other the divinity, both, as they lived devoid of sense, thus also perished with empty bellies.

Acts 1:20

Let his habitation be desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it, and let another take his office. Indeed, these verses are clear and openly explained by the blessed Peter, because Judas received the deserved punishment for his transgression, and going to his own place, namely infernal hell, he deserted the common habitation of human conversation by an untimely and impious death, and nonetheless, with the holy Matthias taking his place in the ministry and apostleship, the most sacred sum of apostolic perfection was restored. But it is to be noted that the whole testimony is not taken from the one hundred and eighth psalm according to the Vulgate Edition, but only the final part, while the former is from the sixty-eighth, in which it is said of the Jews: Let their habitation be desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in their tents. For while the blessed Peter wished to confirm both the rejection of Judas and the election of Matthias with prophetic testimonies, he joined the testimony which was specifically about Matthias's episcopate with that which was generally placed about the rejection of the Jews, among whom Judas was also numbered. This, I know not by which first unskilled editor, was added to the one hundred and eighth psalm. When he saw these verses put together by the blessed Peter, and his Psalter not having them together, he began to think his Codex falsified, and presumed to add what he did not have.

In the same way, eight verses from the thirteenth psalm were added in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, which he had composed from various psalms and the prophet Isaiah. The first of these is: Their throat is an open sepulcher. The last: There is no fear of God before their eyes. These things which I have said, not only the Hebrew truth and the more correct edition of the seventy interpreters confirm, but also open reason proves, that in the same one hundred and eighth psalm, excepting these verses, there are thirty curses laid upon Judas Iscariot, according to the number of pieces of silver with which he did not fear to sell the Lord. The first of which is: Set a sinner over him. The last: And let them be covered with their own confusion as with a cloak.

Acts 1:23

Joseph who is called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. Barsabbas is interpreted as "son of rest," Matthias as "little one of God." Concerning whom Arator says: O how far human judgments differ from

those above? He who was just is deservedly surpassed by the little one in human praise.

Acts 1:26

And they gave forth their lots, etc. This example, or because the prophet Jonah was caught by lot, should not be indiscriminately relied upon for lots, "since the privileges of individuals," as Jerome says, "can by no means make a common law." For there, even the Gentile men, driven by the storm, sought the author of the danger by lot, and here Matthias is chosen by lot, lest the selection of the apostles seem to differ from the command of the old law, where the high priest was commanded to be sought by lot, as it is said about Zechariah: According to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to put incense (Luke 1). Therefore, as I think, he was then chosen by lot, so that by the type it might be figured that a true priest should always have been sought, until he came for whom it was reserved, who not by the blood of sacrifices, but by his own blood entered once into the holy places having obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9). Whose sacrifice, offered at the time of Passover, but truly consumed on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit appeared in fire. For it was the custom of the old to consume victims accepted by God with heavenly fire. Therefore, until the truth was fulfilled, it was allowed to practice the figure. Hence it is that Matthias, who is ordained before Pentecost, is sought by lot; but the seven deacons afterward are not ordained by lot, but only by the election of the disciples and the prayer and imposition of hands by the apostles. But if any, compelled by some necessity, think that God should be consulted by lots as an example of the apostles, let them see that the apostles themselves did this not except by gathering the brotherhood and pouring out prayers to God.

CHAPTER 2

Acts 2:1

And when the days of Pentecost were completed, they were all together in the same place. This is in the upper room, which they are said to have ascended. For whoever desires to be filled with the Holy Spirit must necessarily transcend the dwelling of the flesh through the contemplation of the mind. Just as the forty days during which the Lord conversed with His disciples after His resurrection signify the Church's journey in this world with the risen Christ, so the fiftieth day, on which the Holy Spirit is received, fittingly

expresses the perfection of blessed rest, by which the labor of the temporal Church will be rewarded with eternal denarius. For the number forty itself, when computed by its equal parts, adds that denarius and makes fifty. The half of the number forty is twenty, a quarter is ten, a fifth is eight, an eighth is five, a tenth is four, a twentieth is two, a fortieth is one. Twenty, ten, eight, five, four, two, and one make fifty. The figure of this calculation is easily evident, because the present conflict generates for us the eternal joy of the jubilee, as the Apostle says: For our momentary and light affliction works for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure (II Cor. IV). Our true blessedness, however, is the eternal vision of the most high and blessed Trinity, wherein we glory in the immortality of both body and soul. For we consist of the four well-known qualities of the body.

In the inner man, we are commanded to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind. And this is the perfect denarius of life, to rejoice in the present vision of divine glory. It is to be noted historically that among the ancients, the day of Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth day on which the law was given, was counted from the slaughter of the lamb. However, as the blessed Augustine explains, the fiftieth day here is counted not from the Lord's Passion, but from His resurrection, on which the Holy Spirit was sent. He, by the return of the old sign's example, most manifestly consecrated the Lord's day by His coming. At that same point in time, He showed that the true Pascha is to be celebrated on the Lord's day. For just as here, so also there God appeared in the vision of fire, as Exodus says: And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire (Exod. XIX).

Acts 2:2

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, etc. The Lord indeed appeared through fire, as Blessed Pope Gregory explains, but He made the interior communication by Himself. And neither was God the fire, nor was that sound, but by what He exhibited outwardly, He expressed what He made within. For He who made the disciples both fervent with zeal and instructed with the word inwardly, showed fiery tongues outwardly. Therefore, elements were brought in as a sign so that bodies might perceive fire and sound, while hearts were taught by invisible fire and soundless voice. [Acts 2:3] -- And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire. For the Holy Spirit appeared in fire and tongues, because all whom He fills He makes both burning and speaking. Burning indeed from themselves,

and speaking about themselves. At the same time, indicating that the holy Church, extended to the ends of the world, was to speak with the voice of all nations.

Acts 2:3

And it sat upon each of them. What is said to have sat is an indication of royal power. Or certainly because His rest is indicated in the saints. [Acts 2:4] -- And they began to speak with various tongues. The unity of tongues that the pride of Babel had dispersed, the humility of the Church gathers together again. Spiritually, however, the variety of tongues signifies the gifts of various graces. But it is not inconsiderate to understand that the Holy Spirit is therefore first understood to have given the gift of tongues to men, by whom human wisdom is learned and taught from the outside, as a sign that by the wisdom of God, which is internal to them, He could easily make them wise. [Acts 2:5] -- Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. I think it fitting to inquire who these were, and from what captivity the Jews. Since indeed the one that was in Egypt or Babylon had already been completed. But the Jews had not yet come into captivity to the Romans, although even that itself was already impending as retribution for the sin committed against the Savior. Therefore, it remains to be understood as the captivity that took place under Antiochus, which certainly had happened not many times before.

Acts 2:6

Because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. It is asked in this place how each one heard them speaking the great things of God in his own language: whether those who were speaking in different languages were delivering what was being said in the language of each one, that is, whether each of them now spoke in this, now in another language, thus running through all, or it was more marvelous in this, that the speech of those who were speaking, whatever language had been pronounced, was understood by each one hearing according to his own language, that (for example) when any one apostle was teaching in the church (for it was necessary that one should speak while the others were silent, and one speech should reach the hearing of all), that same speech would have such a force in itself, that although there were listeners of different nations, each one would receive the hearing and grasp the understanding of that one speech pronounced by the

apostle according to his own language. Unless perhaps it seemed more wonderful that this was a miracle of the listeners rather than of the speakers.

Acts 2:9

And those who dwelt in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia. In this place, Judea does not signify the entire nation but a part of it, that is, the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, to distinguish, namely, from Samaria, Galilee, Decapolis, and other regions in the same province. Although they all spoke one Hebrew language, each had its own distinctive way of speaking. Hence also Peter, during the Lord's Passion, was identified as a Galilean by his speech. [Acts 2:10] -- The Jews also and proselytes. Proselytes, that is, they called the newcomers those who, originating from the Gentiles, preferred to choose circumcision and Judaism, as is narrated that Achior did in the book of Judith. Therefore, they say, not only those who were Jews by nature had gathered from different parts of the world, but also those who, born from the foreskin, had embraced their rite.

Acts 2:13

But others mocking said: Because they are full of new wine. Though mocking, they testify mystically to the truth. For they are not filled with old wine, which failed at the wedding of the Church, but with the new wine of spiritual grace. For now the new wine had come into new wineskins, as the apostles, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit of God, resounded the great deeds (Rom. VII). [Acts 2:15] -- For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. The Holy Spirit, about to proclaim the glory of the indivisible Trinity, came down fittingly at the third hour. And because it is said above: They were persevering in prayer, they rightly receive the Holy Spirit at the hour of prayer, to show readers that the grace of the Holy Spirit is not easily received unless the mind is elevated from carnal intentions to those of the heavens. For the three times at which Daniel is read to bend his knees and pray in the day, that is the third, sixth, and ninth hour, are understood by the Church. Because the Lord, sending the Holy Spirit at the third hour, ascending the cross at the sixth, and laying down His soul at the ninth, deemed fit to make known and to sanctify these hours for us more excellently than the others.

Acts 2:17

I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh. The word effusion shows the largess of the gift, because, not as before to the prophets and to the priests only, but to all indiscriminately in both sexes, conditions, and persons, the grace of the Holy Spirit would be given. For what all flesh may mean, the prophet subsequently explained. [Acts 2:17] -- And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, etc. And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs on earth beneath. Wonders in heaven, when a new star appeared at the birth of the Lord, the sun was darkened when He ascended the cross, and the very heavens were covered with darkness. Signs on earth, when the Lord gave up the Spirit, the earth quaked, the graves opened, rocks were split, and many bodies of the saints who slept arose. [Acts 2:19] -- Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The blood of the Lord's side, the fire of the Holy Spirit, the vapor of compunction and weeping. For as from fire comes smoke, so from the ardor of the Holy Spirit proceeds compunction. For it remains to believe that blood flowed from a dead body in a living stream, which is against the nature of our bodies, was done as an indication of a sign. For what other purpose, unless for our salvation and life, which indeed springs from His death? The illumination of the faithful can also be understood in the fire, and the blindness of the Jews who did not believe in the vapor of smoke. Hence, the Lord, about to give the law, descended in fire and smoke, because He illuminates the humble through the brightness of His manifestation, and darkens the eyes of the proud through the obscurity of error.

Acts 2:20

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. This is believed to have been partly fulfilled during the Lord's Passion, and partly to occur before the great day, that is, the Day of Judgment. For at that time the sun was darkened, but the moon, turned into blood, could not plainly appear to men, since it was (as it happens during Passover) the fifteenth day, and during the day it was hidden from mortal sight by the obstruction of the earth. [Acts 2:21] -- And it shall be: Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. This is what Peter says elsewhere: For God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation, whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him (Acts X).

Acts 2:22-23

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God, and so on until you afflicted and killed Him. Like a learned teacher, he first admonishes the unbelievers, whom he pities, to give advice of salvation later when pierced by just fear. And because he speaks to those who know the law, he shows that Christ Himself is the One promised by the prophets. However, he does not first call Him the Son of God by his own authority, but a man approved, a just man, a man resurrected from the dead, not in the common resurrection along with the others, which is delayed until the end of the world, but celebrated on the third day, so that the assertion of a singular glorious resurrection might bear the testimony of eternal divinity. Since the bodies of others are proven to have undergone corruption after death, this one, of whom it is said: You will not let Your Holy One see corruption (Psalm XV), is shown to be free from human frailty, and proven to have surpassed the merits of human condition, and therefore more deserving to be ascribed to God than to humans. You will learn from the story of Cornelius the centurion and in the sermon given by the Apostle Paul in Athens what kind of introduction the apostles use in their preaching to the Gentiles.

Acts 2:25

I have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, that I should not be moved. Coming, he says, into the transient things, I did not take my eye off Him who always remains, foreseeing this, that after passing through temporal things I should turn to Him, because He favors me, so that I may remain steadfastly in Him, and I attribute this, that I did not commit sin nor was deceit found in my mouth (I Peter II), not to humanity, but to divinity; on account of this, there is joy in my thoughts, and rejoicing in my words, because of the resurrection, namely, because through it the world has been delivered. [Acts 2:26] -- Moreover, my flesh will not fail in destruction, but will sleep in the hope of resurrection. For You will not leave my soul to be possessed by Hell, nor will You allow Your Holy One's body, through which others too are sanctified, to see corruption.

Acts 2:28

For You have made known to me the paths of life, by which we proceed to eternity. In these, after the sorrow of passion, You will fill me with joy with Your face (Psalm XV). And ascending to heaven, You will give the delights of

Your right hand continually. Because He was neither left in Hell. Thus Christ indeed descended according to the soul to Hell, to aid those who needed it, but He was not left in Hell, for He quickly returned to claim His resurrected body. [Acts 2:33] -- Exalted therefore by the right hand of God, because the Psalm had said: "Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." And having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this, which you both see and hear. You see the fiery tongues, you hear in our speech. But that which He says, that He received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured it out, shows both natures of the same Christ, because He received as man, and poured out as God.

Acts 2:34

For David did not ascend into the heavens. He himself says: "For these latter things, blessed David predicted, not about himself, but about his Lord's ascension, who would be sent forth from Zion, that is, from David's royal lineage, and would rule in the midst of his enemies;" so also understand those previous things he mentioned, which pertain not to David, but to Christ's death and resurrection. [Acts 2:34] -- The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand." The first name of the Lord among the Hebrews is the Tetragrammaton, which is properly used for God; the second, which is common to mortals, is that by which both kings and other men are called. If the Arian heresy wishes to oppose us with this difference, making the Son lesser, and the Father greater, we will respond that the inferior name belongs to him to whom it is commanded to sit. As blessed Peter explained: "For God made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." For it was not the divinity that was crucified, but the flesh. And this indeed can be done, which could be crucified.

Acts 2:35

"Until I make your enemies your footstool." This is what Peter elsewhere said about the Lord: "Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things" (Acts III). For then, when all times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord, He will send Jesus Christ, who was preached to us from royal thrones, to judge the living and the dead (Wisdom XVIII). [Acts 2:37] -- And having heard this, they were cut to the heart, etc. See the prophecy of Joel fulfilled, the flesh following the fire of the Holy Spirit, compunction's vapor follows. For smoke tends to produce tears. They begin to weep

who had laughed, they beat their chest, they give their prayer to God as a sacrifice, so they might taste the blood of salvation, which they had previously invoked upon themselves and their children to their condemnation. It follows:

Acts 2:38

"Repent," he says, "and let each one of you be baptized." Speaking of baptism, he first mentioned the laments of repentance, so that, following the custom of the Church, they might first immerse themselves in the water of their affliction, and afterward be washed in the sacrament of baptism. [Acts 2:41] -- And about three thousand souls were added that day. Where the baptism of the Church was first celebrated, divine mercy, by careful plan, gathered a number of souls equal to the confession of the Holy Trinity. And Moses indeed, on the fiftieth day of Passover when the law was given, commanded the solemnity of the first fruits to be initiated; but now, with the Holy Spirit coming, not sheaves of wheat, but souls were consecrated as first fruits to the Lord. [Acts 2:44] -- And they had all things in common, etc. If the love of God is poured into our hearts, it soon surely generates love for our neighbor. Hence, on account of the double ardor of charity, the Holy Spirit is read to have been given twice to the apostles. It is also a great indication of fraternal love to possess all things in common, having nothing as one's own.

CHAPTER 3

Acts 3:1

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple, etc. The apostles, about to enter the temple at the ninth hour, first heal a man lame from birth, and then, laboring until evening, imbue many thousands of men with the word of faith. For the teachers of the Church, coming toward the end of the world, preach both to Israel, who were first languishing, and afterwards to the Gentiles. For these are the laborers whom the father of the family brings into the vineyard at the ninth and eleventh hour (Matt. XX). [Acts 3:2] -- And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried. For the people of Israel were rebellious not only to the Incarnate Lord, but from the very first times of the given law, as if lame from the mother's womb. This is well figured by Jacob wrestling with the angel, blessed indeed, but limping (Gen. XXXII), because the same people, prevailing in the passion of the Lord,

were in some ways blessed through faith, but in others lame through disbelief.

Acts 3:2

Whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful. The Beautiful Gate of the temple is the Lord, through whom if anyone enters, he shall be saved. To this gate, the weak Israel, unable to go on his own, is carried by the voices of the law and the prophets, so that he may beseech help from those entering the interior, by hearing the wisdom of faith. They place listeners at the gate by the prophecy of what is to come, but it is Peter's to lead them into the temple, to whom for a strong confession both the name of the rock and the keys of heaven have been given. [Acts 3:6] -- Silver and gold have I none, etc. Indeed, the old tabernacle had the justifications of worship, and the secular sanctuary distinguished by gold and silver, but the blood of the Gospel shines more precious than the metals of the law, because the people who before lay mentally weak at the gilded posts, healed in the name of the Crucified, enter the temple of the heavenly kingdom. Otherwise, the blessed Peter, mindful of the Lord's precept, which says: Do not possess gold and silver (Matt. X), used to preserve the money placed at the apostles' feet not for himself, but for the use of the poor, who had left their patrimonies.

Acts 3:7

And having taken his right hand, he raised him up. He who lifts another up also strengthens him with his right hand. For the word of the teacher is worth less in the hearts of the hearers if it is not also recommended by examples of one's own action. [Acts 3:8] -- And leaping up, he stood and walked. And he entered the temple with them. The order of perfection is clear: first, he who had lain down rises, then he seizes strength, and thus he enters the gate of the kingdom with the apostles. [Acts 3:10] -- And they were all filled with wonder and amazement. Ecstasy means fear here. For ecstasy can also be said in another way, not alienated by fear, but taken up by some inspiration of revelation. [Acts 3:11] -- All the people ran to them, to the portico called Solomon's. With Israel saved by the apostles, the entire world rushes to the thresholds of the true and peaceful Solomon, of whom it is said: "His government shall increase and peace shall have no end" (Isaiah IX). This is the stone cut from the mountain, which, with the earthly realm

of faith's enemy crumbling, alone holds the peaceful dominion through the world (Daniel II).

Acts 3:23

And it will come to pass that every soul who does not listen to that Prophet shall be destroyed. Briefly and clearly, with the testimony of the prophets and the law, he teaches that the Lord must be listened to by all nations, condemning indeed the unbelievers and granting the faithful eternal blessing. [Acts 3:24] -- And all the prophets from Samuel and onwards. Although the patriarchs and saints of earlier times prophesied concerning Christ through their words and deeds, the proper time of the prophets, I say, is that which began with Samuel, under whom the times of the kings in Judea began, and continued until the end of the Babylonian captivity. [Acts 3:25] -- And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. The seed of Abraham is indeed Christ, in whose faith the blessing was promised to all the families of the earth, that is, to Jews and Gentiles alike. The apostle soothes the minds of the Jews to make them more prompt to believe, saying that the Healer of the whole world chose to visit and bless them first.

Acts 3:26

To you first (he says) God, raising up His Son. Here it should equally be noted that it is concerning the same Son of God, whom he calls the seed of Abraham, due to the twofold nature of Christ, lest they believe Christ to be merely a man, or one son human and the other divine. By this snare of heresy, the insane Manes and Nestorius were deceived.

CHAPTER 4

Acts 4:1

While they were speaking to the people, the priests and the magistrates of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, and so on. And the priests and the magistrates, or the temple prefect, as another edition says, who seemed to be the teachers and judges of the people, were grieved that the multitude had flocked to hear the apostles. The Sadducees, however, were grieved because they preached the resurrection. Yet both were grieved because those whom they knew as the man Jesus, whom they had killed, were claimed by them to be glorified by God the Father. [Acts 4:4] -- And the number of men became five thousand. If in the five thousand men whom the Lord fed in the desert (Matthew XIV), the people under the law are under-

stood but were refreshed by the gift of Christ, these five thousand instructed by the apostles' teachings can also signify the people of the Gentiles, who spiritually followed the mysteries of the same law. And both are fittingly granted the heavenly gift in the evening, because when the fullness of time had come, God sent His Son (Galatians IV).

Acts 4:11

This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. The builders were the Jews, who, while all the nations were dwelling in the desolation of idols, they alone were reading the law and the prophets daily for edification. As they were building, they came upon the cornerstone, which would embrace two walls, that is, they found in the prophetic Scriptures that Christ would come in the flesh and build two peoples in Himself. And because they preferred to stand on one wall, that is, to be saved alone, they rejected the stone, which was not suited to one, but to two. However, God, though they were unwilling, Himself placed this stone as the chief cornerstone, that from the two testaments and the two peoples, a building of one and the same faith might arise. [Acts 4:12] -- And there is no salvation in any other. If salvation is in no other, but only in Christ, then the fathers of the Old Testament were saved by the same Redeemer's incarnation and passion, in which we believe and hope to be saved. And though the sacraments may differ according to the times, yet the same faith agrees. For the dispensation of Christ, which we know to have been accomplished through the apostles, they learned through the prophets would come. For there is no redemption of human captivity except in the blood of Him who gave Himself as a ransom for all.

Acts 4:13

Finding out that these men were unlettered and ignorant, they marveled. Illiterate men are sent to preach, so that the faith of believers might not be thought to have been brought about by human eloquence and learning, but by the power of God, as the Apostle says: "Not in the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect" (I Cor. I). For those were called idiotae who, content with their own language and natural knowledge, were unacquainted with the study of letters. Indeed, the Greeks call their own, ἰδιον. [Acts 4:22] -- The man was over forty years old on whom this sign of healing was performed. According to the history, the perfect age of the

man is indicated amidst the invincible critics. Allegorically, however, the people of Israel did not only seek the Egyptian impurities in the desert for forty years, despising manna, but even in the promised land, they always limped between the rituals of the Lord and of idols. Or if the number forty signifies the double fullness of the law (for four times ten makes forty), the transgressor of both, like a weak person, lying down, surpasses the forty-like perfection.

Acts 4:24

Lord, you who made the heaven and the earth, etc. Hearing the threats of the persecutors, they ask for the confidence to resist through the signs of virtues. [Acts 4:27] -- Against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They interpret the name of Christ, about whom it was said: "And against His Christ" (Psalm II), according to the word. For Christ received his name from chrism, that is, from anointing. According to what is said: "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness" (Psalm 45:7), that is, with the Holy Spirit. [Acts 4:31] -- And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken. Those who sought the strength of firm hearts against the deceit of the enemy received the sign of their prayer being heard through the earthquake, so that they might understand that the earthly hearts were to yield to them. When the Holy Spirit came upon them, even the earth itself was struck with fear. Although it might be understood as the joyful fear of those who, by believing, were to be subjected to the apostles, and who, with their earthly heaviness shaken off, learned to rise with Christ and seek heavenly things.

Acts 4:32

And the multitude of believers was of one heart and one soul. Those who had completely abandoned the world did not boast of their noble lineage, preferring one another, but being as if born from the womb of one and the same mother, the Church, all rejoiced in the same love of brotherhood. [Acts 4:33] -- And with great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. It distinguishes the order of teachers and the attentive listeners. For the multitude of believers, having despised their possessions, were bound together by the bond of charity. The apostles, shining with powers, revealed all the mysteries of Christ. [Acts 4:36] -- Joseph, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles. I think this Barnabas is the same who

later is read to be ordained as an apostle to the Gentiles with Paul. Hence, because he was a Cypriot by birth, after separating from Paul, he returned to his native island. Although some think he was a companion of Paul rather than the one who was established by lot with Matthias in the apostleship, they overlook the fact that, according to the more correct manuscripts, this Barnabas should be called Barsabas with a changed letter, and in the Book of Hebrew Names, this Barnabas is interpreted as the son of consolation, but the other as the son of quiet.

Acts 4:36

Which means the Son of Consolation. Wherever the sacred Scriptures place the names of things or persons together with an interpretation, it undoubtedly signifies a more sacred meaning in those. He is rightly called the son of consolation, who, despising present things, is consoled by the hope of future things. For the Holy Spirit is therefore also called Paraclete because He grants consolation, that is, the joy of heavenly things, through the inner infusion of His gift to those who have pressure in the world. Similarly, blessed Peter is called Bar Jona, that is, the son of the dove, because of the same grace of the Spirit. [Acts 4:37] -- And he brought the price and laid it at the feet of the apostles. About this, Arator says: They prove that they should be deprived, what they avoid touching and teach that gold should be trampled, placed under the feet. From which earthly cares come to the hearts, similarly scattered on the ground.

CHAPTER 5

Acts 5:3

Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart? In another translation, according to the Greek text, it reads: Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart? It should be noted here that no creature can fill the soul and mind of a man according to essence, but only the Creator Trinity. For it is only according to operation and the instinct of the will that the mind is filled with things that are created. Satan indeed fills the mind of someone and the chief part of the heart, not by entering into him and into his senses, and entering the access of the heart (so to speak), since this power is peculiar to divinity alone, but as a cunning, wicked, deceitful, and fraudulent deceiver, dragging the human soul into evil affections through thoughts and the incitements of vices, with

which he himself is full. Satan thus filled Ananias's heart, not by entering himself, but by inserting his venom of malice.

Acts 5:4

You have not lied to men but to God. Before, he had said he lied to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is indeed God, and the error of Macedonius was condemned before it existed. [Acts 5:5] -- Hearing these words, Ananias fell down and expired. The severe sentence was given to the transgressor not for the sake of profit, but foresaw in spirit the future weeds that would adulterate the Church's simplicity with corrupt morals (from these, the most detestable race of the Sarabaites is said to have sprung, who, not abandoning their possessions, falsely pretend to keep apostolic strictness), he did not allow the culprits to be cured by repentance, but took care to completely uproot the harmful seed to instill fear in future generations. Subsequently it follows: [Acts 5:11] -- And great fear came upon the whole Church and upon all who heard these things. No one else dared to join them. The punishment of the two who fraudulently sought to join them provided an example to others.

Acts 5:15

So that as Peter came along, at least his shadow might fall on some of them and they would be healed. At that time, Peter visibly raised the sick with the shadow of his body, and even now he does not cease to strengthen the infirmities of the faithful with the invisible shadow of his intercession. And since Peter is the type of the Church, he indeed walks upright himself, but by his shadow accompanying him he raises those that lie down, because the Church, with its mind and love intending towards heavenly things, seemingly runs through the earth shadow-like, and here renews those by temporal sacraments and figures of heavenly things, whom it rewards there with perpetual gifts. Some connect to this place what the Lord said in the Gospel: He who believes in me will do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do (John 14).

Acts 5:17

But the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, etc. Heresy is called in Greek from election, because each one, having rejected the sayings of others, chose what he thought should be followed. But the Sadducees, who are called just (for they claimed

for themselves what they were not, as we read below), entirely denying the resurrection of the body, said that the soul perishes with the flesh. They did not believe there was an angel or any spirit, and accepting only the five books of Moses, rejected the proclamations of the prophets. And therefore these chiefly supported the leaders in persecuting the apostles, being led by zeal, because those with great power and signs of miracles gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. [Acts 5:19] -- But the angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison by night, etc. So that Thomas might not doubt it was the Lord bearing flesh and bones, whom he had seen entering while the doors were closed, behold, He Himself with his companions, still clothed in mortal flesh, went out through closed doors.

Acts 5:23

We found the prison indeed closed with all diligence, and the guards standing before the doors; but opening it, we found no one inside. Why, profane Jew, are you driven by blind madness, saying that the apostles stole the Lord from the tomb? Say, I ask, do you believe the same apostles were stolen from your closed prison by theft? [Acts 5:24] -- They were in doubt about what would happen to them. They were not willing to give themselves to faith even in this way. For inborn malice hardens an unfaithful heart even against manifest signs. [Acts 5:28] -- You want to bring this man's blood upon us. The high priest forgot the obligation he had imprecated on himself and his own, saying: His blood be on us and on our children. [Acts 5:34] -- But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel rose in the council. This Gamaliel, as Clement indicates, was a companion in faith with the apostles, but remaining with the Jews by their counsel, so that he might calm their madness in such a commotion.

Acts 5:36

For before these days Theudas rose up, etc. This Theudas persuaded many, as Josephus reports, taking their possessions from the city, to occupy the banks of the Jordan. And since he was a magician, he claimed to be a prophet and that he could provide a passage through the divided stream by his command. But a troop of horsemen, by the order of the procurator Fadus, coming upon him, killed many, captured others, and brought his head back to Jerusalem. [Acts 5:37] -- After him rose up Judas the Galilean. Josephus also writes about this man from the city of Gamala, who, taking up with a certain Pharisee

named Sadduc, urged the people not to lose their freedom by paying taxes to the Romans, citing the law that service should be given only to the Lord and that those who brought tithes to the temple should not pay taxes to Caesar. This heresy grew so greatly that it even disturbed the Pharisees and a large part of the people, so that they believed it necessary to ask the Lord Christ whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not.

CHAPTER 6

Acts 6:1

There was a complaint of the Greeks against the Hebrews. The cause of the complaint was that the Hebrews preferred their widows, as supposedly more learned, in the ministry over the widows of the Greeks. [Acts 6:2] -- It is not right for us to abandon the word of God and serve tables. About this, Arator: . . . This place indicates that the offerings of the mind are better for an unlearned people than the dishes served to the body. [Acts 6:3] -- Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, etc. Hence the apostles, or the successors of the apostles, have now decreed that throughout all the Churches there should be seven deacons who are of higher rank than the others, and who stand near the altar like columns of the altar, not without some mystery of the number seven. [Acts 6:8] -- Stephen, full of grace and strength, performed great wonders and signs among the people. But some from the synagogue, which was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, etc., arose. Stephen, in Greek, is called Crowned in Latin. He anticipated in his name the reality of being crowned, humbly stoned, but sublimely crowned. In Hebrew, it is interpreted as your norm. Whose? Namely, of the subsequent martyrs, of whom he was the first to suffer, setting the example of dying for Christ.

Acts 6:10

And they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. This is what the Lord Himself says to His martyrs: For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. It was fitting that in the first martyr, what He deigned to promise to all who are betrayed for His name should be confirmed.

CHAPTER 7

Acts 7:2

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, etc. It should be noted, according to the words of Stephen, that it was not as it appears in Genesis, that God spoke to Abraham after the death of his father, who certainly died in Haran, where the son also lived with him; but before he dwelt in the same city, even then when he was in the region of Mesopotamia, of which it is a city. [Acts 7:3] -- "Leave your country and your kindred and come into the land I will show you." Then he left the land, etc. The land and kindred of Abraham refers to the homeland and race of the Chaldeans, from where he had long since left, who now lived in Mesopotamia, but because he left with hope of returning and longing, he hears from the Lord: "Leave your country." Not to physically move himself, which he had already done, but to remove the love of it from his mind. Therefore, what follows: Then he left the land of the Chaldeans, does not signify a physical departure, but a departure of the mind, by which he separated himself forever from the conversation and people of the Chaldeans. Because according to the belief of the Chroniclers, in the same year he left Chaldea, entered Mesopotamia, stayed in Haran, and was led into the promised land.

Acts 7:6

For his seed shall be a stranger in a foreign land, and they shall subject them to slavery and mistreat them for four hundred years. It should not be understood as if he said that this seed would be mistreated or subjected to slavery for those four hundred years, but by a hyperbaton it should be read that his seed would be strangers for four hundred years, during part of which time slavery also occurred. For it is written: "In Isaac shall your seed be called" (Gen. XXI), and from the year of Isaac's birth to the year of the exodus from Egypt four hundred and five years are counted, which Scripture, in its manner, calls four hundred years, during which that seed would be strangers, either in the land of Canaan or in Egypt. It can also be understood that from Isaac's fifth year, when through the son of the bondwoman, affliction began, the labor of four hundred years is counted.

Acts 7:14

Joseph called his father Jacob and all his kin, seventy-five souls. He follows the Septuagint in saying this, but in the Hebrew truth, only seventy souls are

found. And if you wish to count the series of souls in Genesis, adding Jacob himself and Joseph with his two sons who were in Egypt, you will find only seventy souls. [Acts 7:16] -- And he died and our fathers, and they were carried over to Shechem. Concerning Joseph alone, Scripture relates that his bones were transferred from Egypt and buried in Shechem. But from these blessed Stephen's words and from the writings of Saint Jerome, who lived in those places, it should be noted that the other patriarchs were also buried there, although the memory of Joseph is deservedly more celebrated, since he himself commanded that this be done with his bones, and the city itself belonged to his tribe. Indeed, Jerome in the history of blessed Paula relates thus: "He passed (he says) through Shechem, not as many mistakenly read Sichar, which is now called Neapolis, and around Jacob's well, built on the side of Mount Garizim, over which the Lord sat, he entered the church." And soon after: "And from there (he says) turning, he saw the tombs of the twelve patriarchs." Likewise in the book about the best kind of translation: "The twelve patriarchs are not buried in Arbes, but in Shechem." But understandably, what follows troubles:

Acts 7:16

And they were placed in the tomb which Abraham bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. For Genesis teaches that Abraham bought the place of the tomb from Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, in Cariatharba, for four hundred silver shekels, in which Abraham himself, Isaac, Jacob, and Adam the first man were buried. And also Jacob, returning from Mesopotamia, received a portion of the field near the city of Shechem, where he pitched his tents, from Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred lambs given. Therefore, Abraham did not buy the sepulcher from Hamor the Shechemite but from Ephron the Hittite, in which the twelve patriarchs were not buried, but in Shechem, as we have said. However, blessed Stephen, speaking commonly, follows the common opinion more in his speech. For combining two narratives together, he aims not so much at the proper order of the surrounding history as at the cause in question, which was being discussed. For he who was accused of teaching against the holy place and the law proceeds to show how Jesus Christ is shown from the law to be promised, and that they did not choose to serve Moses then, nor the Lord now. These things I have said as I could, not prejudicing a better judgment, if one be present. Moreover, where it is said: From the sons of

Hamor the father of Shechem, it is written in the Greek example: From the sons of Hamor, who was in Shechem, which seems to agree more with the history of Genesis, though it may have happened that the same Hamor had a father and son named Shechem.

Acts 7:17

But when the time of the promise which God had confessed to Abraham was drawing near, namely that which was said: And after these things, they will go out and serve me in this place. [Acts 7:27] -- Who made you a ruler and judge over us? In his entire speech, he convicted them, already then being contrary to the law and Moses. [Acts 7:37] -- This is Moses who said to the sons of Israel: God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers, like me. Like me, visible in the flesh, but more wonderful in majesty and more terrible in majesty than I. He says, lest the doctrine of Christ be thought new and foreign, it is Moses himself, whom your fathers did not wish to obey, who preaches and says that he will come in the form of a man and will give the precepts of life to all souls.

Acts 7:42

Did you offer to me victims and sacrifices for forty years in the desert? Although they offered libations to the Lord out of necessity, they are said to have truly served idols with their hearts turned away, from the time when they transformed gold into the head of a calf. For afterwards, we read that they offered certain things to the Lord, not out of will, but as we learn from this place, out of the fear of punishments and the destruction of those who fell because of idols. However, the Lord regards not what is offered, but the will of the one offering. Therefore, wherever there was an occasion, they always turned back to Egypt in their hearts. [Acts 7:43] -- And you took up the tabernacle of Moloch. Although, he says, you appeared to bring victims and sacrifices to the tabernacle of the Lord, yet in your whole intention of heart, you embraced the shrine of Moloch. But Moloch, or Melchom, as it is often read, is the idol of the Ammonites, which is interpreted as your king.

Acts 7:43

And the star of your god Remphan. You have forsaken (he says) the true and living God, and you have taken the star of Remphan, that is, your own creation, as God. But it signifies Lucifer, to whose worship the Saracen people were enslaved in honor of Venus. And because Remphan (as I said) means

either your creation or your rest, the prophet subsequently added, and said: [Acts 7:43] -- The figures which you have made to worship them. It is understood, you have adopted them conjointly. [Acts 7:43] -- And I will carry you beyond Babylon. Because of these (he says) sacrileges, you will be taken captive not only into Babylon but also beyond Babylon. Nor is the first martyr to be thought erring because he said beyond Babylon instead of beyond Damascus, as written in the prophet (Amos V). He considered the understanding more than the word, because they were led into Babylon beyond Damascus, just as beyond Babylon.

Acts 7:44

The tabernacle of testimony was with our fathers in the desert. Because they said he was acting against the holy place, here he shows that the Lord does not greatly esteem decorated stone but desires the splendor of heavenly souls. Where he wants it to be understood that just as the tabernacle was in the wilderness before the construction of the temple, so they should understand the temple itself to be destroyed when a better state succeeds. As Jeremiah once foretold, saying: Do not trust in lying words, saying: The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord (Jerem. VII). And after some time: I will do to this house, in which my name is called, and in which you have trust, as I did to Shiloh, where my name dwelled at the beginning, and I will cast you away from my face (Ibid.). [Acts 7:49] -- Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. This is not to be understood carnally, as if God has members placed in heaven and on earth, as we do when we sit, but to indicate that he is within and above all, he claimed that heaven is his throne and the earth his footstool. To show that he encompasses everything, elsewhere he declares that he measures the heavens with his palm, and the earth he encloses with a handful. Spiritually, however, heaven suggests the saints, and the earth the sinners, because God inhabits and presides over the former while condemning and casting down the latter.

Acts 7:49

Or what is the place of my rest? Not a golden or marble earthly dwelling place, but as the Prophet follows: Upon whom does my Spirit rest, if not upon the humble and quiet one, who trembles at my words (Isaiah LXVI)? [Acts 7:53] -- You who received the law as ordained by angels. The law is indeed ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator. [Acts 7:56] -- Behold, I see the

heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Since the Lord Christ is the perfect Son of both God and man, why did the blessed martyr prefer to call Him the Son of man rather than the Son of God, when it would seem to bring more glory to call Him the Son of God rather than the Son of man, except that by this testimony the unbelief of the Jews would be confounded, as they remembered that they crucified a man and did not wish to believe Him to be God? Therefore, to strengthen the patience of the blessed martyr, the gate of the heavenly kingdom is opened, and lest the innocent man being stoned waver on earth, the crucified God-man appears crowned in heaven. Hence, because standing is the posture of one fighting or assisting, he rightly saw Him standing at the right hand of God, whom he had as a helper among the persecuting men. Nor does it seem discordant that Mark describes Him as sitting at the right hand of God, which is the position of one judging, because even now He invisibly judges all things, and in the end He will come as the visible judge of all.

Acts 7:58

And they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the Lord suffered outside the gate, who chose us from the world into His heavenly kingdom and glory, and Stephen, as if a stranger to the world, is stoned outside the city. For he did not have a lasting city here, but sought the one to come with his whole mind. And by just change of things, the martyr directs his gaze from the world's heart to the heavens, the persecutor of hard neck sends his hands to the stones. Hence Arator says: "Rebellious Judea, you deliriously seize stones against Stephen, you who [will] always be stony in your harsh crime." [Acts 7:60] -- But kneeling down, he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." For himself indeed he prayed standing, for his enemies he knelt, because their greater iniquity demanded the greater remedy of supplication. And the wondrous virtue of the blessed martyr, who was so fervent with zeal that he openly reproached the guilt of their disbelief to those he was held by, so burned with love that even in death he prayed for those by whom he was killed.

CHAPTER 8

Acts 8:1

And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. This is what the Lord Himself commanded: When they persecute you in one

city, flee to another (Matt. X). For it was by His will that the occasion of tribulation became the seed-bed of the Gospel. [Acts 8:6] -- But the crowds paid attention to what was being said by Philip. From this chapter and from the story of the Samaritan woman, it is proven that this nation was prompt in spirit to believe. [Acts 8:13] -- Then Simon himself also believed. Either he truly believed in the Lord, having been overcome by the words and virtue of the blessed Philip, or, as it is more credible, he pretended to believe until he received baptism, so that, because he was very eager for praise, in such a way that he wanted to be considered the Christ, as the stories tell, he might learn from Him the arts by which he performed miracles. This is also said to have been done by his successors, who, initiated in their author's malevolent arts, customarily entered the Church by any deceit and secretly acquired baptism.

Acts 8:14

They sent Peter and John to them. Arator beautifully explains this: Peter often makes John his companion, because the Church favors the virgin. [Acts 8:17] -- It should be noted, however, that Philip, who evangelized Samaria, was one of the seven. For if he had been an Apostle, he would certainly have been able to lay hands on them so that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For this is reserved to bishops alone. For presbyters, whether outside the bishop's presence or in his presence, are allowed to baptize and anoint the baptized with chrism, but only with chrism consecrated by the bishop; however, they are not to anoint the forehead with the same oil, which is reserved to bishops alone when they impart the Paraclete Spirit to the baptized. [Acts 8:20] -- "Your money perish with you," and other things. When holy men pronounce a sentence of cursing, they do not erupt from the desire of vengeance, but from the justice of examination. For they see the subtle judgment of God inwardly, and recognize the evils rising outwardly that ought to be carried by a curse; and they do not sin in the curse, since they do not disagree with the inner judgment. For when the innocence of the one cursing remains, and yet the curse swallows up the one who is cursed to destruction, from the outcome of both sides it is gathered that the sentence received from one internal judge is hurled at the guilty one. Thus Simon, who received the curse from Peter, perished by eternal damnation. And below, Bar-Jesus, rebuked by Paul, was immediately deprived of common light.

Acts 8:23

For I see you are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. Therefore, the Holy Spirit descended in a dove to teach those who would receive Him to be simple. For he who retains the gall of bitterness in his heart, however baptized he may seem to be, is not freed from the bonds of his iniquity, but as if purged for a single moment at the hour of baptism, he is soon oppressed seven times more fiercely by a demon. Therefore, in vain does he attempt to buy the grace of the Spirit, who has taken care to divest himself with a raven's mind. [Acts 8:26] -- Arise and go toward the south. It is well to seek, find, and wash at noon, the one who, burning with the devotion of his heart, merited to be consecrated by God as a kind of first-fruits of the nations. In him that special saying of the Psalmist is fulfilled: Ethiopia will stretch out her hands to God.

Acts 8:26

To the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, this is desert. Not the road, but Gaza is called desert. For that old Gaza, which was once the boundary of the Canaanites near Egypt, was utterly destroyed, and another in its place was built elsewhere. This allegorically represents the people of the Gentiles, formerly deserted by the worship of God, nor cultivated by the preaching of any prophets. The way descending from Jerusalem to Gaza opens the spring of salvation; it is the Lord Jesus Christ, who says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John XIV). He descended from the heavenly Jerusalem to our infirmities, and whitened the blackness of our guilt in the water of baptism. [Acts 8:27] -- And behold, a man from Ethiopia, a powerful eunuch. He is called a man for the virtue and integrity of his mind; and not undeservedly, as he had so much zeal for the Scriptures that he did not cease to read them even on the way; and he bore so much love in religion that, leaving the royal court, he came from the farthest parts of the world to the temple of the Lord. Hence, while justly seeking an interpreter of the reading, he found Christ whom he was seeking; and, as Jerome says, found more in the desert fountain of the Church than in the gilded temple of the synagogue. For there, as Jeremiah in amazement proclaims, the Ethiopian changed his skin, that is, washed from the filth of sins, he ascended whitened from the washing of Jesus.

Acts 8:27

The queen of the Ethiopians, Candace. And in the Book of Kings, we read that the Queen of the South came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. For, indeed, it was the custom of that nation always to be ruled by women, and to call them Candace. [Acts 8:27] -- Who was over all her treasures. The queen of the Ethiopians, sending her treasurer to Jerusalem, designates the Church of the nations, which will offer the Lord gifts of virtues and faith. The etymology of the name also fits. For Candace can be interpreted as changed from Hebrew. It is indeed she to whom it is said in the psalm inscribed: For those who will be changed: Hear, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear, and forget your people and your father's house (Psalm 45), and the rest. [Acts 8:29] -- And the Spirit said to Philip. The Spirit spoke in Philip's heart. For the Spirit of God, as it were, appears to speak words to us, with a hidden force prompting us to do what ought to be done.

Acts 8:32

As a sheep led to the slaughter. Just as a sheep, when led to sacrifice, does not resist, so he suffered of his own free will. Or in a higher sense, just as the lamb was accustomed to be sacrificed at Passover, so Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5). [Acts 8:32] -- And as a lamb before its shearer is silent. He not only redeemed us with his blood but also covered us with his wool, so that we, shivering in our unbelief, might be warmed by his garment, and we might hear the Apostle speaking to us: As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Thus, he did not open his mouth, since in his passion he wished to answer Pilate and the chief priests briefly, and Herod not at all. [Acts 8:33] -- In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away. Because the judge of all did not find truth in judgment, but, without any fault, was condemned by the clamor of the Jews and the voice of Pilate.

Acts 8:33

Who shall declare his generation? Either it is to be understood of his divinity that it is impossible to know the mysteries of his divine birth, of which the Father speaks: I have begotten you from the womb before the morning star (Psalm 110); or of the Virgin's birth, which can be explained with difficulty. To Mary, seeking the reason, it is said through the angel: The Holy Spirit will come upon you. So either the angel or the evangelist should declare only

the sacraments of his birth, who is a rare narrator. [Acts 8:33] -- For his life will be taken from the earth. So that he would live not on earth, but in heaven. [Acts 8:35] -- But Philip opening his mouth, etc. Philip interpreted means 'the mouth of a lamp,' and it is a beautiful sense that the mouth of a lamp opened its mouth, while it brought forth the obscure things of prophecy into the light of knowledge. Although these circumlocutions according to history could signify that his speech at that time would be somewhat longer.

Acts 8:36

They came to a certain water. Even today there is a village called Bethsoro in the tribe of Judah, on the twentieth milestone of those going from Chebron of Elias. Near it, a fountain bubbling up at the roots of a mountain is absorbed by the soil from which it springs. In this place, the eunuch was baptized by Philip. [Acts 8:36] -- Who prohibits me from being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop, and the rest. Here another translation according to the Greek exemplar has a few more verses where it is written: Behold water, who prohibits me from being baptized? But Philip said to him: If you believe with all your heart, you will be saved. And responding, he said: I believe in Christ, the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stop, and the rest. I believe, therefore, that our own interpreter initially translated these verses as well, but they were later omitted due to the fault of the scribes.

Acts 8:39

The Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. There are some who testify that an angel did this in the Holy Spirit, as Jerome reports. [Acts 8:40] -- He preached to all the cities until he came to Caesarea. He says of Palestine, where it is described below that he had a house, which is shown to this day, as well as the room of his four prophesying virgin daughters.

CHAPTER 9

Acts 9:1

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. Evidently present by afflicting with murders, and deterring the absent with threats. [Acts 9:4] -- Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? He did not say: Why do you persecute my members? but why do you persecute me? because he still suffers the unrighteous in his own body, which is the Church. He even declares that benefits bestowed upon his members are done unto him when he says: I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat (Matt. 25). And he

added in explanation: As long as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me (Ibid.). [Acts 9:5] -- I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. He did not say: I am God, I am the Son of God, but he says: Accept the weakness of my humility and lay down the scales of your pride.

Acts 9:6

Rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you must do. He did not immediately show him what was to be done but advised that it would be heard later in the city, so that he would stand more firmly in good things as he had previously fallen completely from his former error. [Acts 9:8] -- And when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. He could not see well again unless he was first properly blinded, and excluding his own confounding wisdom, would he commit himself to faith in all things. [Acts 9:9] -- And he was without sight for three days. Because he had not believed that the Lord had conquered death by rising on the third day, he is now instructed by his own example, who would change the darkness of three days with the returning light. [Acts 9:16] -- For I will show him how much he must suffer for my name. He should not (he says) be feared as a persecutor, but rather be embraced as a brother, who is ready to endure the adversities which he had inflicted upon the saints, together with the saints.

Acts 9:18

And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes. It is said that the entire body of the dragon is covered with scales. Because the Jews are called serpents and brood of vipers, those who followed their perfidy had covered the eyes of their heart as if with the skin of a serpent. But when the scales fell from his eyes under the hand of Ananias, it was shown in his face that he had already received true light in his mind. [Acts 9:25] -- But his disciples took him by night. That is, the disciples of Christ. For in Greek, there is no addition of "his", but only "disciples" so that they are understood generally as disciples of Christ or the Church. For Paul had not yet been read as having made disciples but only as having confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus. [Acts 9:25] -- They let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket. This kind of escape is still preserved in the Church today when someone, surrounded by the snares of the ancient enemy or the traps of this world, is not saved by his hope and faith. For the wall of Damascus, which is interpreted as drinking blood, is the adversity of the world. King Aretas, who

is interpreted as descent, is understood as the devil. The basket, which is usually made of rushes and palm leaves, signifies the conjunction of faith and hope. For the rush signifies the greenness of faith, and the palm signifies the hope of eternal life. Therefore, whoever sees himself surrounded by the wall of adversity, let him quickly ascend by the basket of virtues by which he may escape.

Acts 9:26

When he had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples. Let us not believe that he came to the apostles in Jerusalem immediately after being baptized, but as he himself wrote to the Galatians, first he went to Arabia and then returned again to Damascus. Then after three years, coming to Jerusalem, he saw Peter and stayed with him for fifteen days. But he did not see any other of the apostles, except James the brother of the Lord. And then, as Luke also follows, he came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Whether he endured the plots in Damascus the first or second time is not easily evident. For it can also be understood the second time since it is said that after many days were fulfilled, the Jews made a plot to kill him. Therefore, it seems that Luke omits Arabia because he did not preach there, according to what he himself later said to King Agrippa: because I preached first in Damascus, and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles.

Acts 9:27

But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. This is that Barnabas, a Cypriot by race, a Levite, who is said above to have brought the price of his field and laid it at the feet of the apostles. [Acts 9:29] -- He also spoke and disputed with the Greeks. It is noted that he taught Greeks in Jerusalem and Jews in Damascus, which is a city of the Gentiles, lest perhaps it signifies that Gentiles are to be helped into the city of God and Jews are to fall into the perfidy of the Gentiles. As Isaiah says: And Lebanon shall be turned into Carmel, and Carmel shall be counted as a forest (Isaiah 29). [Acts 9:33] -- He found there a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years. This Aeneas signifies the human race, languishing previously in the pleasure of infirmities, but healed by the work and word of the apostles. For since the world itself is raised up by four directions, and the course of the age is varied by four yearly seasons, anyone who embraces present and fleeting joys is laid out powerless on a bed, counting, as it were, the twice four years in

number. Indeed, the bed itself is sloth, where the sick and weak mind rests, that is, in the pleasure of the body and all worldly delight.

Acts 9:34

Aeneas, the Lord Jesus Christ heals you. Rise and make your own bed. He who had been cured of paralysis was immediately commanded to rise and make his bed, spiritually suggesting that whoever perceives the foundation of faith in their heart should not only shake off the torpor in which they previously lay fatigued, but also prepare good works in which they can rest. [Acts 9:36] -- In Joppa, there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is interpreted as Dorcas. That is, gazelle or doe. It signifies souls elevated by the pursuit of virtues but contemptible in the opinion of men. For indeed, blessed Luke would not enhance the interpretation of the name unless he recognized that there was a great mystery in it. For a gazelle or doe are animals similar in nature but differing in size, residing in high mountains, and though seen from afar, they can be discerned by all who come. Hence, they are called dorcades in Greek from the sharpness of their sight. Thus, undoubtedly, the saints dwelling high in the merits of their works, sharply focus their minds on heavenly contemplation, and always vigilantly guard themselves with cautious circumspection. For although these animals are clean according to the law, they are timid and unwarlike, as Martial, expressing their nature, says: The boar is feared for its tusk, the stag defends with its antlers; the harmless doe, what are we but prey? Does it not clearly signify those who strive to live simply and walk with a discerning step in action, as if advancing with a cloven hoof and continuously meditating on the word of God? If perchance, through ignorance or weakness, they incur spiritual death, they merit to be revived for the integrity of their sound intention, as it is proved to have happened with Peter himself, to whom what is written about Dorcas can most rightly be applied.

Acts 9:37

And it happened that in those days she became sick and died. For when the saints, through the frailty of mortal nature, commit some wrong, they fall, as it were, into sudden infirmity in the days of their good works. But when they immediately take to tears, they ascend with hope of recovering their virtue, invoking the help of the saints, recalling their good deeds which they had interrupted, they indeed do what follows. [Acts 9:37] -- After they

washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And other things, which are narrated about Peter's summoning and the showing of Dorcas's alms. [Acts 9:39] -- And all the widows stood around him weeping. Widows are the pious thoughts of the penitent soul, which for a time had abandoned the strength of their previous senses, as a wife's governance, and who must most humbly intercede for the sinning soul.

Acts 9:39

And showing him the tunics and garments, which Dorcas used to make for them. They did not entreat for the deceased with their voices, but by her own works, for almsgiving delivers not only from the second, but also from the first death. [Acts 9:40] -- He said: Tabitha, rise. She opened her eyes, and upon seeing Peter, she sat up. The most just order of the one arising is that she first opens the eyes of the mind, and then, upon hearing Peter's voice, she sits up, reclaiming the light of her circumspection which she had lost and lives according to the teaching of those who had helped her. [Acts 9:41] -- Giving her his hand, he raised her. Tabitha rises at the touch of Peter's hand because a soul languishing in sins recovers in no better way than by the examples of the saints.

CHAPTER 10

Acts 10:1

Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, named Cornelius, etc. One attains virtues not through virtues to faith, but through faith to virtues, as blessed Pope Gregory explains. For Cornelius (he says), whose alms were praised by an angel's witness before baptism, came not to faith through works, but to works through faith. For he had believed in the true God even before baptism, whom was he praying to? Or how had almighty God heard him, if he had not revealed himself to be perfected in goodness? Therefore, he knew the creator God of all, but he was ignorant that His almighty Son had been incarnated. He had the faith whose prayers and alms could be pleasing. By his good actions, he merited to know God perfectly, and to believe in the mystery of the Incarnation of His Only Begotten Son, so that he might come to the sacrament of baptism. Therefore, through faith, he came to works, but through works, he was solidified in faith.

Acts 10: 3

He clearly saw in a vision at about the ninth hour of the day, etc. He rightly receives the oracle to seek baptism at the ninth hour because in the death of Him, who surrendered His spirit at the ninth hour, he was to be baptized. [Acts 10:5] -- And now send men to Joppa. When alms and prayers had been accepted, immediately the teacher of salvation is ordered to be summoned, clearly implying that through those alms and prayers, he sought from the Lord the full knowledge of his salvation. [Acts 10:7] -- He called two of his domestic servants and a soldier who feared the Lord. Cornelius sent three to Peter, because the Gentiles destined to believe overcame Europe, Asia, and Africa with apostolic faith, partly by military efforts, that is, the urgency of preaching, partly by attending to domestic affairs. Note that one soldier and two domestics were sent. The stronger they are, the fewer you will find among the members of the Church; there are more who know how to hear the word than those who know how to speak it.

Acts 10: 9

Peter went up to the housetop. This signifies that the Church, leaving behind earthly desires, will have its conversation in the heavens. [Acts 10:9] -- To pray about the sixth hour. At the sixth hour, Peter hungered amidst the prayers, certainly for the salvation of the world, which the Lord in the sixth age of the world came to seek and save. He also wished to indicate this when at the same hour of the day, he thirsted by the well of the Samaritan woman. [Acts 10:11] -- And a certain vessel descended as it were a great sheet. That vessel signifies the Church endowed with incorruptible faith. For a moth does not consume linen, which corrupts other garments. Therefore, whoever wishes to belong to the mystery of the Catholic Church, let him exclude from his heart the corruption of evil thoughts, and thus be incorruptibly firm in faith, so that he is not gnawed in mind by wicked thoughts as if by moths. Alternatively: The moth is a heretic, wishing to corrupt the garment of the Lord but not being able by the dispensation of the Lord. This was also prefigured in the tunic of the Lord which the soldiers did not dare to tear.

Acts 10: 11

Submitted by heaven to earth at four corners. The four corners, by which the sheet was hanging, designate the four regions of the world to which the Church extends. For she is indeed the city of our God in His holy mountain,

expanding the rejoicings of all the earth. For what is submitted from heaven indicates that it is preserved and increased by the grace of the Holy Spirit alone. Whence John says in the Apocalypse: I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God (Rev. 21). The four corners can also prefigure the evangelists, through whom the Church is imbued and exalted by heavenly grace. [Acts 10:12] -- In which were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles of the earth, and birds of the air. Those animals are all the nations impure by errors, but cleansed by the thrice immersion, that is, by the mystery of the Holy Trinity in baptism, which, leaving the image of man, took on the forms of beasts and serpents. Thus it is said to Herod because of his deceitful wickedness: Go tell that fox (Luke 13). And to the Pharisees: Brood of vipers (Luke 3). And to the lustful: Horses maddened in pursuit of mares (Jer. 5). And of the shameless: Do not give what is holy to the dogs (Matt. 7). And of the voluptuous: Do not throw your pearls before swine (*ibid.*). And of the proud and deceitful: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests (Matt. 8). And generally of all: And man being in honor, that is, made in the image of God, did not understand, was compared to senseless animals (Ps. 49). But Solomon shows the true man, that is, incorrupt: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12).

Acts 10:13

Rise, Peter, kill and eat. He says, rise to prepare for evangelization. Kill in the nations what they were, and make them what you are. For he who eats food outside takes it into his own body. Therefore, he commands that the nations placed outside through unbelief, with their past life killed, be incorporated into the society of the Church, which Peter signifies. According to what the Apostle Paul says about himself: For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God and Christ. And again: It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Gal. 2). But those who are surrounded by heretics are as if devoured alive by death. [Acts 10:14] -- Because I have never eaten anything common and unclean. The people of the Jews, boasting themselves as part of God, call common foods those which all men use. For example, pork, oysters, hares, and such animals which do not split the hoof, nor chew the cud, nor have scales among fish. But unclean foods are said to be the flesh of beasts or reptiles, which are not edible by any mortals.

Acts 10:16

Now this happened three times, because the mystery of the Holy Trinity was to be preached by the twelve apostles to the four parts of the world, therefore four lines were let down from heaven a third time. Or as blessed Ambrose interprets, the figure repeated three times expressed the operation of the Trinity. And therefore, in mysteries, a triple question is put forth and a triple confirmation is celebrated, nor can anyone be purified except by a triple confession. Hence, Peter himself in the Gospel is asked three times whether he loves the Lord, so that by a triple response he might loosen the chains that he bound by denying the Lord. These things were shown to Peter opportunely, when Cornelius the gentile sent to summon him, so that he would not hesitate to deliver the Christian faith to the uncircumcised. For he was like those animals shown in the vessel by the Gospel. Hence also by the Holy Spirit he is confirmed to do the same.

Acts 10:16

And immediately the vessel was received into heaven. After the third submission, the sheet is taken up to heaven, because after the conversation of this world, in which the Church sojourns purified by faith and baptism, the blessed and eternal heavenly habitation follows. [Acts 10:19] -- The Spirit said to him: Behold, three men seek you. He heard this in his mind from the Spirit, not in the ear of the flesh. [Acts 10:20] -- Rise therefore and go down, and go with them. He is commanded to go down from the roof and go to preach, that the Church may not only watch for the Lord by climbing high, but also may preach the same to the infirm and to those still placed outside, as it were, but knocking at the door of Simon, that is, obedience, by returning to the active life, as if rising from bed. According to what the Lord said: You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (John 1). Of which it is rightly remembered that his house was placed by the sea. For the sea designates the turbulent tumults and furies of the world, where wicked men, like very greedy fish, pursue and devour one another. But the conversation of the saints is in heaven (Philippians 3), who, even if the earthly house of this habitation is dissolved, have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5).

Acts 10: 21

Behold, I am he whom you seek. What is the reason for which you have come? The Spirit told him that soldiers were present, and he was silent about why they had come, because to preserve the humility of the human mind, sometimes the Spirit of prophecy touches on part and does not touch on part. [Acts 10:25] -- And it happened that when Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him. By his bodily gesture, Cornelius showed what he had inwardly in his heart of devotion. For the listener met his teacher, who receives the word of faith with a pure heart, attentive ear, and eager desire. For he who is slowly drawn to believe is as if he were raised by his teacher from lying down. But he who, blushing at the stains of his life, falling on his face shows signs of humility and modesty, rightly merits to be raised by his teacher.

Acts 10: 26

Peter, however, lifted him up, saying: Stand up; I too am a man. For the holiness of action has deserved the equality of communion. For in the fault of Ananias and Sapphira, the crime revealed the right of authority's vengeance. [Acts 10:28] -- And God showed me that no man should be called common or unclean. He undoubtedly showed this when the angelic voice sounded: What God has purified, do not call common. [Acts 10:30] -- From the fourth day until this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me, and so on. In Greek and in some Latin manuscripts it is written thus: From the fourth day until this hour I was fasting, and praying from the sixth hour to the ninth, and behold, a man, and so on. It was very appropriate that he who extended his prayer for three hours from the sixth to the ninth should be heard. At which time the Lord himself, whom he beseeched, prayed with outstretched hands on the cross for the salvation of the whole world.

Acts 10: 36

He sent the word to the children of Israel, announcing peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. It appears (he says) that God is no respecter of persons, because He sent His only begotten Son, who is the Lord and Creator of all, to make peace with the human race, in whose name, as the Prophets attest, the remission of sins should be received not only by the Jews but by all who believe. [Acts 10:37] -- You know the word which was proclaimed

throughout all Judea, and so on. He briefly included everything that is recited in the Creed: that Jesus is the Christ, that he is Lord of all, that he was sent to reconcile the world to God, that he was heralded by the voice of John, that he was anointed with the Holy Spirit, that through miracles he was declared to have God dwelling in him, that he was crucified and resurrected from the dead, and appeared to his followers, that he will come as the judge of all at the end, and that through faith, he will also spread his Church throughout the whole world.

Acts 10: 38

How God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power. Another edition says: As God anointed Him. Hence John preached Jesus, as God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, then indeed when he said: He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (Matthew III). And again: Because I saw the Spirit descending like a dove upon Him (John I). Therefore, Jesus was anointed not with visible oil, but with the gift of grace, which is signified by the visible ointment with which the Church anoints the baptized. Yet He was not then anointed with the Holy Spirit when it descended upon Him as a dove after His baptism. For then He deigned to prefigure His body, that is, His Church, in which the baptized especially receive the Holy Spirit. But He is to be understood to have been anointed with that mystical and invisible anointing at the time when the Word of God was made flesh, that is, when human nature was united with the Word of God in the womb of the virgin without any precedents of meritorious good works so that it became one person with Him. For this reason, we confess Him born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary.

Acts 10: 38

Because God was with Him. That is, the Father with the Son. For it is better to understand it thus than to indicate that the divinity of the Son cohabitated with the man whom He assumed, lest we seem to duplicate the person of Christ and fall into the dogma of Nestorius. [Acts 10:41] -- For us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. Here blessed Peter expounds what is not recited in the Gospel, namely, that after the resurrection, he drank with the Lord. Unless perhaps we believe it was indicated there where he says: Until I drink it new with you in the house of My Father. [Acts 10:44] -- While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon

all who heard the word. Then they asked him to stay with them for some days. Lest it be doubted that baptism should be given to the Gentiles, it was confirmed by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which customarily sanctifies the waters of the font, in a new order of precedence, which it never happened with the Jews, as occurred once for the testimony of the Gentiles' faith.

Acts 10: 48

And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. And the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. Since the rule of the Church is that believers are to be baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, it is asked how Luke, throughout the entire text of this book, testifies that baptism is given only in the name of Jesus Christ. Blessed Ambrose resolved this by saying that the mystery is fulfilled through the unity of the name. For whether you say Christ, you have designated both God the Father, who anointed the Son, and the very Son who was anointed, and the Spirit by whom he was anointed; for it is written: Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit; whether you say Father, and his Son, and Spirit, you indicate equally in the mouth if you even comprehend it in your heart; or if you say Spirit, you name both God the Father, from whom the Spirit proceeds, and the Son, because the Spirit is also of the Son. Hence, that authority may also be joined to reason, Scripture indicates that we can rightly be baptized in the Spirit as well, with the Lord saying: But you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). And the Apostle says: For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). Elsewhere: It is particularly fitting for us to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, since as the Apostle says: For as many of you as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death, etc. (Rom. 6:3).

CHAPTER 11

Acts 11: 6

And I saw the four-footed animals of the earth, and beasts, and reptiles, and birds of the sky, etc. I am amazed how these things are interpreted concerning certain foods prohibited by the old law but now allowed to be eaten, when neither serpents nor reptiles can be eaten, nor did Peter understand it this way, but that all people are equally called to the Gospel of Christ, and no one is impure by nature. For he was not rebuked for eating beasts but for as-

sociating with Gentiles, he explained the mystery of this vision. [Acts 11:12] -- But these six brothers also came with me. Beautifully, the testimony of the seven-fold number of brothers is the outpouring of the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere. Because the world was formed in six days, the works are shown to be complete by the six brothers. They well accompany the teacher when they demonstrate to their listeners examples of perfect operation during words of exhortation.

Acts 11:18

And they glorified God, saying: So then, God has given even the Gentiles repentance unto life. This is what we read in the book of blessed Job: From the north comes gold, and terrifying praise to God (Job 37:22). Because first the splendor of faith arises from the cold heart of the Gentiles, and for this unexpected faith, Judea glorifies God with fearful praise. [Acts 11:19] -- They traveled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, etc. Here already, after the revelation of the Gospel sheet, in which the holy animals rested softly in hope from above, the affairs of the Church began to increase, with the Gospel being preached through foreign provinces, islands, and cities, not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles. [Acts 11:25] -- But he set out for Tarsus to search for Saul. For it was said earlier that Saul would be secretly sent from Jerusalem to Tarsus.

Acts 11:28

And one of them named Agabus, rising up, signified by the Spirit that there would be a great famine. Agabus can be interpreted as a messenger of tribulation, who, according to his name, both predicts the general famine here and later the bonds to the apostle Paul. [Acts 11:29] -- They decided to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. They knew that in Judea, and especially in Jerusalem, the famine would rage more fiercely. There, the poor saints, who, having sold their possessions, houses, and fields, brought the prices to the apostles, did not engage much further in acquiring wealth. But some were also deprived of their property by the incredulous Jews because of their confession of faith. To these, the Apostle says: "And you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property" (Hebrews 10). Among these charitable acts, the religious deed of Helena, queen of Adiabene, is remembered, who, having bought grain from Egypt, generously ministered to the needs of the

Jerusalemites. Hence, she also earned an honorable burial before the gates of the same city.

CHAPTER 12

Acts 12:1

Moreover, at that time, the great king Herod sent. Not at the time of the famine, which historical accounts refer to as happening in the fourth year of Claudius, since Herod died in the third year of the same Claudius, but undoubtedly at the time when the offerings were being carried to Jerusalem. Nor should we think that Herod, who was a tetrarch and later became a king, is designated in this chapter. For Josephus reports that Caius, upon taking the throne, immediately handed the leadership of the Jews to this Herod, son of Aristobulus, whom he nevertheless calls Agrippa, along with the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias. And in the fourth, which is the last year of his rule, he similarly bestowed it upon the same Herod. But he condemned that Herod, who had either been the instigator of John's death or had been involved in the passion of the Lord, to perpetual exile after suffering many diseases. Furthermore, this Herod or Agrippa, in the third year of Claudius and the seventh year of his reign, having been struck by an angel, left the kingdom to Agrippa, his son. Aristobulus, however, whom he mentioned, is the one who, along with his brother Alexander, had been killed by the treacherous father, that is, the elder Herod, under whom the Lord was born.

Acts 12:2

He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. Clement of Alexandria reports a certain story about this James, which is worth remembering. And he (Clement says) who had brought him to the judge for martyrdom (namely James), was also moved and confessed himself to be a Christian. They were both led together to punishment. And as they were being led on the road, he asked James to grant him forgiveness. But James, after hesitating a little, said, "Peace be with you." And he kissed him. And thus they were both beheaded together. [Acts 12:4] -- Delivering him to four squads of soldiers. Just as a centurion has a hundred soldiers under him, so does a squad of soldiers have soldiers under him. [Acts 12:7] -- And striking the side of Peter, he raised him up. The striking of the side is a commemoration of the passion of Christ, from whose wound our salvation flowed. And to us, too, who are

held by the chains of pressures, the apostle Peter himself gives such solace, saying: "Since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention" (1 Peter 4).

Acts 12:8

Gird yourself and put on your sandals. And we read that prophets and apostles used belts, which Peter had loosened for a moment due to the rigidity of the prison, so that, with his tunic lowered around his feet, he could somewhat temper the cold of the night, providing an example to the weak that, when we are tempted by either bodily discomfort or human injury, it is permissible to relax the rigor of our purpose a little. And because it was said, "Let your loins be girded and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," spiritually he is ordered to resume the emblems of virtues and of preaching the word. [Acts 12:10] -- They came to the iron gate that leads to the city. Narrow indeed and made of iron was the gate that leads to the heavenly Jerusalem, but it has now been made passable to us by the footsteps of the apostles, who conquered the iron door with their own blood. About this, Arator: "Why is it surprising if iron doors yield to Peter? Whom God appoints as the guardian of the heavenly hall and makes the head of his Church, he commands to overcome Hell."

Acts 12:11

And Peter, coming to himself. That is, having returned from the height of contemplation to what he was previously in common understanding. [Acts 12:13] -- The girl came out to hear. And the Lord, having come forth from the constraints of the tomb, was first announced to the disciples by a woman, so that where sin abounded, grace might more abound. [Acts 12:15] -- But they were saying, "It is his angel." That each of us has an angel is found both in the book of the Shepherd and in many places of the Holy Scriptures. For the Lord also speaks of the little ones: "Their angels always see the face of my Father" (Matt. XVIII). And Jacob speaks of himself: "The angel who redeemed me from all evil." And here the disciples believed that the angel of the apostle Peter had come. [Acts 12:19] -- Descending from Judea into Caesarea. Although it seems according to the situation of the places to refer to Caesarea Philippi, which like Tyre and Sidon is a city of Phoenicia, Josephus nevertheless teaches that this was done in Caesarea of Palestine,

which was once called Tower of Strato, and is situated on the shore of the Great Sea, at the border of Phoenicia and Palestine.

Acts 12: 20

They were asking for peace because their regions were being fed by him. They needed the friendship of the neighboring king because their region was very narrow and was pressed by the boundaries of Galilee and Damascus. Whence, neither did their metropolis of Tyre have so much wealth from its own land that it might be the emporium of the whole world, as much as it had from the subjugation of ships. It is also very rich in purple dye and shell-fish. [Acts 12:23] -- Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him. Consistently also according to Josephus: "While he did not shudder at the wickedness of illicit adulation, shortly after, looking, he sees an angel standing over his head; and immediately he felt him as the minister of his destruction, whom he had previously known as the provider of good things." And shortly after: "Indeed, tortured by continuous pains in his bowels for five days, he violently broke off his life."

CHAPTER 13

Acts 13: 2

Separate for me Barnabas and Saul for the work, to which I have called them. It seems that Saul, according to the order of history, in the thirteenth year after the passion of the Lord, received the apostleship with Barnabas and the name of Paul. But in the fourteenth year, according to the agreement of James, Cephas, and John, he set out to teach the Gentiles. Nor does the ecclesiastical history contradict, saying that the apostles were commanded to preach in Judea for twelve years. [Acts 13:5] -- They preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. Due to ignorance of the places, I believed it should be noted once: Wherever you see a synagogue of the Jews, know that occurrences in the city are described. [Acts 13:6] -- Whose name was Bar-Jesus. It is incorrectly read as Barjesus, when it should be read as Bar-Jew, that is, sorcerer, or in evil. I believe that the name Jesus is written with the same letters but with a mark above. For it is not fitting for a wicked man and sorcerer to be called the son of Jesus, that is, the Savior, whom conversely Paul calls the son of the devil.

Acts 13:9

Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit. From Sergius Paulus the proconsul, because he subjugated him to the faith of Christ, he took the name of Paul. And the subsequent sections of this account deal with the miracles of Paul. For it was fitting that he should give the completion to apostolic acts, whom the Lord had long chosen despite him kicking against the goads. [Acts 13:11] -- Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind. The Apostle, mindful of his own example, knew that it was possible to rise from the darkness of the eyes of the mind to light. For he did not deserve to have the eyes of the flesh, who labored to take away the eyes of the mind from others. [Acts 13:14] -- They came to Antioch in Pisidia. There are two cities named Antioch: one in Coele-Syria, founded by King Seleucus, which was formerly called Reblata, which they say has the nearby spring of Daphne, and enjoys its abundant waters, in which the disciples were first named Christians; but the other Antioch, of which there is now mention, is in the province of Pisidia.

Acts 13:19

He distributed their land to them by lot, as it were after four hundred and fifty years. God had said to Abraham that his seed would be a stranger in a foreign land for four hundred years. And again he said: "In Isaac shall your seed be called." From the birth of the seed until the exodus of Israel from Egypt, there were (as Exodus writes) four hundred and five years. Add to these the forty years in the desert, and five in the land of Canaan, during which it seems that the land rested from battles, and the lot was cast, and you will find four hundred and fifty years. [Acts 13:21] -- And God gave them Saul for forty years. I believe, because the Book of Kings does not explicitly state how many years Saul reigned, that the Apostle, speaking popularly, wished to say what common rumor held. But searching more diligently there, as the books of Chronicles also testify, we found that Samuel and Saul governed Israel for forty years. For it says, "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD, in the fourth year of his reign." When you add to the three hundred and ninety-six years, during which the judges ruled, as indicated in their book, the forty years of David and the four of Solomon, forty remain, of

which, as Josephus testifies, Samuel spent twenty and Saul spent the other twenty in governance.

Acts 13: 33

Because God fulfilled this promise to your children by raising Jesus, as it is written in the second psalm: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." It should not be thought that this example from the psalm pertains to the resurrection of Christ, which he has just mentioned, but to his very incarnation, about which he spoke earlier. For the following verse clearly testifies about the resurrection. Since he was speaking earlier about his incarnation, passion, and resurrection, he wanted to confirm both with testimonies from the psalm. Therefore, he says, "You who are eternal, Son before the ages, now appear born in time." Some codices have: "As it is written in the first psalm," which is thus explained, the first and second psalms being considered as one work, which begins in blessedness and ends in blessedness. [Acts 13:34] -- Because I will give you the holy and faithful promises of David, that is, whatever I promised David, I will surely and faithfully fulfill to you, namely, that Christ would be born from his lineage. For Isaiah, tasting the mysteries of the New Testament in this way, says: "And I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the holy and sure blessings of David" (Isaiah 55:3). This is read in the Hebrew truth: "And I will make with you an eternal covenant, the faithful mercies of David."

Acts 13: 43

Many Jews and devout converts followed them. It is better read: "And worshipers of God," as we have seen in the Greek. This means those who were Gentiles by nature but Jews by religion, whom the Greeks call proselytes. [Acts 13:47] -- For the Lord has commanded us: I have set you as a light to the Gentiles. What was specifically said to the Lord Christ, the apostles now consider said to themselves, remembering that they are his members, just as he himself, because of the unity of the same body, said: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4). [Acts 13:51] -- But shaking the dust off their feet against them, they went to Iconium. The dust is shaken off the feet according to the precept of the Gospel as a testimony of their labor, that they entered their city and that the apostolic preaching reached them; or the dust is shaken off so that they take nothing from them, not even what is necessary for sustenance, who have rejected the Gospel.

Acts 13: 52

And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. In the Greek it is: "But the disciples," so that we may understand, while the Jews were persecuting the faith, the disciples were enriched in contrast with spiritual joy.

CHAPTER 14

Acts 14: 2

They stirred up the souls of the Gentiles against the brothers. What follows in Greek: "But God made peace," is missing in some Latin manuscripts. And there: "They were preaching," it follows in Greek: "And the whole multitude was moved by their teaching." [Acts 14:6] -- But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Lystra. And these little verses are not found in some of our manuscripts. [Acts 14:8] -- And a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, sat, etc. Just as that lame man whom Peter and John healed at the gate of the temple prefigures the salvation of the Jews, so also this sick man of Lycaonia, a people far removed from the religion of the law and temple, but gathered by the preaching of the apostle Paul. He says, "They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision." And the times agree with the exposition. For he was in the early days of faith, when the word had not yet been believed by the Gentiles; but here the Jews, having been expelled for their unbelief and sprinkled with the dust of condemnation, are healed amidst the new joys of the converted Gentiles.

Acts 14: 9

And seeing that he had faith to be healed. And that one seeks money in the Jewish manner, but this one seeks salvation from the apostles through faith. [Acts 14:10] -- He said with a loud voice: Stand upright on your feet. In the Greek exemplar it is read: He said with a loud voice: I say to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, stand upright on your feet. We have added these from the translation, so that, bewildered by the variety of manuscripts, you might not be ignorant of what is true. [Acts 14:11] -- The gods, likened to men, have come down to us. The foolish error of the Gentiles, who think that whatever they see above themselves are gods. [Acts 14:12] -- And they called Barnabas Jupiter; indeed, because he seemed to be the chief among them. For they thought Jupiter was the father of gods and king of men.

Acts 14:12

But Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker; because they believed Mercury to grant eloquence and speech to mortals. Hence, they called Mercury as if running in the middle, that is, between ears and tongues, and the Greeks called him Hermes, which means interpreter. [Acts 14:13] -- Bringing bulls and garlands before the gates. The bulls for sacrifice, and the garlands, either to decorate the face of the temple according to the custom of the Gentiles or to place them upon those they would sacrifice to as gods. [Acts 14:14] -- Having torn their clothes, they rushed out into the crowd, and so on. They, fearing, tear their garments because they were being honored with the worship of gods. For this is a custom of the Jews whenever they hear anything blasphemous and as if against God. But Herod, because he did not give honor to God but acquiesced to the excessive favor of the people, was immediately struck by an angel.

CHAPTER 15

Acts 15:2

They decided that Paul and Barnabas and some others from them should go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, etc. About this ascension of his, Paul himself writes to the Galatians: Then, after fourteen years, I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also, and I communicated to them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles (Galatians II); where the very number that he mentioned must be reckoned in years. For we know that the apostles Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom in the thirty-eighth year after the passion of the Lord, that is, in the last year of Nero, and that the blessed Peter sat upon the episcopal throne in Rome for twenty-five years. Now, twenty-five and fourteen make not thirty-eight but thirty-nine. Therefore, it follows that we believe the blessed Peter came to Rome in the same fourteenth year after the passion of the Lord, in which Paul conversed with him at Jerusalem, in the fourth year of Claudius Caesar; and likewise, unless I am mistaken, from this position it is proven that the blessed Apostle Paul came to faith in the same year in which the Lord suffered and rose again.

Acts 15:5

Saying that it is necessary to circumcise them. The Galatians were deceived by this error, believing that circumcision and the ceremonies of the law

should be mixed with the grace of baptism. [Acts 15:9] -- Purifying their hearts by faith. Therefore, it is not necessary to cleanse them with the circumcision of the flesh, whose hearts such great faith purifies, that they even deserve to receive the Holy Spirit before baptism. [Acts 15:11] -- But by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be saved, even as they are. If therefore they, that is, the fathers who could not bear the yoke of the old law, believed themselves to be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is manifest that this grace was what made the ancient righteous live. Since the righteous shall live by faith, there could have been different sacraments for different times, yet all converging harmoniously to the unity of the same faith.

Acts 15:16

After this I will return, and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen, and the rest. The tabernacle of David signifies the shadow of the law, which was corrupted and torn apart by the traditions of the Pharisees, but when the Lord returns, that is, appears in the flesh, it is raised up by the spiritual grace of God, so that not only Jews but also all nations of the Gentiles may seek his name. [Acts 15:20] -- And from things strangled, and blood, that is, from shedding blood or eating with blood. These indeed were allowed for those coming from a Gentile life, as the rudiments of the faith and the ingrained habit of Gentilism, but lest they should think that the same sufficed even for the more perfect, he diligently added and said: [Acts 15:21] -- For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him in the synagogues; that is, and if they are not burdened by the severity of the precepts now, yet with passage of time, as they more frequently gather for reading of the law and the prophets, they will gradually adopt ways of life and the interrelated laws of mutual love to be preserved. For the primitive Church, still Judaizing, it is understood to have celebrated these on Sabbaths.

Acts 15:28

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us; that is, it pleased the Holy Spirit, who, being the arbiter of his own power, breathes where he wills and speaks what he wills. [Acts 15:28] -- It has also seemed good to us; not by our will alone, but by the urging of the same Spirit. [Acts 15:35] -- Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. In those days, what the apostle Paul said was fulfilled:

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face (Galatians 2). [Acts 15:38] -- But Paul insisted that he should not be received. Because, standing on the very forefront of the line, he had stood too tepidly, and rightly, Paul rejected him, lest others be corrupted by his influence as though it were contagion. [Acts 15:39] -- There was, however, discord. Do not think this a sin. For it is not wrong to be troubled, but to be troubled irrationally, without any just cause.

Acts 15: 39

And Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. For the brother he loved and who was related to him (for they are said to have been cousins), Barnabas, separated from Paul, returned to his native island, and nonetheless carried out the evangelical work commanded to him.

CHAPTER 16

Acts 16: 3

He circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places. Not that he believed the figures of the law would bring any utility with the truth of the Gospel shining forth, but so that the Jews would not fall away from the faith because of the Gentiles. Though these old shadows were to be gradually taken away, as was the moral depravity of the Gentiles, as said above. For those legal shadows, sometimes established by the Lord, were sometimes used by the Apostles in those times to avoid the infidelity of the Jews. But the Gentile institution, truly found by Satan, was never touched by the saints. [Acts 16:6-9] -- They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, etc., up to Passing into Macedonia, help us. Truly the Lord is terrible in counsel above the sons of men. One promises to follow the Master in everything and is not allowed; another, commanded to follow, does not get the requested leave for burial of his father. Saul is drawn in, invincible and resisting. To Cornelius, persistent in prayers and alms, the way of salvation is shown as a reward, and God, who knows the hearts, removes the Teacher from Asia through the grace of a benefit, lest the error of a wicked heart be judged more severely for despised preaching if what is holy is given to dogs. Again, while another apostle cares elsewhere, a legate from Macedonia, whom we believe to be an angel of that nation, asks to be offered crumbs of the Lord's bread.

Acts 16:12

Which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. A colony is one that, due to the lack of natives, is filled with new settlers. Hence it is also called a colony from the cultivation of fields. [Acts 16:16] -- A certain girl having a spirit of divination. What pythonic divination entails in terms of knowledge, we find in the book of Kings, where, at Saul's request, a witch summoned either the soul of Samuel or rather an unclean spirit in his stead from the underworld. This kind of magical fantasy, discovered by Apollo Pythius and named after him, is thus called. But the Hebrew name also fits, who call the Python the mouth of the abyss. [Acts 16:17] -- These men are servants of the Most High God. This is not a confession from the will, followed by a reward for confessing, but compelled by the fear of the Holy Spirit, the lying spirit speaks truth, not daring to hide its darkness any longer in the present light. But God says to the sinner: Why do you recount my statutes? Let us not be corrupted by the bitter honey of deceit, if he who serves falsehood sings truth, as Arator says.

Acts 16:18

I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. Bar-Jesus, who was an adversary of the faith, was struck blind both in physical weakness and loss of his sight. But he managed to deprive this woman, who though perverted in mind, yet spoke the truth, only of her wicked art. For it was unfitting that the word of the Gospel should be proclaimed by an unclean spirit; he commanded this one to depart and be silent, for devils must confess the Lord with trembling, not praise with joy. [Acts 16:21] -- And they proclaim a custom which it is not lawful for us to receive or to observe, since we are Romans. They speak of the faith of Jesus Christ, in whose name the spirit of Python had departed. For the Romans had already decreed that no god should be accepted unless approved by the Senate.

Acts 16:25

And at midnight Paul and Silas were worshiping God, saying a hymn, and so forth. The devotion of the apostolic heart and the power of prayer are expressed together, as both they sang hymns in the depth of the prison, and their praise shook the ground of the prison, and struck its foundations, and opened the gates, and finally released the chains of the prisoners themselves. Alternatively: Whoever among the faithful considers it all joy when he falls

into various temptations (James 1), and willingly glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in him (2 Cor. 12), with Paul and Silas, hymns amidst the prison's darkness, and with the Psalmist sings to the Lord: You are my refuge from the oppression that surrounds me, my exultation (Psalm 31). [Acts 16:33] -- He washed their wounds, and he was baptized himself. A beautiful variety of events. Those whose wounds of injuries he washed, by them he lost his own wounds.

CHAPTER 17

Acts 17:3

Explaining and demonstrating that Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead, and that this Jesus is the Christ. Among the Scriptures, the Father indicated both that Christ must suffer and rise, and that this very suffering and resurrection pertains to no one other than Jesus of Nazareth. For there were some of the Jews, as there are today, so perfidious, that although they cannot deny the suffering and resurrection of Christ inserted in the Scriptures, yet they totally deny that these refer to Jesus, preferring rather to expect the Antichrist than to believe Jesus Christ. And therefore Paul not only preached the mysteries of Christ but also taught that these were fulfilled in Christ Jesus. [Acts 17:4] -- And a great multitude of worshipers and Gentiles; that is, both those who had exchanged their gentile rites for Judaism and those who had remained entirely Gentiles, many joined to Christ.

Acts 17:11

These people were nobler than those who are in Thessalonica. He speaks of the nobility of soul which they had displayed in hearing and scrutinizing the word. [Acts 17:18] -- Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. The Epicureans, following the slowness of their teacher, placed human happiness solely in bodily pleasure, while the Stoics placed it solely in the virtue of the soul. Although they disagreed among themselves, they unanimously attacked the Apostle because he taught that man consisted of both soul and body and therefore should be happy in both; but this would be achieved neither in the present time nor by human virtue, but by the grace of God through Jesus Christ in the glory of the resurrection. [Acts 17:18] -- What does this idle babbler want to say? Rightly is he called an idle babbler, that is, *σπερμιόλογος*, because the word of God is a seed. And Paul the

Apostle himself says: "If we have sown spiritual things among you," etc. (1 Cor. 9).

Acts 17:23

I found an altar with the inscription: To the Unknown God. God is known in Judea but not received. God is unknown in Achaia, although earnestly sought through many means. Therefore, those who do not know will be ignored; those who transgress will be condemned. Neither is free from fault, but those who have not offered faith to Christ, whom they did not know, are more excusable than those who have laid hands on Christ, whom they knew.

Acts 17:24

God, who made the world and everything in it, being the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, and so on. The order of the apostolic discourse is to be carefully observed, in which he formed a way of dealing with the Gentiles: first teaching that there is one God, the author of the world and of all things, in whom we live and move and have our being, of whom we are the offspring. This shows that he ought to be loved not only for the gifts of light and life but also because of a certain kinship of race. Then he refuted that opinion about idols by clear reasoning, that the creator and lord of the whole world cannot be confined in stone temples, that the giver of all benefits does not need the blood of sacrifices, and that the creator and governor of all men cannot be created by the hand of man. Finally, that God, in whose image man was made, should not be thought to resemble metals, teaching that the remedy of error is the endeavor to repent. For if he had first sought to destroy the ceremonies of idols, the ears of the Gentiles would have rejected him. Therefore, when he persuaded them that there is one God, he then affirmed by His judgment that salvation had been given to us through Christ. He called Him more man than God, starting from the things He did in the body and describing them as divine, so that He seemed more than a man. He had conquered death by His power, and, rising from the dead, He (for faith grows gradually), as He was seen to be more than a man, was believed to be God. For what does it matter in what order one believes? Perfection is not sought in beginnings, but one progresses from beginnings to what is perfect.

Acts 17:28

For in Him we live and move and have our being. This verse, because it is difficult to understand, should be explained by the words of blessed Augustine. "The Apostle shows," he says, "that God works unceasingly in the things He has created. For indeed we do not exist in Him as in His substance, as it is said that He has life in Himself; but certainly, since we are something other than Him, we exist in Him only because He works this. And this is His work by which He contains all things, and which His wisdom extends from end to end mightily and orders all things sweetly. Through this arrangement, we live, move, and exist in Him. From this it is inferred that if He withdrew this work from things, we would neither live, nor move, nor exist." And a little later: "For neither heaven nor earth, and all things in them, namely the whole of spiritual and bodily creation, remain in themselves, but surely in Him of whom it is said: For in Him we live and move and have our being. For although each part can exist in the whole, which it is a part of, the whole itself does not exist except in Him by whom it was made." The same blessed Augustine elsewhere says: "This, if the Apostle were speaking according to the body, could also be understood of this corporeal world. For in it according to the body we live, move, and exist." Hence, according to the mind which is made in His image, this should be taken in a certain more excellent and not visible but intelligible mode. For what is not in Him, of whom it is divinely written: For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things (Rom. XI)?

Acts 17:28

As some of your poets have said. This is what he says elsewhere: I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. For to those who did not accept the faith of the prophets, not Moses, not Isaiah, or any of the prophets, but he speaks by the testimonies of their own authors, citing the verse of Aratus, confirming his truth from their falsities, which they could not contradict. Indeed, it is of great knowledge to give food to fellow servants at the right time, and to consider the persons of the hearers. [Acts 17:28] -- For we are indeed his offspring. We are most rightly called the offspring of God, not born of His nature, but voluntarily created through His spirit, and recreated by adoption. [Acts 17:34] -- Among whom also is Dionysius the Areopagite. This is Dionysius, who later gloriously ruled the

Church as bishop of the Corinthians, and left many volumes of his genius beneficial to the Church, which remain to this day, taking his cognomen from the place he presided over. For the Areopagus is the court of Athens, deriving its name from Mars. For indeed in Greek, Mars is called ἄρης, and ‘pagos’ means hill.

CHAPTER 18

Acts 18:2

Because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome. Josephus narrates that this happened in the ninth year of Claudius. Suetonius the historian reports it in this way: Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, as they were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus. Whether he meant to restrain and suppress the Jews making disturbances against Christ, or also wished to expel the Christians as related religious members, it is not at all clear. [Acts 18:3] -- They were of the tent-making trade. As exiles in the land and strangers, they build tents for themselves to use on the way; σκῆναι in Greek are called tabernacles, deriving the etymology from shading, among which shade is called σκία; σκῆναι or σκηνώματα mean something like little shades, which the ancients formed from woolen, wooden, or Cilician cloths, or from the leaves or branches of trees. Mystically, just as Peter by fishing draws us from the waves of the world through the nets of faith, so Paul by setting up the tents of protection defends us from the rain of sins, the heat of temptations, and the winds of treacheries, both by word and by deed. At this point, there are two verses in Greek that are not found in some of our manuscripts. He discussed in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded Jews and Greeks. Then follows what both manuscripts have, added:

Acts 18:18

When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, and so forth. Who had his hair cut in Cenchreae for he had a vow. Cenchreae is a port of Corinth, where he cut his hair due to a vow because, according to the law of Moses, those who vowed themselves to God were commanded to let their hair grow as long as they wished to be Nazirites, and afterward to cut it and offer it to the fire. Therefore, Paul did this, not indeed forgetting what he had decided with the other apostles in Jerusalem about the abolition of the law, but lest those who had believed from among the Jews be scandalized, he pretended

to be a Jew in order to win the Jews. Some manuscripts have in the plural number "They shaved their head, and had a vow," meaning Priscilla and Aquila. But the distinguished doctors of the Church Jerome and Augustine, each in their letters, put it in the singular number and interpret it concerning Paul. Jerome writes thus: "Bidding farewell to the brothers, he sailed to Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, and he had his head shaved in Cenchreae for he had a vow."

Acts 18: 21-22

He departed from Ephesus, and descending, he went up to Caesarea and greeted the church. He says Caesarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia. For he had not yet come to Syria of Phoenicia. Formerly called Mosacha from Mosoc, the son of Japheth, later it received the name Caesarea from Caesar Augustus. [Acts 18:27] -- When he came, he conferred much with those who believed. For he vigorously confuted the Jews. Another translation has: He greatly benefited the believers by grace. This is what the Apostle writes to the Achaians: "I planted, Apollos watered" (I Cor. III).

CHAPTER 19

Acts 19: 2

And he said to them: Did you receive the Holy Spirit upon believing? This means, Did you receive the laying on of hands, by which the Holy Spirit is usually given, after baptism? [Acts 19:4] -- John baptized with the baptism of repentance. This baptism, he says, could not grant the remission of sins but could teach only repentance. For just as the sign of circumcision was a seal of the faith which they carried in the patriarchs, so this washing was accepted by the repentant people as a singular sign of their devotion: Yet this same thing was figuratively showing also the baptism of Christ, by which remission would be granted. [Acts 19:5] -- Having heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. A question is frequently discussed, whether those who, perhaps due to ignorance, were baptized by some who were not themselves baptized, yet were of the right faith, ought to be baptized again; which matter, I think, is explained in this chapter. For what difference does it make whether someone is baptized before the beginning of Christ's baptism or now without its succession, since even John himself, whom he baptized in faith and in the name of Christ, though it was to come, had baptized, said they should be baptized again, saying: "I baptize you with water; he will bap-

tize you with the Holy Spirit" (Matt. III)? For if now, such people could be remedied sufficiently by participation in the body and blood of Christ alone, as some assert, it might have sufficed then too; nor would it have been necessary for those whom John baptized with water to be baptized by Christ's disciples, but merely to be confirmed by sharing in the blood.

Acts 19:7

All the men were about twelve, etc. But the judgments of God are a great abyss. Behold, recently deemed unworthy of the visitation of the apostles, Asia is now consecrated by the Apostolic number and elevated by the prophetic gift. And it should be noted that the Holy Spirit also here showed the signs of his coming upon the twelve disciples, and above upon the one hundred and twenty, which is the number twelve multiplied by ten, that sign in Jerusalem, this in Ephesus, which is a city of the Greeks. I believe to show that whether a person believes from among the Jews or the Gentiles, they only who communicate with the unity of the Catholic and Apostolic Church are fulfilled. [Acts 19:13] -- However, certain itinerant Jewish exorcists attempted to invoke over those who, etc. Josephus reports that King Solomon devised and taught his people modes of exorcism, that is, adjurations, by which unclean spirits, once expelled from a person, might not dare to return. This sometimes happens even through reprobates, either for the condemnation of those who do such things or for the benefit of those who see and hear, so that although men may despise those who perform the signs, they nevertheless honor God, at whose invocation such great miracles are performed.

Acts 19:14

However, there were some seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva, who were doing this. It is better read according to the Greek: However, there was of a certain Sceva. Since even Satan himself transforms into an angel of light (II Cor. XI), he does not fear to color his ministers with the same pretense. Hence, since the grace of the Holy Spirit is usually designated by the number seven, in which figure the Lord, after the resurrection, feasts with seven disciples, and seven brothers come to Cornelius to baptize him with the Holy Spirit, the sons of Sceva are reckoned as if they are to expel evil spirits in the number seven. Since they invoke the name of Christ and the apostles, not believing, but testing, they are deservedly condemned not only

by God but also by the very demons for their deceitful falseness. They are well called the sons of Sceva, which translates to "little fox crying out." This animal, very crafty and deceitful, shows Jews, Gentiles, and heretics always lurking against the Church of God and chattering with a garrulous voice. Concerning whom it is commanded by the guardians of the same Church: Catch for us the little foxes that ruin the vineyards.

Acts 19:15

Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize. About this verse, Arator says, Know your madness, enemy race, the demon admits to reigning, Whom you deny has come, and you are convicted by this very fact, By the one who drives you to ruin. [Acts 19:19] -- And many of those who had followed curious arts brought their books, etc. He calls curious arts the industry of magical arts, whose followers justly burn their books, valued at a great price, when they see the very demons they served honoring Jesus Christ the Lord and his apostles. [Acts 19:19] -- They found the sum to be fifty thousand silver coins. And in the Gospel's debtors under the number of fifty denarii, debts are forgiven. I believe that subsisting in this life with the five senses of the body, we transgress the precepts of the Decalogue. Here, however, due to the enormity of the magic crime, the number of a thousand is also added. Otherwise, the number fifty often refers to penance and the remission of sins, whence the Fiftieth Psalm of Penance, and the fiftieth year is one of remission.

Acts 19:22

Sending two of his ministers to Macedonia, etc. He sent disciples ahead to prepare alms, which he was to bring to Jerusalem, so that collections would not be made when he came himself. [Acts 19:24] -- A certain Demetrius, a silversmith, etc. This Demetrius, who tries to disturb the way of the Lord, fulfills his name by his actions. For it means "excessive persecutor." Hence, accordingly, the temples he makes for Diana are built of nothing else but silver metal since silver in the Scriptures is usually indicated by eloquence, just as gold signifies understanding. And the cunning gentiles try to defend their religion not with any reason of understanding but with the mere elegance of words. [Acts 19:27] -- Not only, however, will this part of our work be in danger of coming into disrepute, but also the temple of the great Diana will be considered as nothing, and be destroyed, etc.; that is, not only will our works be found vain and unworthy of reward, but our religion will also be

dishonored, if Paul's teaching prevails, that idols are not gods. And the foolishness of the Gentiles is astonishing, who are not ashamed to worship those whom they know can be built or destroyed by humans.

Acts 19:28

And they cried out, saying: Great is Diana of the Ephesians. When Demetrius said Diana would perish, they, on the contrary, marvel at her greatness. [Acts 19:29] -- And they rushed with one accord into the theater. The theater is a place having the shape of a semicircle, where people standing inside watched scenic plays. Hence, it received its name in Greek, from the spectacle. Therefore, as Arator says: The merit and cause of Diana deserved no other than to be treated lasciviously in the market forum, the base area of the ugliness of the assembly's work.

CHAPTER 20

Acts 20:1-2

And he set out to go to Macedonia. After he had toured those parts and had exhorted them with many words, he came to Greece. Greece is a province of Achaia, which the Greeks call *ἐλλάδα*. Hence, where Latin Codices have Greeks or, to distinguish them from Jews, Gentiles, the Greek text writes *Ἕλληνας* and *Ἕλληνιστάς*. So after Macedonia, Paul came to this place, because he intended, as said above, to pass from Macedonia and Achaia and to go to Jerusalem. [Acts 20:7] -- On the first day of the week, when we had gathered together to break bread, etc.; that is, on the Lord's Day which is the first from the Sabbath, when we had gathered to celebrate the mysteries. [Acts 20:7-8] -- And he prolonged his speech until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room. Here we can allegorically say that the upper room signifies the height of spiritual gifts, night the obscurity of the Scriptures, the abundance of lamps the exposition of the hidden sayings, the Lord's Day the remembrance either of the Lord's or our resurrection; and to admonish the spiritual teacher that if at any time, by the sweetness of the resurrection and the joys of eternal life, he will invite his listeners to the heights of virtues, and by prolonged disputation touch upon any secrets of the Scriptures, he should immediately illuminate the same with the lamp of plain exposition for the sake of weak listeners. Just as the Apostle, when he said Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman, immediately explained: These are the two covenants, etc.

Acts 20:9

A certain young man named Eutychus was sitting at the window, etc. Eutychus in Hebrew means insane, in Greek lucky. One of these fits him who has fallen from the height of virtues due to youthful pleasure, the other to him who, by the preacher's condescension, will return to the height of virtues. [Acts 20:9] -- Awakened from sleep, he fell down from the third loft, etc. During the words of preaching, an opportunity for healing arose, so that the word might be strengthened by the sweetness of the miracle and the doctrine, and the labor of vigils might be warded off, and the memory of the teacher soon to depart might be more deeply impressed upon minds. Indeed, the three lofts in which Paul was disputing represent faith, hope, and charity. But the greatest of these is charity (1 Cor. 13). If anyone out of laziness deserts it, and does not fear to slumber among the voice of the Apostle, he will already be counted among the dead. For whoever offends in one point becomes guilty of all (James 2).

Acts 20:10

Upon whom when Paul had descended, he laid upon him. That he descended, laid upon him, embraced him, this is what he himself says: My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you. Indeed, more laborious is the resurrection of those who sin through negligence than those who sin through infirmity. And this is expressed through Eutychus, and that through Tabitha whom Peter raised. And therefore she, sick for days, dies; he falls down and dies in the middle of the night. She, washed after death, is placed in an upper chamber; he, fallen from the third loft, is mourned dead below. He in the presence and teaching, she with the teacher absent. To him Paul descended, to her Peter ascended to raise her. She, immediately seeing Peter, sat up; he, having died in the middle of the night, finally rises in the morning, and with the breath of the sun of righteousness, is brought back to life.

Acts 20:16

For he was hastening if it were possible to be present at the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. Indeed, it was commanded by the law that all Jews should gather in Jerusalem three times a year, that is, at the time of Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, but the Apostle, breaking the ties of the world, hastens to observe the fiftieth day, that is, the day of remission and

the Holy Spirit. [Acts 20:17] -- He called the elders of the Church. For elders, the Greek uses πρεσβυτέρους. [Acts 20:23] -- Except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city. When he says through the cities, he clearly shows that what was to come for him, he knew not through himself but revealed by others about himself. Among these was the prophet Agabus, and also those disciples who, persisting in Tyre, warned him through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.

Acts 20:23

Saying, that bonds and tribulations await me in Jerusalem. So that where he once persecuted the Church, he now fights for the peace of the Church. [Acts 20:24] -- Nor do I count my life dearer than myself. He means the very life in the temporal body, which he considers as the least, who awaits eternal joy in another life. [Acts 20:26] -- Because I am clean from the blood of all of you. He believed himself to be clean from the blood of his neighbors by the fact that he did not spare their sins from being struck. [Acts 20:28] -- In which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. For above he had called the elders called from Ephesus to Miletus, whom he now names bishops, that is, overseers. For indeed one city could not have many bishops, but he signifies those same elders, as true priests under the name of bishops. For the rank is joined, and in many respects nearly similar.

Acts 20:28

To rule the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. He does not doubt to call it the blood of God, on account of the union of the person in the two natures of the same Jesus Christ. Because of which it is also said: The Son of Man who is in heaven (John III). Therefore, let Nestorius cease to separate the Son of Man from the Son of God and make for himself two Christs. [Acts 20:30] -- And from among yourselves will arise men speaking perverse things. Concerning these, John also says: They went out from us, but they were not of us (1 John II). [Acts 20:31] -- For three years, night and day, I did not cease to admonish each one of you with tears. This is beautifully and succinctly explained by Arator: He who sings of the Church's three doctrines, often produces a Historical, moral-sounding, and typological volume; Hence Judea, lying empty, is called the barren tree, Which, after three years, did not produce the expected fruit.

Acts 20:35

I showed you all things. That is, not only must one persist in teaching amid pressures and tears, but one must also work with one's hands to support the weak so that no one is burdened. This is what was meant by: And whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I return (Luke X), namely, to preach the Gospel and not to seek support from the Gospel. [Acts 20:35] -- It is more blessed to give than to receive. He does not prefer the rich almsgivers to those who, having left all, followed the Lord; but he glorifies those most greatly who, having renounced all they possess at once, still work with their hands to produce what is good so they have something to give to those in need.

CHAPTER 21

Acts 21:5

We set out, being escorted by wives and children, etc. The prophecy which sings of the Church is fulfilled: The daughters of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the rich among the people (Psalm XLIV), and the rest, up to the end of the Psalm. For no city received, held, or dismissed the Apostle with greater sweetness. Indeed, today the place in the sands where they prayed together is shown. [Acts 21:10] -- A certain prophet came down from Judea. He says from Judea because Caesarea, where they were staying, belongs to the region of Samaria, situated at the border of Phoenicia and Palestine. [Acts 21:11] -- Thus says the Holy Spirit: The man whose belt this is, will be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem in this way. He imitates the old prophets, who used to say: Thus says the Lord God. Because the Holy Spirit is equally Lord and God, as the Father and the Son, and their activity cannot be separated, whose nature and will is one. Whence we also read above: The Holy Spirit said: Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them (Acts XIII), that is, the apostleship. And Paul himself writes: Paul, an apostle not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father (Galatians I). We have said this, lest anyone, after the manner of Macedonius, thinks the Holy Spirit to be a creature or of lesser authority than the Father or the Son.

Acts 21:18

The following day Paul went in with us to James. This James was the brother of the Lord, that is, of Mary, the sister of the Lord's mother, whom John the

Evangelist mentions, and he was her son. Immediately after the passion of the Lord, he was appointed bishop by the apostles and ruled the Church in Jerusalem for thirty years, that is, until the seventh year of Nero. When the Jews, who were keen to kill Paul, could not do so, as soon as Festus died and Albinus had not yet arrived in the province, they turned their hands against James, who was buried next to the temple where he had been cast down.

Acts 21: 21

But they have heard about you, that you teach the Jews among the Gentiles to depart from Moses, etc.; that is, they claim that you say that what was administered to the fathers by Moses should be condemned as sacrilegious and not commanded by God due to the doctrine of Christ. This had been alleged of Paul, not by those who understood with what mind these things should have been kept then by the faithful Jews to commend the divine authority and the prophetic sanctity of those sacraments, not to attain salvation, which was already being administered in Christ through the sacrament of baptism; but by those who had spread this about Paul, who wished these things to be observed as if salvation in the Gospel could not be obtained without them. For they considered him a most vehement preacher of grace, teaching contrary to their intent, that one is not justified by those things, but by the grace of Christ, for whom these shadows in the law were ordained to foretell. Therefore, seeking to stir up envy and persecution against him, they accused him as an enemy of the law and divine commandments. He could not more fittingly avoid the envy of this false accusation than by himself observing those things which he was thought to condemn as sacrilegious, thus showing that neither the Jews at that time should be prohibited from them as impious, nor the Gentiles compelled to them as necessary. For if he indeed rejected them as had been heard, and yet undertook to celebrate them to conceal his opinion with a simulated action, James would not have said:

Acts 21: 24

And all will know that what they have heard about you is false; but would have said, All will think: especially since the apostles had already decreed in Jerusalem that no one should compel the Gentiles to Judaize. However, they had not decreed that no Jew should be prohibited from Judaizing then, although even the Jews were already not compelled by Christian doctrine.

[Acts 21:27] -- And when the seven days were nearly completed. These days were not yet completed, but their course was ongoing, the completion was awaited. Hence it is more clearly said in Greek: When the seven days were beginning to be completed. Otherwise, the statement he made after five days of being in Caesarea to the governor cannot stand: For it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. For if you add these seven days and those five days of the council in which he dissociated the Pharisees and Sadducees, and that in which the Jews vowed to kill him, undoubtedly more than twelve days will be found there.

Acts 21: 28

Here is the man who speaks against the people, the law, and this place, teaching everyone everywhere. Because they saw that the followers of the new grace attended the ceremonies of the law and the solemnities of the temple less, they feared, as it is read in the Gospel, that the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation. [Acts 21:37] -- He said: Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian, etc.? For an Egyptian had come to Judea, who by magical art claimed prophecy for himself, gathered about thirty thousand Jews; and leading them through the desert, he came to the Mount of Olives, ready to rush from there into Jerusalem and subjugate the city for himself. But Felix anticipated his attempt, quickly meeting him with armed men. The Egyptian, having fled with a few, and others being killed, easily restrained the rash attempt.

Acts 21: 38

Four thousand men of the Sicarii. There is no controversy to be held between the tribune who spoke these things and Josephus who wrote about the Egyptian. For it could happen that he first came with a few, the same secretly leading a tyranny, but later joined many to himself by public deceit. It is read, however, that in the time of Felix, this kind of robber arose, who, not seeking hidden places or times, but carrying daggers, that is, short swords in hand, mixed among the people in the very light of day, attached themselves by blind wounds, to the point that death prevented a complaint, and the striker lay hidden. And if anyone were moved by the fact that such things were done in the middle of the city, he too perished. Thus, by fear of danger or dissimulation of the crime, the assassin was not apprehended.

Acts 21: 39

A townsman from Tarsus in Cilicia, a not unknown city. The Apostle was indeed born in the town of Giscala in Galilee. When it was captured by the Romans, he moved with his parents to Tarsus in Cilicia. From there, sent to Jerusalem for the study of the law, he was instructed by Gamaliel, a very learned man, as he himself recounts later. However, he calls himself not a citizen but a townsman, from the township, that is, the territory, of the same city in which he was raised. It is called a municipality, because it only pays duties or taxes. For noble and very famous causes, and those which derive from the emperor, belong to the dignity of the cities. And no wonder that he calls himself a Tarsian and not a Giscalite, since the Lord Himself, although born in Bethlehem, is not called a Bethlehemite but a Nazarene.

CHAPTER 22

Acts 22: 9

They did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. Above, the story narrates about this vision that his companions stood stupefied, hearing indeed the voice, but seeing no one. Hence it is inferred that they heard the sound of a confused voice, but not the distinction of words. [Acts 22:23] -- As they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, and throwing dust into the air. In the Lord's passion, the priest alone leaping from the throne tears his garments, because then the old priesthood was to be changed to the new. But now, because after the death of the apostles, the whole nation was to be stripped of the glory of the kingdom, all throw off their garments, and lift their clamor mixed with dust to heaven. According to what the Psalmist says: "The pride of those who hate you rises always" (Psalm 73).

Acts 22: 28

I have obtained this citizenship for a great sum of money. Another edition indicates more clearly what he had said. The tribune said: Do you say so easily that you are a Roman citizen? For I know at what price I obtained this citizenship. [Acts 22:28] -- And Paul said: But I was born so. That is, in this I am more of a Roman than you because I did not buy the Roman name elsewhere, but I was born in their city.

CHAPTER 23

Acts 23:3

God will strike you, whitewashed wall. He did not say this disturbed in mind, but indeed he spoke prophetically, because that figurative priesthood, which was composed in the likeness of a whitewashed wall, was to be struck and destroyed when the true priesthood of Christ had come, with the apostles preaching the Gospel. And that is why he said: God will strike you. He did not say, may He strike you: indeed indicating this in the indicative mode that it would happen, not cursing in the optative. For that he spoke these things with a calm mind, he shows by the following response, saying: [Acts 23:5] -- I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest. For although he truly knew that this was not the high priest in the new testament, nonetheless teaching others, and thus urging those who are in power to behave more modestly, he also wanted to temper himself here.

Acts 23:6

Brothers, I am a Pharisee, etc. Just as the unity of the good is always useful, so the unity of the wicked is always harmful to the good. Therefore, now the Apostle strives to dissociate his persecutors so that they, united, would surround him, but divided, would release him. Thus the Red Sea, which as solid had confined the children of Israel, when divided, freed them from Egypt. But that he attests to being a son of Pharisees, or, according to the Greek, a son of a Pharisee, is what above he glories in, having learned the law and the prophets at the feet of Gamaliel, who is read to be a Pharisee. [Acts 23:12] -- And they bound themselves by an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. While the Lord says: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5), these contrariwise hunger for iniquity, and thirst so greatly for blood that they even renounce food for their body until satisfied by his death. But there is no wisdom nor prudence nor counsel against the Lord. For even though Paul had offered sacrifices above, shaved his head, performed ritual foot washing, made himself a Jew to the Jews, he did not escape the bonds predicted. And here, although they devise plans, bind themselves with vows, set traps, nevertheless the Apostle is preserved, so that he may bear witness to Christ in Rome as it was told him.

CHAPTER 24

Acts 24:5

And the author of the sedition of the sect of the Nazarenes. At that time Christians were called Nazarenes as a reproach; later indeed among the Jews a heresy arose called that of the Nazarenes, who believe in Christ, the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, and say he who suffered under Pontius Pilate and rose again, in whom we also believe. But since they wish to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither Jews nor Christians. [Acts 24:6-8] -- Whom we also apprehended. From whom you will be able, by judging all these things, to know. In this place, some of our Codices have several verses which read in Greek as follows: Whom we also apprehended, and according to our law wished to judge. But Lysias the tribune, coming with many, took him by force from our hands, ordering his accusers to come before you, hence you may be able yourself, by judging all these things, to know, etc.

Acts 24:14

But I confess this to you, that according to the sect which they call a heresy, so I serve my Father God. It is better read in Greek: That according to the way which they call a heresy, so I serve the Father God. For what consistency is there for him who spoke Greek, to say: According to the sect which they call a heresy, since the same in Latin, sect, means heresy in Greek? But he said: So I serve the Father God, according namely to that way which the unbelievers call a heresy, that is, a sect, as if it has more persistence in its following than in the diligence of rightly discerning. [Acts 24:19] -- But some Jews from Asia. Join this to the preceding, that is, these are the ones who found me in the temple. [Acts 24:27] -- After two years were completed, Felix receives his successor Porcius Festus. He refers to the two years of Paul's stay in Caesarea, not Felix's procuratorship. For it is said above that he was a judge for that nation for many years. Especially since the histories recount that in the second year of Nero, the Apostle was sent to Rome, and that Claudius Caesar, at the time when he made Agrippa, the son of Herod, whom the angel struck down in Caesarea, king of the Jews, he also sent Felix as procurator of the whole province of Samaria and Galilee, and the region called across the Jordan.

CHAPTER 25

Acts 25:11

No one can grant me to them. I appeal to Caesar. The reason he appeals to Caesar and hastens to go to Rome is so that he may persist longer in preaching, and when many believe from this, and with everyone he will be crowned as he goes to Christ. [Acts 25:13] -- King Agrippa and Bernice came down to Caesarea. This Agrippa who came to Caesarea with his sister is (as I said) the son of Herod Agrippa, whom we read above was killed by the angel, who held the kingdom of Judea until the destruction of Jerusalem, always friendly to the Romans, and safest from all that Jewish sedition.

CHAPTER 26

Acts 26:2

Of all the things I am accused of by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate before you, since you are to defend me today. Another Edition translated this verse thusly: I consider myself fortunate, starting today to render a defense before you. Which in a certain place, Saint Jerome placed with his exposition thus: "Of all the things I am accused of by the Jews, O King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate, since before you I am to be defended today, who especially know all the customs and questions among the Jews. For he had read that in Isaiah: Blessed is he who speaks into the ears of a listener, and knew that the words of an oration profit as much as the judge's prudence has understood." [Acts 26:10] -- And when they were to be killed, I delivered the sentence. Another Edition says, And I delivered the sentence on how they were to be killed, that is, I myself gave the sentence on their deaths.

Acts 26:24

Festus said in a loud voice: You are insane, Paul. He deemed it insanity that a man in chains, instead of just defending himself from external accusations, made a speech about the conscience by which he gloried inside and reviewed all the miracles of the revelation by which he was transformed from a persecutor into an apostle, and discussed the dispensation of our Redeemer and argued vehemently about the resurrection of the dead. Indeed, just as there is the foolish madness of the prodigal son feeding pigs after abandoning his father, so there is spiritual madness, that is, true madness, about which the Apostle says: "For whether we are out of our mind, it is for God; or whether

we be sober, it is for you." And in comparison to this, the Psalmist sings: "Blessed is the man who has the name of the Lord as his hope, and has not looked to vanities and false insanities" (Psalm 39).

Acts 26:27

Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe. This he speaks not in flattery, as some think, but truly. For Agrippa, as one versed in the rites and laws of the Jews, believed that the prophets spoke truth, but as a faithless man, he did not know to whom that truth referred, that is, the Lord Christ. Although it is recorded that in a certain council with the Jews, he said: But you rely on the help of religion, since the disciples of Jesus have already filled the Roman world, or do we think that this religion grows without God's will?

CHAPTER 27

Acts 27:7

And after we had sailed slowly for many days, and with difficulty had come against Chios. It is better read as against Cnidus, which is an island opposite Asia. [Acts 27:11] -- But the centurion trusted the helmsman and the shipmaster. Shipmasters in Greek, in Latin are called *navicularius*. [Acts 27:14] -- A Typhonic wind sent itself against them. Another Latin translation says: A tempestuous wind. For Typhus in Greek is called inflation in Latin. [Acts 27:15] -- And when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, etc. Another Translation more clearly states: And when the ship was caught, they could not face the wind, and yielded the ship to the wind, and began to gather the sails. Then we ran under an island which is called *Clauda*, which they could not reach, but lifeboats were sent to help the ship, girding it. They also lowered anchors, fearing they might run aground in the *Syrtes*. This shows that ropes from the middle of the side of the ship were lowered on both sides around its front parts, attached to anchors that were towed. Similarly, in our, that is, the British sea, they are accustomed to place millstones under the ship's stern to slow it down. They did this to retard the ship's progress, so that it might not rush into the *Syrtes*, terrifying even to hear about, which draw everything to them. Hence Sallustius says they were named from the dragging.

Acts 27:16-17

We could scarcely obtain the lifeboat. After it was taken, they used auxiliary ropes. The lifeboat or *Catascopos* is a light boat, made of wicker and covered with rawhide. It is called in Greek from the act of viewing, because sailors or pirates on such a vessel used to observe lands and shores. Thus, when they had launched this lifeboat into the sea to help the larger ship, they could scarcely hold onto it, lest it slip, due to the seething wave. [Acts 27:17] -- They were being carried under control with a newly lowered sail. Another translation places it thus: "Fearing that they might fall into the Syrtic, they loosened the ropes and thus were being carried." [Acts 27:23] -- For an angel of God stood by me this night. He was not boasting of himself by saying this but was provoking them to faith. For the sea was allowed to be stormy so that by what was heard and by what was not heard, the spiritual grace in Paul might be revealed.

Acts 27:31

"Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved," etc. Because in the danger of shipwreck, the knowledge of sailors who were experienced in the sea was more beneficial than the weapons of soldiers, they were therefore more likely to control the boat than to let the sailors be cast away. [Acts 27:33] -- And as the day was about to dawn, Paul urged everyone to take some food. In this passage, the most beautiful sense of allegory is laid open, as Paul urged those he promised would be saved from the wreck to take food. And because they were being guided by four anchors amid the force of the waves in the middle of the night, at daybreak, they made for the shore; for no one escapes the tempests of this age unless he is fed with the bread of life. And he who in the night of present tribulations leans with all his might on wisdom, fortitude, temperance, and justice, soon achieves, with the Lord's assistance shining forth, the haven of safety he sought, so long as he seeks only the flame of love to warm his heart.

Acts 27:40

And hoisting the foresail, according to the direction of the breeze, they made for the shore. The foresail is a small sail contrived more for steering the ship than for speed. [Acts 27:41] -- And when we had fallen into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground. The place is called "bithalassum," *bicursal*, because the Greeks call the sea "thalassa." It signifies a stretch

of land projecting into the sea and surrounded on both sides by the same sea dividing itself. [Acts 27:41] -- And the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was broken by the violence of the waves, etc. Thus this ship perished, not from a light run over the waves, but by being violently thrust into the bed of the sea itself, partly held by the ground, partly broken by the raging waves. Such indeed is the fate of a soul given to this world, which, neglecting to trample on the desires of the world, fixes the prow of its intention deeply into the earth, dissolving the entire structure of subsequent works by the waves of cares. But those who escape by fragments of this boat seek the land, as others act more cautiously by the examples of those perishing.

CHAPTER 28

Acts 28:3

When Paul had gathered a great bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire. The Apostle, having come out of the sea, kindled a fire because of the cold, as he warmed the hearts of those he had rescued from the tempests by his teaching with the ardor of love. The sticks are called any exhortations, which, capable of kindling charity, are as if cut from the integrity of the Scriptures, like branches cut with leaves. [Acts 28:3] -- A viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. Because the unclean spirit, repelled by the flame of virtues from the heart of the faithful, tries to inject the poison of persecutions into the teachers of truth to harm the hand, that is, to impede the work of spiritual doctrine. [Acts 28:5] -- And indeed he shook off the beast into the fire and suffered no harm. By the same fire that warms his own, he burns the beast, because by the same virtues both the saints make progress, and the wicked with their own author perish in envy, as the prophet says: Zeal has seized an unlearned people, and now fire devours the adversaries.

Acts 28:8

It happened, however, that the father of Publius, afflicted with fever and dysentery, was lying down, etc. Why does he save an infirm unbeliever with prayer, who heals the faithful Timothy and Trophimus, one by medical art and leaves the other entirely, unless because the former was to be healed outwardly by a miracle, who was not alive inwardly, which those who were healthily alive inwardly did not need? [Acts 28:11] -- We sailed in an Alexan-

drian ship, which had wintered on the island and had the insignia of Castor and Pollux. I believe that at first the insignia of Castor was placed, but due to the mistake of the scribes, letters were added, just as "frustra panis" is written instead of "frusta," and "appropriat" instead of "appropiat," which we find often written in the oldest manuscripts. For in Greek instead of the insignia of Castor, it is written παρασήμω διοσκούροις, but Διόσκουροι, the twin Castors, that is, Castor and Pollux, are called in Greek. The city of the Colchians is a witness, which, made by the charioteers Amphitus and Cercyon, is called Dioscuria from their name. For this reason, the pagans invoke them as gods at sea, because in the omens of sailors, if solitary stars appear on the ship or on the masts, they are dangerous; but if twin stars, they are harbingers of a prosperous voyage. At their arrival, they say the dreadful star called Helen is driven away. In another translation, we saw written for παρασήμω διοσκούροις, "bearing the emblem of Jupiter's sons." For the fables say that Jupiter, transformed into a swan, ravished Leda, the wife of Theseus, and Helen was born from that. Hence it is said: That melodious bird sought Leda's embrace, and similarly, he transformed into a star and fathered Castor and Pollux as twins.

Acts 28: 25-26

Because the Holy Spirit well spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying: "Go to this people and say: You will hear indeed, etc." This prophecy, which the Apostle affirms was pronounced by the Holy Spirit, the book of the prophet itself recalls as having been spoken by the Lord. From this, it is clearly shown that the will and nature of the Lord and the Holy Spirit are one, and the name of the Lord is also understood in the appellation of the Spirit. And indeed, Paul, having no other Holy Spirit when he wrote these things about him, who was in the prophets before the coming of the Lord, was referring to the same Spirit of whom he himself was also a partaker, and all those who were brought in the faith of perfect virtue. Hence, he mentions the Spirit with the article, confirming it to be singular and one, and as he says, not simply "Holy Spirit," but with the added article "the Holy Spirit," and he recalls Isaiah prophesying with the word "the Holy Spirit." Peter too, in that speech by which he persuaded the present, said: "It was necessary for the Scripture to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke (that is, 'the Holy Spirit') through the mouth of David concerning Judas" (Acts I). He too shows that the same Spirit worked in the prophets and in the apostles. These ex-

cerpts from the books of the blessed Didymus should hold this place in our writings.

Acts 28:27

For the heart of this people has grown dull, and their ears barely heard. So that we do not think the dullness of the heart and heaviness of the ears are of nature, not of will, he adds the blame of choice and says: [Acts 28:27] -- They have shut their eyes lest they should see with their eyes. That is, by their preceding merits, they were the cause that God shut their eyes. Or it should be joined to the preceding, with the Lord saying to the prophet, "Go to this people, and reproach them with sins that they may have deserved blindness, perhaps if even thus they may be worthy to hear and turn to me" (Isaiah VI). [Acts 28:30-31] -- However, he remained for two whole years in his own hired house, that is, in the lodgings he had rented for himself, preaching Christ to all, not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles, who he said were to be saved, those who were rejected.

Acts 28:31

And teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with boldness without hindrance. He was not only not prohibited from preaching in Rome, but also, with Nero's empire not yet firmly established, and with crimes not yet erupting as much as the histories tell about him, he was sent to preach the Gospel of Christ also in the regions of the West, as he himself says to the Romans: Now therefore I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. And shortly after: Therefore, when I have completed this, I will pass through you into Spain. Later, that is, in the last year of Nero, he was detained by him, and was crowned with martyrdom. He explains both these things in the second Epistle to Timothy, which he dictates while being in chains: At my first defense, no one came to my support, but all deserted me. But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it, and I was rescued from the lion's mouth (II Timothy 4). Very clearly indicating that Nero is the lion because of his cruelty. And in the following: And he saved me, and will save me for his heavenly kingdom (Ibid.), which evidently indicated that he felt his impending martyrdom. Hence, in the same Epistle, he had prefaced by saying: For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for

my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith (Ibid.).

P A R T T W O

Retractions on Acts

Bede's later notes on the Greek text of Acts.

Retractions on the Acts of the Apostles

THE VENERABLE BEDE

AD 673–735

In later life Bede went back over his commentary on Acts, after he had compared it with a Greek copy of the book. In this short work he sets out where the Latin differs from the Greek and what the better reading means.

PREFACE

We know that the distinguished teacher and bishop Augustine, when he was an older man, undertook to write books of Retractions on certain of his works which he had composed as a young man, so that he could incorporate into literary monuments, not with confusion at his earlier lack of knowledge, but rejoicing instead in his own improvement, those things which through the passage of time and the frequent exercise of reading, aided by heavenly generosity, he had learned better. We also have decided to imitate this effort to the best of our ability, in order that after our exposition of the Acts of the Apostles, which we wrote many years ago at the request of the venerable Bishop Acca, with the greatest diligence we could muster, we might now compose a brief book of Retractions into the same volume, with the chief aim of either adding what we had less adequately discussed or correcting what seemed to have been stated incorrectly. In this, we have also taken care to briefly mention certain things observed in Greek—which were either stated differently or omitted or more comprehensive—whether due to the negligence of the translator or corruption by scribes, we have yet to determine. For I do not dare suspect the Greek original was falsified; hence, I advise the reader to read these notes wherever we have made them for the sake of learning, and not to intersperse them into his own volume as corrections unless he indeed finds them interpreted the same way in the old Latin text of his edition.

For even Jerome teaches many testimonies of the Old Testament as the Hebrew truth holds it; yet he did not wish these to be interpreted or us to

correct them in our codices. For example: "I shall no longer look upon man, and the inhabitant, my generation has rested" (Isaiah XXXVIII). And: "His grave shall be glorious" (Isaiah XI); and: "We have heard praises from the ends of the earth" (Isaiah XXIV); and: "Everyone who kills Cain shall be punished sevenfold" (Genesis IV): he says in Hebrew, "He shall be avenged seven times; and: "From the wings of the earth; and: "His rest shall be glorious; and: "The inhabitant of quietness, my generation has been taken away; he wanted the reader to be aware of these Hebrew versions for learning purposes only, not for the sake of correction.

CHAPTER 1

Acts 1:1

I indeed made the first account, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began to do and teach. What he says: Indeed the first, is not an adverb of order, according to the Apostle: First, I thank my God (Romans 1), but as it is easily evident from the Greek, first is a noun to be joined to what follows the discourse, so that the meaning is that he made the first discourse about Jesus by writing the Gospel, now he is about to make the second by adding the Acts of the Apostles. And indeed he fulfills the mention of the first discourse, when he adds: Until the day He was taken up, having given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen, and then he made the beginning of the second discourse, when he follows: To whom he also presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs over the course of forty days, etc. For even if he testified in the Gospel that He ascended into heaven, and that the disciples returned to Jerusalem from Bethany, he did not however say there that over forty days after his passion he appeared to them frequently, that they questioned him about restoring the kingdom to Israel, that angels stood by them when he sought heaven, predicting that he would return in like manner, and other such things.

Acts 1:5

For John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Baptisma in Greek is called tinctio in Latin. Wherefore, in some manuscripts we find it interpreted thus: For John indeed dipped with water, but you will be dipped in the Holy Spirit. Here the marvelous harmony of the words of the Lord and his precursor is evident. For he said to those whom he baptized, about the Lord: I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you

with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). And the Lord himself: John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. It should be noted as well that the baptism of the Lord in the Holy Spirit, which John had foretold, does not refer only to that time when the Apostles and other faithful of that time were baptized with water for the remission of sins, through the grace of the Holy Spirit given to them by the Lord; but also to this, when, with the Lord sending them, they received more fully the gifts of the same Spirit from heaven. But also now, whoever receives baptism for the remission of sins, is certainly baptized in the Holy Spirit, through whose gift they are both cleansed from all sins, and are aided so that they can progress in good deeds.

Acts 1:6

Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Not to this Israel, but to this Israel; and as it is manifest in Greek, where τῷ Israel, and not οὗ Israel, is written. Which would be understood more easily if, by adding one word, it were said: Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to the people of Israel. [Acts 1:10] -- While they were looking on as he went into heaven. In Greek, it is thus: And while they were gazing into heaven as he went; that is, they were gazing into heaven, where he was going. Hence, the angels say to them: Why do you stand looking into heaven? Because it is also shown that they were gazing at him who was going into heaven, by the angels' following words, when it is said: He will come in the same way you saw him going into heaven.

Acts 1:13

And when they had entered the upper room, they went up where they were staying. For in Greek the order of words is also placed thus: And when they had gone into the upper room, they went up where they were staying—Peter and John, and Andrew and James. In Greek the order of names is thus: Peter and Andrew, and James and John, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. Histories recount concerning these, in which the passions of the apostles are contained, and many deem them apocryphal, that they preached in Persia, and there were killed by the priests of the temples in the city of Sus-anir, and they underwent glorious martyrdom. The Book of Martyrology, which is titled with the name and preface of blessed Jerome, although Jerome himself was not the author but the translator, and Eusebius is nar-

rated to have been the author, affirms this as well. Further, Isidore believes that this Simon is the one who ruled the Church of Jerusalem after James the brother of the Lord, and was crowned with martyrdom of the cross under Trajan, being a hundred and twenty years old, whom we also followed formerly in the first book of the Acts of the Apostles, not examining what he wrote scrupulously, but simply listening to his words, believing that he learned these things from certain ancient histories.

We dare not deny this even now, especially since he who wrote the aforementioned passions of the apostles has most certainly revealed that he wrote uncertain and false things. For he says that the eunuch of Candace, whom Philip baptized in Judea, was in Ethiopia at the time when Matthew was teaching there and helped him in his teaching, while it is manifest that Candace is the name not of a man, but of a woman, that is, not of the eunuch, but of his mistress, namely the queen of the Ethiopians, who, as we have learned from ancient records, were all commonly called thus in olden times. I wrote in the same work, following Jerome's commentary, and concerning Judas the brother of James, who was also called Thaddaeus, that he was sent to Abgar, king of Osroene, as ecclesiastical history has handed down; but afterward, examining the ecclesiastical history itself more diligently, I found it not written there that Thaddaeus the apostle, one of the twelve, but Thaddaeus one of the seventy disciples, was sent to heal the aforementioned king. I do not think an error should be imputed to me, where, following the authority of great doctors, I believed without doubt what I found in their small works should be accepted.

Acts 1:14

With the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. It says brothers of Jesus, not of Mary. For in Greek there is a clear distinction where it is written not ἀντῆς but αὐτοῦ, which without any doubt is a masculine pronoun among them. Blessed Luke took care to inform readers that the brothers of the Lord were participants in his faith at that time, about whom it was previously said before his passion: "Neither did his brothers believe in him." [Acts 1:19] -- And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Akeldama. It says in their language who were inhabitants of Jerusalem, because certainly, even though both spoke Hebrew, the propriety of the language of Jerusalem differed from that of the Galileans, from whom were the apostles, which we learn in the

story of the Lord's passion, where Peter, even against his will, was revealed by his speech to be a Galilean.

Acts 1:23

And they appointed two, Joseph who was called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus. In Greek it is more detailed: And having said these things, they appointed two: Joseph who was called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. Where we in this sentence read Justus, in the Greek also Justus is written. If we believe it to be a Latin name, it seems that this man was of such virtue that even the Romans, who could have known him, gave him the name of justice. But if it is a Hebrew name, it can be interpreted as "sparing" or "he himself uplifted," as Jerome teaches in the Book of Hebrew Names. What is called Justus in Latin, in Hebrew is Sadoch, and in Greek is called δίκαιος. Furthermore, Clement of Alexandria, a most learned man in all respects, reports that both those appointed to the lot of apostleship were from the number of the seventy disciples.

CHAPTER 2

Acts 2:1

And when the days of Pentecost were completed, they were all together in the same place. Some Codices incorrectly have, Pentecosten. For Pentecoste in the nominative case means fiftieth; Pentecostes in the genitive, fiftieth's; Pentecosten in the accusative, fiftieth. However, no rule of speech allows us to say Pentecosten, when it should be said: When the fiftieth day was completed; or certainly as it is read in Greek in the singular number: And when the fiftieth day was completed. But truly in the prayers of the same day, it should be said: And celebrating the most sacred day of Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth. From the usage of this word, it is thought by some who do not know the Greek language that the solemnity of this day should also be called Pentecosten in the nominative case.

Acts 2:2

And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, etc. And in the very giving of the law and grace, the most evident difference between the old and new testament is apparent. There, the people stood far off, there was fear, but no love. For they were so afraid that they said to Moses: Speak to us yourself, and do not let the Lord speak to us, lest we die (Exodus 20). Therefore, God

descended, as it is written, on Sinai in fire, but terrifying the people standing far off, He wrote the law with His finger on stone, not with His spirit in the heart. But here, when the Holy Spirit came, the faithful were gathered together in one place; He did not terrify them on a mountain, but entered the house. Indeed, a sound came suddenly from heaven, and it sounded as if a violent wind was coming; but no one was afraid. You heard the sound, see the fire, because on the mountain there was both, and fire and sound, but there also smoke, here fire, divided tongues as of fire. Was He terrifying from afar? By no means. For He sat on each one of them, and they began to speak in tongues, as the Holy Spirit gave them to utter. Hear the tongue speaking, and understand the Spirit writing not on stone, but in the heart.

Acts 2:3

And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them, etc. This fire, not this fire. For in Greek it is πυρὸς, not πῦρ. This distinction would be easier to see if, adding a word, it were said: Divided tongues appeared as if of burning fire, or as if of shining fire, so that it may be understood that the tongues were divided in the appearance of fire. [Acts 2:4] -- And they began to speak in various tongues, as the Holy Spirit gave them to speak. But there were in Jerusalem Jews dwelling, religious men from every nation, etc. In Greek it does not say at this place "in various tongues," but "in other tongues." For Isaiah had said: With other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people, and even so they will not hear me, says the Lord. Indeed, Blessed Luke, noting that this prophecy was fulfilled by this gift of the Spirit, took care also to place the same word which he saw in the prophecy in this sacred history.

Acts 2:6

Since each one heard them speaking in his own language, they were all amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? I know I have been criticized by some for saying that this sentence can be understood in two ways, or rather for asking how it should be understood. To them, I briefly respond that everything I wrote about the same sentence in my previous volume was not expressed from my own thought but taken from the words of the holy and utterly irreproachable teacher, that is, Gregory of Nazianzus. It is indeed clear that the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke in all tongues, nor is it allowed for any of the faithful to

doubt this. But how they spoke is rightly questioned, namely whether the speech of the apostles had such power that everyone who knew different languages could equally understand it when heard, or if whoever spoke, as it was necessary for someone to speak among such a multitude, while the rest were silent, at first made his speech in Hebrew for the Hebrews, with the rest not knowing what he said. Then for the Greeks, he spoke in Greek while the others waited.

Then for the Parthians, and after them the Medes, and thus for the Elamites, and those peoples enumerated in order, he spoke in their own language, with each group waiting and remaining silent until their turn came, so they could understand what was said and thus give assent to the words of the teaching in faith. However, Luke reports Peter speaking to the crowds, but does not report him repeating the same things a second or third time. Instead, he notes that they, heeding the counsel of salvation, were consecrated in the mysteries of the Christian faith. I do not think it would be wrong for someone to believe that both things could have happened: that the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, could have understood and spoken the languages of all nations, and also that their words, by a greater miracle, could have been equally understood by all who heard them, regardless of the language in which they were spoken.

Acts 2:9

And those who inhabit Mesopotamia, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia. These provinces which are named after Judea, indeed all speak Greek, but if they sounded nothing different from the custom of their homeland, they would not by any means be mentioned with such a subtle distinction of languages. Hence, the wondrous grace of the Spirit is to be seen in the apostles, which not only taught them the diversity of all languages, but also made the distinctiveness of properties in each language recognizable in their speech, according to the number of provinces that used it. [Acts 2:10] -- And Roman sojourners. It would be more correctly rendered in Greek as And Roman wanderers, that is, Jews who were living in Rome as foreigners, just as others elsewhere, as mentioned above. For it is shown in the following verse that among those present were foreigners who are called proselytes in Greek, that is, those who from the nations had converted to Judaism, abandoning the rites of their own cultures, as it is said: Jews and proselytes as well.

Acts 2:19

Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. About fire and smoke it has been said in the previous book: he speaks of blood not only of the Lord's wounds, but also of the Lord's sweat, when, praying before the betrayal, His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. This is numbered among the divinely wrought signs, because it is proved not to be found in the custom of human nature. It is therefore a sign, because it signified that the whole world would be cleansed by the blood of the Lord, so that just as the tabernacle or temple was at some point consecrated to the Lord with the blood of victims, so now through the whole world the faithful people would be dedicated to Him as a holy house by His own blood, and not only in Jerusalem would be a place for prayer, but in every place of His dominion, the elect would lift their hands through pure prayers to the Lord.

Acts 2:20

The sun will be turned into darkness. The name of darkness in Greek is read in the singular number, that is, σκότος, which the Latin translator necessarily rendered in the plural as tenebras because he could not express it in the singular. I thought it necessary to mention this so that anyone who reads this among the people of the Angles might know that it is not necessary, because of the authority of the Latin language, to render "darkness" in their own speech in the plural; rather, it should be in the singular, as this can just as easily be done owing to the authority of the Greek, from which it was translated into Latin scripture. [Acts 2:23] -- By the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, this man was handed over to you, and with the help of wicked men, you put him to death by nailing him to the cross. The Greek has one more word which pertains significantly to the cause: "Foreknowledge of God handing him over." For he was handed over by the governor into their power with the condition that they could choose either him or the robber; and they, having received this option, granted life to the robber and, by their own shouts and prayers, put Jesus to death through the hands of the soldiers.

Acts 2:24

Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains, just as it was impossible for Him to be held by it. The sense of this sentence seems to be that the pains of punishment were loosened when the Lord descended to the lower regions,

that is, they were not able to touch Him at all. But if we look at the Greek authority, where it is written: Whom God raised up on the third day, loosening the pains of death through Him, just as it was not possible for Him to be held by it, it is clear indeed that He says that the pains of the underworld were loosened by the Lord, or of death, that is, through His descent to the lower regions the saints were freed from the places of the underworld, who, although they were in Abraham's bosom, that is, in the consolation of quiet rest, nevertheless were not entirely free from the pain of death or of the underworld. They did not yet deserve to see and enter the heavenly joys, until what was said through the prophet to the Lord was done: You also, by the blood of your covenant, have brought forth your prisoners from the pit where there is no water (Zech. IX). For if the saints in the pit of the infernal regions were utterly free from the pain of death, why does he say they were prisoners until they were brought forth by the blood of Christ? He therefore loosed the pains of death through Him, just as it was impossible for Him to be held by it. For just as He Himself was immune from the power of death, so He was also powerful enough to rescue whomever He wanted from the dominion of death.

Acts 2:25

For David says in reference to Him, that is, in His person: I foresaw the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, that I may not be moved. By explaining what the Mediator of God and men did, He gives us who are pure men advice on how to avoid sins. For whoever continuously looks upon the presence of his Creator with the eye of his mind in no way turns to sins. He also states the reason why he was not moved. Since indeed with the Lord helping at the right hand, the left side does not prevail; but the soul that He guards perseveres more firmly in Him. Appropriately, he was saying that the Lord is at his right hand, because if He does not hold this part, the insidious devil will immediately occupy it, as it is written about Judas: And the devil stood at his right hand (Ps. CVIII).

Acts 2:26

For this reason my heart was delighted, and my tongue exulted. For this reason, because He, indeed, stood at the right hand, and He attests that in His thoughts, joy and exultation arose in His tongue. And indeed, as the passion was threatening, He said: "My soul is sorrowful unto death," and He began to

fear and be weary (Mark 14). But He was sorrowful to show that He was truly man in soul and body, and truly passible; but His soul and tongue exulted because He knew that by His passion the human race was to be saved. [Acts 2:26] -- Moreover, even my flesh will rest in hope. Indeed, He was rejoicing that He could not be moved or overcome by enemies; but beyond this joy, He declares that His joy increased even more in that He was to provide an example of resurrection in His flesh, by which He saved us through His death.

Acts 2:27

Because you will not abandon my soul in hell, nor will you let your holy one see decay. It is certain that the soul of the Lord was not abandoned in hell, which, having taken away those for whom He descended there, soon returned to the heights above; it is certain that nor was His flesh corrupted, which was glorified by a swift resurrection. But it must be asked how He says in another psalm, reproaching the impenitent and the stubborn, the suffering of His passion: "What profit is there in my blood, while I go down into corruption?" (Psalm 29). This is solved because there He says He descends into corruption when His body is penetrated by the piercing of nails and the lance, for the transfixion of the solid body itself may not unreasonably be considered a kind of corruption spoken of. Here, however, He rightly denies that corruption, that is, putrefaction, not happening, which generally devastates human flesh, but it had no power to come upon His most sacred body.

Acts 2:28

You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy with your face. These words are rightly understood not only of the Lord, who did not need any other guide to overcome the kingdom of death, but, once receiving the fullness of divine power and wisdom, he was able to destroy death by himself, rise to life, and ascend to the right hand of the Father; they also truly apply to his chosen ones, who, with His gift, find the path of truth through which they return to the life that they lost in the first man, and who themselves will be filled with joy with the face of God the Father; because this is our perfect happiness, that we have merited to see Him face to face, as Philip understood well when he said: Lord, show us the Father and it is enough (John XIV). For it is enough joy to see the face of the Lord, nor is anything further required, because neither will there be anything more re-

quired, when He who is above all is seen. And these are the things that follow in the psalm: Pleasures at your right hand forever (Psalm XV).

Acts 2: 30–31

Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath that of the fruit of his loins one would sit on his throne, he spoke foresightfully about the resurrection of Christ, etc. In the Greek it is more: To raise the Christ from the fruit of his loins and to sit on his throne. But in what follows: Foresightedly he spoke of the resurrection of his Christ, because neither was he left in hell; it is more consistently in the Greek: Because neither was his soul left in hell. And Saint Fulgentius, writing to Thrasamund, puts it this way: “For he also immediately added about the raising of his body from the dead, saying: Nor did his flesh see corruption.” As also the prophet encompassed both, saying: For you will not abandon my soul to hell, nor let your holy one see corruption (Psalm XV).

Acts 2: 33

And having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you see and hear. In Greek it is translated thus: He has poured out this gift which you now see and hear. Indeed, concerning Jesus, whom the Jews crucified and whom God raised, He taught that He is the Christ; but now gradually leading the listeners to higher belief, He signifies that this is the true God, by confirming that He has poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit, which any wise person recognizes to be of divine power alone. And fittingly, He used the same word ‘pouring,’ which the prophetic statement previously mentioned has the Lord say, to teach them from this that it is the same Lord Jesus Christ who both before taking flesh was accustomed to speaking in the prophets; who disposed the future ages according to His will; who gave signs and wonders in the heaven and on earth; who would save all invoking His name, and fulfill the other things described in prophetic discourse as the Son of God and true God.

Acts 2: 34–35

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says: The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand. Certain codices have ‘The Lord says,’ but Greek exemplars in both this book and the Psalter have ‘The Lord said.’ Most clearly, blessed Peter explains through this psalm how to understand what he previously assumed from another psalm, that the Lord swore to

David to raise Christ from the fruit of his loins and to set him on his throne, namely, because this throne of the kingdom is not to be understood in earthly Jerusalem where David reigned, but at the right hand of His majesty in the heavens. Here he evidently asserts both natures of our one Redeemer from the prophetic scriptures: the human, from the fruit of David's loins through the virgin, and the divine because ascending into heaven, the man was received at the right hand of the Father. In this truly, He is the son of David, in that He is the Lord of David, for which reason he congruously added:

Acts 2:36

Therefore, let all the house of Israel know most certainly, that God has made him both Lord and Christ. For he proved him to be Lord from the word of David, which says: The Lord said to my Lord; and from what the prophet Joel said: And it shall come to pass, in the last days, says the Lord: I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh (Joel II), when He declared that this truly happened on that very day. He also taught that he is Christ by the word of the same David, which sings as said to him by the Lord: Sit at my right hand, and also from the fact that speaking through the prophet he declared that his Holy Spirit is Spirit, and that he could give it to men by his own power. For indeed, who but an infidel would doubt that this could pertain to no other man at all, except the Mediator of God and men, man Jesus Christ? For how could it be thought that he was not truly Christ, that is, believed rightly to be anointed with all the fullness of the Holy Spirit, who was proven by the same Spirit to give to whomever he willed? Therefore, he says that God has made him both Lord and Christ. Is not the Lord Christ both God and man, one person existing in two natures? In divinity, he was eternally born from the Father; in humanity, he was made from time by the Father, when He willed him to be incarnate in the womb of the Virgin by the working of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:36

And the Lord, he says, He made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. Because Jesus is the proper name of that man whom the Jews crucified, just as Aaron or David are proper names of men: however, Lord is a term of power and majesty, to which every creature should rightly be subject, about which He Himself said to the disciples after appearing post-resurrec-

tion: All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, Christ is a title of royal or priestly dignity. For priests and kings were accustomed to be anointed with holy oil by law, and for that reason to be called anointed, a figure indeed of Him who was anointed with the oil of gladness, that is, the Holy Spirit above His companions by God, made to be our King and great Priest: a priest, namely, so that by the sacrifice of His passion He might cleanse us from all sin, so that, placed at the right hand of God, He might intercede for us even now; a king, however, so that, with all our adversaries defeated, He might lead us to an immortal kingdom.

Acts 2: 37

What shall we do, brothers? In Greek, it is rendered more: Show us. This word we frequently find appended to sentences in the works of those who expounded the holy Scriptures. [Acts 2:38-39] -- And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, as the Lord says through the prophet: I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy (Joel II). And what he added: And to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call, refers to that final testimony placed from the prophet, that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Ibid.). This particularly pertains to the calling of the Gentiles, who were far removed from the fellowship of the sons of Israel in both kinship and merit, and yet were to be saved by invoking the name of the Lord according to the prophet's promise.

Acts 2: 41

Those, therefore, who received his word were baptized. Another translation, according to the accuracy of the Greek truth, has it thus: Those indeed willingly accepting his word were baptized. By this interpretation it seems more clearly expressed that not some of those who had heard Peter's word, but all who had assembled to hear, willingly hearing this, were baptized. [Acts 2:47] -- But the Lord added daily those who were being saved. In Greek it is read thus: But the Lord added to the Church those who were being saved, and then another narration begins.

CHAPTER 3

Acts 3: 1

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. Which can be adapted to the previous sentence thus: Since the

Lord daily was gathering the believers to his Church through the preaching of the apostles, the foremost of the apostles were going up to the temple to pray to God for the same thing, that is, so that he might always provide increases to his Church. [Acts 3:7] -- And immediately his feet and ankle bones were strengthened. The term 'bases' is Greek in origin, and it is placed thus in Greek, which in Latin means 'supports': by which term it indicates that his steps were strengthened, just as some have also translated it into Latin. But it must be known that steps are properly called διαβήματα or πορίαι among the Greeks. [Acts 3:10] -- And they were filled with wonder and amazement. Another Edition for amazement, which is a state of being beyond one's mind, does not properly place 'admiration'; because greater amazement sometimes leads the mind to a state beyond, and transfers it to higher modes of thought beyond the usual manner of thinking.

Acts 3:13

The God of our fathers glorified His Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered, etc. In Greek it is more appropriately stated: The God of our fathers glorified His servant Jesus. For it was fitting for a wise teacher, when addressing those who had killed Him, first to recall His humanity, which could be delivered up and slain; then gradually revealing the glory of His resurrection, to declare that He is also God and God's Son. Finally, shortly after, he calls Him the Author of life. And at the conclusion of the speech, more openly: To you first, he says, God, raising up His Son, sent Him blessing you, that your sins may be blotted out, that when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord, then your sins may be blotted out. The times of refreshment, however, signify the distinction of the universal judgment and the redemption of the just, of which they themselves, having indeed suffered tribulations but made safe in hope, say to the Lord in the psalm: We went through fire and water, and you brought us into refreshment (Psalm 65). For then indeed our sins will be fully blotted out when, by the power of the resurrection, the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed (I Corinthians 15). In a certain translation, we find this verse positioned this way for the explanation of the sense: That when the times of refreshment come, they may come to you from the face of the Lord. And indeed it is thus written in Greek, with the addition of that pronoun: That when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord to you.

Acts 3: 21

Whom heaven must indeed receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began. This is what the Psalmist testifies as said to the same Lord Jesus Christ by God the Father: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet (Psalm 109). For He was taken up into heaven and sits at the right hand of God. In that seat of paternal majesty, He always remains divinely, nor has He ever departed from it, but in the assumed humanity, He is to come from heaven to judge the living and the dead when all His enemies will be put under His feet, and all things which God spoke through all the prophets from the beginning of the world will be restored; because, when all the saints enter eternal life with the Lord, the reprobates with the devil will endure eternal punishments, there will be absolutely nothing left which the prophets can promise us further to hope for, since both parts, namely the good and the bad, will have received an irrevocable sentence in the final judgment from the just judge. And Origen is greatly mistaken and deceives, who thinks that after this judgment, though after a long interval of time, the other sinners, who were sent to hell with the devil on the left side of the judge, will be freed and brought to the heavenly kingdom, as if the prophet who said:

And they will be gathered in the dungeon, and after many days they will be visited (Isaiah 24), promised this to them, since the clear meaning of the prophet's words according to sound sense is that he predicted that the enemies and persecutors of the holy Church would be carried off to hell individually on the day of their departure, but he foresaw that all of them would be briefly released from there on the day of judgment, when, having received an immortal body, they would again be plunged into double punishment of eternal death. For the next words of the prophet declare that he intended this in his statement, who after saying: And after many days they will be visited, immediately added: And the moon will be confounded, and the sun ashamed (*ibid.*), which will come to pass on the day of judgment as both prophecy and the words of the gospel declare.

Acts 3: 22

Moses indeed said: Because the Lord your God has raised up for you a prophet from among your brethren, like me, you shall listen to him according to all

that he will speak to you, etc. The beginning of this passage in Greek has more: Moses indeed said to your fathers: Because the Lord your God has raised up for you a prophet. The meaning of the sentence is clear, because our Lord took on the truth of flesh from the people of Israel, appearing in the likeness of Moses, so that just as he [Moses] introduced carnal Israel, instructed and purified by ceremonies and sacred rites, into the promised land, so also the Lord, through the grace of the Gospel, gathering spiritual Israel from the whole world, would lead them to the heavenly kingdoms. And just as those who disdained the law of Moses were expelled from the promised land by enemy nations, so also those who have scorned the teaching of evangelical grace will be cast out from the assembly of the saints by avenging spirits. For this is what follows:

Acts 3:23

But it shall be, every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be cut off from the people. Truly, it should be noted that blessed Peter here did not care to hold onto the words of the Mosaic sentence, but the sense. For it is written in Deuteronomy, with Moses speaking to the sons of Israel: The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your nation and from your brethren like me, you shall listen to him, as you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb (Deut. XVIII). And a little later: And the Lord God said to me, Well have they spoken all that they have said: I will raise up for them a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command. And whoever will not listen to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will be the avenger (Ibid.). For which Peter placed: He shall be cut off from the people, more manifestly insinuating that this is the mode of divine vengeance, that those who scorn heavenly mandates are rendered exiles from the ranks of the elect. And also here, and in many other places, where the apostles and evangelists have taken examples from the Old Testament, it is clear that they sought the sense of the Scriptures, not the words, nor did they particularly care for the order of the speeches, so that the matter might be clear to the understanding.

Acts 3:25

Saying to Abraham: And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. From both this testimony, namely that which was given to Moses,

and that which was proclaimed to Abraham by the Lord, both his severity and goodness are shown: goodness indeed in those who, having received faith in Christ, deserve to be blessed by him; severity, however, in those who, due to their own contempt and disobedience, are exterminated from the people of the blessed, that is, cast out beyond the boundaries of eternal happiness. But it was said: In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed, just as it was said in the Gospel: He was the true light which enlightens every man coming into the world (John I). For not all the families of the earth are blessed in Christ, nor is every man coming into the world enlightened by Christ, since many are those who, living in the darkness and curse in which they were born due to the first transgression, or even adding worse deeds, are damned to eternity. But it must be understood that in the seed of Abraham, that is, in Christ, all the families of the earth who are to be blessed are blessed; and by his grace, every man who belongs to the lot of the saints, which is in light, is enlightened: nor is there another name under heaven given to men in which we must be saved (Acts IV).

Although it can also rightly be understood in this way, that there is no clan or family of the earth in which some do not receive the blessing of the heavenly inheritance: I speak of those families, or clans of seventy-two, into which the human race was divided after the flood in the construction of the tower. Therefore, in the seed of Abraham, namely the Mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ, all the chosen are blessed, not only those who believed in him after his Incarnation, but also those who, being born in the flesh, preceded the times of his Incarnation. For to all the same man God, ascending to the heavens, opened the gates of the heavenly kingdom, to all he will say on the day of judgment: Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom (Matthew XXV).

CHAPTER 4

Acts 4:1

The priests and magistrates of the temple arrived. "Magistratus" should be read in the singular, as is clear from the Greek, where "στρατηγός" is written in the singular: for which, in Latin, some Codices have "praepositum templi," while others more correctly have "praetorem templi." For in Greek "praetor" is "στρατηγός," while "magistrate" or "chief" is called "ἀρχων." [Acts 4:8] -- He said to them: "Rulers of the people and elders." In Greek, it includes more: "And elders of Israel, listen." Similarly, in the following, where

it is said: "In this, he stands before you healthy," in Greek it is: "Before you healthy today, and in no other." [Acts 4:13] -- But seeing the boldness of Peter and John, and realizing that they were unlettered and ordinary men, they marveled. "Unlettered" is said, not because they were ignorant of letters, but because they were not skilled in the art of grammar. For in Greek, it is more clearly, for this word, "ἀγράμματοι," that is, unlettered, and "idiotae" are called unskilled. Finally, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where it is written: "And if unskilled in speech, yet not in knowledge" (2 Cor. XI), for "unskilled" in Greek it is "ἰδιώτης."

Acts 4:21

Because all were praising for what had been done. It is better in Greek: "For all were glorifying God for what had been done." And what in our Codices is added, "for what had happened," is not in the Greek. Indeed, "glorifying" and "praising" are often interchangeably translated from the same Greek, which is "ἐδόξαζον," but there is a difference between a deed being praised and God being praised or glorified in the deed. For a deed or word to be praised is to be spread to the knowledge of many by fame, which can also happen with human deeds remarkably done; but for God to be praised or glorified in the deeds of men is specific to Christian piety and humility, with Him commanding and saying: "Let your good deeds shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. V).

Acts 4:25

Why did the nations rage and the peoples devise vain things? The prophet does not ask as if he does not know but reproves the madness of the impious in astonishment, those who rose up against the Lord the Savior, although harmed not at all by him, rather assisted by many good deeds. He mentioned nations because of the Roman soldiers, peoples because of the Jews. Hence it is aptly said that the nations raged but the peoples devised vain things against God. For indeed, the leaders of the Jews with diligent meditation plotted how they might deliver the Lord to death; but the soldiers are found to have inflicted nothing upon him, to have laid no traps against him, but merely to have obeyed the governor's orders in his insult and death. Hence they are also said to rage, driven by an unskilled and disorderly motion; and since rage is properly of wild beasts, they are rightly said to rage who, setting aside reason, were inflamed by bestial fury. However, that the peoples are said to have de-

vised vain things looks back to what is said about the blessed man in the preceding Psalm: "But his will is in the law of the Lord, and in his law, he will meditate day and night" (Psalm 1). For just as he is blessed who spends all his time in meditation on the divine law, so rightly must that people be assigned to perpetual miseries who not only pridefully turn away from meditating on God's law but also, in insanity, frequently engage in meditation against God himself, the lawgiver and their Lord.

Acts 4: 26

The kings of the earth have taken their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. It speaks of the leaders of the Jews and Pilate himself; but it mentions kings in the plural because of Herod the tetrarch, as the subsequent words of the apostles testify. Although it can be rightly interpreted by the plural appellation of kings to refer to Herod the tetrarch who consented with Pilate in the Lord's death, as well as that one of the same name and malice who, after the Lord's birth, killed the children in Bethlehem. Even though they did not live at the same time, with the same hatred and wickedness of mind, they took their stand and gathered together with the leaders of the Jews against the Lord. It is also noteworthy that the clauses of these verses are such that the first takes the closing phrase from the second, which says "against the Lord and against His Christ," and the second takes the introductory adverb "why" from the first, so that the position of each is complete: Why did the nations rage, and the people devise futile things against the Lord and against His Christ? Why did the kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers gather together as one, against the Lord and against His Christ? He says "kings of the earth" to distinguish them from those for whom, while they are pilgrims on earth, the kingdom is preserved in heaven.

Acts 4: 30

In that you stretch out your hand, healings and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy Child Jesus. In Greek, it is rendered as "through the name of your holy Boy Jesus," which seems to align more with the apostles' wishes, who strove in every way to make it known that the man whom the Jews crucified, through the signs of miracles becoming evident by his name, having been taken up into heaven, should be recognized as the Son of God.

Acts 4:31

And they spoke the word of God with confidence. In the Greek it is added: To everyone willing to believe. Also, in the following reading, when it was said: And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, here too in the Greek manuscripts, which our Codices do not have, it is added: And there was no division among them. And then, which is also contained in our Codices in a subdued manner: Nor did anyone say that what they possessed was their own. Blessed Cyprian also placed this sentiment in the third book of Testimonies, saying: "But the crowd of those who believed were of one heart and soul; nor was there any distinction among them, nor did anyone consider any of their possessions to be their own." This passage fits well and coheres aptly with what was said above, since those who received the Holy Spirit on the holy day of Pentecost, though all were Galileans, spoke in the tongues of all who were present from different parts of the world, both Jews and proselytes. For there indeed, through the uniting of different languages, it was beautifully foreshadowed that the holy Church, by the gift of the same Spirit, would have one heart and soul among the different nations and languages across the world. For it is not for all believers to speak in all tongues, but the unity of different tongues in the faith of Christ was a sign, because there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Eph. IV).

Acts 4:32

But they had all things in common. In Latin, "common" is said as "communia," which in Greek is called κοινά, from which it is understood that the perfect servants of God are called κοινοβίται in Greek, that is, those living in common, and their communal dwellings are called κοινόβια; for in their language, βίον is understood to mean life, not that life which is contrary to death, but the way of life someone leads in their conversation, whether in the military, or in agriculture, or in any honorable or dishonorable art, whether one is a monk, layperson, or cleric. However, the life by which we are distinguished from the dead is called ζωή by the Greeks. Therefore, those who live in such a way that all things are common to them in the Lord are rightly called κοινοβίται, a name composed from two words. This life is certainly so much happier than other ways of living in this world, as it imitates the state of the future world even in the present, where all good things are

common to the blessed, who see His glory from whom all good things come; and because there the highest grace of peace and security reigns, the city in which this way of life was first typified was rightly called Jerusalem, that is, the Vision of Peace.

Hence, the distance of things and places is noteworthy, seeing that in the work of the prideful tower, the language and mind of the human race, when they were one, were deservedly scattered due to iniquity, so that although people spoke all languages there, no one could understand the will or words of their neighbor. However, in Jerusalem, the same languages were united by the merit of humility, and there was one language, one will, and one soul among all. This indeed continues to this day throughout the whole world, while the elect serve the Lord with one and undivided heart and intention amidst the manifold division of languages; but indeed the reprobates all serve the devil in such a way that the same service is carried out with mutual conflict and contention, because of which their city is rightly called Babylon, that is, confusion.

Acts 4: 36

Joseph, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles, which is interpreted as the son of consolation, a Levite of Cyprian origin, having land, sold it, etc. It is remarkable how this Barnabas, who was later ordained an apostle of the Gentiles with Paul, and after a long companionship with him, returned to Cyprus, where he was born, to preach again, Eusebius, in the Ecclesiastical History, considers him to be among the seventy disciples of the Lord Savior, while it is clearly written by blessed Luke that he came to the discipleship of the apostles after the Lord's ascension; unless perhaps it is to be thought that he first followed the discipleship of Christ in such a way that he had not yet renounced all that he possessed. Whether this was in keeping with evangelical doctrine, anyone can easily see. [Acts 5:17] -- But the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him, etc. This reading in Greek begins thus, looking back at the previous events: And seeing these things, the high priest rose up.

Acts 5: 24

But when the temple magistrates and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about what was to happen concerning them. And here "magistrate" should be read in singular form, as also in the following pas-

sages where it says: Then the magistrate went into the temple with the ministers. For the Greek exemplar has "στρατηγός," that is, "praetor," in the singular in both places. It should be noted that this passage has more in Greek, for it is written thus: But when the priests heard these words, as well as the temple magistrate and the chief priests, they were amazed and perplexed about them, wondering what this might mean. [Acts 5:27-28] -- And the high priest questioned them, saying: Did we not strictly command you, etc. In the Greek it is more consistent: Did we not strictly command you? For it is more fitting for one questioning to speak thus.

Acts 5:29

We must obey God rather than men. It is read interrogatively in Greek: Should we obey God rather than men? and the Apostles fittingly refuted the foolish and rash questioning of the high priest with a firm and prudent response. [Acts 5:30] -- The God of our fathers raised up Jesus. In Greek, it has His Child Jesus, according to the psalmist: Give power to your child; save the son of your handmaid (Psalm 85). [Acts 5:32] -- And we are witnesses of these words, and the Holy Spirit whom God gave to all who obey Him. We are witnesses because we have seen the glory of His resurrection, because we have followed with our eyes as He ascended into the heavens. The Holy Spirit is also a witness, because as we proclaim to you the great works of God with unyielding proclamation, He has strengthened us with His presence, He has formed these words in us as He speaks within us. And this is what the Lord promised them, saying: But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of me, and you will bear witness (John 15), that is, He by inspiring you to speak, and you by providing outward testimony, will bear witness of me.

Acts 5:34

Then stood up one in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, etc. Of this Gamaliel, we read in the book of Saint Clement, that he was secretly a disciple of the apostles, but by their counsel, he was commanded to remain among the Jews to mitigate their fury where necessity required; but this has been most certainly made known today as a true account through the revelation of the relics of the most blessed protomartyr Stephen, which was made widely known to the Church of Christ through the divine

dispensation by the same man. For he appeared in a vision to the holy servant of God and priest Lucian, as the same priest Lucian later wrote to all the Churches; and he taught most sweetly where Saint Stephen was buried, along with Nicodemus, who buried the Lord with Joseph, as well as Gamaliel himself with his son Abibam.

Acts 5:37

After this arose Judas the Galilean in the days of the registration. In Greek, it is written, In the days of ἀπογραφῆς, that is, in the days of the census registration, as we also have interpreted in ecclesiastical history in Latin. [Acts 5:38] -- And now therefore I say to you: Depart from these men, and leave them alone. In the Greek, it is added: Not defiling your hands. [Acts 5:39] -- But if it is from God, you will not be able to destroy them. And in the Greek, more is added here: Neither you, nor your rulers. [Acts 5:39] -- Lest you be found to be fighting against God. For what we have as fighting against God, or, as some have interpreted, opposing God, in Greek one word is used, θεομάχοι. I thought this worth mentioning, so that when we find θεομάχος or θεομαχίαν in histories, we can more surely know the meaning of the term.

CHAPTER 6

Acts 6:6

They set them before the sight of the apostles, and praying, they laid hands on them. Not those who set them, but the apostles, laid hands on them. For indeed the common dispensation demanded that men be chosen as ministers for widows; but when those were found who seemed worthy for this ministry, gradually, as often happens, the providence of the saving counsel pleased that they themselves should be ordained as ministers of the altar of the sacred and dominical blood, as well as the refectio and common table of the multitude of believers: which is proved by the word which said: And praying, they laid hands on them. For this is indeed for those who are promoted from the common number of the faithful to the office of the most holy altar.

Acts 6:8

Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. In Greek it is added: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I wrote in the previous book that Stephen is interpreted as "crowned," and it is not far from the truth what I wrote. But learning more diligently, I found

that Stephen in Greek signifies not "crowned," but "crown." For this name is of the masculine gender among them, and thus appropriate for a man; however, the term for "crowned" is στεφανηφόρον, as if, "bearing a crown." Indeed, in the psalm where we sing: You will bless the crown of the year with your goodness (Psalm 64), that verse begins among the Greeks as εὐλογήσεις τὸν στέφανον. Expounding beautifully on the mystery of this name, Eusebius says: "Immediately, after his ordination, he was stoned by those who also killed the Lord, whereby a crown is given to Stephen by Christ in accordance with his name." The term for "crown" in Greek is also in the neuter gender στέμμα. I thought this worth noting, because we often find this name included even in Latin books.

Acts 6:9

However, there arose some from the synagogue called the Libertines and Cyrenians, etc. And in the Greek text, the name Libertines is written. Now, libertini are called the sons of freedmen, that is, those who, after servitude, were freed and granted liberty. It is therefore evident that those who first rebelled against the faith of Christ were born of a servile stock; who, although they were emancipated from human masters, nonetheless did not cease to be slaves of sin. In their person, the most wicked persecutors of faith and all holiness, namely heretics, are fittingly portrayed, about whom Peter says: "For speaking proud words of vanity, they lure in the lusts of the flesh those who have barely escaped, those who walk in error, promising them liberty, while they themselves are slaves of corruption" (2 Peter 2). This servitude is, of course, opposed to the liberty of the Spirit, which the Bereans had, about whom it is said in praise while Paul and Silas preached: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, daily examining the Scriptures."

Acts 6:10

And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Holy Spirit who spoke. In the Greek text, there is more: "And they were not able to resist the wisdom that was in him, and the Holy Spirit who spoke: for which reason they were reprov'd by him with all confidence." Therefore, when they could not contradict the truth, then they suborned men who said, etc.

CHAPTER 7

Acts 7:1

Then the high priest said. In the Greek text, it is added to Stephen; and then it is appended: "Are these things so?" [Acts 7:2] -- Brothers and fathers, hear: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham. Because the blessed Stephen was accused of speaking blasphemy against Moses and God, at the very beginning of his speech he very vigilantly addressed their slander by saying that the same God who spoke to the fathers and prophets was the God of majesty and glory. Even when he reached the times of Moses in his speech, he praised him with fitting words, but proved that those people had always been rebellious and disobedient to his words. It is also noteworthy how skillfully he spoke; thus, he began to speak to his persecutors as if he were afraid of them: Brothers and fathers, hear. What could be gentler, what could be more gracious in winning over his audience, than to commend the Savior? He began gently so that he would be listened to for a long time. And since he had been accused here of speaking against God and the law, just as he showed that he was preaching the true God at the beginning of his speech, he also explained their law to them in such a way that he was seen as a proclaimer of that law of which he was accused of being a destroyer. Indeed, as his speech progressed, when he refuted both their new and old errors, he clearly showed how great was the authority of his spirit, and how free his soul was from the fear of the enemy.

Acts 7:16

And they were placed in the sepulcher that Abraham had purchased for a sum of silver. In the Greek it is written: Our father Abraham, which the blessed Stephen added while speaking gently to his listeners so he would be heard longer and more willingly. [Acts 7:17] -- But when the time of the promise which God had confessed to Abraham approached, it is better written in Greek: Which God had promised to Abraham. [Acts 7:31-32] -- And as he came near to observe, the voice of the Lord came: I am the God of your fathers. In the Greek it is written thus: A voice came from heaven saying to him: I am the God of your brothers, remove the sandals from your feet. For the place where you stand is holy ground. This place, according to moral sense, admonishes us that while standing in the Church, which is rightly called holy ground, we should renounce dead works.

Acts 7:42

And he handed them over to serve the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets. He says this in the singular because among the Hebrews there is one book of the twelve prophets, and not twelve books, according to the number of those same prophets. The host of heaven, however, is sometimes referred to as the army of angels: but in this place, it seems more consistent that he called the host of heaven the stars, since he immediately adds the testimony of the prophet, in which the star of their god is taken in place of God; they are convicted of having accepted the tabernacle of Moloch instead of the tabernacle of the true God. [Acts 7:51] -- Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. He shows them that the circumcision of the foreskin, in which they gloried against the grace of the Gospel, is of no avail for salvation, who were proven to have unclean thoughts and hearing. And at the same time, by speaking these things as if interpreting, he explains to them what the Angel signified when he appeared to Moses in the flame of fire from the bush, so that the bush burned but was not consumed. For the fire indeed signifies the Holy Spirit; the bush, which is a kind of thorn, figuratively denounced the sins of that people. Therefore, the Lord appeared to Moses in the bush having fire, but not consumed, to indicate that He Himself indeed came with the enlightenment and fervor of the Holy Spirit to instruct the people, but He would not consume the sins of that same people, although He would always oppose them with His pious benefits amidst the thickest thorns of their wickedness.

Acts 7:56

Behold, I see the heavens opened. What we say in Latin as "I see," in Greek is called θεωρῶ, from which is derived the name of the theoretical, that is, contemplative life. Through this, some of the elect, still retained in this life, with the eye of the heart more diligently cleansed, have deserved to behold divinely elevated the joys of the future life, as at present saint Stephen, as Paul, when he was caught up to the third heaven, and many others at other times. Hence also God is called Θεός in Greek, because He sees all things, and all things are naked and open to His eyes. [Acts 7:60] -- Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And having said this, he fell asleep. Beautifully he says

"fell asleep," and did not say "died." For he offered the sacrifice of love and fell asleep in the hope of resurrection.

CHAPTER 8

Acts 8:1

Now on that day, a great persecution arose in the Church that was in Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. If the Church was scattered, the apostles remained in Jerusalem, as Luke tells us, it is evident that he lied who, writing under the name of Melito, bishop of Asia, explains that in the second year after the Lord's ascension, all the apostles were divided to preach in their respective provinces: who all, as the death of the blessed Mother of God approached, were lifted in the clouds and snatched to Jerusalem from the places where they were preaching the word of God, and placed before the door of her house, among whom was also Paul, who, having recently converted from being a persecutor to the faith of Christ, was taken up with Barnabas into the ministry of the Gentiles. This scripture also specifically refers to the Apostle John, that at that time he preached in Ephesus: all of which openly contradicts the words of blessed Luke, who narrates that the apostles, with the other faithful driven out from Jerusalem, remained there and preached everywhere until the Church had peace through all Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. That this could not be accomplished in one year is evident to all. He also clearly indicates that Paul was not ordained with Barnabas into the ministry of the Gentiles in the second year after the Lord's ascension, but a long time later.

Moreover, let us not believe that the blessed Apostle John, to whom the Lord on the cross committed his virgin mother to a virgin, departed after one year and left her alone, and that so much time passed that she feared her body would be burned by enemies after death; and that he, after being taken up in clouds, returned to himself as if negligent or forgetful, and that she anxiously asked him, saying: "I ask you, son John, to remember the word of your master, my Lord Jesus Christ, who commended me to you. Behold, I am called to the way of all the earth. But I have heard the counsel of the Jews saying: Let us wait for the day when she who bore Jesus of Nazareth dies, and let us burn her body; therefore, my son, take care of my funeral. I have taken care to recall these things because I know some who rashly give assent to the aforesaid book against the authority of blessed Luke.

Acts 8:2

Godly men cared for Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. This lamentation and the martyrdom of blessed Stephen is well remembered in the book of the revelation of his relics, which we have made mention of before, in which it is recounted that Gamaliel said among other things, in a vision to the presbyter Lucian: "I am Gamaliel, who raised Paul, the apostle of Christ, and taught the law in Jerusalem. Here with me in the eastern part of the tomb lies my lord Stephen, who was stoned by the Jews and the chief priests in Jerusalem for the faith of Christ outside the gate which is to the north, which leads to Cedar; where he lay cast out day and night, so that burial would not be given to him, according to the command of the impious chiefs, that his body should be consumed by wild beasts. But by God's will, not one of them touched him, neither a beast, nor a bird, nor a dog. I, Gamaliel, sympathizing with the ministry of Christ, and hastening to have a reward and part with the holy man of faith, sent by night as many as I knew who were religious and believed in Christ Jesus, living in Jerusalem among the Jews: and I encouraged them, and provided necessary supplies, and persuaded them to secretly go and carry his body with my conveyance to my village, that is, to Caphar Gamala (which means, the village of Gamaliel), twenty miles from the city; and there I made lamentation for him for forty-five days, and placed him in my new tomb in the eastern chamber, and I commanded them to give whatever was necessary for his lamentation from my resources."

Acts 8:4

Therefore, those who were scattered went about evangelizing the word of God. For scattered, in Greek it is written as disseminated, that is, dispersed. For they were those of whom Isaiah spoke: All who see them will recognize them because they are the seed which the Lord has blessed, and about whom the Lord said in the parable of the Gospel: The good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom (Matthew XIII). This seed was disseminated through regions so that the harvest of faith, which began in Jerusalem, first filled Judea and Samaria, then the whole world. Finally, we read about these same scattered ones, or rather disseminated ones, in the following: that they spoke the word not only to Jews but also to Greeks, and the foundations of the nascent church in Antioch were laid nobly through them. [Acts 8:5] -- But Philip

went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And he was from among the disseminated ones, who first preached Christ in Samaria, and he began through the deacon, as Christ said to the apostles: And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria (Acts I).

Acts 8:9

A certain man who had previously been in the city, a magician seducing the people of Samaria. For seducing, in Greek it is written ἐξιστῶν, which signifies putting into ecstasy or mental displacement, that is, amazement and awe, through the displays of his tricks. [Acts 8:10] -- All listened to him from the least to the greatest, saying: This man is the power of God. This, not as an adverb of place, but as a pronoun. As if to say: This one is the power of God. [Acts 8:20] -- May your money perish with you. More accurately, it is written into perdition, according to the Greek authority, rather than in perdition. For in that perdition, in which a wicked man was condemned, his money was not to be with him, but he was commanded to retain the money he offered to the apostles for the sacrilegious bargain since they did not want to accept it, and this into his own perdition, so that, undoubtedly, due to this money which he had amassed for an unjust purchase, he would suffer eternal punishment.

CHAPTER 9

Acts 9:11-12

Behold, he prays and sees a man named Ananias entering and laying hands on him. In Greek, it is held thus: And he saw in a vision a man, that is, ἐν ὁράματι, which name Juvencus the priest also used in the evangelical poem, saying: Make all ignorant of this vision. Therefore, it appears that during those three days, in which he, being blinded, awaited the grace of future light, he was by no means idle or torpid, but rather elevated by divine illumination, he explored heavenly secrets; and, unless I am mistaken, it is credible that at that time he was taught the mystery of the evangelical dispensation, of which he himself boasts to the Galatians, saying: For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. I). And shortly afterwards: But when it pleased Him who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem, etc. (Ibid.). Also,

the text of this little book, which is appended: He was with the disciples who were at Damascus for some days, and immediately in the synagogues he preached Jesus, that He is the Son of God (Acts IX), in no way asserts that he learned anything from men, but rather confirms that he immediately took up the ministry of an eminent teacher after baptism. Certainly, he is to be compared to him of whom it is written: Because the word of the Lord set him on fire (Psalm CIV).

Acts 9:23-24

The Jews made a council to kill him. But the plot against Paul was known to him; and they watched the gates of the city day and night to kill him. It was not the Jews who kept watch, but the citizens themselves with their king Aretas, as the Apostle himself, who was besieged and escaped, writes to the Galatians. For both Gentiles and Jews, although they disagree among themselves, always agree in the persecution of Christians. [Acts 9:26] -- When he had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples. In this verse, in Greek, the name Paul is applied: "When Paul had come to Jerusalem," not because at that time he was yet called so, before he converted Sergius Paulus, the pro-consul of Cyprus, to the faith of Christ, but he is now called by anticipation in this way, the blessed Luke speaking opportunely: to indicate beforehand that he was to be called Paul, when he first came to Jerusalem after his conversion, and was said to be joined to the apostles, so that where a little earlier he had exited as a proud persecutor of the Church, he now entered as a humble protector of the Church. For since in Latin "paulum" means "little," rightly did he prefer to be called Paul, who did not cease to remain humble amid the greatest works of virtue. Nor is it to be thought that Paul or Peter are Hebrew words, but rather Latin or Greek words, since it is certain Hebrews do not have the letter p in any way.

Acts 9:27

But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and narrated to them how he had seen the Lord on the way, etc. When these things were done, and to which apostles Barnabas brought Paul, Paul himself shows, writing to the Galatians: But when it pleased Him who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, and so forth, until he says: Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles

except James, the Lord's brother (Galatians 1). Therefore what Luke subsequently says: And he was with them entering and departing out of Jerusalem, it is credible that this was acted during the fifteen days which he asserts himself to have stayed with Peter and James. And as for what follows, he himself in the Epistle says: Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Galatians 1), and how this happened Luke thus subsequently insinuates saying:

Acts 9:29-30

And he spoke and disputed against the Greeks, but they sought to kill him. When the brethren knew of it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. For Tarsus is a city of Cilicia, and Caesarea Philippi is also a city of Syria. And when he adds: But he was unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ; they had only heard, that he who once persecuted us now preaches the faith which once he ravaged (Galatians 1). This is what Luke had previously stated, that he attempted to join the disciples, and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple, until they learned from Barnabas narrating it. Therefore, since it is established that Paul came to Jerusalem after three years of his conversion, and was associated with the number of the apostles, still being, as he himself writes, unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ, they are greatly mistaken who following apocryphal books think that in the second year after the Lord's passion, he was already ordained as an apostle to the Gentiles with Barnabas.

Acts 9:31

Indeed, the Church had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria. Where it is said in Latin "throughout all," in Greek it is καθ' ὅλης. Hence, it should be noted that the Church is called Catholic because it is spread throughout the whole world and abides in one peace. [Acts 9:31] -- And it was filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit, or it was multiplied, as it is written in Greek. For what we say as "consolation," in Greek it is παρακλήσει: whence it is clearly evident that the Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete because, enlightening the hearts of the faithful, He multiplies the Church throughout the whole world and fills it with His grace.

CHAPTER 10

Acts 10: 5-6

And summon Simon, who is called Peter; he lodges with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. All things in the Holy Scriptures are filled with spiritual figures, even the names and the location of places. Peter lodges in the house of Simon, that is, the obedient one; and he himself is a tanner, because he is a teacher of the Church; there he has a pleasing dwelling and beloved lodging, where he finds obedient listeners, where those who chastise their body and bring it into subjection (I Cor. IX); who, strengthened by God, stand on the height of virtues, so that having crossed all the waves of the fleeting world, they despise them with the tranquil liberty of mind. For this is to have Simon the tanner's house, in which Peter is received in a part of the city which is by the sea, that is, to have perfect listeners of the word in the holy Church, who with unfaltering constancy of true faith, either despise the fleeting glory of the world or the temporary and changing terrors of it.

Acts 10: 10

A trance fell upon him, and he saw heaven opened. The opening of heaven designates the future imminent revelation of heavenly mysteries to the Gentiles, and the very entrance of the heavenly kingdom being opened. [Acts 10:13] -- Rise, Peter, kill and eat. What is said in Latin as "kill" is said in Greek in this place as *θύσον*, which is not a general term for killing but a specific term for the kind of killing by which sacrifices are offered to God. For both the sacrificial victim or sacrifice in Greek is *θυσία*, and the altar is called *θυσιαστήριον*. And in the psalm where we sing: "Sacrifice the sacrifice of righteousness" (Psalm IV), it is said in Greek, *θύσατε θυσίαν*, and "Offer to God the sacrifice of praise" (Psalm IV), *θύσον τῷ Θεῷ θυσίαν*. According to this meaning, therefore, it is said to Peter: *θύσον* and eat, which our translator has rendered as "Kill and eat." He could equally have translated it as "Offer and eat," so that Peter would understand that the various kinds of animals offered to him from heaven were to make those who were designated by such animals, by preaching the sacrifice of the Lord, taken from the harmful life of the paternal tradition and transferred into the new life of divine servitude through the sacraments of the Lord's passion.

Acts 10: 15

What God has cleansed, do not call common. The meaning of this divine voice is indeed clear, that the Gentiles, whom Peter still considered unclean, the internal providence of their Creator already counted among the clean. But note the custom of Holy Scripture, which usually calls unclean things common, because whoever wants to serve various allurements cannot be clean, as Scripture says: No one can serve two masters (Matt. VI). And again: You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve (Luke IV). Therefore, whoever desires to be clean should not divide his mind with diverse and multifarious thoughts, but should constrain himself to follow solely the will of his Creator. [Acts 10:30] -- And Cornelius said: Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour. In Greek, it is written more fully and clearly: Four days ago to this hour, I was fasting and praying from the sixth hour until the ninth. Where it is clearly shown that four days before he spoke with Peter, he remained fasting until the ninth hour; and to make the fast acceptable to God, he prayed devoutly from the sixth hour until the ninth; hence he deserved to obtain what he sought with great persistence in fasting and prayer.

Acts 10: 32

He is staying in the house of Simon the tanner by the sea. Immediately therefore I sent to you, and you have done well by coming. It follows in Greek: When he arrives, he will speak to you. [Acts 10:33] -- Now therefore we are all present before you to hear all that has been commanded to you by the Lord. In Greek it is: We are present before God. Which was rightly said by him who had a mind ready to obey the divine will as soon as he learned it, and he believed that its majesty was present everywhere.

Acts 10: 41

For us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. In Greek, it is added, "For forty days," and Saint Augustine declared that it is so in his Codex, and in explaining it, he added: "Not that they ate and drank with him every day for forty days. For it would be contrary to John, who interposed those eight days during which he was not seen by them, to manifest himself for the third time at the Sea of Tiberias. Explaining the sacrament of his eating and his fasting for as many days elsewhere, he says: "He fasted when he was tempted before his death, still needing food; but he ate and

drank when he was glorified, no longer needing food. For there he showed our labor in himself, but here he showed his comfort in us, defining both by forty days. For he fasted for forty days when he was tempted in the desert, as it is written in the Gospel, before the death of his flesh; and again, he was with the disciples for forty days coming and going, eating and drinking after the resurrection of his flesh. By this number forty, the duration of this world seems signified, in those who are called by grace to him, who did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it.

For there are ten commandments of the law already spread through the world by Christ's grace, and the world is divided into four parts, and ten multiplied by four makes forty, for the Lord redeemed them from the regions; he gathered them from the East and the West, from the North and the sea (Psalm 106). Therefore, fasting for forty days before his death, he seemed to cry out: Abstain from the desires of this world (1 Peter 2); but eating and drinking for forty days after the resurrection of his flesh, he cried out: Behold, I am with you until the end of the age. For fasting is in the tribulation of struggle, since he who is in the contest abstains from all things; but food is in the hope of peace, which will not be perfect until our body, of which we await the redemption, puts on immortality, which we do not yet glory in attaining, but are already fed by hope. The Apostle shows us doing both at the same time, saying: Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, as if the former were in food, the latter in fasting. For while we follow the way of the Lord, we both fast from the vanity of the present age and are refreshed by the promise of the future, here not setting our hearts, there feeding them above.

Acts 10: 45

And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues, etc. This is similar to that statement by the same apostle Peter, when he was giving an account to the Jews why he had committed the sacraments of baptism to the circumcised. So then, he said, if God gave them the same gift as He gave to us, etc. There are many other testimonies of the Scriptures that consistently attest that the Holy Spirit is the gift of God, insofar as it is given to those who love God through Him. Therefore, it is the gift of God insofar as it is given to those to whom it is given; but it is God Himself, even if it is given to

no one, because God was coeternal with the Father and the Son before it was given to anyone; nor because they give, is it given, hence it is not lesser than them. For thus it is given, as a gift of God, so that He gives Himself as God. For the Spirit blows where He wills (John III).

CHAPTER 11

Acts 11: 29–30

Now the disciples, each according to what they had, decided to send aid to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Paul. Here the disciples seem, to those who understand poorly, not to have kept the command of the Lord, where He says: Do not be anxious about tomorrow (Matthew VI), or what Paul often testifies about himself, that he worked with his own hands, so as not to burden anyone, does not seem to have followed the Lord's command to imitate the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. But from these and similar passages of Scripture, it is clear enough that our Lord does not disapprove of someone providing for these things in a human manner; but if someone serves God for the sake of these things, so that in their works they seek not the kingdom of God but the acquisition of these things. Therefore, this entire precept is reduced to this rule: that even in the provision of these things we should think of the kingdom of God, but in the service of the kingdom of God, we should not think of these things.

CHAPTER 12

Acts 12: 8

Gird yourself, and put on your boots. Instead of boots or sandals, as some manuscripts have, in Greek it says sandals. We read in the Gospel that a type of footwear was permitted to the apostles, not without a symbolic mystical sense. For the apostles' feet were covered neither entirely nor bare to the ground, so they would be reminded that the Gospel is neither to be concealed nor devoted to earthly comforts, so it may be as it is written: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news! [Acts 12:21] -- And he sat on the tribunal and preached to them. On the tribunal, he says in the tribunal. It is a custom of the Latin language to use 'pro' to mean 'in' with this word.

CHAPTER 13

Acts 13:2

The Holy Spirit said: Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them. This seems to have happened after the death of Herod, who died in the third year of the reign of Claudius, which, according to the chronicles, is the thirteenth year after the passion of the Lord. Since it is clear that Paul, along with Barnabas, was set apart for the apostleship after so much time had passed since the Lord's passion, it becomes evident that those who wrote or accepted the book we mentioned above about the death of Saint Mary are greatly mistaken. For it is written in that same fabrication, as we have often said, that in the second year after the Lord's ascension, when that most blessed Mother of God was about to die, the apostles, who had already been dispersed throughout the world to preach, suddenly came together in a cloud to visit her; among them was Paul, recently converted to the faith, and immediately made an apostle to the Gentiles with Barnabas. But it happened very differently: that is, he was not ordained an apostle in the second year after the Lord's passion, but in the thirteenth. Anyone who believes blessed Luke understands this; and thus the aforementioned book about the death of blessed Mary, being obviously mistaken in its timing, also proves to be of dubious faith in other respects.

Acts 13:6

They found a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet, whose name was Barjesus. In Greek it adds more: Which is interpreted as Elymas. [Acts 13:8] -- However, Elymas the magician (for so his name is interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith. And this too is more in the Greek: Because he was gladly listening to them. [Acts 13:9] -- But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, and so on. Just as Barnabas' name was changed immediately after his renunciation, so that instead of Joseph he was called Barnabas, which is, instead of "increased," "son of consolation." For after he was increased and added to the number of the elect, he immediately deserved to be both called and to be "son of παράκλησις," that is, "of consolation" through the received grace of the Spirit; so Saul, after receiving the rank of apostleship, was named Paul. Because he had become humble from being proud, he was rightly called Paul instead of Saul: for Saul was named after the impious and persecutor king Saul, but Paul is named

from humble and small spirit. For Paul means "small." Hence, interpreting his own name in a certain way, he himself would say: For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God (I Cor. XV).

Acts 13: 11

And immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him. The name of darkness in Greek is placed in the singular number σκότος, which the Latin interpreter did not follow, because this name does not have a singular number in Latin as we have similarly taught above. [Acts 13:19-20] -- And destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, He allotted their land to them by lot, as after four hundred and fifty years, and after this He gave them judges. How this number can be understood, we said in the preceding book of our exposition. But it should be known that in the Greek it is written differently: And destroying the nations in the land of Canaan, seven, He allotted their land to them by lot. And after this, about four hundred and fifty years, He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. How this agrees with the statement which is contained in the book of Kings, that from the exodus of Israel from Egypt until the building of the temple, there were four hundred and ninety years, is not within our capacity to explain, unless perhaps he followed the popular saying in speaking, which is proven that blessed Stephen did in the discourse held with the Jews about the burial of the twelve patriarchs.

Acts 13: 21

And God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And in this place concerning the kingdom of Saul, the apostle seems to have followed popular opinion, as we have already said in the previous book; but what I said there, because Eusebius, following Josephus, assigned forty years to the rule of Samuel and Saul, divided equally between them, subsequently, upon more diligent inspection of the histories of Josephus, I saw that he did not write those forty years of that age but assigned twelve only to Samuel and twenty years to Saul. But also, having more carefully reread the books of Chronicles, I noticed why Eusebius did not want to follow the authority of Josephus in this place, just as he did not in the years of Joshua, to whom Josephus attributes twenty-six years, while he thought it better to annotate twenty-seven. This, therefore, was the reason: because if he followed him, he could by no means have the prescribed number of four

hundred and eighty years from the exodus of Israel from Egypt until the temple began to be built, but would find in his codices ten years less of the same age. This he endured because, following the Septuagint interpreters, he neglected to place Ahialon the judge, who ruled the people for ten years after Abessa, in his Chronicles.

But realizing that ten years of the prescribed calculation were missing in the sacred history according to the Edition he followed, he took care to add these from his own where it seemed convenient and less contrary to the sacred history. Thus, he adds one year to the times of Joshua, eight to the times of Samuel and Saul, and to complete the tenth number, he includes the fourth year of Solomon's reign, in which the temple began to be built: which whoever follows the Hebrew truth finds should not be done. And what I wrote in the preceding book, that the judges ruled the people from Moses to Samuel for three hundred and ninety-six years, I followed the authority of the Chronicles, not yet noticing that it does not agree with the Hebrew truth.

Acts 13:25

He said: "Whom you think me to be, I am not." In Greek it is more fully said: "I am not the Christ." [Acts 13:26] -- "Men, brothers, sons of the lineage of Abraham, and those among you who fear God." In Greek it adds: "Listen." [Acts 13:32-33] -- "And we declare to you the promise made to our fathers, that God has fulfilled this to our children." In Greek it reads more consistently: "That God has fulfilled this to their children." It follows:

Acts 13:33

"Raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second psalm." The holy Father Hilary thus remembers this place: "But what is now in the psalm: 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you' (Psalm II), does not pertain to the birth from the Virgin, nor to the regeneration of the bath, but to the Firstborn from the dead, according to apostolic authority. For in the book of the Acts of the Apostles it is said thus: 'We announce to you the good news of the promise made to our fathers; God has fulfilled this to our children, raising our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is written in the psalm: You are my Son; today I have begotten you, when he raised him from the dead, no longer to return to decay' (Acts XII). Therefore, this voice of God the Father according to the Apostle is heard on the day of resurrection." And shortly after, recalling the

opinion of the Apostle, where he says about him: "Who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Philippians II), and so on: "And in the glory of God the Father, today he is born begotten, that is, in the enduring form of God previously, the assumption of the form of a servant is honored by the reward of death, and a new but not unusual nativity happens under time, since to resume the glory of God the Father, who was found in the form of a servant from the form of God, the firstborn from the dead was born."

Acts 13: 41

"Look, despisers, and be amazed, and perish." In Greek it is written thus: "Listen, despisers, and be amazed; look, and perish." [Acts 13:43-44] -- They were speaking, urging them to remain in the grace of God. Hence in the Greek follows a verse, which our Codices do not have: But the word was spread throughout the whole city, and then what we have is added: On the next Sabbath, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of God.

CHAPTER 14

Acts 14: 13

The priest of Jupiter, who was in front of the city, bringing bulls and garlands before the gates, etc. It was the custom of the gentiles, according to Pliny, that when sacrificing to the honor of their gods, they would place garlands on both the victims and themselves. [Acts 14:19] -- But some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium. In Greek, the narrative begins thus: While they were staying and teaching, some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium.

CHAPTER 15

Acts 15: 10

Now, therefore, why do you test God by placing a yoke on the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear. It is clear that it should be understood in many ways what is said: You shall not test the Lord your God (Matt. IV). Therefore, he tests God who attempts to serve and please him in a way other than he has commanded, who confides that he can keep his commandments without the help of his grace. But the blessed Peter wishes to remove the heavy yoke of law observance from the necks of the disciples, so that he may place upon them the light yoke of evangelical freedom. Of which Paul also says to the companions of the same grace: For you

did not receive a spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father (Rom. VIII).

Acts 15:20

To abstain from the pollutions of idols, and fornication, and that which is strangled, and blood. He speaks of that which is strangled as carrion, about which Ezekiel writes: "The priests shall not eat anything that is dead of itself or torn by beasts, whether it be from birds or from cattle" (Ezek. XLIV). Jerome explains this: "And according to the literal sense, says he, this pertains to the whole chosen royal and priestly race, which properly refers to Christians, who are anointed with spiritual oil, about which it is written: 'God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.' These precepts apply, that they do not eat dead flesh, whether from birds or from cattle, whose blood has by no means been shed, which in the Acts of the Apostles is called strangled; and the epistle of the Apostles from Jerusalem warns that these things should necessarily be observed; and what is taken by a beast, because this too is similarly strangled; and it condemns priests who, with gluttonous greed, keep these things from thrushes, fig-peckers, dormice, and the like."

Acts 15:24

They have troubled you, subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commandment. In the Greek, more is added: Subverting your souls, saying, you must be circumcised, and keep the law, whom we gave no commandment. [Acts 15:26] -- Who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Greek is added: In every temptation. [Acts 15:28] -- For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us. In the Greek it is written: For it has pleased the Holy Spirit, and us. [Acts 15:33] -- They were dismissed in peace by the brethren to those who had sent them. Where it is written To those who had sent them, in the Greek it is written To the Apostles.

CHAPTER 16

Acts 16:3

And taking him, he circumcised him because of the Jews. It is rightly asked why the Apostle, who circumcised Timothy, refused to circumcise Titus, as he himself writes to the Galatians. But it must be understood that he circumcised Timothy to avoid scandal among the Jews, to show through him that he does not condemn the sacraments of the Mosaic law, but does not impose

them on the Gentiles as necessary for salvation. But after he circumcised Timothy, certain Jews, who wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised because they said that without those sacraments they could not be saved, began to boast and say: "Because Paul also holds this view, which we say, that without these sacraments there is no salvation. For if he does not believe this, why did he circumcise Timothy?" When Paul heard this, who did it out of freedom, not necessity, to avoid scandal among the Jews, not for Timothy's salvation, he saw that they had taken the occasion to preach something else and to cause a bad suspicion towards Paul, and he did not want to circumcise Titus. It is therefore apparent why he wanted to circumcise one and not the other: he wanted to circumcise the first to avoid scandal among the Jews, and did not want to circumcise the latter because of the opportunity for misbelief.

Acts 16:14

And a certain woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple, of the city of Thyatira, a worshipper of God, heard, etc. He says "a dealer in purple" meaning a seller of purple, as we also find in another translation, which in Greek is called πορφυρόπωλις. Properly, however, the woman who first believed with the Apostle preaching in Illyricum is said to be a dealer in purple. It signifies the Church, which is accustomed to sell, as it were, purple, because it does not hesitate to shed its blood for Christ, so that through this it can obtain eternal life. Indeed, purple rightly designates the shedding and color of blood, and by the property of its nature, which is made from the blood of shellfish. Lydia, however, forced the Apostle and his companions to enter her house and to stay there, because the Church received the preaching of the gospel with internal devotion of the heart, despite being rejected by the Jews.

Acts 16:16

As we were going to prayer, a girl having a spirit of Python met us. He who mercifully gathered the believing purple seller to the members of the holy Church, soon afterward strictly judged and removed the wicked art from the pythoness proclaiming the great deeds of God with an unclean mouth. For this is the power which the holy apostles received from the Lord, when He said: "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18). However, what I wrote in the previous book, that python could mean "mouth of the abyss" in Hebrew, I wrote because I found it in the book of Hebrew names. But let the

reader know that this name is Greek and forcibly interpreted according to the Hebrew language, which even the interpreter of Hebrew names, Jerome, did not remain silent about, as if it were said "Fythona": for the Hebrews do not have the letter p, but use f instead of it in foreign words. Indeed, it should be noted that in this reading, where it is written that the girl met us, for the Latin "obviare" it is written in Greek *ὕπαντῆσαι*, which I thought should be mentioned, so that the reader may notice that the Lord's feast, which is called the Presentation of the Lord, took its name from this in Greek, because, when the Lord was brought to the temple, Simeon, Anna, and the other faithful and chosen ones who were there came to meet Him with devout heart and homage.

Acts 16:35

And when it was day, the magistrates sent officers. Officers were called those who were in charge of punishing the guilty. Hence in Greek they are called *ῥαβδοῦχοι*, from the rod, because the Greeks call a rod *ῥάβδον*, of which Hilary mentions in the exposition of the Apostle's sentence, saying: "What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in a spirit of gentleness?" (1 Corinthians 4): Was Paul inquiring whether he had praetorian power to threaten with the rod, and to be present at the Church of Christ with the office of an officer?

CHAPTER 17

Acts 17:6

And when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers to the rulers of the city. It is written in Greek: And some other brothers; whence it is understood that Jason was also a brother, that is, faithful to Christ. [Acts 17:12] -- Many indeed believed from among them and from the honorable Greek women, and not a few men. Some manuscripts have better and more consistently according to the Greek example: And not a few men. [Acts 17:18] -- And some were saying: What does this word-seedling want to say? Concerning this name, Saint Augustine said: "We read," he said, "that the apostle Paul was called a seed-sower of words. It was indeed said by those mocking, but it should not be rejected by those who believe. For he was truly a seed-sower of words, but a reaper of conduct. And although we are so small, and by no means comparable to his excellence, in the field of God, which is

your heart, we sow the word of God and expect an abundant harvest of your conduct."

Acts 17: 26

And he made from one every kind of human being. What he says from one is clear, because he means from one human being. But it is fuller in Greek: He made from one blood, which no one doubts means the same. For by the name of blood, he indicates the propagation of the flesh; and by the flesh, according to the usual manner of Scripture, he wants a human being to be understood according to that of the Psalmist: All flesh will come to you (Psalm 64).

CHAPTER 18

Acts 18: 7

And departing from there, he entered the house of a certain man named Titus Justus. The name Justus is also written in Greek, because either this name was proper to the man, or he was surnamed this way by the Romans who knew him due to his merit of justice. However, it should not be thought that this is Titus, the disciple of the Apostle Paul, to whom he himself wrote an Epistle and appointed him bishop of the Cretans. For that Titus was with him much earlier, when he came from Antioch to Jerusalem concerning the question of circumcision, with Barnabas still accompanying him. For the same Paul says to the Galatians: Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me, and I communicated with them concerning the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. For he communicated with them about the Gospel he was preaching, diligently inquiring in the council of the apostles whether he was correct in preaching that the Gentiles could attain salvation through the baptism of faith without circumcision; not that he himself had any doubt about this matter, but that the minds of those who were doubting might be confirmed by the authority of the apostolic council.

Acts 18: 8

But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house, etc. This Crispus is believed to be the one whom Paul mentions as baptized by him when writing to the Corinthians: I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius. [Acts 18:17] -- And all of them seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the

tribunal. In Greek it is better written: And all the Greeks seized Sosthenes. For after the Jews were disgracefully expelled from the tribunal, the Gentiles also afflicted their leader with greater humiliation by beating him. [Acts 18:18] -- Bidding farewell to the brothers, he traveled to Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, who had his head shaved in Cenchrea, etc. It seems unclear whether Paul or Aquila had their head shaved in Cenchrea; but Jerome the presbyter clearly, as we explained more fully in the previous book, understands this as said of Paul. For after he gave this statement in his letter to Augustine, he immediately added and said: "Even if there he was compelled to circumcise Timothy out of fear of the Jews, why did he grow his hair out as a vow, and later cut it in Cenchrea according to the law?" If we wish to follow his meaning in this place, we never read anywhere that Aquila was shaved. If we say that Aquila was shaved in this place, there remains at the end of this booklet a place where we also read that Paul was shaved, or shaved off. However, those who say that Aquila and his wife Priscilla were shaved are mistaken due to a textual error. For in the Greek, it is clearly written *χειράμενος*, that is, shaved, in the singular number, and he had a vow, not they had, whether this is understood of Paul or Aquila.

Acts 18:28

For he strongly refuted the Jews, publicly showing through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. In Greek, it is written: Publicly and from house to house showing; which is of an excellent teacher, thus to teach many generally, so as not to cease to exhort individuals vigorously.

CHAPTER 19

Acts 19:9-10

He separated the disciples, daily disputing in the school of a certain Tyrannus. This happened for three years, etc. At this time, while Paul was staying in Ephesus, it is said that he wrote the first letter to the Corinthians, in which he also mentions Priscilla and Aquila, saying: "Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house" (1 Cor. XVI). By this word it is also shown that not only did they serve Christ faithfully, but also had a congregation of faithful in their house. Furthermore, the second epistle is said to have been written when he was in Troas: Moreover, the Epistle to the Romans was written later as the record shows. For he himself testifies that he wrote it on his journey to Jerusalem. [Acts

19:12] -- So that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried to the sick. Many of us do not know what aprons signify; however, Gregory, who is now the bishop of the Apostolic See, while he was still an archdeacon, answered a friend from Britain who inquired about this among other things, that it is a kind of handkerchief which the Hebrews use on their heads.

CHAPTER 20

Acts 20: 4

And with him was Sosipater, son of Pyrrhus, from Beroea. This one from Beroea, not that Beroean. Moreover, it is more in the Greek: And he went with him as far as Asia. [Acts 20:9] -- Awoken from sleep, he fell from the third loft. For the third loft, in Greek it is written "τριστέγου," which I wanted to mention so that the reader may know what is in Genesis, where Noah is ordered to build the ark: "Make in it lower, second, and third decks" (Gen. VI); for in Greek, "στέγη" means roof, and "τρίστεγα" means threefold roofs. [Acts 20:14] -- With him we came to Mytilene. We have written in the first book, following Pliny the Younger, that Mytilene is an island off Asia; but Pliny elsewhere writes that Mytilene is a city on the island of Cyprus. Both are believed to be true; however, it is said that now Paul and his companions did not come to the city of Cyprus, but to the island near Asia. For after a long journey and traveling through many regions, Cyprus appeared, but it is said they did not enter it.

Acts 20:16

For he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to observe the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. In Greek, it is written as the Day of Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth day. Therefore note that the time of Passover and Pentecost were also celebrated at the time of the apostles. But whether they were celebrated among the Jews who adhered to the law on the day the lamb was sacrificed in Egypt and the day the law was given on Mount Sinai, or on the day of the Lord's resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, let those who know say. Nonetheless, it is known that the apostle Peter celebrated Passover in Rome on the Lord's Day of the resurrection of Christ; it is known that the evangelist Mark, sent by him, taught this in Egypt.

CHAPTER 21

Acts 21: 8

And entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him, etc. For the initial duty of preaching, he deserved to be called an evangelist, although all performed this task. This house and his daughters remained in the same city for a long time afterward. Indeed, Jerome also mentions him in the History of Saint Paula, when he described her coming to Caesarea: "In which (he says) she saw the house of Cornelius as the church of Christ, and the small houses of Philip and the room of the four virgin prophetesses."

Acts 21: 25

About those who believed from among the Gentiles, we wrote judging that they abstain from idols, sacrifices, etc. In Greek, it is more clearly stated: About those who believed among men, we wrote judging that they observe no such thing, except they keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, etc. Therefore, at that time, Jewish believers in Christ were not prohibited from entering according to the custom of the law, since the temple and their religion still stood, although they would find salvation in the sacraments of the New Testament alone; but those who believed from the Gentiles and were instructed in the sacraments of the Gospel were prohibited from turning to accept the sacraments of the law. However, they were urged to diligently observe those commandments of the law which pertain to the training of morals and the purification of the heart, such as: You shall not covet (Rom. VII). This fourth apostolic synod was held in Jerusalem. The first was concerning the election of the twelfth apostle in place of Judas, the second about the election of the seven deacons, the third about circumcision so that it would not be imposed on Gentile believers, and this fourth one concerning Jewish believers at that time so that they would not be prohibited, where necessity required, from being initiated into the legal ceremonies, to avoid the offense of those who thought they had condemned the decrees of Moses as idolatrous doctrines, which they had also been accustomed to do previously, as proven most notably by the circumcision of Timothy.

Acts 21: 34

He ordered him to be taken into the camp. And in this place, and in this whole narration, wherever the name of the camp is positioned, it must be

taught that it is placed in the singular in Greek: for this reason the Latin interpreter preferred to place it in the plural, lest, if he placed it in the singular, the sense of the reader would be carried far elsewhere, and instead of the assembly of the army and soldiers, a fortified place would be understood. So also in the Psalm where it is said: And they fell in the midst of their camps; in Greek παραβολή is written in the singular number. [Acts 21:35] -- When he reached the steps, it happened that he was carried, and the rest. The steps signify not the descent from the temple, but the ascent into the camp. This is clear from the Greek, where ἀναβαθμός, not καταβαθμός; that is, it has ascent, not descent.

Acts 21: 39

I am indeed a man, a Jew from Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. For 'citizen' some Codices have 'municipate,' which is translated from one Greek word πολίτης, derived from the name of the city, which in Greek is called πόλις. Whence that which the Apostle says: But our conversation is in heaven (Philippians III), some have interpreted: But our citizenship is in heaven. And Jerome, writing to Heliodorus, put it thus: "For he wanted no other citizenship to be understood, than a civil conversation, which in Greek is called πολίτευμα."

CHAPTER 22

Acts 22: 3

Educated according to the truth, being a zealot of the paternal law. In Greek it is added more: Being a zealot of God, according to that in Romans: For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. [Acts 22:7] -- Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? In Greek, in this place as well it is added: It is hard for you to kick against the goads. [Acts 22:9] -- And those who were with me indeed saw the light. And in Greek it is added more: And they were afraid. [Acts 22:17-18] -- But it happened that when I was returning to Jerusalem and praying in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him. For the trance of the mind, some Codices have a mental ecstasy, others a fear, others an alienation. For what is called ecstasis in Greek is variously interpreted in Latin. This word was also used in the vision of Peter above, where he was being called forth to teach Cornelius. For an ecstasy fell upon him, and he saw the heavens opened. But the mind of the

praying apostles was alienated, not from the lowly but to the heavenly, not to deviate, but to see.

Acts 22:28

I acquired this city with a great sum of money. In Greek, for city it has *πολιτείαν*: which signifies rather civil society, that is, social interaction among citizens, or the administration of the republic, than city. For the tribune had not bought the Roman citizenship he possessed, but the partnership of the Roman commonwealth of which he was a participant. But Paul was even more a Roman citizen, because he had this not by purchase, but by birth. [Acts 22:29] -- The tribune also feared, after he discovered that he was a Roman citizen. For citizen, the same word in Greek is placed, which above was for inhabitant, that is, *πολίτης*.

CHAPTER 23

Acts 23:12

And they vowed themselves saying they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Vowed signifies cursed. Indeed for this word in Greek it is written *ἀνεθεμάτισαν*: but in the following, where they said: We have vowed with a vow that we will taste nothing, in Greek it is written, *ἀναθέματι ἀνεθεματίσαμεν*. The severity of this word knows those who are anathematized by the priestly anathema from the society of Christ and the Church.

CHAPTER 24

Acts 24:17

However, after many years, I came to my nation to give alms and make offerings and vows. Alms pertain to those things which he had brought for the use of the saints, of which he makes frequent mention in his Epistles; offerings and vows, however, to those things which, at the urging of James and the elders, he offered to God in the temple. Although in Greek, vows are not added. Even though Luke in the order of the history did not say that Paul came to Jerusalem from Greece with the alms for the poor of Christ, from the words, however, which he reports Paul said, he shows that he had done this.

CHAPTER 25

Acts 25:4

But Festus replied that Paul was being kept in Caesarea, and that he himself was about to depart soon. "Soon," he says, naturally means "quickly," although sometimes it is said to be "sooner" when something is done more slowly and with mature counsel. For in Greek it is written ἐν τάχει, that is, "in haste." [Acts 25:23] -- When Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, etc. For "pomp," in Greek it is written φαντασία, by which term is designated a great display and royal pomp, with which he, being surrounded on all sides, was encircled.

CHAPTER 26

Acts 26:5

For according to the most accurate sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. For "sect," in Greek it has "heresy." Whence it is proved that at that time even a good sect was called by this term among the Greeks, which now among us is accustomed to have only a bad sense.

CHAPTER 27

Acts 27:1

When it was decided that he should sail to Italy, Paul, along with the rest of the prisoners, was handed over to a centurion. More accurately read in Greek: "When it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they handed over Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion." [Acts 27:5] -- And sailing through the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Lystrus, which is of Lycia. For Lystrus, in Greek, it is written Smyrna, for which Jerome in the book of Hebrew names puts Myra: which I think is found thus in some Codices, because in Greek μύρρα is called Smyrna. Furthermore, in the psalm where we sing: Myrrh, and aloes, and cassia (Psalm XLIV), in Greek it is written thus: Smyrna, and stacte, and cassia. [Acts 27:8] -- We came to a certain place, which is called Fair Havens. THESE Fair Havens, not THIS Fair Havens.

Acts 27:11

And he trusted the pilot more. The pilot in Greek is called the master of the ship. [Acts 27:12] -- If by any means they might reach Phoenix to spend the winter, a port of Crete looking toward the southwest and northwest. The southwest wind, which in Greek is called λίψ, blows between the south and

west, inclining; Corus, however, toward the north and west, but more deflected toward the west. It is clear, therefore, that the region of Phoenix had Crete to the west, and so its port of Crete looked in some places to the southwest; and in some places to the northwest, for that reason, whether the southwest wind or the northwest wind blew, they could sail from Crete to Phoenix. But even if the south wind itself, that is, the meridian wind, blew, they could nonetheless navigate to Phoenix with a wavering direction of rudders and with the trimming of sails, if divine judgments did not hinder them. Wherefore it is subsequently added:

Acts 27:13–16

And the south wind blowing softly, they thought they had obtained their purpose, etc., we could scarcely retain the boat. We wrote in the first book, following Isidore, that the boat was a light vessel, woven from wicker and covered with rawhide; but subsequently, upon perusing the writings of others, we found that boats are also called small vessels hollowed out of a single tree, which the Greeks call monoxylas.

CHAPTER 28

Acts 28:2

For lighting a fire, they revived us all. In Greek it is written: They received us all. Which we also think was first so translated into Latin, but changed through the negligence of scribes. [Acts 28:8] -- It happened that the father of Publius, having been struck by fever and dysentery, was lying ill. Dysentery is an affliction of the intestines, caused with ulceration, because it expels bloody discharge, or bile, or some other alteration of humour; but it is considered harmful by the ancients if it produces black discharge from the beginning. For Hippocrates in his Aphorisms stated this: "Dysentery beginning from black bile is deadly." Following this, patients experience continual distress in the lower abdomen, sometimes green, sometimes mucilaginous: they also emit scrapings with drops of blood, with a biting pain in the intestines and navel, they suffer from sleeplessness, nausea, frequently also slight fever, which is narrated that the father of Publius suffers here; sometimes even the exclusion of excrement occurs, especially in infants: it occasionally results from chilling or from the corruption of sharper humours. Gregory also recalls this disease in the fifth book of his Histories, saying thus: "In the times of Emperor Tiberius, the dysenteric disease nearly seized all of Gaul. For in

those who were suffering, there was a severe fever with vomiting and excessive pain in the kidneys, heaviness of the head, or neck; moreover, what was expelled from the mouth was either saffron-colored or certainly green. However, many asserted that it was hidden poison; but herbs that cure poisons, taken as a drink, provided relief for many.”

Acts 28: 30–31

He remained in his lodging for a full two years and welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God. Jerome makes mention of this place in a letter to Lucinius: “Paul enters Rome in chains, to free those chained by errors of superstition; he remains in his rented lodging for two years, to render to us the eternal gift of both instruments.” By this exposition, he taught that all other things that are written in this volume, either about Paul the apostle himself or about others, do not only present the fruits of ecclesiastical doctrine on the surface of the letter: but truly also if anyone has perfectly understood, they possess the essence of spiritual sense, pregnant with virtue. THE END OF THE BOOK OF RETRACTIONS.

P A R T T H R E E

Commentary on the Catholic Epistles

James, Peter, John and Jude.

Commentary on the Catholic Epistles

THE VENERABLE BEDE

AD 673–735

Bede explains the seven letters of James, Peter, John and Jude, which the church calls the Catholic or general letters because they were written to all believers. The commentary begins with a prologue on the seven letters and then takes them one after another, chapter by chapter.

PROLOGUE ON THE SEVEN CANONICAL EPISTLES

James, Peter, John, and Jude issued seven Epistles, which the ecclesiastical custom calls Catholic, that is, universal. Among these, the first Epistle of James is placed first because he took over the governance of the Church of Jerusalem. For in the catalog of apostles, Peter and John are usually named first. However, the fountain and origin of evangelical preaching began [from Jerusalem] and spread throughout the world. The dignity of this chair is also revered by the Apostle Paul, who, when naming it, says, "James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars of the Church"; or certainly because he (James) sent his Epistle to the twelve tribes of Israel, who first believed, it justly should be placed first; deservedly, the second should be Peter's, because he wrote to the chosen strangers, who in Greek are called proselytes, that is, to those who converted from Gentilism to Judaism, and from Judaism to the grace of evangelical election. Justly, the Epistles of John are placed third because he wrote to those who believed from the Gentiles, though neither by nature nor by profession did they exist. Finally, many ecclesiastical writers, among whom is Saint Athanasius, bishop of the Church of Alexandria, testify that his first Epistle was written to the Parthians. Justly, Jude's Epistle is placed last because although he is also great, he is lesser compared to the three preceding apostles; or because the first [supplying James'] Epistle was written, then Peter's, after these, John's; therefore, they now retain the order in which they were written.

For it is known that blessed James completed his martyrdom in the thirtieth year after the Lord's passion. Peter suffered in the thirty-eighth year, that is, the last year of Nero, and he himself wrote in his second Epistle: "I am certain that the putting off of my tent is imminent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ indicated to me by revelation. Whence it is evident that he wrote this Epistle while his passion was impending, as James had departed for Christ long before. Nor indeed did it seem proper to separate his Epistles from one another, which he wrote to the same churches. Furthermore, John wrote his Epistles and the Gospel much later, who, after the Lord's assassination, returned from exile and found the Church troubled by heretics in his absence, whom he often names Antichrists in his Epistles.

JAMES 1

James 1:1

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. The apostle Paul spoke of this James: James, and Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave the right hand of fellowship to me and to Barnabas, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Galatians II). Therefore, since he was appointed as an Apostle to the circumcised, he took care of those who were from the circumcision by instructing them both by speaking in person and by comforting, teaching, reproving, and correcting those absent through his letter. To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion, greetings, he says. We read that after the blessed Stephen was killed by the Jews, there was a great persecution on that day against the church in Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. To those who were dispersed and suffered persecution for righteousness, he sends the letter. Not only to them, but also to those who, despite having received the faith of Christ, had not yet been perfect in works, as the subsequent parts of the Letter testify, as well as to those who remained faithless and continued to persecute and disturb the believers as far as they were able. All of these, driven from their homeland by various circumstances and suffering countless slaughters, deaths, and hardships wherever they were oppressed by enemies, as ecclesiastical history sufficiently explains.

Even in the Acts of the Apostles, we read that they were widely dispersed by the time of the Lord's passion, as Luke says: Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven (Acts II). Many

of these nations are expressly named as it continues: Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, etc. (Ibid.). Therefore, he exhorts the righteous not to fall away from faith in temptations, rebukes the sinners and admonishes them to refrain from sins and to advance in virtues, lest they become unfruitful or even damned after having received the sacraments of faith. He admonishes the unbelievers to repent for the killing of the Savior and their other crimes in which they were involved before divine retribution overtakes them, whether invisibly or even visibly.

James 1:2

Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials. The word begins with the more perfect, so that it may reach those in order whom he saw being corrected and raised to the height of perfection. And it is to be noted that he does not simply say, "Rejoice" or "Consider it joy," but "Consider it all joy," when you encounter various trials; deem yourselves worthy of all joy if it happens that you endure trials for the sake of faith in Christ. This is grace, if someone endures suffering unjustly for the sake of God's conscience, as Peter says (1 Pet. II). And his co-apostle Paul: The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us. And all the apostles departed rejoicing from the presence of the council, because they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus. Therefore, we should not be saddened if we are tempted, but if we have been overcome by temptations.

James 1:3

Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. And let patience have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Therefore (he says) you are tempted by adverse things, so that you may learn the virtue of patience, and through it, you may be able to show and prove that you carry in your heart a firm faith in future reward. Nor should this place be considered contrary, but rather understood to be in harmony with, what the apostle Paul says: Knowing that tribulation produces patience, and patience, experience (Rom. V). For patience produces experience, because he whose patience cannot be overcome is proved to be perfect. Which is also subsequently taught here when it is said: And let patience have its perfect work. And again: The testing of your faith produces patience. Be-

cause that reason makes the faithful exercised through patience, so that through this their faith may be proved how perfect it is.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all abundantly and without reproach, and it will be given to him. All truly salvific wisdom must be asked of the Lord, because, as the wise man says: All wisdom is from the Lord God, and it was always with him (Ecclesiasticus I). Nor can anyone through free will, without the help of divine grace, although the Pelagians strongly contend otherwise, understand and be wise. But here it seems especially to be said of that wisdom which we need to use in temptations. If anyone (he says) among you cannot understand the usefulness of temptations that happen to believers for the sake of testing, let him ask God to grant him the sense by which he may discern with how much compassion the Father chastises the children whom He cares to make worthy of eternal inheritance. And he deliberately says: Who gives to all abundantly, lest anyone, conscious of his own frailty, should doubt that he can receive by asking, but rather let each one remember that the Lord has heard the desire of the poor. And as the same one says elsewhere: The Lord has blessed all who fear Him, the small with the great (Psalms CXIII). However, because many ask for many things from the Lord, who nevertheless do not deserve to receive, he adds how they ought to ask if they desire to obtain.

James 1:6

But let him ask in faith, without doubting. That is, let him show himself to be such by living well, that he may be worthy to be heard when he asks. For he who remembers that he has not obeyed the Lord's commandments justly despairs that the Lord will attend to his prayers. For it is written: He who shuts his ear to the law, even his prayer shall be abominable (Proverbs XXVIII). [James 1:6] -- For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. He who, with a conscience biting him for sin, doubts about receiving heavenly rewards, easily abandons the state of faith at the impulse of temptations, in which he seemed to serve God in peace, and at the whim of the invisible enemy, as if by a gust of wind, is carried away through various errors of vices.

James 1:8

A man of double mind is unstable in all his ways. In all his ways, in adversity and prosperity, he says. A man, however, is double-minded, who both kneels to pray to the Lord and utters prayerful words, yet inwardly doubts, due to his accusing conscience, that he can obtain. A man is double-minded who wants to rejoice here with the world and reign there with God. Likewise, a man is double-minded who seeks not inward reward in the good things he does but outward favor. Hence, it is well said by a certain wise one: Woe to the sinner who enters the land on two paths (Eccli. II). For the sinner enters the land on two paths, when what he shows in action belongs to God, and what he seeks in thought belongs to the world. However, all these are unstable in all their ways, because they are easily deterred by worldly adversities and entangled by prosperities, so that they stray from the path of truth.

James 1:9

Let the humble brother boast in his exaltation. Therefore, he says, you must consider it all joy when you fall into various trials, because everyone who humbly endures adversities for the Lord receives lofty rewards of the kingdom from Him. [James 1:10] -- But the rich man in his humility. It is understood from the previous verse to boast. It is clear that this is said with sarcasm, which in Greek is called irony. Thus, he says, the rich man must remember that his glory, in which he boasts of his wealth and despises or even oppresses the poor, is to end, so that humbled, he may perish forever, like that rich man in purple who despised the poor Lazarus. [James 1:10] -- For like the flower of the grass, he will pass away. The flower of the grass delights both the sense of smell and sight, but swiftly loses the grace of its charm and sweetness. Therefore, the present happiness of the wicked is most rightly compared to this, which can in no way be lasting.

James 1:11

For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls. The scorching heat of the sun is taken to mean the stern sentence of the judge, by which the temporal glory of the reprovéd comes to an end. However, the elect also flourish, but not like the grass. For the righteous will flourish like a palm tree (Ps. XCI). The unrighteous flourish temporarily, who will quickly wither like grass, and like the herbs of the field will soon fall. The righteous flourish like trees, because their flower, that is, their most

certain hope, awaits everlasting fruit. And their root, that is, charity, remains firm and immovable. Hence, the wise man says: I have flourished like a vine with the sweetness of fragrance (Eccl. XXIV). Finally, Naboth, a just man, preferred to die rather than transfer the vineyard of his fathers into a garden of herbs. For to transfer the vineyard of the fathers into a garden of herbs is to change the strong works of virtues, which we have received from the teaching of the fathers, into the fragile pleasure of vices. But the righteous prefer to lay down their soul rather than choose earthly goods over heavenly ones. Hence, it is almost sung about them that they will be like a tree planted by the streams of water, which bears its fruit in its season (Ps. I), and so forth. But what of the unrighteous? And his face's beauty perishes. So too, the rich man withers away in his ways.

He does not mean every rich man, but the one who trusts in uncertain riches. For he has set the rich man in opposition to the lowly brother, showing that he speaks of that rich man who is not humble. For even Abraham, though he was rich in the world, after death received the poor man in his bosom, leaving the rich man in torment. But he did not leave the rich man because he was rich, for he himself had been rich, but because he was not merciful and humble, which he himself had been. And conversely, he received the beggar Lazarus, not because he was poor in possessions, which he himself had been, but because he was humble and innocent, which he himself had been. Therefore such a rich man, that is, proud and impious, preferring earthly joys over heavenly ones, will wither away in his ways, that is, will perish in his wicked acts, because he neglected to enter the straight path of the Lord. But while he, like grass before the sun's heat, falls, the righteous, on the contrary, like a fruitful tree, endure the same sun's heat, that is, the severity of the judge, and further bring forth the fruits of good works for which they are eternally rewarded. Hence it is rightly added:

James 1:12

Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he is tested, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him. This is similar to that in Revelation: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life," which God has promised, He says, to those who love Him (Revelation 2). He openly admonishes that one ought to rejoice all the more in temptations, the more it is evident that God imposes a greater burden of temptations on those He loves, so that through the exercise of temptations

they may be proven perfect in faith; when they have been proven to be truly faithful, that is perfect and entire, lacking nothing, they rightly receive the promised crown of eternal life. [James 1:13] -- No one, when tempted, should say that they are tempted by God. Hitherto he has spoken about the temptations which we endure externally by the permission of the Lord for the sake of being tested; now he begins to address those which we endure internally, instigated by the devil, or even persuaded by the fragility of our nature. Here he first destroys the error of those who believe that just as good thoughts are inspired by God in us, so also bad ones are thought to be generated in our mind by His instigation. Therefore, no one, when tempted, should say that they are tempted by God, namely with that temptation by which a wealthy person withers while traveling his paths. That is, no one who has committed robbery, theft, false testimony, murder, adultery, or other such things, should say that they had to commit these acts under the compulsion of God, and thus could by no means avoid the perpetration of these deeds.

James 1:13

For God is not a tempter of evils. It is understood as temptations. Indeed, He tempts no one. That is, with the temptation that deceives the merciful so that they sin. For there are two kinds of temptation. One which deceives, another which tests. According to that which deceives, God tempts no one. According to that which tests, God tempted Abraham. Of whom even the prophet asks: "Test me, O Lord, and try me" (Psalm 26). [James 1:14] -- But each one is tempted by his own desire, being drawn away and enticed, etc. Drawn away from the right path and enticed into evil. On this verse, Jerome, against Jovinian, says: "Just as in good works God is the perfecter, for it is not of the one willing, nor of the one running, but of God who shows mercy and helps, so that we may be able to reach the goal, so in evils and sins, our seeds are the incentives, but the perfection is of the devil. When he sees us building on the foundation of Christ with hay, wood, and stubble, he sets fire beneath it. Let us build with gold, silver, precious stones, and he will not dare to test it, although even in this there is no certain and secure possession: for a lion lies in wait in hiding places to kill the innocent. And the furnace tests the potter's vessels, but testing of tribulation tests just men."

James 1:15

Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. Temptation occurs in three ways: by suggestion, by delight, by consent. By the suggestion of the enemy, and by delight or also by the consent of our frailty. But if, while the enemy suggests, we do not want to delight or consent to sin, this very temptation leads us to victory, by which we may deserve to receive the crown of life. Yet if, by the suggestion of the enemy, we are gradually drawn away from right intention, and begin to be enticed by vice, we indeed offend by delighting, but have not yet incurred the fall of death. However, if from the delight of the offense conceived in the heart, the birth of a wrong action follows, then we, already guilty of death, are left by the victorious enemy. To prove this by examples, Joseph was tempted by the words of his mistress, but because he did not have lustful desire, he could only be tempted by suggestion, not by delight or consent; thus, he emerged victorious. David was tempted by the sight of another man's wife, and because he had not yet overcome the desire of the flesh, he was drawn and enticed by his own desire. And when he completed the conceived crime, he fell into the guilt of death, which he nonetheless escaped by repenting.

Judas was tempted by avarice, and being greedy, he was drawn and enticed by his own desire, and fell into destruction by consenting. Job was tempted in many ways, but because he did not place his possessions or bodily health above divine love, he could be tempted by hostile suggestion, but never could he consent to or even delight in sin. Therefore, what is said, "Sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death," looks back conversely to this, which was said above about the one who endures temptation, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life. For just as the one who overcomes temptation merits the rewards of life, so indeed the one who is enticed by his desires and overcome by temptation, rightfully incurs the ruin of death.

James 1:16

Do not therefore err, my most beloved brethren, by assuming that the temptations of vices originate from God. Although we know that some, due to the demands of the merits of preceding crimes, have again fallen into other wickednesses by the permission of the just and rigorous judge. Hence is

the saying of the Apostle: "And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness" (Rom. I). [James 1:17] -- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. After he has taught that the vices by which we are tempted do not come from God to us, but arise from ourselves, he shows on the contrary that whatever good we do, we receive this by the gift of God. Hence he calls Him the Father of lights, whom he knows to be the author of spiritual gifts. To which also agrees the saying of the Apostle Paul: "For what do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. IV).

James 1:17

With whom there is no variability or shadow of turning. Because in God's nature there is no changeability, nor does His light, as the light of this world, suffer any shadow of turning, it is clear that He sends us gifts of light alone, and does not also send us the darkness of errors. [James 1:18] -- Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth. And the Lord in the Gospel: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John XV). And in the prophet Hosea: "I will love them freely" (Hosea XIV). Therefore, what he had said, that every good and every perfect gift comes from God, he confirms by adding consequently, that not by our merits, but by the benefit of His will, through the water of regeneration, He has transformed us from children of darkness into children of light.

James 1:18

That we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. Lest we imagine that by saying, "He begot us," we become what He is, this demonstrates that a certain preeminence is granted to us in creation by this adoption. Indeed, some have translated the verses as follows: "Of His own will He begot us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." That is, that we should be better than the other creatures we see. For the law commanded to consecrate the firstfruits of crops or animals to the Lord, and the firstfruits of gold and silver were to be offered for the work of the tabernacle, which means the best of the metals. And of the ancient people of God, the prophet Jeremiah said: "Israel is holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of His harvest" (Jer. II).

James 1:16

You know, my most beloved brothers. "It is well known," he says, "to you that you yourselves had the inclination to fall to the depths, but it happened that you were enlightened by the Lord, not by your own provision, but by heavenly grace anticipating you." [James 1:19] -- But let every man be quick to listen, but slow to speak. Hence, he instructs the listener with moral precepts. And rightly first admonishes one to adapt an ear as quickly as possible to the teacher, but slowly to open the mouth to teach, for it is foolish for anyone to desire to preach to others what he himself has not learned. Therefore, whoever loves wisdom should first, as he previously admonished, ask for it from God. Then, as a humble listener, let him seek a teacher of truth. And in conducting himself, let him most cautiously restrain his tongue not only from idle talk but also from proclaiming the very truth he has recently learned. Hence, Solomon, writing about the distance of times, says: "A time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Eccles. 3). Thus, the Pythagoreans, equipped with the teaching of natural science, command their listeners to be silent for five years and only then permit them to preach. For it is safer for truth to be heard than to be preached. Because when it is heard, humility is preserved; but when it is preached, it is scarcely that some amount of boasting does not creep upon any of the men. Hence, Jeremiah, describing the life of a well-instructed youth, counts the modesty of silence among the foremost studies of virtues. "It is good for a man," he says, "that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and be silent" (Lamentations 3).

James 1:19

And slow to anger. Because the maturity of wisdom is only perceived with a tranquil mind. For it is written, anger rests in the bosom of fools (Eccles. VII). However, it does not so much alter the speed of anger, as to approve its slowness, but rather admonishes this, that even in the hour of perturbation and quarrels, let us beware lest anger creeps upon us; or if it has crept upon us, let us restrain its impulse within the confines of the mouth, and after the hour of crisis has passed, let us more freely purify it from our heart over time. Or certainly, he commanded us to be slow to anger, so that we do not turn the serenity of our countenance into austerity for any reasons, but only for certain reasons. For example, if we see that those near us, especially those entrusted to us, cannot be corrected otherwise, let us then exhibit the severity

of the word or even of stricter judgment, while maintaining as much as human nature allows, the serene state of our mind. For (as I believe) Phinehas, Samuel, Elijah, and Peter were slow to anger, and yet they punished the sinners, whether by sword or by word. But Moses, though he was a very meek man, went out from Pharaoh whom he saw as incorrigible, very angry, and threatened him with punishment, which he also carried out in deed.

James 1:20

For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. The meaning is clear, because whoever rashly subjects himself to the sin of anger, even if he appears just to men, is not yet perfectly just in the divine judgment. But it can be understood more profoundly, because it is said of the Lord: "But you, Lord of hosts, judge with tranquility" (Wisdom XII). Any human judge who judges a delinquent with a disturbed mind, even if he judges justly, cannot imitate the justice of divine judgment, into which disturbance does not enter. [James 1:21] -- For this reason, putting away all filthiness and abundance of malice, in meekness you have received the implanted word. First, he orders both the body and the mind to be cleansed from vices, so that they may be worthy to receive the word of salvation. For he who does not first turn away from evil cannot do good. Indeed, he designates all impurity of both flesh and soul. But malice properly refers to the depravity of the inner man. "Receive," he says, "the implanted word," that is, the word which we impose on your hearts by preaching, you must receive by learning. Or certainly, it should be understood this way: the word which was implanted in you on the day of redemption, when God voluntarily begot you, now receive it more perfectly, even fulfilling it with works, which you already hold in ministry.

James 1:21

Which can save your souls. Even if you suffer temptations in body, or are consumed by death from the unfaithful. [James 1:22] -- Be however doers of the word, and not hearers only, etc. Thus also Paul about the observers of the law. "Not the hearers," he says, "of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. II). And in the Apocalypse John, having said: "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy of this book," immediately added: "And keep those things which are written therein" (Apoc. I). [James 1:25] -- But he who has looked into the perfect law

of liberty and has continued in it. By the perfect law of liberty, he means the grace of the Gospel. For the law brought nothing to perfection (Hebr. VII). And elsewhere: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption of sons" (Rom. VIII). And again: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. III). And the Lord Himself: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John VIII).

James 1:25

Not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Not by the futile hearing of the word, but by the execution of the work is happiness prepared. Thus also the Lord speaking to the disciples: "If you know these things," He says, "blessed are you if you do them" (John XIII). [James 1:26] -- But if anyone thinks that he is religious, not restraining his tongue, but deceiving his heart, this person's religion is worthless. He had previously advised not only to hear the word of God but also to do it. Now he adds that even if someone seems to exercise the Lord's commands, which he has learned, in deeds, if he does not also restrain his tongue from slanders, lies, blasphemies, foolish talk, even from much speaking itself, and other things by which he usually sins, he boasts in vain about the righteousness of his works. Just as Paul, approving the sentence of a Gentile poet, says: 'Bad company ruins good morals' (I Cor. XV).

James 1:27

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this. Beautifully did he add "before God and the Father," because there are those who seem religious to men, while they are considered profane by God. Therefore, Solomon also says: 'There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death' (Prov. XIV). [James 1:27] -- To visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Because he said that the doer of the work will be blessed in his act, now he says which deeds are most pleasing to God, namely mercy and innocence. For in that he commanded to visit orphans and widows in their distress, he suggests all that we must do mercifully towards our neighbors. How much this matters will be revealed at the time of judgment, where the Judge will say: 'As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' (Matt. XXV). Furthermore, in that he commanded us to keep ourselves unspotted from this world,

he shows all those things in which it is fitting to keep ourselves chaste. Among these are also those things which he had previously advised to observe, that we should be slow to speak and slow to anger.

JAMES 2

James 2:1

My brothers, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with partiality. He showed that those to whom he wrote were indeed imbued with evangelical faith, but were empty in works. And since the Lord taught that his commandments should be fulfilled through alms for the poor, he saw that they, contrary to what should be done for the poor for the sake of eternal rewards, were rather doing it for the rich for the sake of earthly advantages, and therefore he reproved them as they deserved. And fittingly, at the beginning of this passage, he surnames our Lord Jesus Christ as "of glory," so that we may remember that it is to his commands we ought to obey, who, being the splendor of glory (Hebrews 1), rewards eternally whatever is given to the poor out of love for him, rather than any human dignity which is generally said to be all flesh is grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass, etc. (Isaiah 40).

James 2:2-3

For if there comes into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there also comes in a poor man in shabby clothing, and you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or "Sit down at my feet." In this exposition of the sentence let us use the words of blessed Augustine. "If," he says, "we refer this difference of sitting and standing to ecclesiastical honors, it must not be thought a small sin to have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with partiality. For who can tolerate that a rich man should be chosen to the seat of honor in the Church, disregarding a poorer but more learned and holier man? But if he speaks of everyday seating arrangements, who sins here (if indeed he sins) except when he judges internally within himself that the other seems better to him to the degree that he is richer?"

James 2:4

Do you not judge among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? It follows: [James 2:5] -- Listen, my beloved brothers. He says, pay closer atten-

tion, because those who are richer in the world are not necessarily better in the divine judgment. [James 2:5] -- Has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to those who love him? He calls the poor, humble, and those who, through contempt of visible things, but faith in invisible riches, are despicable to this world. For such the Lord Jesus Christ has chosen by saying: Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. He has chosen such when he created poor parents for himself, whose service nourished him coming into the world. But he has made them illustrious and noble by the expectation of the future kingdom.

James 2:6

But you have dishonored the poor. For the one to whom it was said: You stand there, when it was said to the one with the gold ring: You sit here well. [James 2:6] -- Do not the rich oppress you by power, and drag you into courts? Do they not blaspheme the honorable name which was invoked upon you? Here he shows more clearly who are the rich, concerning whose humiliation and destruction he previously disputed. Truly, those who place their riches before Christ, entirely alien to his faith, nonetheless oppress those who believe by power, dragging them into the courts of the powerful, and blaspheming the name of Christ, which is above every name. This is shown quite clearly in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of Paul the Apostle, that many leaders among the Gentiles, especially among the Jews, did this in the times of the apostles.

James 2:8

If, however, you fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures: You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. See how he calls them transgressors, because it is said to the rich: Sit here, and to the poor: Stand there. Thus, lest they think it a contemptible sin to transgress the law in this one matter, he added:

James 2:10

Whoever shall keep the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not kill." Now if you do not commit adultery but you kill, you have become a transgressor of the law. Because of what was said: Convicted by the law as transgressors.

Therefore, it seems accordingly (unless it can be otherwise understood) that he who says to the rich man: Sit here, and to the poor man: Stand there, giving more honor to this one than to that one, should be judged guilty of all crimes. For he who offends in one is made guilty of all. Hence, it must be questioned, how is he guilty of all if he has offended in one who has kept the whole law? Or perhaps because the fullness of the law is love, by which God and neighbor are loved, upon which commandments of love the whole law and the prophets depend, he rightly becomes guilty of all who acts against that in which all things hang? No one sins except by acting against it. Because "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not kill," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. XIII). Hence, he becomes guilty of all by doing against that in which all things hang. Why then are not all sins said to be equal? Or perhaps because he acts more against charity who sins more gravely, and less who sins lightly? Yet even if he offends in one, he is guilty of all, because he acts against that in which all things hang.

James 2:12

Thus speak, and thus act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. The law of liberty is the law of charity, of which it is said: If, however, you fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures: You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well. Therefore, he says, speak thus, and act thus, that by loving your neighbors, you may deserve to be loved by God, and by showing mercy to your neighbors, you may expect mercy in the divine judgment. Otherwise, as the law of servitude is what was given through Moses, so the law of liberty is the grace of the Gospel which was given through Jesus Christ, as the Apostle attests, who says: For you have not received the spirit of slavery again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, in which we cry, Abba, Father (Hebr. VII). And again, where there is the Spirit of the Lord, there is liberty (II Cor. III). Therefore, if you speak, he says, and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. This is indeed to begin being judged. For it is more severe to be judged by the law of Moses than by the natural law. Likewise, it is more severe for those who despise the known grace of the Gospel than those who despise the edicts of the Mosaic law. For to whom much is given, much will be required from him.

And to whom much has been entrusted, more will be asked from him (Luke XII). Hence, the Apostle also says: For if the word spoken by angels was confirmed, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Which at the beginning was spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard him (Hebr. II). And again: If anyone sets aside the law of Moses, he dies without compassion on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severe do you think the punishment will be deserved by the one who has trampled the Son of God, and has considered the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified to be defiled, and has insulted the Spirit of grace (Hebr. X)? But both meanings regard one end, namely that responding to divine grace with just works, we should be kind to one another, merciful, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave us.

James 2:13

For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Without mercy shall be judged the one who, though able to show mercy, did not do so before being judged. While this is rightly thought of all the unmerciful, it is certainly understood that the greater the mercy someone has received from the Lord, the more unjustly they have denied mercy to a needy neighbor and thereby will more justly suffer the penalties for their wickedness. Hence the Lord wisely warns: Do not judge, so that you may not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you (Luke 6). Therefore, judgment without mercy will be for the one who has shown no mercy. [James 2:13] -- But mercy exalts over judgment. For as the one condemned in God's judgment will grieve who did not show mercy, so the one who did will rejoice and exult when rewarded. Alternatively: Mercy exalts over judgment. It is not said: Mercy overcomes judgment. For it is not opposed to judgment but exalts over it, because many are gathered through mercy, but those who have shown mercy. For blessed are the merciful, since God will have mercy on them (Matthew 5). Again, Mercy exalts over judgment, that is, mercy is placed above judgment. In which, if a work of mercy is found, even if there is reason for punishment in judgment, like a wave of mercy, the fire of sin is extinguished.

James 2:14

What will it profit, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? And so on. Here he discusses the works of mercy more extensively, so that he might console those he had strongly frightened with knowledge preceding, by reminding them how even daily sins, which cannot be lived without here, are expiated by daily remedies. Lest a person, who, by offending in one thing, becomes guilty of all, and by offending many, since we all offend in many ways (James 3), brings a great heap of accumulated guilt before the tribunal of so great a Judge and does not find the mercy they did not show. Instead, by forgiving and giving, they may merit to have their debts forgiven and the promises returned to them.

James 2:15-16

But if a brother or sister is naked and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them: Go in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things that are necessary for the body, what does it profit? So too faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself, etc. It is clear that just as mere words of piety do not refresh the naked or hungry, unless food and clothing are also offered, so faith kept only in words does not save. For it is dead in itself without works of charity, by which it might be revived and animated. Nor is this contrary to what the Lord said: He who believes and is baptized will be saved (Mark XVI). For it must be understood that he truly believes who exercises what he believes by doing. And since faith and charity cannot be separated, as Paul attests, who says: There is faith which works through love (Gal. V), John the Apostle aptly gives such a judgment on charity as James gives on faith, saying: Whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him (I John III)?

James 2:19

You believe that there is one God, you do well, and the demons also believe and tremble. Do not think that you are doing something great by believing that there is one God. For the demons also do this, and not only do they believe in God the Father, but also in the Son. Hence Luke says: "And demons also were coming out of many, shouting and saying, 'You are the Son of God.'" And rebuking them, He did not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ (Luke 4). Not only do they believe, but they also

tremble. Hence the legion that was possessing the man cries out to Him with a suppliant voice: "What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me" (Mark 5). Therefore, those who do not believe that God exists, or do not fear Him when believed, are certainly to be considered more sluggish and defiant than demons. But it is not great to believe in God and to tremble, if one does not also believe in Him, that is, if the love of Him is not held in the heart. For it is one thing to believe Him, another to believe in Him, another to believe into Him. To believe Him is to believe that what He says is true. To believe in Him is to believe that He is God. To believe into Him is to love Him.

For many, even the wicked, can believe that what He says is true. They indeed believe it to be true, but they do not want to do it, because they are lazy in action. But to believe that He is God, even demons were able to do this. But to believe into God is known only by those who love God, who are not Christians in name only, but also in deeds and life. Because faith without love is empty. With love, it is the faith of a Christian; without love, it is the faith of a demon. Therefore, he who does not want to believe in Christ does not even imitate the demons. And if he already believes in Christ but hates Christ, he has a confession of faith in fear of punishment, not in love of the crown. For they too feared punishment. Finally, when the blessed Peter confessedly said to the Lord: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16), he seems to utter almost the same words that the demons also spoke, but the confession of the demons, because it was spoken with hatred, was rightly condemned by Christ, and Peter's confession, because it proceeded from internal love, was rewarded with eternal blessedness.

James 2:20

Do you want to know, O empty man, that faith without works is idle? Because the Apostle Paul, preaching that a man is justified by faith without works, was not well understood by those who took it to mean that once they believed in Christ, even if they acted badly and lived wickedly and wickedly, they would be saved by faith: this passage of this epistle explains how the same sense of the Apostle Paul should be understood. Therefore, he uses the example of Abraham more, showing that faith is empty if it does not work well, because Paul also used the example of Abraham to prove that a man can be justified without works. For when he recalls the good works of Abraham, which accompanied his faith, he sufficiently shows that the Apostle Paul did

not teach that a man is justified by faith without works in such a way that if anyone has believed, it does not matter for him to do good works, but rather to ensure that no one thinks he has achieved the gift of justification, which is by faith, through the merits of previous good works. In this, the Jews wanted to prefer themselves over the Gentiles believing in Christ, because they said they had achieved evangelical grace through the merits of good works which are in the law. And therefore, many who believed from them were scandalized because the grace of Christ was given to the uncircumcised Gentiles. Whence the Apostle Paul says that a man can be justified by faith without works, that is, preceding works. For being justified by faith, how can he not act justly? Therefore when James says:

James 2: 21

Our father Abraham was justified by works, offering Isaac his son upon the altar. Elegantly, the example of good works from the patriarch himself was pointed out to be learned, urging those who believed from among the Jews to follow the deeds of their first and greatest ancestor as good offspring. And since he admonished them not to fail in temptations and to prove their faith through works, he elegantly used the example of the patriarch, by which he could instruct them in both virtues. For what greater temptation, except those pertaining to the wounds of one's own body, can occur than for an old man to be compelled to kill his only beloved son? How then would he delay in giving his tunics or food to the poor for the love of God, who did not delay in giving his son, whom he had received in his old age as an heir, to death at the prompt command of the Lord? Therefore, this statement of blessed James is in harmony with what Paul says: "By faith Abraham offered Isaac his son when he was tested, and he offered his only begotten son whom he had received by promise, to whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' considering that God is able to raise even the dead" (Heb. 11). Indeed, in the same act, James praised the magnificence of Abraham's works, while Paul lauded the constancy of his faith. Yet Paul did not present a different or contrary opinion to James.

For both knew that Abraham was perfect in both faith and works, and therefore each of them praised that virtue in him which they saw as needed more by their own audiences. Because James wrote to those who held faith without works idle, he presented that relevant example where Abraham's notable faith, which was previously praised by Scripture, appeared, showing

that it did not lie dormant idly in his heart but was proven fervent in obedience to divine commands. But Paul demonstrated to those who boasted in their works without the grace of faith that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11), and by collecting examples from all the patriarchs, clearly taught that all were proven by the testimony of faith. Hence he specifically mentioned Abraham: because by faith he offered Isaac, considering (he says) that God is able to raise the dead (Heb. 11). So he joined the work of faith, who therefore was willing to offer his son at once, because he believed God would immediately raise him. He believed this because he held as true what he had heard: "In Isaac your seed shall be called. This combination of both virtues blessed James also expounds by saying:

"You see that faith was working together with his works, and by works, faith was made perfect, and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.'" Paul's firm discussion addressed to the Romans clearly teaches this testimony, showing that the strength of faith is such that once its mysteries are perceived, it can instantly make a righteous man out of an impious one. Because Abraham believed God with such great and fervent faith, that he was ready in spirit to perform whatever God commanded, by God's judgment, his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness. And so that we might also know the faith by which he was justified, God tested him by commanding him to offer his son, and by works, faith was completed, that is, it was proven perfect in his heart by the execution of works. Likewise, in this time, if someone newly comes to faith, receives baptism, and resolves in his heart to follow God's commandments, if he soon departs from this life justified by faith alone, he departs without works, because by God's providence, who foresaw and prepared it, there was no time for him to prove his faith by works. But those who, having received the sacraments of faith, survive a long time and do not care to engage in good works, must be reminded of the example set by blessed James of faith combined with the works of Abraham, and he immediately added, saying:

James 2: 24

Do you see that a man is justified by works and not by faith only? What he says by works means by works of faith. Because no one can have perfect works without faith, but many can have faith without works if they do not have

the time to act. Of such it is said: He was taken away lest wickedness should change his understanding or deceit beguile his soul (Wis. IV).

James 2: 25

In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? Lest they excuse themselves as unable to imitate the works of so great a father Abraham, especially since no one now compels them to offer their sons to God to be killed, but rather God Himself forbids this to be done through the Scriptures, he adds also of a sinful woman, a foreign woman, who nevertheless by acts of mercy, by the duty of hospitality, even at the risk of her life, received the servants of God and was deemed worthy to be justified from sins, to be numbered among the citizens of the people of Israel, to be counted in the catalog of their royal lineage, to be inserted in the genealogies of our Lord and Saviour descending from the fountain of the patriarchs, to be rescued from the destruction of her perishing country, whose treachery she abandoned. By the examples of this woman turned to better things, he therefore advises his listeners to avoid entering the perishing homeland, and to remember to separate themselves by fruitful works from the sins they had left by believing, so that they may be united with the assemblies of the saints and may deserve to reach the fellowship of their Redeemer. And so he exhorts them to receive the messengers of Jesus, that is, to gladly hear the preachers of the word of the Gospel.

And when they know that these have been rejected by their kinsmen or even sought after to death, as the Acts often show to have happened, they themselves, taking from them counsel for their salvation, should send them back to the Lord Jesus in peace. So the Book of Acts of the Apostles indicates that Gamaliel, the master of the blessed apostle Paul, by the revelation of the relics of the proto-martyr Stephen, effected something once honorable to all the people of the Jews and now more honorable to the whole Church of Christ, when the Jewish council, planning to slay the apostles, himself with wiser counsel thwarted their machinations and sent the apostles, rescued from their snares, back unharmed to evangelize Jesus.

JAMES 3

James 3:1

Do not become many teachers, my brethren. The Acts of the Apostles show that there was much zeal among believers during the time of the apostles to spread the word more widely, so much so that Apollos, a man very learned in the Scriptures, knowing only the baptism of John, confidently preached Christ. Yet because he was wise, as soon as a teacher was present, he most easily fulfilled what he had lacked, and returned now perfected to the office of preaching. Others, departing from Judea to Antioch with greater ignorance, were teaching the Gentile believers that unless they were circumcised according to the law of Moses, they could not be saved, and they brought no small labor of debate to the chaste preachers. Therefore, blessed James removes these and such teachers from the office of the word, lest they become an impediment to those who could properly fulfill it.

James 3:1

Do you not know that you shall receive greater judgment? For as he who ministers well acquires a good degree for himself, so also he who, being unlearned, tries to usurp the office of teaching, who does not sincerely announce Christ, would deserve a greater judgment of condemnation than if he had perished alone in his own sin. [James 3:2] -- For in many things we all offend. He did not say "you offend," when he reprov'd those whom he saw as less perfect in both knowledge and action, and would remove such from the chair of teaching, fearing lest they might harm the little ones by preaching erroneously, and turn their ears away from the hearing of teachers by forestalling them; or certainly might defile what they rightly preached with the filth of incorrect action, and thus obscure the path of evangelical perfection with sinister opinion; but he said, "we offend," when we are of Christ; thus speaks the Apostle. And he prefaced it with "in many things," he added "all," so that the imperfect might consider themselves all the more cautiously in acting or speaking, as they would know more certainly that not even the perfectly good, who walk under the guidance of the grace of the Holy Spirit, can by any means pass through the path of this life without offending by some sin, according to what is written elsewhere: "The heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job XV). And as Solomon says: "There is no just man upon earth, that does good, and sins not" (Eccl. VII).

James 3:2

If anyone does not offend in word, this one is a perfect man. How can he say that the man who does not offend in word is perfect, when he has previously stated: Because in many things we all offend? Is it because the elect can offend in many things, and yet remain perfect? Indeed, it is to be understood in this way. For there are different kinds of offenses. The elect offend in one way, the reprobate in another, as Solomon testifies, who says: For the just man falls seven times, and rises again; but the wicked stumble into evil. And if the just man indeed offends through the frailty of the flesh or through ignorance, he nonetheless does not cease to be just. Because just as such daily and unavoidable offenses occur, so too is there a daily remedy of prayers and good works, which quickly raises the offending just man, so that he does not fall to the ground, and stain the wedding garment of charity and faith with the dust of vices. Therefore, if anyone does not offend in word, this one is a perfect man, that is, in that word whose offense human frailty can avoid, such as the word of deceit, of detraction, of cursing, of pride, of boasting, of excusing sins, of envy, of dissension, of heresy, of lying, of perjury, and also of idle and unnecessary and even superfluous speech in those things which seem necessary. In whatever word anyone keeps himself without offense, this one is a perfect man. For he who keeps his mouth and his tongue, keeps his soul from troubles (Prov. XXI).

James 3:2

He can also bridle his whole body. This verse depends on the previous one. If anyone, he says, does not offend in word, this one is a perfect man, and he can also bridle his whole body. Which is to say openly: If anyone avoids the slip of the tongue, which is nearly inevitable, he will learn also to observe the other members of the body, which can be more easily disciplined, so that they do not stray from the right path. [James 3:3] -- But if we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole body as well. How much more fitting it is to put the bit of restraint into our own mouths to comply with our Creator, so that by guarding our tongue we may also seek to obtain the rectitude of deeds? If, as some copies have it, we read: Just as we put bits into the mouths of horses, there will be no question, because it is connected to what is said subsequently: So also the tongue is indeed a small member, etc.

James 3: 4

Behold, even ships, though they are so great, and are driven by strong winds, are steered by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. The great ships on the sea are the minds of men in this life, whether good or bad. The strong winds by which they are driven are the inclinations of the minds, compelled by nature to act, by which they reach either a good or bad end. The rudder by which such ships are steered wherever the will of the pilot directs is the intention of the heart itself, by which the elect, having crossed the waves of this world, reach the happy harbor of the heavenly homeland, while the reprobate, killed by the stormy errors of this life, which they did not know how to leave, perish like those destroyed by Scylla or Charybdis. And because the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart, it is rightly added:

James 3: 5

Thus also the tongue is indeed a small member, and it exalts great things. Certainly, it exalts great rewards if the force of the guiding mind rightly governs it. According to that of Solomon: He who understands possesses the steerage. But if it governs badly, it exalts great evils of destruction both for itself and its people. Wherefore Solomon says: Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. XVIII). Therefore it exalts life if it teaches the Church well. Against this, it exalts death if it acts gravely. For this is said against those who, lacking both life and knowledge, presumed to teach and, therefore, harmed the Church even more; but if it is read as in some manuscripts: It also rejoices greatly, that exultation must indeed here be understood, of which it is said in the following, when he enumerated through many vices of the tongue, he added: But now you exult in your arrogances. All such exultation is evil. From which also the mother of blessed Samuel restrains us with devout exhortation, saying: Do not multiply speaking proudly (I Kings II). Therefore, the tongue exalts greatly, which, despising the senses and words of others, boasts singularly of being wise and eloquent itself.

James 3: 5

Behold how great a fire a small forest kindles. How much he says how small. Indeed, the manuscripts also have it so: Behold a small fire. Just as from a small spark the growing fire often kindles a great forest, so the incontinence of the tongue, nourished by its lightness, destroys much of the material of

good works, many fruits of spiritual life, where it touches, but also very often consumes countless leaves of speech which seemed the best. [James 3:6] -- And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is a fire because it consumes the forest of virtues by speaking badly. Hence the wise man says of the foolish: "The opening of his mouth," he says, "is a flame." To which indeed the fire of perdition is opposed, that saving fire which, being a tongue, consumes the hay, stubble, and vices, and illuminates the secrets of the heart. By this fire, the holy teachers are kindled, so that they both burn with love and, as if with fiery tongues, ignite others by preaching. Of such it is well written: "There appeared to them tongues as of fire, and they rested on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2). Rightly, it is said of the undisciplined tongue that it is a world of iniquity, because almost all crimes are either concocted by it, such as robberies, rapes; or perpetrated, such as perjuries, false testimonies; or defended when any impure person, by excusing the crime he has committed, pretends to display a good deed that he has not done.

James 3:6

And it sets on fire the wheel of our birth, being set on fire by hell. By hell, it means by the devil and his angels, for whom hell was made, and who, whether they fly in the air, wander on earth or under the earth, or are detained, always bring with them the torments of flames, like a feverish person who, even if placed on ivory beds or in sunny places, cannot avoid the heat or cold of his inherent disease. Thus, demons, even if they are worshipped in golden temples or roam through the air, always burn with the hellish fire, and, reminded by their own punishment, suggest to deceived men the fuel of vices that cause their downfall. In contrast, the holy city of God, the new Jerusalem, is said to descend from heaven by God, because clearly, whatever heavenly things we do on earth, we have certainly received the celestial gift to do so. Moreover, the wheel of our birth refers to the continuous course of temporal life, in which from the day of birth until death we are driven like a constantly running wheel. Hence, Solomon rightly said: "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of affliction come" (Ecclesiastes XII), and shortly after added: "And the wheel is broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth from which it came. Therefore, the tongue sets on fire the wheel of our birth, contaminating our entire state of being with corrupt speech.

Again, he calls it the wheel of our birth, because due to the merit of the first transgression, having been cast from inner stability, we are carried hither and thither with a wandering mind, and in all our uncertain paths, we know not where danger or safety lies. This wheel of our birth is set on fire by the corrupting fire of the tongue when the vice of our inherent disturbance is further compounded by foolish and harmful words.

James 3:7

For every kind of beast, and bird, and serpent, and that of others, is tamed and has been tamed by human nature. We read in Pliny that the most enormous asp of serpents in Egypt was tamed by the head of a household, and daily emerged from its hole, accustomed to take provisions at his table. We also read, as Marcellinus Comes writes, that a tamed tiger was sent from India to Emperor Anastasius. Therefore, it is meant to be understood that the tongue of the wicked surpasses beasts in ferocity, birds in lightness or exultation, serpents in venomousness. There are indeed those who have sharpened their tongues like a sword (Psalm LXIII), there are those who are flighty and have set their mouth against the heavens (Psalm LXXII), and whose mouth speaks vanity (Psalm CXLIII), there are those serpentine, of whom it is said: The venom of asps is under their lips (Psalm XIII).

James 3:8

However, no man can tame the tongue. This sentence can be correctly understood in two ways: both that none of the good teachers can tame the tongues of those who neglect to restrain themselves from foolish prattling, and that there is no speaker who does not sometimes offend with his tongue. Finally, it was truthfully said of a perfect man placed in the moment of greatest temptation: In all this Job did not sin with his lips (Job I). And yet he afterward blamed himself, upon hearing the words of God, for the foolishness of his unwise speech, saying: I have spoken once, which I wish I had not said, and again, but I will add no more (Job XXXIX). [James 3:8] -- A restless evil, full of deadly poison, etc. He adds restless, because he had said it can't be tamed, whereas beasts and birds are tamed. He indeed calls it full of deadly poison, to explain why he called it untamable, since serpents are known to be tamable. He subsequently adds many things about the atrocity of its venom.

James 3:10

Blessing and cursing proceed from the same mouth. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth sweet and bitter water from the same opening? Just as sweet and bitter water cannot simultaneously bubble up from a single vein of the fountain, but if they are mixed in a vessel or a cistern, the sweet water immediately becomes bitter from the bitter water, but the bitter water cannot be changed into sweetness by the mixture of sweet water, so blessing and cursing cannot be in any way combined in one mouth; but whoever is accustomed to bless God by praying or preaching His word, but still does not cease to curse men, it is evident that the sweetness of his blessing is consumed by the bitterness of the cursing. For a little leaven corrupts the whole mass (I Cor. V). And there is no fair praise in the mouth of a sinner (Eccli. XV). Finally, if you make a pipe with double openings for the water to enter, and a single one for it to exit, and you pour bitter water in one side and sweet water in the other side, without any doubt where there is one exit opening, they will be mixed, and the water will appear bitter. For it is certainly much easier for sweet to turn into bitter when they are mixed together, than for bitter to turn into sweet. From this example, it is gathered that bad conversations, as testified by the Apostle, corrupt good morals as well as good speech.

James 3:12

Can a fig tree, my brothers, produce olives, or a vine figs? etc. It is clear, because just as a tree cannot, having lost its natural fruit, produce the fruit of another tree from itself, so a slanderer, even if he seems to speak some good temporarily, is in no way able to have the fruit of blessing. But if someone wishes to discuss this more deeply, in the fig tree whose leaves our first parents, after the recognition of their transgression, used to cover their nakedness, can be understood the veil of excuse, by which they then tried to repel the reproach of the Creator and to cast it back on the Creator Himself, and now many of the foolish turn their hearts to an evil word, to excuse excuses in sins (Psalm 140). In olives can be taken the fruit of mercy, in the vine the fervor of love. But I, he says, like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord, have hoped in the mercy of my God (Psalm 51), that is, just as one who produces the fruit of mercy, I have hoped for mercy myself from the Lord. Likewise: And your cup inebriates me, how excellent it is (Psalm 23)! Which is

understood to speak of the love of God, which is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5). Therefore, a fig tree cannot produce olives, because whoever tries to excuse himself for sins rather than accuse himself, in no way performs works of piety for sins perfectly towards others, but gives more with a proud heart. Nor can a vine produce figs, because he who is perfectly inebriated with divine love, accuses none of his errors, except himself.

James 3:13

Who among you is wise and disciplined, let him show by good conduct his works in the humility of wisdom. Because he had imposed silence on wicked teachers and had forbidden them to hold the rank of teacher, since he saw that they had neither the perfection of life nor the restraint of the tongue, he consequently admonishes that if anyone among them is wise and disciplined, or appears to be so to himself, let him show his wisdom and discipline more by living wisely and disciplined than by teaching others. For he who with meek heart and calm speech does the good which he can, surely gives evident proof of a wise man. For the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Psalm 110). But he who is more inclined to preach the word than to act often incurs the guilt of foolishness through the love of boasting, through the zeal of contention, through the facility of eloquence, through the envy of other teachers, through ignorance of the catholic truth. Well does that saying of Solomon apply to him: For in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin (Proverbs 14). Hence it is rightly added here:

James 3:14

But if you have bitter zeal, and there are contentions in your hearts, do not glory, etc. He says 'bitter zeal' because there is also sweet zeal, from which also the apostle Simon rightly received the name of perfect heart. Which also Elijah had, when he said: I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant (1 Kings 19). And the apostle Paul: For I am jealous for you with a Godly jealousy (2 Corinthians 11). There is also good contention, which the Lord commanded us to have, saying: Strive to enter through the narrow gate (Luke 13). Do not, he says, glory, and lie against the truth. For the Truth itself proves that those who utter words of wisdom from their mouth, and carry bitter zeal and the zeal of unfruitful contention in their heart, are not worthy of glory.

James 3:15

This is not the wisdom descending from above, but earthly, unspiritual, demonic. And Paul says that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. It should be noted that the natural man, or natural wisdom, is derived not from the animal, but from the soul, as the Apostle testifies, because the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving spirit (I Cor. XV). But it is not first that which is spiritual, but that which is natural. The authority in Greek, in which language ψυχή means soul, and ψυχικόν means natural, confirms that it is derived from the soul. Moreover, though animals in Latin seem to derive their name from the soul, in Greek they have a very different and dissimilar etymology. For they get their name from the fact that they live. Among the Greeks, ζωή means life, ζῶα means animals. Therefore, when the Apostle in his Epistles often mentions the carnal man, the natural man, and the spiritual man, he calls spiritual either the Lord Himself, who, appearing in flesh and soul, was full of the Holy Spirit, or every elect person, who, naturally consisting of flesh and soul, also received the grace of the Holy Spirit according to the measure of Christ's gift, by which he is enlightened. But he calls carnal or natural the man who, having no grace of the Spirit, knows only to think or do those things which are naturally implanted in the senses of the flesh or the soul. Therefore, contentious and proud wisdom is rightly remembered as earthly, unspiritual and demonic, because while the soul seeks earthly glory, while, devoid of spiritual grace, remaining alone, it thinks of those things which are naturally implanted in it after the fall of the first transgression, rightly deluded by the evil spirit, it turns to doing those things which are mad and harmful.

James 3:16

Where there is jealousy and contention, there is inconstancy and every wrongful work. With all, he says, guard your heart, for from it comes life. For just as the root of the heart is, so in the sight of internal judgment is the whole fruit of action. And he who conceals wickedness in a heart filled with envy or contention, every work of his is wrongful, however righteous it may seem to men, evidently because of the inconstancy of a mind fluctuating here and there, because he has neglected to anchor himself firmly to the heavenly gaze. [James 3:17] -- But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits. This is

the gentleness of wisdom that he previously instructed to be possessed, certainly as opposed to the bitterness of jealousy and contention, which is foolish, by which the virtue and doctrine of the holy preachers are mutually associated with each other in the peace of charity and concord. First, he says, pure, then peaceable. Pure, evidently, because it understands chastely; peaceable, because it does not separate itself from the society of others through pride. Gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, because it is certainly the wise man's task to give assent to the persuasion of the good, just as Peter promptly agreed with the one rebuking him, and to repudiate the doctrine of the wicked with all intention, either by teaching or by living.

James 3:17

Full of mercy and good fruits. And this is the good conduct that he urged above to show the wise and disciplined, that is, to be merciful in mind, and to show outwardly the fruits of that mercy through works of piety. [James 3:17] -- Judging without hypocrisy. This virtue is as much used properly by pure wisdom as contentious and blasphemous wisdom entirely lacks it. For he who desires to appear more learned and more perfect than others must labor greatly, so that he can skillfully chastise his neighbor as if he were less prudent, and also to always falsely pretend that he has never done or said anything wrong, even to those whom he is estranged from.

James 3:18

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Everything we do in this life is a seed of future retribution, and that retribution itself is the fruit of present works, as the Apostle bears witness, saying: For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. And he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians VI). And therefore it is rightly said that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. For the fruit of righteousness is eternal life, which is rewarded for just works, because those who seek peace follow it; with that same peace which they study, they sprinkle the soil of their heart as with the best seed, so that through the daily growth of good works they may be able to arrive at the fruit of heavenly life. Concerning this, it is written elsewhere: Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy (Psalm 126), and so on to the end of the psalm. But the wicked also sow and reap, because they will receive according to their deserts in judgment.

However, they are known to reap not fruit, but corruption, because they do not enjoy eternal goods (for fruit is named from enjoying), but they will pay eternal penalties for the corruption in which they lived.

JAMES 4

James 4:1

From where come wars and fights among you? Do they not come from this? That is, from jealousy and contention, which he previously forbade. Hence also here he more fully explains the same, adding: [James 4:1] -- And from your desires which wage war in your members, etc. Desires wage war in the members when the hands, or tongue, or the consent of other members intemperately obey the wicked suggestions of an evil mind. Concerning this, also in the earlier parts of this Epistle, he says: But each one is tempted by his own desire, being drawn away and enticed, etc. But desires for earthly goods can also be understood in this place, namely the desire for kingdoms, riches, honors, dignities. For because of these and similar innumerable things, fights and wars frequently arise among the wicked. [James 4:2] -- You quarrel and fight, and you do not have because you do not ask. You quarrel, he says, and fight for temporal glory, and you are not able to obtain this, precisely because you do not care to ask the Lord, so that he himself might bestow upon you whatever is beneficial. For if you were to ask him with pious intention, he would grant you both the earthly necessities for temporal use and the heavenly goods for eternal enjoyment.

James 4:3

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, etc. He had foretold that they do not ask, and now he says that they ask wrongly, because he who asks wrongly seems to ask nothing at all in the sight of the inner witness. He asks wrongly who, despising the Lord's commands, desires supreme benefits from the Lord. He also asks wrongly who, having lost the love of higher things, seeks merely to gain lower goods, and this not for the sustenance of human frailty, but for the excess of unrestrained pleasure. This is indeed what he means when he says: So that you may spend it on your passions.

James 4:4

Adulterers, do you not know that friendship with this world is enmity with God? He rightly calls adulterers those whom, having turned from the love of heavenly wisdom to the embrace of worldly friendship, he reproaches, seeing

that they serve mammon more than the Creator whom they despise. He had indeed spoken above about the manifest enemies of God: Do not the rich oppress you by their power, and do they not drag you to the courts? Do they not blaspheme the good name that has been invoked upon you (James II)? But lest you think that only those who openly blaspheme God, who persecute His faith in the saints, and unjustly condemn them are His enemies, he shows that those are also enemies of God who, under the faith and confession of the name of Christ, serve the lure and love of the world, who, only in name being faithful, set earthly things above heavenly ones. This he more earnestly enforces in the following verse, adding: Whoever therefore wishes to be a friend of this world constitutes himself an enemy of God. Therefore, all lovers of the world are enemies of God, all seekers of trifles, all who belong to those of whom it is said: Behold, your enemies, O Lord, shall perish (Psalm XCI). Whether they enter the churches or do not enter the churches, they are enemies of God. For a time they may flourish like grass, but when the heat of judgment appears, they will perish, and the beauty of their face shall fade.

James 4:5

Do you think that the Scripture says uselessly? Namely, that Scripture which, restraining the faithful from the society of evildoers, thus speaks through Moses: You shall not make a covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not live in your land, lest they make you sin against Me, for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a scandal to you (Exodus XXIII). And again: You shall not make their works, but you shall destroy them and break their statues (Ibid.). [James 4:5] -- Does the spirit that dwells within you desire to envoke envy? It should be read as a rhetorical question, as if he were saying: Does the Spirit of grace, with which you were marked on the day of redemption, desire this, that you should envy one another? Not, indeed, a good spirit in you, but an evil spirit causes the vice of envy. There is a similar mode of expression in the psalm: "A brother cannot redeem; a man shall redeem" (Psalm 48). For it is understood thus: If Christ, who deigned to become our brother through humanity, did not redeem us, could any mere human suffice to redeem us? Some interpret this passage thus: The spirit that dwells within you desires against envy—desiring, that is, that the sickness of envy be conquered and eradicated from your minds. Others understand it to refer to the human spirit, with the sense being: Do not covet, do not cling to

the friendships of this world because the spirit of your mind, while it covets earthly things, indeed desires envy when you desire to acquire things for yourself, envying others who have them.

James 4:6

But He gives greater grace. The Lord gives greater grace than the friendship of the world, because while it provides these earthly goods temporarily and with the pain of losing them, He bestows eternal joy. He subsequently explains to whom He grants this grace.

James 4:6

For this reason it says: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Thieves, indeed, perjurers, the lustful, and other sinners are punished by God as despisers of His precepts, but He is said to resist the proud especially, because those who trust in their own virtue, who neglect to submit by repenting to divine power, who act as if they are sufficient to save themselves, and refuse to seek the aid of heavenly grace, are certainly afflicted with greater punishment. On the other hand, He gives grace to the humble, because those who submissively submit to the hands of the true physician in the wounds of their vices deservedly receive the gifts of the desired health. It is to be noted, however, that this statement regarding the proud and humble was placed by the blessed James from the proverbs of Solomon according to the ancient Translation, just as Peter did in his Epistle. In our Edition, which descends from Hebrew truth, it is said thus: He will mock the mockers, and He will give grace to the meek. The Lord will mock the mockers according to what Paul speaks about those who, refusing to receive Him coming in the name of His Father, will accept the Antichrist coming in his own name (John V): Because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved, therefore God will send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie (Thess. II). He mocked the mockers when, to the Jews saying:

If he is the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross and we will believe in him (Matt. XXVII), He patiently endured until, having died and been buried, He overcame their insults and even death itself by a swift resurrection. But He will give grace to the meek, because to those who humbly follow Him, He abundantly grants both the perfection of good work and the gifts of blessed eternity.

James 4:8

Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you: Draw near to the Lord by following His footsteps in humility, and He will draw near to you through mercy, freeing you from distress. For no one is far from God in terms of regions, but in terms of affections. Indeed, dwelling in one place on earth, both he who is diligent in virtues and he who wallows in the filth of vices, one is far from God, the other has God near. Hence the Psalmist says: "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145). Again: "Salvation is far from sinners" (Psalm 119). That same salvation of which we sing: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27). And the Lord Himself, when He encouraged us to draw near to Him by saying: "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11), immediately demonstrated that this should be fulfilled not by feet but by actions when He added: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (*ibid.*).

James 4:8

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. This is truly to draw near to the Lord, namely to have purity of works and simplicity of heart. "Innocent," he says, "with clean hands and a pure heart, this one shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy" (Psalm 25). And this is truly the Lord drawing near to us, to give to us simply those gifts of His mercy which we seek. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and will withdraw from thoughts that are without understanding (Wisdom 1). [James 4:9] -- Be miserable, mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Do not, He says, love to become wealthy and rejoice in this world, but being mindful of the sins you have committed, rather aim that through the brief miseries, poverty and transient lamentation of this life you may reach the eternal joys of the heavenly kingdom, so that you do not, for the temporary joy of wealth which you have acquired through unjust labor, perpetually beg, mourn, and pay the penalties in torment.

James 4:11

Do not slander one another, my brothers. This vice of slander looks to the deadly venom of the tongue, about which it is said: You quarrel and fight.

[James 4:11] -- He who slanders a brother or judges his brother, slanders the law and judges the law. He slanders the law who slanders a brother, as if it were not right for it to have forbidden slander, saying through the Prophet: "I pursued the one who secretly slanders his neighbor" (Psalm 101). And in Leviticus: "You shall not be a slanderer, nor a whisperer among the people" (Leviticus 19). It can also be understood this way: He who slanders a brother who is obeying the law, slanders the law and judges the law that gave such commands. For instance, the law commanded, saying: "You shall not remember the wrongs of your fellow citizens." Therefore, he who slanders a brother and judges a brother whom he sees willingly accepting injuries for the love of God, certainly slanders the law and judges the law that commanded us to forget wrongs.

James 4:12

But who are you to judge your neighbor? He condemns the recklessness of the one who delights in judging his neighbor without taking care to consider the state of his own frailty and the uncertainties of his temporal life. And because sometimes, through the change of the right hand of the Most High, those who judged their neighbor are subjected to the power of the one they judged, sometimes they are suddenly taken from the world while still living, he subsequently also condemns the recklessness of those who, having no certainty of their own life, stretch their minds into the future, thinking of the profits of many years to come. For it follows: [James 4:13-14] -- Behold now, you who say: "Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and spend a year there, and trade, and make a profit," yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. He notes the folly in this kind of planning in many ways, since clearly they both consult about the increase of profit and assume they will live for a long time, and that it is within their power to spend a year there, and in all of these things they disdain to recall the judgment of the Supreme Judge to mind.

James 4:14

For what is your life? It is a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. He does not say what is our life, but what, he says, is your life? Because the righteous truly begin to live when they reach the end of this life. But the enemies of the Lord, when they have been honored and exalted, will perish like smoke (Psalm 36). However, it should not be thought that this is

the same sentiment which the ungodly are reported to have expressed in the book of Wisdom: For we are born from nothing, and after this we will be as though we had never been (Wisdom 2). Because smoke has been blown into our nostrils, and a word as a spark to stir up our heart. When this is extinguished, the body will be ashes, and the spirit will be dispersed like soft air. For these things reasoned with those who believed in no life except this one, saying with Epicurus: "After death there is nothing, and death itself is nothing." But the blessed James added that the life of the wicked is short in the present, yet in the future, eternal death follows, according to the saying of the blessed Job: They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave (Job 21).

James 4:17

To him therefore who knows to do good and does not do it, it is sin. Throughout the text of this Epistle, the blessed James shows that those to whom he wrote had the knowledge of doing good, and had also learned the right faith, so that they had presumed they could become teachers to others, yet had not attained the perfection of works, or humility of mind, or even moderation of speech. Hence, he now among other words of reproof and exhortation greatly frightens them with this statement, that he who knows how to do good, and does not do what he knows, is said to have a greater sin than he who sins out of ignorance. Although he who sins in ignorance cannot be entirely free from guilt, for ignorance of good itself is not a small evil. Hence the Lord said: The servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few (Luke 12).

JAMES 5

James 5:1

Come now, you rich, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming upon you. Now, while it is the acceptable time, while it is the day of salvation (II Cor. VI), avoid, he says, the future miseries of punishment by weeping and giving alms. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be a testimony against you, and will eat your flesh like fire. Not only does the visible fire of Gehenna torment and torture the wicked and merciless rich, but also the very memory of their decayed and useless riches, with which they could

very easily redeem their sins, will burn their souls no less before judgment, and their flesh after the resurrection, when they begin to be intensely angry with themselves because they did not wish to wash away their sins with alms. Finally, the rust of wealth was a testimony to the wickedness of that rich man clothed in purple and turned into an increase of punishment, when through Abraham's reproach he heard: "Son, remember that you received your good things in your lifetime, and Lazarus likewise evil things" (Luke XVI). Even the carnal delights themselves can be understood by the name of the flesh, which the rust of wealth eats like fire, while the flame raging outside torments the luxurious soul, and not less piercing inwardly the pain of its tenacity accuses. This often happens even in this life, that some, losing wealth they used badly, begin too late to feel the sorrow that they had them without profit, and then groan that they did not give their goods to the needy when they are themselves compelled to beg due to impending need.

James 5: 3

You have stored up wrath for yourselves in the last days. Because, having neglected the nakedness or hunger of the poor, you rejoiced in storing up treasures of money for yourselves, now, not having foreseen it, you have accumulated the wrath of the eternal Judge against yourselves. Although it has not yet appeared, in the last days it is already most certain, that is, when the end of temporal days has come.

James 5: 4

Behold, the wages of the workers who have reaped your fields, which were withheld by you, cry out. How great is the iniquity of the proud, who, although they have sufficient wealth, not only disdain to welcome and refresh the poor coming everywhere, but also refuse to give the due wages of their work to the laborers or their servants. This fault of impiety the blessed Job indicates that he took great care to avoid, as he says: If my land cries out against me, and its furrows weep together, if I have eaten its fruits without money, and afflicted the soul of its tillers, let thorns grow instead of wheat, and thistles instead of barley (Job 31). And their cry has entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts. He calls the Lord of Hosts to instill fear in those who think that the poor have no protector. But to this place suits that of the Psalmist: "For the poor are left to you, you will be a helper to the orphan" (Psa. Heb. 10). And what is written in the book of the blessed Job:

"For God will not hear in vain, and the Almighty will consider the causes of each one" (Job 35). You have feasted on the earth. Having neglected the heavenly joys to which you could have come through afflictions and fasts, you only love carnal feasts, which will be followed by such great hunger and thirst in the future, that not even a single drop of water can then be obtained from elsewhere to cool your burning tongue.

James 5: 5

And in luxury you have nourished your hearts. They nourish their hearts in luxury, who, according to that saying of Ecclesiastes, do not forbid their heart to enjoy every pleasure and to amuse itself with those things they have prepared. And this they take as their part, if they use their own works, having no care for the sustenance or amusement of the poor (Eccl. II). On the day of slaughter you have led and killed the just man, and he did not resist you. He calls the Lord Savior just, about whom the blessed first martyr Stephen also speaks to the same Jews: Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute, and killed those who announced the coming of the Just One? of whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers (Acts VII). Therefore it appears that the blessed James addresses those rich men from that place, where he says: Come now, you rich, weep and howl, who conspired for the death of the Lord, and yet have not accepted the faith of his name by which they might be saved. Of whom he also speaks above to the believers: Do not the rich oppress you through repentance, and they themselves drag you into courts? Do they not blaspheme that good name that has been invoked upon you (James II)?

And because he writes to the twelve tribes that are in dispersion, he thus urges the faithful to do works of faith, so that he may also persuade those who had not yet believed to convert to the faith of the Lord along with the works of faith, reminding them that they had killed the Son of God, and moreover, as if they had done nothing evil, they gave themselves over to luxury and avarice, nor did they care to amend such a crime with repentance and alms. To whom it properly applies what he says: That avarice will consume their flesh like fire, and because they have treasured up wrath for themselves in the last days. For this became evident in them after the killing of James himself, when the city of Jerusalem, indeed the whole province of Judea, was besieged and cleared by the Romans, and for the rest of their crimes they had committed. Therefore be patient, brothers, until the com-

ing of the Lord. After he had rebuked the proud and incredulous, he again turns to those who had been oppressed by the wickedness of such men, exhorting them to patience, and insinuating that the end of such pressures is near, whether by them being taken up to the Lord and receiving the fruit of their patience, or by their persecutors being deprived of the power to persecute. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, patiently enduring until he receives the early and the latter rain, etc.

If he for the fruit of the earth, which he expects, and hopes to obtain in due season, labors so patiently, how much more ought you, for the fruit of heavenly reward, which you can possess forever, endure all present adversities? For you will indeed receive the early fruit, namely the life of the soul after death. You will also receive the latter, the incorruption of the flesh at the judgment. Or certainly the early fruit in works of righteousness, the latter in the reward of labors, according to that of the Apostle: You have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life (Rom. VI). Do not groan, brothers, against one another, so that you may not be judged. As if you suffer greater adversities than you deserve, and your persecutors, though they have committed the greatest crimes, seem to endure nothing adverse. So that you may not be judged. By the judgment of condemnation, because you reproach this judge as if he judged unjustly.

James 5: 9

Behold, the Judge stands at the door. He will return to you the rewards of patience, and to your adversaries the punishment they deserve. He stands at the door, because either He is close to knowing everything you do, or He will come quickly to repay, to you and to your persecutors, what each one has deserved. Take as an example, brothers, the outcome of evil, and of longsuffering, and of labor, and of patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. See, he says, that the prophets who were so holy, so free from sins, so that the Spirit of God spoke through them His mysteries to men, had an evil end by suffering death from the faithless, such as Zechariah, Uriah, and the Maccabee martyrs. And in the New Testament, John, Stephen, James the son of Zebedee, and many others. Nevertheless, they did not lament over such an end, but rather wished to bear it with long-suffering. Others endured long labors, but they bore these patiently and without grumbling, like Noah in the building of the ark for a hundred years, Moses in the redemption and leadership of the people for forty years, David in suffering exile

without fault, Joseph in service taken deceitfully by his brothers. To both cases, however, he added a firm and immutable example saying: You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord.

You have learned by reading about the labor and patience of Job, and how he received double of everything he lost due to the enemy's deceit, through the mercy of the Lord. You also saw the end of the Lord on the cross which He patiently endured, but also learned by evangelical preaching of His glory in the resurrection and ascension to heaven. Because the Lord is merciful and compassionate. So that either He may deliver His own from temptations in the present life, and glorify those living for the steadfastness of their faith even before men, or crown them in secret after death, and not even then take away the memory of the praise they deserved from men. Above all, however, my brothers, do not swear, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath. But let your speech be Yes, yes; No, no. Because He desires to completely drain the deadly poison of the tongue from His listeners, prohibiting backbiting, forbidding judging one's neighbor, and banning mutual groaning in adversities, which are manifest sins, He also adds this which to some may seem trivial, to abolish the custom of oath-taking as well. For it is clearly evident that this too is by no means to be overlooked by those who carefully consider that saying of the Lord, who says: Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment (Matthew 12), that you do not fall under judgment.

Accordingly, He says, I restrain you from guilt of swearing, lest by frequently swearing truthfully you may sometimes also fall into perjury, but stay as far away from the sin of perjury as you would not even want to swear truthfully except out of urgent necessity. But even he falls under the judgment of guilt, who, although he never perjures, more often than necessary swears truthfully. Because undoubtedly he sins by the very idleness of excessive speech and offends the Judge, who forbids both an unnecessary word and every oath.

James 5:13

Is anyone among you in trouble? etc. He who previously forbade brothers to groan to each other under trials now demonstrates what should be done in contrast. If, he says, any of you is oppressed by sadness, whether an injury received from other men may accidentally occur, or by an incidental fault, or by a domestic loss overwhelming, or by any other reason you are caused

grief, in no way at that hour should you murmur amongst yourselves and convene to complain about God's judgments, but rather run to the church, pray to the Lord on bended knees, so that He may send the grace of His consolation, lest the sadness of the world, which works death, swallow you (II Cor. VII). Also, drive away the harmful plague of sadness from your heart by the sweetness of frequent Psalm-singing. [James 5:14] -- Is anyone among you sick? etc. Just as he gave counsel to the sorrowful, so he gives counsel to the sick, on how to guard themselves from the foolishness of murmuring, and he sets the manner of healing according to the manner of the wound, instructing the sorrowful that they should pray and sing Psalms for themselves, but commanding the sick either in body or in faith to remember to cure themselves with the aid of several, and especially elders, and not to refer the cause of their weakness to the younger and less learned, lest they might receive some harmful word or advice from them.

James 5:14

And let them pray over him, anointing him, etc. We read that the apostles did this in the Gospel, and now the custom of the Church holds that the sick are anointed with consecrated oil by the presbyters, and are healed with accompanying prayer. Not only the presbyters, but as Pope Innocent writes, also all Christians are permitted to use the same oil to anoint in their own or their relatives' necessity, though this oil may only be consecrated by bishops. For what he says, With oil in the name of the Lord, signifies oil consecrated in the name of the Lord. Or certainly because when they anoint the sick, they should also invoke the name of the Lord over him. [James 5:15] -- And if he is in sins, they will be forgiven him. Many people, due to sins committed in the soul, are punished with sickness or even death of the body. Hence the apostle told the Corinthians, who were accustomed to receive the body of the Lord unworthily: Therefore many among you are weak and ill, and many sleep (1 Corinthians 11). If therefore the sick are in sins, and they have confessed these to the elders of the Church, and have endeavored with a perfect heart to abandon and correct them, they will be forgiven. For sins cannot be forgiven without the confession of amendment. Hence it is rightly added:

James 5:16

Confess therefore your sins to one another, etc. In this matter, there should be this discretion, that we confess our daily and trivial sins to one another, to our equals, and believe that we are saved by their daily prayer. Moreover, we should disclose the uncleanness of graver leprosy according to the law of the priesthood, and take care to purify according to his judgment as he has ordered and for as long as he has ordered. [James 5:16] -- For the prayer of a righteous person has great power, etc. He adds a fitting example of how much the continual prayer of the righteous avails, when Elijah with one prayer by praying for such a long time withheld the heavens, turned away rain from the lands, denied fruits to mortals, and again when he willed, when he perceived the time was appropriate, when he saw the heart of the proud king and the idolatrous nation bent to repentance by the long plague of famine, with only one prayer prayed, and restored to the lands the fruits and waters he had denied. For thus it follows:

James 5:18

And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, etc. Therefore, he prayed once and before and after, and this one Elijah obtained such great and mighty things; how much more, then, is the frequent prayer of many righteous people worth? But lest our frailty should tremble, thinking that it cannot do similar things to such a great prophet, who deserved to be taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot, the blessed James, intending to speak about his prayer, thus began: Elijah was a man like us, subject to suffering. For he was a man, although second to none in virtue, like us in the origin of the flesh, subject to suffering as we are, both in the frailty of the mind and the flesh. For he showed that he was frail in the flesh by seeking sustenance from the widow at Zarephath. And because he was also subject to the suffering of the mind, he showed it when, after waters were returned to the earth and the prophets and priests of idols were slain, he fled through the deserts, terrified by the threats of a single woman. But how great it is to pray for the sick before the Lord, and to call them back to health as confessing their sins, he shows by adding:

James 5:19

My brothers, if anyone among you strays from the truth, etc. For, as in the earlier sections of this Epistle, our tongue is restrained from wicked or idle

speech, it is now shown what we should especially speak at the end. Therefore, we are commanded to pray and sing psalms to the Lord whenever we are struck by adversities. Likewise, we must confess our sins to one another and pray for each other, so that we may be saved, showing as much care as we can for the health of our neighbors, not only their temporal but rather their eternal health. For just as it is of great reward to save a body destined to die, how much more meritorious is it to save a soul destined to live forever in the heavenly homeland? It should be noted that some codices have: "He will save his own soul from death. And from the ambiguous Greek, it can also be rightly interpreted this way. Indeed, whoever corrects a stray person thereby secures for themselves greater joys of celestial life. He says, "He will save his own soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. He who converts a sinner from error hides his sins from the view of the inner Judge by the superposition of a better life; and he also covers his own failings, in whatever ways he has erred, from the sight of Him who sees all things by caring for his neighbor, according to the Psalmist:

"Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Psalm 31). And Blessed James, urging this, does not forget what he said earlier: "Do not become many teachers, my brothers" (James 3). For there, he removes the imperfect from the office of teaching, which they sought out of pride. Here, however, he instructs those who are well-prepared on what they ought to do for the salvation of their neighbors out of fraternal love. For what a teacher is said to do here, elsewhere charity is remembered to do, according to Blessed Peter the apostle: "Because charity covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4). Nor should it be overlooked that this conversion of the erring is often accomplished not only by speaking but also frequently by acting well. For if anyone shows good examples of action to their neighbors, even without speaking, and converts them to works of alms, hospitality, or other virtues they had neglected, they indeed perform the office of a teacher and will receive a certain reward from the merciful Judge for the salvation of the brother they corrected.

1 PETER 1

1 Peter 1:1

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, etc. "Strangers in Latin, in Greek called proselytes." By this name, the Jews called those who, born from the nations, preferred to believe in God and, having received circumcision, to lead a life

according to the Jewish custom, according to God's law. Among whose number were some of those who, on the holy day of Pentecost, when the apostles received the Holy Spirit in the vision of fire, believed in Christ at their preaching, as Scripture says that Jews and proselytes were present. Therefore, he calls them chosen strangers, who from gentility came to the knowledge and acceptance of the divine law, and having received the legal sacraments, deserved to reach the acceptance of the grace of faith. Hence, the holy presbyter Jerome, speaking of them, says: "Because Peter, after the episcopate of the Antiochian Church and the preaching of the dispersion of those who believed from circumcision in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, in the second year of Claudius, goes to Rome to oppose Simon Magus." But also if we can truly say with the prophet to God: "For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, as were all our fathers" (Psalm 38), we should also believe the letters written by the blessed Peter and read them as sent to us. Finally, in these same letters, as those having another homeland, he admonishes us, saying: "Beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts" (1 Peter II). As for what is added, concerning the dispersion, this indicates that they were dispersed from Jerusalem in the persecution that took place under Stephen, or surely afflicted by other various persecutions for the faith either by Jews or by the Gentiles, often driven from their own homes, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. And even Paul to the Galatians: "Have you suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?"

1 Peter 1:1

The dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, etc. All these provinces are of the Greeks in Asia. But there is also another Bithynia in Europe, from which it is said those in Asia are descended. However, the Bithynia in Asia is also called the greater Phrygia, which is separated from Galatia by the river Hieria. [1 Peter 1:2] -- According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, etc. These verses are connected to what was previously stated, "To the elect exiles." For they were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Hence the apostle also says: "Those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son." And elsewhere: "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." They were elected to this end, that by the gift of the Holy Spirit they might be sanctified, cleansed from all sins, to begin to obey the Lord Jesus Christ, who had perished due to the proto-parent's disobedience, that being sprinkled with His blood they might avoid the

power of Satan, just as Israel avoided the dominion of the Egyptians through the lamb's blood. He speaks of sprinkling in the manner of the old Scripture, where those things which were to be sanctified were usually sprinkled with the blood of sacrifices. Otherwise, the Lord Himself speaks clearly about this: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6).

1 Peter 1:2

May grace and peace be multiplied. So that what you have well begun, you may complete perfectly. He first names grace, then peace, because without the grace of Christ we cannot attain to the peace of reconciliation, indeed we cannot have anything peaceful except through His grace. [1 Peter 1:3] -- Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus he returns praises to God the Father, to show that our Savior Lord is both God and man. For when he says, "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he indeed calls Him the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, because he remembers that the Lord Christ was made man; but he calls Him the Father of our Lord, because he does not doubt that the same Lord of ours has always existed as the Son of God. [1 Peter 1:3] -- Who according to His great mercy has reborn us, etc. Rightly is God blessed by us, who, when we had been begotten by our merits unto death, through His mercy reborn us unto life. And this through the resurrection of His Son, when He so loved our life that He arranged for Him to die on its behalf; and by that same death destroyed through the resurrection, showed us the hope and example of rising again. For He died, so that we would not fear death. He rose from the dead, so that we might hope through Him to be resurrected.

1 Peter 1:4

To an inheritance incorruptible, etc. Incorruptible, he says, because of the heavenly life, which is touched neither by age, nor disease, nor death, nor any sadness. Undeiled, because no impure person can enter into it. Unfading, because that heavenly life and conversation never come to seem worthless to the minds of the blessed, as the luxuries and delights of the present age often turn into disgust from prolonged custom and use. [1 Peter 1:4] -- Kept in heaven for you. Kept in you he says, instead of saying, kept for you, that is, kept now for this purpose, that it might be bestowed on you in heaven at the appointed time. Or certainly kept in heaven in you, because He who gave be-

lievers the power to become children of God (John 1), gave them the power to receive that inheritance in heaven, by persevering until the end to be saved. And therefore he says the inheritance is kept within those whom, with the Lord's help, he knows must arrive at it by their merits, because those who do not keep the discipline of the Father do not deserve to receive the inheritance from Him.

1 Peter 1:5

You who are kept by the power of God through faith, etc. And the Lord said in the Gospel: In my Father's house are many mansions (John XIV). And again: It is not mine to give to you, but for whom it is prepared by my Father (Mark X). Therefore, seats are prepared in the kingdom of God, mansions prepared in the house of the Father, salvation prepared in heaven, only let him render himself worthy who desires to receive it. But since no one can make himself worthy solely by his own effort, nor can come to eternal salvation by his own strength, it is rightly prefaced: You who are kept by the power of God through faith. For no one can sustain themselves in good by their own free will's power, but help must be sought from Him through all things, that we may be perfected, from whom we have received the beginning of good action.

1 Peter 1:6

In which you will rejoice, etc. What he says "In which," signifies that at the last time, salvation prepared will be revealed and given to the worthy. Of which the Lord also said: Again I will see you, and your heart shall rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you (John XVI). [1 Peter 1:6] -- Now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved. He says, it is necessary to be grieved, because it is only through the sorrow of a fleeting world and afflictions that one can come to eternal joys. He says "for a little while," because when the eternal reward will be given, all that seemed severe and bitter in worldly tribulations will appear brief and light.

1 Peter 1:7

That the proof of your faith may be much more precious than gold, etc. And the book of Wisdom compares the sufferings of the saints to gold that is tested by fire, saying of the Lord: As gold in the furnace he has tried them, and received them as a burnt offering (Wis. III). Indeed, those whom He has found faithful in the furnace of tribulation, these He will take up in the joy

of reward as a pleasing sacrifice to Himself. And well is the patience of the saints likened to gold, for just as among metals there is nothing more precious than gold, so this is most worthy of praise before God. Hence it is written: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Psalm CXV). For as gold enclosed in the furnace is tested by fire, but when brought out it will show what brilliance it has, so the constancy of the faithful appears contemptible and foolish among the oppressions of the unfaithful; but when the time of retribution comes, after the contest of tribulations is ended, then it is shown how much glory and progress in the flames of passion their virtue has acquired. Hence it is aptly added:

1 Peter 1:7

Found unto praise and glory, etc. The proof of faith is found unto praise when the Judge, praising it, will say: I was hungry and you gave me food, etc. (Matt. XXV). It is found unto glory when, glorifying it, He introduces it: Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Ibid.). It is found unto honor when, with the wicked cast into eternal punishment, the just will go into eternal life (Ibid.). Of this, He Himself says: If anyone serves me, my Father will honor him (John XII). [1 Peter 1:8] -- Whom having not seen, you love, etc. And Paul says: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him (I Cor. II). [1 Peter 1:10] -- About which salvation the prophets inquired and searched, etc. They inquired and searched in secret from the Lord, or from angels, about the future grace of the Gospel, when or in what order eternal salvation would come to the world, which is found in their books. Therefore, one of them also deserved to be called "man of desires" by the angel for his great love of saving knowledge. But they prophesied by speaking openly to people and explaining what they knew in secret through internal contemplation.

1 Peter 1:11

Inquiring into what or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating, etc. The evangelist indicated these glories when he said: "For the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified" (John VII). There are, however, two glorifications of the Lord, according to the form of the assumed man: one, by which He rose from the dead; and the other, by which He ascended into heaven before the eyes of His disciples. A

third remains, also in the sight of men, when He will come in His majesty and that of the Father and the holy angels to render to each according to their works. [1 Peter 1:12] -- To whom it was revealed that not to themselves, etc. Among the many secrets revealed to the prophets, when they diligently searched and inquired about the future salvation, it was also revealed to them that the same salvation would not be in their days, but rather in yours, who are born in the last days of the world. He says this to warn them to take care of the proffered salvation, which the prophets and earlier just ones loved so much, desiring to live in the world at the time when, immediately after departing from the world, it would be permitted to ascend to the heavenly kingdoms.

1 Peter 1:12

Through those who evangelized to you, etc. Previously he had said that the prophets foretold his sufferings and subsequent glories by the Spirit of Christ, and now he says the apostles declare the same to them by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Hence, it is clear that the same Spirit of Christ was in the prophets before, who later [was] in the apostles; therefore the same faith in the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories were preached by both to the people, [with] the former still expecting it to come, [and] the latter [declaring] it had already come; and by this, [it is evident] that there is one Church, of which one part preceded the Lord's advent in the flesh, [and] another part followed.

1 Peter 1:12

Into whom angels long to look. It is indeed clear that so great the later glory of Jesus Christ, the man who suffered for us, followed, that even the angelic powers in heaven, though they are perfected in eternal happiness, not only rejoice to always look upon the eternal magnificence of the Deity, but also the glory of His assumed humanity. But it should be more diligently considered how it is said that angels desire to look into Him, since longing is not usually spoken of concerning that which we have, but that which we wish to have, for no one longs for what he has. How then do they desire to look into Christ, whose face they never cease to behold, unless the contemplation of the divine presence so beatifies the citizens of the heavenly homeland, that in an ineffable order for us, they are both always satisfied with the vision of His glory, and always hunger insatiably for His sweetness as if it

were new? For, as blessed Pope Gregory, wonderfully distinguishing the delights of the heart and of the body, says, bodily delights, when not possessed, kindle a grave desire in themselves, but when possessed and consumed, immediately turn the eater into disgust through satiety. On the contrary, spiritual delights, when not possessed, are in disgust; when possessed, are in desire; and they are hungered for more by the one who eats them more, as they are consumed more by the one who is hungry.

In those, appetite begets satiety, and satiety begets disgust; in these, appetite begets satiety, and satiety begets appetite. For spiritual delights increase desire in the mind while they satisfy it, because the more their flavor is perceived, the more it is known that they should be loved more. Moreover, what is said: "Into whom angels long to look," can also be rightly understood of the Holy Spirit, of whom it was promised: "Those who preached the Gospel to you in the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. For blessed Peter wished to refer this to the grace of divine pity, that He who is of such great majesty and glory, that His vision, as well as that of the Father and the Son (since indeed it is one and the same), is desired by angels in heaven, for the sake of human salvation sent the Spirit to earth, and infused it into the minds of the faithful to illuminate them.

1 Peter 1:13

Wherefore girding the loins of your mind, etc. Because it is promised to you, he says, that you shall see the revelation of Jesus Christ after this life, which angels now see, the greater the grace promised to you, the more diligently you ought to strive to be worthy to receive it. He girds the loins of his mind, who also restrains it from wandering thoughts. And rightly he says: Hope for the grace which is given to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ, because he who with girded loins of mind, that is, chaste in mind and body, awaits the Lord's coming, rightfully, when He is revealed, hopes. For he who does not know how to please the Lord, rightfully, in the hope of good things, fears lest they come sooner in the flesh. [1 Peter 1:14] -- As children of obedience, etc. Rightly he wishes them to be children of obedience, whom he had called elect in the preface to the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:15

But as he who has called you is holy, etc. This is similar to that in the Gospel: Be ye therefore perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5). [1 Peter 1:17] -- And if you call on the Father. Saying in prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven (Matt. 6). [1 Peter 1:17] -- Who without respect of persons judges, etc. Not like an earthly father who is accustomed to pardon his erring children more indulgently than his servants. But the Father God is of such justice and piety, that He transforms even humble and obedient servants, indeed even enemies who give themselves to Him, into the adoption of children, and again, those who seem more honorable under the name of children, for the fault of disobedience, utterly excludes from perpetual inheritance. [1 Peter 1:17] -- Conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your sojourning. Lest through idleness and negligence you become unworthy of such a Father, and while you are secure in the present sojourn, you may not attain the promised happiness of the homeland.

1 Peter 1:18

Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, with gold or silver, etc. The greater the price by which you were redeemed from the corruption of carnal life, the more you ought to fear, lest perhaps by returning to the corruption of vices you offend the spirit of your Redeemer. [1 Peter 1:23] -- Born not of corruptible seed, etc. Such is in the Gospel of John: To those who believed in his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1). Therefore, just as the price of the Lord's passion by which we have been redeemed is incorruptible, so also is the sacrament of the holy font by which we are reborn. These are so interconnected with each other that neither can confer salvation upon us without the other. For indeed, the Lord in the time of His Incarnation redeemed us all together with His holy blood, so that also in our time, individually through the regeneration of baptism, we ought to reach the fellowship of the same regeneration. Of this regeneration, it is well said that it is not of corruptible seed, but through the word of the living and eternal God, so that it is understood hence that just as from corruptible seed is born flesh which is corrupted, so through water consecrated by the word of God, a life that does not know faith is granted to us. This indeed is aptly supported by prophetic testimony, adding:

1 Peter 1:24

Because all flesh is like grass, etc. Therefore, just as perishable flesh generates perishable flesh, so the word of the Lord, which remains forever, gives eternal life in both flesh and soul to those whom it regenerates from water. Saint Cyprian, in his book on the Dress of Virgins, thus recalls this testimony: "Isaiah's God, he says, proclaims: All flesh is grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever." It is not fitting for any Christian, and especially not for a virgin, to consider any fleshly glory and honor, but to seek only the word of God and embrace what is good and will endure forever. Or if there is to be any glorying in the flesh, it is clearly when one suffers in the confession of the name, when a woman is found stronger than torturing men: when she endures fires, or crosses, or iron, or beasts, so that she may be crowned. Those are the precious adornments of the flesh, those are the better ornaments of the body. However, let it not trouble the reader that in this sentence of the prophet, he used "claritas" while our translation says "gloria," for both are commonly translated from the one Greek word, which is δόξα (doxa), into Latin.

1 PETER 2

1 Peter 2:1

Therefore, laying aside all malice and all deceit, etc. Because you have been recently reborn, he says, and made children of God through baptism, now be such by striving for a good way of life, just as newborn infants of an innocent age by nature, ignorant, namely, of malice and deceit, not knowing to pretend, envy, slander, or be committed to other such vices in any way. Just as they naturally desire their mother's milk, that they may grow to salvation and be able to come to eat bread, so also you should seek the simple rudiments of faith first from the breasts of the mother Church, that is, from the teachers of both Testaments, who either wrote divine words or even preach them to you in a living voice, so that by learning well you may come to the nourishment of the living Bread that came down from heaven, that is, through the sacraments of the Lord's incarnation, by which you have been reborn and by which you are nourished, you may come to the contemplation of the divine majesty.

1 Peter 2:2

Desire the rational and pure milk, without guile, etc. This precept of desiring the milk of the word pertains to those who come to hear the sacred readings unwillingly and disdainfully, ignorant of that thirst and hunger of which the Lord said: Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. V). Therefore, they arrive more slowly at the full growth of salvation, by which they could be refreshed with the solid food of the word, that is, to know the divine mysteries or to do greater good. [1 Peter 2:3] -- If you have tasted, that the Lord is sweet. In this way (he says), having forgiven and amended the malice and impurity of your heart, desire the vital nourishment of Christ, if you understand how great the multitude of divine sweetness is. For he who tastes nothing of the heavenly sweetness in his soul, it is not surprising if he does not avoid being defiled by earthly enticements. However, the Psalmist rightly advises to taste how sweet the Lord is, because there are some who perceive about God, not what is sweet inwardly, but what resounds outwardly. And though they understand certain secrets by perceiving them, they cannot experience their sweetness. And though they know how things are, they are ignorant, as I said, of how they taste. And since in that same Psalm from which this verse is taken, it is premised: Come to him and be enlightened (Psalm XXXIII), blessed Peter rightly added, saying:

1 Peter 2:4

To whom coming, a living stone, etc. And he takes this testimony about the stone from the psalm, where it is written: The stone which the builders rejected, this became the head of the corner (Psalm 117). Lest anyone should think in the Jewish sense that it was sung by the prophet about a material stone, which in the construction of any earthly house would be set against human disposition by divine judgment, he thoughtfully added living: To whom coming, he says, a living stone, to signify that it was said about Christ. He was rightly called a stone, who coming in the flesh, deigned to insert himself for the edification of the holy Church, by which this might be confirmed. However, living, who could say: I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14). Who was rejected by men, when they said: We have no king but Caesar (John 19). But chosen by God, when he himself said: But I am appointed king by him (Psalm 2), and so forth. And honored, when after the

death on the cross, God exalted him and gave him a name which is above every name (Philippians 2), and so forth.

1 Peter 2: 5

And you, as living stones, etc. He says they are being built upon because without our Lord Jesus Christ, specifically the living stone, no spiritual edifice can stand. For no one can lay another foundation except for Him (1 Cor. 3), by whose participation the faithful are made living stones, who through disbelief had been dead stones, meaning hard and insensible, to whom it is rightly said: I will take the stone heart from you and give you a heart of flesh (Ezek. 36). But as living stones, they are fit for the spiritual edifice, who, through the discretion of a learned teacher with superfluous actions and thoughts cut away, are squared like with the blow of an axe. And as the layers of stones in a wall are carried by one another, so too are the faithful each borne by the preceding just ones in the Church, and they themselves bear the following just ones through doctrine and tolerance until the last just one. He who, being borne by the previous ones, will not have one whom he should bear himself among the following. But He who carries the whole edifice and is not carried by anyone, is the Lord Christ, whence He is also called a precious stone founded on the foundation by the prophet. Likewise, He calls the chosen living stones, to insinuate the effort of their good intention or action, by which, with the grace of God preventing and accompanying, they must always be exercised.

For dead, that is, material stones, when they are prepared or placed in the building, can neither assist in the labor of the worker nor can they, except by falling, do anything of themselves, but wherever and however the builder places them, they endure insensibly there or fall away. But the blessed Peter does not want us to imitate the hardness and insensibility of such stones, but to be built upon the foundation of Christ as living stones, so that, with grace aiding us, we may cooperate by living soberly, justly, and piously, according to the example of him who said: And his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all (1 Cor. 15). For he was a living stone in the edification of the holy Church who, lest he should seem to have received the grace of God in vain, strove to labor diligently. And lest he should seem to have attributed any part of this labor to himself, he vigilantly added: Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me (*ibid.*). Therefore, anyone who is built into His house by Christ, as a liv-

ing stone, who, by the gift and help of the same, diligently strives to persevere in good works.

But whoever, having been incorporated into the holy Church by the grace of regeneration, does not strive to do anything more for his salvation, is, like a dead stone, utterly unworthy of celestial edification, and thus is to be rejected in divine judgment, and another who is worthy is to be placed in his stead, according to the command of Leviticus, where the stones of a leprous house are inspected by the priest and, if found incapable of purification, are to be counted among the unclean and are ordered to be removed from the order of clean stones. Be built into, he says, spiritual houses. He says those houses must be made into spiritual ones since there is one house of Christ made from all the elect angels and men, just as when there is one Catholic Church spread throughout the world, it is frequently called churches in the plural because of the various congregations of the faithful, distinct by various tribes, languages, and peoples. Hence, he says: I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you in the churches. Nor should it be overlooked that some codices have in the singular, Be built into, spiritual house; others: Be built up into a spiritual house. In which, indeed, the unity of the entire holy Church is more openly commended. But when he had said: Be built into spiritual houses, or spiritual house, he added:

1 Peter 2:5

Holy priesthood. By this most clearly, he exhorts us to be built up as a holy priesthood, being ourselves upon the foundation of Christ. Therefore, he calls the entire Church a holy priesthood, which only the house of Aaron had the name and office of under the law. For indeed, since we are all members of the high priest, we are all anointed with the oil of gladness, and what he added applies to all: [1 Peter 2:5] -- To offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. He calls our works, alms, and prayers spiritual sacrifices, distinguishing them from the carnal sacrifices of the law. However, what he says in conclusion, through Jesus Christ, pertains to all that he stated previously, because through his grace we are built up in him by wise architects, that is, ministers of the New Testament, and we are made spiritual houses by his Spirit, protected against the rains, winds, and lightning of temptations. And to participate in the holy priesthood and to do something good and acceptable to God, we can only do so through him. For as the

branches cannot bear fruit by themselves, unless they remain in the vine; so neither can you (he says) unless you remain in me.

1 Peter 2:6

For this reason, Scripture says: Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, etc. He cites this testimony from Isaiah to confirm what he had previously stated: To whom coming as to a living stone, establishing and affirming that the Lord Savior is called a stone by the prophets because of his firmness. And he added: [1 Peter 2:6] -- And everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. Because of this, he states what he said: And you, as living stones, are being built up. It fittingly agrees with the apostle's words: coming to a living stone or believing in him, you will not be put to shame; and with the verse from the psalm, where it is said: Draw near to him and be enlightened (Psalm 34), immediately followed by, And your faces shall not be ashamed (Ibid.). Similar to what John says: And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming (1 John 2).

1 Peter 2:7

Therefore, to you who believe belongs honor. Certainly this honor, that you may not be put to shame by him at his coming, but as he said: If anyone serves me, my Father will honor him (John 12). [1 Peter 2:7] -- However, for those who do not believe, the stone which the builders rejected. So that as they rejected him while building their deeds, refusing to place him in the foundation of their hearts, they themselves may be rejected by him at his coming, when he will refuse to accept as part of his heavenly house those who rejected him. And this distinction of honor for the believers and the rejection of the unbelievers extends thus far. Hence, speaking again of the believers, he says: [1 Peter 2:6] -- This is made the cornerstone. Because just as a cornerstone joins two walls, the Lord united the Jewish people and the Gentiles in one society of faith. And immediately he adds about the unbelievers:

1 Peter 2:8

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. Hence Paul also says: But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness (1 Cor. 1). [1 Peter 2:8] -- To those who stumble at the word, etc., They stumble at the word itself because it happens that they hear the word of God. They stumble in thought when they refuse to believe what

they hear. Highlighting their foolishness, he added: And they do not believe in what they were destined for. Because they were destined for this, that is, by nature men are made to believe in God and to obey his will. Solomon testifies to this when he says: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man (Eccles. 12). That is, every man is by nature made for this, to fear God and obey his commandments. Some manuscripts have: In which they were placed, which is understood according to what Paul says about God: For in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17).

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, etc. This testimony of praise was once given to the ancient people of God through Moses, which the apostle Peter now rightly gives to the Gentiles because they have believed in Christ, who as the cornerstone has united the Gentiles in that salvation which Israel had in him. He calls them a chosen race because of their faith, to distinguish them from those who, by rejecting the living stone, have themselves become reprobates. And a royal priesthood, because they are united to His body, who is the supreme king and true priest, granting His kingdom to His followers as a king, and as a pontiff cleansing their sins by the sacrifice of His own blood. He names them a royal priesthood, so that they may remember both to hope for an eternal kingdom and to always offer sacrifices of spotless conduct to God. They are also called a holy nation and a people for his possession, in accordance with what the apostle Paul, expounding the sentiment of the prophet, says: But my just one shall live by faith; and if he draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him; but we are not of those who draw back unto perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul (Hebrews 10). And in the Acts of the Apostles: The Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood (Acts 20). Therefore, we have been made a people for his possession by the blood of our Redeemer, which was formerly the people of Israel redeemed by the blood of the lamb from Egypt. Hence also, in the following verse, reminding mystically of the old history, he teaches the new people of God to fulfill it spiritually, saying:

1 Peter 2:9

That you may declare His virtues, etc. For just as those who were freed from Egyptian bondage through Moses sang a triumphal song to the Lord after

the crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh's army, so it is also proper for us, after receiving in baptism the remission of sins, to repay worthy thanks for heavenly benefits. For the Egyptians, who afflicted the people of God, and who are also interpreted as darkness or tribulations, aptly signify our sins, which are erased in baptism. The liberation of the children of Israel and their leading to the promised homeland aligns with the mystery of our redemption, through which we strive towards the light of the heavenly dwelling place, illuminated and guided by the grace of Christ. The light of this grace was also shown by the pillar of cloud and fire, which protected them from the darkness of the nights throughout their entire journey and led them on an indescribable path to the promised homeland's seats.

1 Peter 2:10

Who were once not a people of God, but now are a people of God, etc. He explicitly indicates through these verses that he wrote this Epistle to those who had come to faith from among the Gentiles, who were once alienated from the conversation of the people of God, but now by the grace of faith are united to His people, and have obtained the mercy which they did not know to hope for (Ephes. II). He takes them from the prophet Hosea, who, foretelling the vocation of the Gentiles, says: "I will call those who were not My people, My people, and her who had not received mercy, one who has received mercy. And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they will be called children of the living God" (Hosea I, II).

1 Peter 2:11

Dearest ones, I beseech you as sojourners and travelers, etc. Thus far, blessed Peter has generally instructed the Church, explaining both the benefits by which divine mercy has called us to salvation and the gifts by which, at times the Jews, but now also us, have been deemed worthy of honor. Hence, he earnestly exhorts the diverse persons of the faithful, lest by living carnally, they render themselves unworthy of such great grace of the Holy Spirit. Lest those who are distinguished by the royal and priestly title, subjugated by the malice of vices, degenerate from the glory of the nobility once promised to them. Therefore, first, he addresses servants and free persons, then women and men specifically, and after the general exhortation, he also shows how the elders and young people should conduct themselves. He suitably teaches

the free persons to abstain from carnal desires, because the freedom of a more relaxed life tends to endure greater dangers of titillating temptations, which wage war against the soul. For while the flesh, dulled by concupiscence, is being delicately subdued, indeed, the army of vices is being more firmly armed against the soul. He appropriately calls them sojourners and travelers, so that the less they subject their soul to earthly things, the more they remember they have a home in the heavens. For this is what customarily distinguishes the elect from the reprobates in this life; that the elect, now travelers and exiles, expect their homeland in the future, and thus enjoy the fleeting pleasures of the present less, as they hope to receive joys without end in the future and to reign eternally with Christ. But indeed the reprobates have their homeland here, whose soil they know how to long for with the desires of life, and therefore they will be relegated to eternal exile after this life, where, deprived of all pleasures, they will suffer adversities in torment alone.

1 Peter 2:12

So that in what they detract from you, etc. It frequently happened that the pagans who disparaged the faith of the Christians, because they had abandoned their gods, later, considering their chaste conduct and unbeaten heart in Christ, would stop maligning them, and rather begin to glorify and praise God, who was proven to be good and just by the goodness and justice of His worshippers. He says, "Let them glorify God on the day of visitation," that is, in the time of retribution, let the unbelievers now already recognize how great a glory through God is to be given to you, when they see that you constantly follow Him amid opposing dangers. [1 Peter 2:13] -- Be subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake. He says, to every human creature, to all human dignity, to every person, to every authority, to which divine disposition wished us to be subjected. For this is what he says: For God's sake, because there is no power but from God. And he who resists authority, resists the ordinance of God (Rom. XIII). Which creature he subsequently explains, adding:

1 Peter 2:13

Whether to the king as excelling, etc. Therefore, he speaks only of the king and leaders, but not of masters, because in this place he particularly instructs, as we have said before, those who are masters of slaves. Subsequently, he also

admonishes servants how they should serve their masters. He thus teaches the faithful servants of the eternal King also to be subjected to worldly powers, lest even in this the faith and religion of Christ be disparaged, that through it the rights of the human condition should be disturbed. For it can also rightly be understood what is said, to every human creature, to signify both faithful and unbelieving masters of things. [1 Peter 2:14] -- For the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of those who do good. Not that all kings or leaders indeed know how either to punish evildoers or to praise those who do good, but he narrates simply what the action of a good judge ought to be, that is, to restrain evildoers and reward those who act well. And even if a judge acts unjustly by condemning the good, nonetheless it pertains to the praise of those who endure his wickedness patiently, and resist his foolishness patiently. "Do you want," he says, "not to fear the power? Do good, and you will have praise from it" (Ibid.). He does not say "from that," but "from it," because even if human power does not praise, indeed if it even persecutes, if it kills with the sword like Paul, if it crucifies like Peter, you will have praise from it, since from the fact that it wrongs you, just and innocent, the patience of your virtue earns a crown of praise. For the following words teach that blessed Peter aimed at this sentiment, where it is said:

1 Peter 2:15

"Because this is the will of God, that by doing good, etc." This is therefore the praise of the good, to which he says leaders sent by the king, while using the ignorance of unwise leaders, the good act well to their own perpetual praise.

1 Peter 2:16

As free people, and not as those who have freedom as a veil for malice. Truly free people do good, who, the greater the freedom they enjoy among men, the more strictly, or rather more freely, they are subjected to divine servitude. But those also act as truly free who, in the example of the patriarch Joseph, although they are oppressed by human servitude, are compelled by no art to be slaves of vices. But indeed, they turn their freedom into a veil for malice, who, the less they are restrained by the yoke of human servitude, are the more widely enslaved by the dominion of sins; and when they serve their vices with impunity, they call it freedom, covering their guilt with this name. However, it can be understood generally according to that statement

of the Apostle Paul: "You were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh" (Gal. V). For we are rightly called free, who through baptism are freed from the bonds of sins; who, redeemed from demonic servitude, because made sons of God, have not received a greater faculty or license of sinning by such a gift of freedom; rather, if we sin, we immediately, having lost freedom, become slaves of sin. And whoever thinks that he is freed by the Lord for this reason, that he may sin more licentiously, such a person changes his freedom into a veil for malice. But blessed Peter wishes us to be free from the servitude of faults, so that we may be able to remain good and faithful servants of our Creator; whence he subsequently adds:

1 Peter 2:16

But as servants of God. Honor everyone, etc. Therefore, he urges to give due honor to all, and, according to the command of the Lord, to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Luke XX). And it is commendable that he commands the free also to love the brethren, so that they likewise remember that those who are subject to them by temporal condition have been made their brothers in Christ, invoking the Father together with them who judges without partiality. [1 Peter 2:18] -- Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle but also to the crooked, etc. He calls the crooked undisciplined, using a term derived from Greek speech. For in Greek, schola is called the place where young men usually devote themselves to literary studies and to listening to teachers; thus, schola is interpreted as leisure. Finally, in the psalm where we sing, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46), for that which we say "be still," the Greek has σχολάζετε. The learned in Greek are called scholars, and the unlearned and rustic are called uncultured. But he wishes the subjects to obey both, explaining more clearly how he commanded us to be subject to every human creature. Another translation has "difficult" for "crooked." And the holy bishop Fulgentius in his treatises puts it this way: "Serving with fear not only the good and gentle but also the harsher."

1 Peter 2:20

But if you suffer for doing good, etc. Note carefully how greatly he glorifies the condition of servants, whom he declares to be imitators of the Lord's

passion by doing good and, without fault, receiving punishment from cruel and wicked masters. Indeed, you hear that he suffered for us, and rejoice that he died for you; consider what follows: [1 Peter 2:21] -- Leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps. An example of tribulations, not of delights, of insults, scourges, pains, reproaches, thorns, the cross, wounds, death. In the psalm it is written: "Because of the words of your lips I have kept hard ways" (Psalm 17). Because of which words of God's lips, if not those by which he promises eternal life? [1 Peter 2:24] -- He himself bore our sins, etc. Whereas previously he spoke specifically to servants, now he admonishes in general that even masters be reminded of what God and the Lord endured for them. Indeed, he instructs the whole Church on what the Maker endured for its liberation. For he did not say "your sins," but also added himself: "He bore our sins in his body on the tree."

1 Peter 2: 25

For you were like sheep gone astray. How is it that he calls both sheep and gone astray, when those who lead a life in error are rather called by the name of goats than sheep, unless because the Lord knows who are his, who also endures many living wrongly for a long time, who he nevertheless foresees to be saved in the number of his sheep?

1 Peter 2: 25

But now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. He touches on the evangelical parable, where the pious Shepherd, having left ninety-nine sheep in the desert, came to visit the one that had gone astray. For what was said there, that having found it, he placed it on his shoulders rejoicing, this here the blessed Peter has stated beforehand, saying: Because he himself bore our sins in his body on the wood. Because indeed he wished to redeem us in such a way that the wood on which he would take away our sins, he had to hang upon, bearing it on his shoulders. Therefore, he says, to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Shepherd, namely, because he grants us the pastures of eternal life, he provides pastures of temporal grace in the present. Truly, overseer of your souls, because the Orient from on high has visited us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death (Luke 1). He visits daily the very light in us that he has granted, so that it does not fail by preserving, but rather grows by aiding. Certain Manuscripts have the very Greek: To the shepherd and bishop of your souls. However,

bishop in Latin is said to mean "superintendent." Because indeed the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are towards their prayers, so that out of all their tribulations he may deliver them. (Psalm 34).

1 PETER 3

1 Peter 3:1

Likewise, let women be subject to their own husbands, etc. It is to be noted that the blessed Peter desires women to be good and honest in subjection to unbelieving husbands in such a condition that they not only do nothing evil by their command, but also persist in a conversation so chaste as to be insurmountable, that by their example they may be able to be for their husbands a model of chastity and faith. [1 Peter 3:3] -- "Whose adornment let it not be outward, etc. Because, as Cyprian says, 'Those who are dressed in silk and purple cannot put on Christ. Adorned with gold, pearls, and necklaces, they have lost the ornaments of the heart and soul. If Peter also admonishes women to be restrained and governed by religious observance according to ecclesiastical discipline, who often excuse their adornments through their husbands, how much more is it proper for a virgin to observe this, to whom no excuse for adornment is fitting, nor can the lie of fault be transferred to another, but she alone remains in the crime?'

1 Peter 3:4

But let it be the hidden person of the heart, in the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit, etc. He preaches chastity and the adornment of the inner man in the incorruption of a quiet and meek spirit, saying almost: Since your outer person is corrupted, and you have ceased to have the blessedness of integrity, which is especially proper to virgins, imitate the incorruption of the spirit through strict abstinence, and what you cannot do with your body, perform with your mind. For Christ seeks these riches, and this adornment of your union. It is also remarkable and found this judgment dictated by the law of natural science, according to Pythagoras, that the true adornments of matrons are chastity, not garments. [1 Peter 3:7] -- Husbands, likewise dwelling with them according to knowledge, etc. Likewise, he says, provoking men to imitation because he had already commanded wives above, saying: Let husbands consider your chaste conduct in the fear of God. But according to knowledge, that they may know what God desires, and give honor to the

feminine vessel. If we abstain from intercourse, we give honor. If we do not abstain, it is clear that intercourse is contrary to honor."

1 Peter 3:7

That your prayers may not be hindered. And Paul says: Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer (1 Corinthians 7). Therefore, he reminds us that prayers are hindered by the marital duty, for whenever I render the due to my wife, I cannot pray. But if, according to another saying of the apostle, it is necessary to pray without ceasing, then I should never be devoted to marriage, lest I be hindered at any hour from the prayer I am always commanded to continue. [1 Peter 3:8] -- But all of you in faith be of one mind, sympathetic. As above he taught with appropriate discretion the various persons, conditions, and sexes, now he admonishes all in common in the cause of the Lord's faith, to have one heart and one soul.

1 Peter 3:9

Because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. Namely, with the Judge saying: Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom (Matthew 25). The blessing of inheritance can also be understood as that by which the Church is perpetually blessed in future life. Hence, now rejoicing in the hope of future things, it says: I will exalt you, my God the King, and I will bless your name forever and ever (Psalm 144). Therefore, what anyone wishes to find in the future, he should strive to meditate on and perform in the present, and bless both his Creator and neighbor with sincere voice, making himself worthy of both divine and fraternal blessing. [1 Peter 3:12] -- Because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, etc. Since blessed Peter forbade us to return evil for evil, rather ordered us to bless those who curse, he strengthens with prophetic testimony that both good and bad are always seen by the heavenly inspection, so that we may remember that both our patience by which we tolerate the wicked and our benevolence by which we wish good for our persecutors will be rewarded with an eternal reward, and that our persecutors, if they do not repent, shall rightly be punished, but if they do repent, we too will receive a crown of righteous rejoicing for their salvation which we implored from the Lord.

1 Peter 3:13

And who is there to harm you, etc. He speaks of those things that happen to us from adversaries through insulting words, through the loss of temporal goods, through bodily tortures. For all these and similar things, when inflicted upon the faithful, can in no way harm those who are zealous for good, especially according to knowledge, but rather bring the reward of patience to those who endure equanimously. On the contrary, they greatly harm those who inflict punishment by accumulating eternal punishment for themselves. But if anyone succumbs to such adversities and falls, it is not the one who inflicted the evil that harmed him, but he himself, who refused to bear it patiently. For the house which the wise man built did not fall because it did not endure the violence of tempests, but because it was founded upon a rock. And again, the house which the foolish man built foolishly did not fall because it was struck by tempests, but because it was placed upon sand. For both were equally tested by adversity striking them, but the firmness of the foundation gave the crown of perseverance to one, while the foolishness of the fragile structure overthrew the other. For no mishap, whether brought by the devil, by a wicked human, or by the general turmoil of passing things, can harm the perfect emulator of good. However, it is clear that many zealous for good have been harmed by others when they are ill-instructed in the knowledge of the truth which they love. For how many desiring to believe rightly in God and to live correctly in the Church have been unknowingly led astray by the madness of Arius, by the malice of Sabellius, or other heretics? Read the book of John Chrysostom, which he wrote about this: No one can be harmed by another unless by himself.

1 Peter 3:14

But even if you suffer anything for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. He says, not only does the one who inflicts evil upon those doing good not harm you at all, but also when the enemy persecutes you for the good deeds which he abhors, he provides you with a greater cause of blessedness as he exercises the strength of your patience, according to that saying of the gospel: Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake. [1 Peter 3:15] -- Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts. What does it mean to sanctify the Lord in our hearts, if not to contemplate His holiness, which is of incomprehensible glory, with the innermost affection of the heart? How much

strength He is able to give to those hoping in Him to overcome, whose inestimable holiness shines forth. [1 Peter 3:15] -- Always be prepared to provide an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. We must be prepared to give an account of our hope and faith to those who ask in two ways, so that we may reveal the just reasons for our hope and faith to everyone, whether they inquire faithfully or unfaithfully, and so that we always hold firm the very profession of our faith and hope, even amidst the pressures of adversaries, showing by patience how reasonably we have learned to maintain it, for the love of which we neither fear to suffer adversities nor to undergo death.

1 Peter 3:16

With gentleness and respect, maintaining a good conscience. In the very knowledge of doctrine, he advises observing the quality of teaching, so that humility, which is the teacher and mother of all virtues, may be spoken and shown through seeing. [1 Peter 3:16] -- So that when they malign you as evil-doers, etc. So that those who jeer at your faith and hope in heavenly things they cannot see, may see your good works, and by these be put to shame because they cannot deny they are openly good. Or certainly it should be understood this way: Ensure, by doing good, that those who disparage your good conduct, at the coming time of future retribution, may be put to shame, seeing you crowned with Christ, while they are damned with the devil.

1 Peter 3:17

For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. This statement elegantly refutes the foolishness of those who, when they are accused by their brothers for faults or even restrained by punishments, endure it completely patiently; but when they suffer insults, losses of property, or any adversities from others without fault, they immediately burst into anger, and those who previously seemed innocent, through impatience and murmuring, render themselves guilty. So that the difference in the scourging appears vastly different in unequal merits, let us see that Tobias, Saul, and Elymas were struck by the same affliction of blindness. But Tobias was struck in order that the virtue of his patience might shine more widely as an example to all; Saul so that he might be transformed from Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle; and Elymas so that, suffering the fitting punish-

ment for his treachery, he would cease to lead astray those who were about to believe. And if I were given a choice, I would rather, with such a Father, be subjected to just scourging, divine or human, than be dragged to the pursuit of justice by the force of unjust blows. Again, I would rather be pulled back from faults by a scourge than be subjected to eternal punishment for the insurmountable weight of sins.

1 Peter 3:18

Because Christ also once died for our sins, etc. Therefore, the righteous one who suffers imitates Christ; the one corrected by scourging imitates the thief who recognized Christ on the cross and entered paradise with Christ from the cross; the one who does not desist from faults even amid scourging imitates the left-hand thief, who ascended the cross for his sins and after the cross fell into Tartarus. But he recalls that Christ died once, so that it might also remind us that an eternal reward is given for our temporary sufferings.

1 Peter 3:18

That He might present us to God, indeed mortified in the flesh, etc. Concerning this mortification of the flesh and vivification of the spirit, which those who labor for the Lord through patience possess, the apostle Paul also speaks: Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day (II Cor. IV). Therefore Christ offers us to God the Father when we joyfully sacrifice ourselves for Him through the mortification of the flesh, that is, He presents our praiseworthy life in the sight of the Father. Or certainly, He offers us to God when He introduces us, freed from the flesh, into the eternal kingdom. Indeed, as it is said: Made alive by the Spirit: Saint Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, does not refer this to the human spirit, which is better vivified when the flesh is mortified, as the prophet says about the Lord: To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite (Isaiah LVII), but rather refers it to the grace of the Holy Spirit, who gives eternal life to those mortifying their flesh. For he also uses this testimony against the Arians, who contradict the equality of the Holy Trinity, affirming that by the indivisible unity of divine operation, the Father gives life, the Son gives life, and the Holy Spirit gives life. The Father and the Son, as it is written: For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. The Holy Spirit, indeed, as it is declared by this testimony, which is said of the Son, that He might present us to God,

indeed mortified in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit; and therefore, where the operation is one, the substance or essence cannot be different.

1 Peter 3:19

In which he also preached to those who were confined in the flesh, etc. He who, coming in the flesh in our times, proclaimed the way of life to the world, also came in spirit before the flood to those who were then unbelieving and living carnally, and preached to them. For he was in Noah and the other saints of that time through the Holy Spirit, and through their good conduct preached to the wicked people of that age, so that they might turn to better ways. For he calls those confined in the flesh, those heavily burdened by carnal desires. Hence, Scripture says of them: "For all flesh had corrupted its way" (Gen. VI). And what he says, "in which," refers to what he had stated previously, that he might present us to God. For even then if anyone had wished to believe in the preaching of the Lord, which he manifested through the life of the faithful, he rejoiced to present even them to God the Father. However, those who disparaged the good as if they were evildoers were confounded by the coming flood. His saying, "in which," can be understood in both ways: in those confined in the flesh, he coming in spirit preached, so that through the same preaching, it might result in a crown of praise for the believers and confusion for those who persisted in unbelief. Some manuscripts read: "In which also he who was in prison, preached coming in spirit.

This refers to the same intent of wicked and unbelieving people, who, since they had their minds darkened by darkness, are rightfully said to be confined in prison even in this life. In this prison, indeed, they are burdened by inner darkness, that is, blindness of mind and unjust works, until, being released from the flesh, they are cast into the outer darkness and the prison of eternal damnation. Of which the Lord says in the Gospel: "And the judge will hand you over to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison" (Matt. V). Although even the saints, in this life, when they long for the joy of the heavenly homeland, rightly proclaim themselves to be in prison, as the Psalmist says: "Bring my soul out of prison, to give thanks to your name" (Psalm CXLII). There is a great difference between the two prisons, for the reprobates are in the prison of sins and ignorance, but the righteous, although placed in the prison of tribulations, with hearts always expanded in the light of righteousness towards God, rejoice. This was exemplified by the

apostles Paul and Silas, who, at midnight, in the terror of the deepest prison, bound and beaten, sang a hymn of praise to God with a most joyful voice. Some have interpreted this passage to mean that the consolation of which the Lord speaks to the apostles: "Many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it" (Matt.

XIII); and of which the Psalmist says: "My eyes fail, longing for your word, saying, 'When will you comfort me?'" (Psalm CXIX), that the saints resting in the underworld desired this, and that when the Lord descended to the underworld, this consolation or exhortation was preached even to those who had been in prison and unbelieving in the days of Noah. And that is what he said, but the Catholic faith holds that the Lord, descending to the underworld, only led out his faithful ones, bringing them to the heavenly kingdoms with him, not liberating those souls imprisoned due to their crimes, but daily demonstrating the life of life either through himself or through the examples or words of his faithful in this life. About whom it is well said:

1 Peter 3:20

Those who had once been unbelievers, etc. For even the patience of God was a proclamation of His, when Noah, for a hundred years, persisted in the works of the ark, demonstrating daily through the execution of this work what was to come upon the world. Hence Paul says: Do you not know that the patience of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. II). Another translation has this passage as follows: Christ died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, put to death in the body but made alive in the spirit. In which spirit He also preached to those who were in prison, who once did not believe in those days, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, etc. [1 Peter 3:20] -- In which few, that is, eight souls were saved, etc. The form of baptism is likened to the ark and the waters of the flood. And rightly so, because the very construction of the ark from hewn wood signifies the building of the Church, which is done by gathering the faithful souls through the architects of the word. And the fact that while the whole world was perishing, few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water, signifies that in comparison to the perishing Gentiles, Jews, heretics, and false believers, the number of the elect is much smaller. Hence it is said of the narrow gate and the hard road that leads to life: And few are those who find it (Matt.

VII). And again: Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke XII). About this little flock also it is aptly added here:

1 Peter 3: 21

Not the removal of the filth of the flesh, etc. For where is a good conscience, except where there is also unfeigned faith? For the apostle Paul teaches that the goal of the commandment is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith (1 Tim. 1). Therefore, the water of the flood did not save those placed outside the ark, but killed them; without a doubt, it prefigured that every heretic, even if having the sacrament of baptism, is not uplifted by the waters but plunged into hell by them, whereas the ark is elevated to heaven. The number eight of the souls who were saved through water also signifies that the holy Church received the washing of baptism as a sacrament of the Lord's resurrection, so that just as He rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, so too we, cleansed from sins through the water of regeneration, might walk in newness of life (Rom. 6). For on the eighth day, that is, after the seventh of the Sabbath, the Lord, rising from the dead, showed us an example of future resurrection and the mystery of a new way of life, by which, placed on earth, we would lead a heavenly life. Peter also added this by explaining, saying:

1 Peter 3: 21

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, etc. For just as He, rising from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, so also has He, through baptism, marked the way of salvation and the entrance to the heavenly kingdom open for us. Well indeed does it say: Swallowing death; for what we swallow, we cause never to appear again by the power of our bodies. And the Lord swallowed death, which, by rising from the dead, He so completely consumed that it could not have any power against Him through any contact with corruption, and, retaining the appearance of a true body, all stain of the former frailty was completely absent. This same thing is also promised to us in the end, as the Apostle says when speaking of our resurrection: Then will come about the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15). Well swallowed up, because when we also have been made partakers of eternal life, the power of the immortal body will so take

away all defect of past corruption just as the flame of fire consumes a drop of water by its heat.

1 Peter 3:22

Having gone up to heaven, etc. There is no doubt that all angels and all powers and authorities of the heavenly homeland have always been subject to the Son of God, whom they praise, tremble before, and adore as one God with the Father and the Holy Spirit without beginning. But blessed Peter necessarily considered it appropriate to note that the assumed humanity is so gloriously exalted by the resurrection that it is preferred by an incomparable summit to the dignity of all angelic power. According to which the Psalmist also said about Him to the Father: You have made Him a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8); immediately adding: You have crowned Him with glory and honor, and have set Him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet (Ibid.).

1 P E T E R 4

1 Peter 4:1

Therefore, Christ having suffered in the flesh, etc. After he had based the example of the Lord's resurrection and our cleansing which occurs in baptism on the sacrament of the ark and the flood, he returns to what he had begun to say, that, by imitating the work of our Redeemer, we should, in the midst of the good deeds we do, patiently endure the malice of wicked men. It should be noted, however, that he speaks distinctly when he says: Therefore, Christ having suffered in the flesh. For as blessed Ambrose says: "His flesh suffered, but Divinity, free from death, allowed the body to suffer by law of human nature." Or can Divinity indeed die, when the soul cannot? He says, do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul (Matt. X). If therefore the soul cannot be killed, how can Divinity be killed?

1 Peter 4:1

Because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sins, etc. Whoever among the saints has subjected his body to martyrdom under the violence of persecutors, there is no doubt that, as much as possible given human nature, he has abstained from sins until the end of his life. For what could he think about perpetrating sin, what about carnal desires, what but the will of God could he entertain in his mind, who, whether affixed to a cross, surrounded by blows of stones, subdued by the bites of beasts, placed upon flames, pierced

by the whips of scorpions, or afflicted by any other kind of punishment, was compelled to desire only this: that with the battle ended, he might receive the crown of life? Therefore, blessed Peter wishes us always to imitate the minds of such people, when he instructs us to arm ourselves with the same thought against the wickedness of the depraved and against the delights of vices, proposing the example of the Lord's passion, wishing it to be understood that even we, resting in the peace of the Church, if we assume the disposition of a sufferer, easily avoid the falls of all sins and submit all desires to the commands of divine will, aided by the Lord. Finally, even the Psalmist prays to the Lord, saying: "Pierce my flesh with your fear, for I am in awe of your judgments" (Psalm 118). And the Apostle: "Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5). Therefore, whoever extinguishes carnal desires in the mind with the fear of heavenly judgments, already similar to the crucified and suffering for Christ, lives dead to sins, living only in service to God.

1 Peter 4: 4

In which they marvel, not running with you, etc. Because (he says) you have crucified your flesh with its passions and desires, it follows indeed that although they blaspheme you on account of their own infidelity, as separated from their company, yet in your behavior they always see works of justice and piety, which they rightfully marvel at and for which they rightly praise and revere the Christian faith. [1 Peter 4:5] -- Who shall give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. Therefore (he says) care less, grieve less, if you are blasphemed by the reprobate while doing good, because even if you remain silent, God the judge, who is indeed just, will not remain silent or be restrained, and he will restore worthy rewards both for their blasphemy and for your patience. [1 Peter 4:6] -- Because of this, the gospel was preached even to the dead, etc. So great is God's care, so great his love, so great is his desire that we be mortified in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, that he commanded the word of faith to be preached even to those who are involved in greater crimes and justly named among the dead, namely, in indulgences, desires, drunkenness, revelries, drinkings, and illicit idol worship, so that these too, being judged, that is, having spurned and rejected carnal desires, may live spiritually, and together with those whom the grace of the Gospel found living innocently, may expect eternal life.

1 Peter 4:7

The end of all things is near. Let no one soothe themselves with the delay of the future judgment, in which he said that the living and the dead were to be judged; he prudently warns, for although the coming of the final judgment is uncertain, it is certain to all that in this mortal life they cannot long endure. [1 Peter 4:7] -- Be therefore prudent, etc. And the Lord in the Gospel has commanded us to always pray and watch, in view of the uncertain end. For he says, speaking of the day of judgment: Watch therefore, praying continually, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke XXI). But we are rightly ordered to watch in prayers, so that when we stand for prayer, all carnal and secular thought may depart, nor should the mind then think of anything except what it is praying for. For often the enemy sneaks in and subtly deceiving, distracts our prayers so that we both have one thing in our heart and utter another with our voice, whereas with sincere intention, it is not the sound of the voice but the sense of the soul that ought to pray to God.

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, have fervent charity among yourselves. He rightly added "fervent," because we can always love, but we cannot always be vigilant in prayers due to the frailty of the flesh; we might not always be able to engage in the virtues he subsequently mentions, that is, hospitality, teaching, the administration of graces, whether common or special to our neighbors, and other such things. For indeed, these must necessarily be done both through bodily effort and at appropriate times. However, the charity itself, under whose influence these external actions are performed, can always be present within the inner person, even though it cannot always be publicly displayed. [1 Peter 4:8] -- Because charity covers a multitude of sins. Especially when it is truthfully said to God: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matth. VI). And indeed, it is certain that all the good works we do atone for and cover the faults we have committed, but this is particularly said of charity, through which we forgive our neighbors what they owe us, because it is most just with God that according to the measure of mercy we have used, it will be measured to us. As, on the contrary, the wise man severely rebukes the merciless, saying: "A man preserves anger against man, and seeks healing from

God?" (Eccli. XXVIII). And there is no doubt that in the case of one who, through charity, does everything he can for the correction of his neighbor, admonishing, rebuking, chastising, charity itself covers a multitude of sins, as James attests, saying: "He who converts a sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (James V).

1 Peter 4:11

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the words of God. Fearing, indeed, lest he should say or command anything beyond the will of God or beyond what is clearly prescribed in the holy Scriptures, and be found as a false witness of God, or sacrilegious, or introducing something foreign to the doctrine of the Lord, or certainly omitting and passing over something of those things that are pleasing to God, since He Himself very manifestly instructs the preachers of truth concerning those whom they teach into life, saying: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew XXVIII). For He commands us to teach not just parts but all those things to be observed by their hearers. [1 Peter 4:11] -- If anyone ministers, etc. Let everyone more humbly render every good thing he can to his neighbor, as certainly as he knows that he cannot have what he bestows from himself.

1 Peter 4:11

That in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ, etc. According to the command of Jesus Christ Himself, who said: "Let your good works be seen, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew V). Thus, God is honored in our actions when whatever good things we do according to His will, we attribute not to our own merits but to His grace; yet, on the contrary, we attribute the evil things we do only to our own wickedness or ignorance. [1 Peter 4:12] -- Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal, etc. Some manuscripts read: Do not be strangers to the fiery ordeal. The meaning of both expressions is apparent, because a faithful person should neither be surprised at why he suffers tribulations in this life, as it is for the reason that he is now tried with tribulations so that, when proven, he may be deemed worthy to receive the crown of future life; nor should anyone consider himself to be a stranger and alien from the members of Christ because he is struck by the adversities of the present age, since the death exit of the Lord (Psalm LXVII), and never in His Church, from the first martyr Abel to the

last elect who will be born at the end of the age, has the persecution by unbelievers ceased. Therefore, well did he say, Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal, he added:

1 Peter 4:12

As though something new were happening to you. For it is very ancient and common for the chosen of God to endure adversities in this present life for eternal salvation. [1 Peter 4:15] -- But let none of you suffer as a murderer, etc. For he suffers as a blasphemer who, at the time of his suffering, is carried away into the injury of his persecutor. [1 Peter 4:17] -- For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God. There are two judgments of God indicated by Scripture: one hidden, the other manifest. The hidden judgment is the punishment by which each human being is now either exercised for purification or admonished for conversion, or, if he has scorned the call and discipline of God, blinded for condemnation. The manifest judgment is when the Lord is to come to judge the living and the dead. Now it is said to be the time in which judgment begins from the house of the Lord, that is, from the Church, which is being prepared for future joys through the exercise of present afflictions. For the reprobate now lead a transient life so much more securely and without any scourge of retribution, as there remains nothing else for them in the future but retribution, according to that saying of the blessed Job: They spend their days in prosperity, and in a moment they go down to the grave.

1 Peter 4:17

If it begins with us first, what will be the end of those, etc.? From this it is inferred how sternly the Judge will strike those whom he rejects, if he thus torments here those whom he loves. For if the children are scourged, what can the wicked servants expect? [1 Peter 4:18] -- And if the righteous man is scarcely saved, etc. The Pelagians do not want to believe that in one man the entire mass of the human race is corrupted and utterly damned. From this vice and condemnation of one man alone, the grace of Christ heals and liberates. For why should the righteous man be scarcely saved? Is it a labor for God to free the righteous man? By no means. But in order to show that it was deservedly condemned by nature, the Almighty Himself does not wish to easily liberate from such a great evil. Because of this, both sins are easily fallen into and justice is laborious, except for those who love. But the charity

that makes those who love comes from God. It is to be noted, however, that Blessed Peter took this sentence from the Proverbs of Solomon according to the ancient Editio, for which in our version that descends from the Hebrew truth, it is written: If the righteous man receives on earth, how much more the impious and the sinner (Proverbs XI)? Which is to say openly: If the fragility of mortal life is so great that not even the righteous who are to be crowned in Heaven pass through it without tribulation because of the innumerable errors of corrupted nature, how much more those who are deprived of heavenly grace expect the certain outcome of their perpetual damnation?

1 PETER 5

1 Peter 5:1

Therefore, elders who are among you, I beseech you, etc. For he is indeed a witness, who stood by him suffering, and saw all things as they happened. Or certainly because he himself, for the name of Christ, suffered imprisonment, chains, and scourging, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. [1 Peter 5:1] -- Who is also a partaker of the glory that is to be revealed in the future. Clearly, this happened when on the holy mountain he beheld the heavenly glory of His face with James and John, or when he saw the power of His resurrection and ascension with the other disciples who were present. [1 Peter 5:2] -- Feed the flock of God that is among you. Just as the Lord commanded Blessed Peter to have care for His entire flock, that is, the Church, so Peter rightly commands the subsequent pastors of the Church to protect with diligent governance the flock of God that is among them.

1 Peter 5:2

Providing not forcefully but willingly, etc. One who feeds the flock of God and provides out of necessity for material things, having nothing to live on, therefore preaches the Gospel so that he may live from the Gospel. But willingly and according to God is one who, looking not for any earthly reward, but only for the heavenly reward, preaches the word of God. The Apostle Paul distinguishes between the two: "For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship." Stewardship is said to be entrusted to someone who is commanded to take care of an external matter for a time. For instance, one who is commanded to distribute his master's wheat to his fellow servants in due time is similar to one who does not willingly, but reluctantly, evangelizes. [1 Peter 5:2] -- Neither

for shameful profit, but willingly. He provides for the flock of God for shameful profit, who preaches for gain and earthly benefits, while all works of religion ought to be done willingly. According to the example of the construction of the tabernacle, which prefigured the present construction of the Church, where all the multitude of the children of Israel offered the first-fruits to the Lord with prompt and devoted minds for the construction of the tabernacle, giving all things freely, and the craftsmen offered themselves willingly to do the work.

1 Peter 5:3

Nor as being lords over those assigned to your care, etc. So that the humility, which you desire your subjects to have towards you and among themselves, you may first show by your own actions and keep in your own mind intact, according to the word of the Lord: "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant; and whoever wants to be first among you must be the servant of all" (Matthew XXIII). Paul carefully observing this precept says: "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." [1 Peter 5:5] -- Likewise, young men, be subject to the elders. After teaching the elders how to lead, it was necessary to also instruct the younger ones to obey their paternal provision. However, it was not necessary to speak much to them, but only to give the precept of subjection. For surely he had commanded the elders to be examples to those under them, and it sufficed for the younger ones to look to the good examples of their elders and devoutly imitate them. But lest the superiors hearing these things should think that only the subjects are to observe the laws of humility and not also themselves, he immediately added by admonishing generally:

1 Peter 5:5

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another. For he says all, meaning both the elders and the young men, who are commanded to manifest the virtue of humility towards one another, both by ruling and by humbly obeying. This is something we read that Peter himself did, when, upon entering Caesarea, Cornelius humbly fell at his feet, and he humbly raised him up, saying: Stand up, I too am just a man like you (Acts X). And

indeed Cornelius had not yet been reborn in Christ, nor had he yet been incorporated into the members of the Church. Therefore, all are either taught to have humility towards one another by example, or this is also insinuated by word because he knew that the vice of pride, which cast the angels down from heaven, ought to be guarded against by all. He prudently warns and refreshes all with the accompanying judgment of Solomon, saying:

1 Peter 5:5

For God resists the proud, etc. And he immediately explains what that same grace is which God bestows upon the humble, when he subsequently adds by admonishing: [1 Peter 5:6] -- Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, etc. Thus, He grants this grace to the humble, so that the more they are humbled for His sake at the time of the struggle, the more gloriously they may be exalted by Him at the time of recompense. But humility can be understood in many ways in this context, that is, both the humility where someone, beginning the path of virtues, is healthily worn down to wash away the sins they have committed, and the humility that is shown voluntarily, out of devotion of mind, to God or to neighbors in peace regarding surrounding matters, and also the humility where, under the attacks of persecution storms, the undefeated soul is armed with the virtue of patience. To every kind of humility devout to God, that reward succeeds, so that those who humble themselves during their pilgrimage will be exalted during His visitation.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober and vigilant, etc. In the exposition of this sentence, let us place not our own words, but those of the blessed Cyprian. "He (says he) circles around us individually, and like an enemy besieging enclosed walls, he inspects and tests to see if there is any part of the members that is less stable and less dependable, through which entry to the interior may be gained. He offers alluring forms and easy pleasures to the eyes so that through sight he may destroy chastity. He tries to tempt the ears through melodious music so that the hearing of a sweeter sound may dissolve and weaken Christian vigor. He provokes the tongue with revilement, incites the hand with injuries inducing it to the petulance of killing; to make one a fraudster, he opposes unjust gains; to capture the soul with money, he introduces pernicious advantages. He promises earthly honors to take away heavenly ones. He presents false things

to steal the true. And when he cannot deceive secretly, he openly threatens, always restlessly and always hostile, intending the threat of a turbulent persecution to overpower the servants of God. In peace, he is deceitful; in persecution, violent. Therefore, against all the deceitful ambushes and open threats of the devil, the mind must stand trained and armed, as prepared always to resist as the enemy is to attack always."

1 Peter 5:9

Resist strong in faith, etc. Be (he says) so much stronger in faith, have so much more patience to overcome the deceits of the devil, as it is certain that you are not tempted alone, but the same passion that wearies you is common to the Church of Christ which is throughout the whole world, that is to say, to your brotherhood. And because the righteous have always suffered since the foundation of the world, let it shame you to be unable to endure alone above all others. [1 Peter 5:12] -- Through Sylvanus, your faithful brother, etc. What he says, beseeching, can refer to what precedes, because he writes briefly after all, not commanding, but beseeching them to stand firm in faith. It can also be rightly connected to what follows, so that it is understood that he not only testifies that this is their true grace which he declares by writing, since indeed there is no other in whom we must be saved (Acts IV), but also urges them to make this their true grace which they have been imbued with in Christ. For the grace of Christ becomes their grace, who accept it with a pure heart. For he who despises the grace of God does not diminish grace itself, but makes it not his own, that is, makes it to not benefit himself.

1 Peter 5:13

The Church which is gathered in Babylon greets you, etc. He calls Rome Babylon figuratively, evidently because of the confusion of manifold idolatry. In the midst of which, the holy Church, now immature and very small, was shining forth, in the example of the Israelite people who once, small in number and captured, sitting by the rivers of Babylon, wept for the absence of the holy land, nor could they sing the Lord's song in a foreign land (Psalm 136). And blessed Peter appropriately, while exhorting his listeners to endure present adversities, mentions the Church which is established with him in Babylon, that is, in the confusion of tribulations. And yet, he confirms it to be gathered, to show that the holy city of God in this life cannot

be free from the intermingling and oppression of the city of the devil, which Babylon signifies. He calls Mark his son, who is said to become his son through baptism. Hence it is clear that before he sent Mark from Rome to Alexandria to preach the gospel, he wrote this Epistle. In the time of Emperor Claudius, both Peter and Mark came to Rome, and Mark himself, after composing his Gospel in Rome, was sent to Alexandria. Whence it is inferred that when Peter sought a place and time to write this Epistle, the place was Rome, the time was during the reign of Claudius Caesar.

1 Peter 5:14

Greet one another with a holy kiss. With a holy kiss, a true kiss, a peaceful kiss, a dove-like kiss, not deceitful, not polluted, like the one Joab used to kill Amasa, like the one Judas used to betray the Savior, like those who speak peace with their neighbor, but evil is in their hearts (Psalm 27). Therefore, they greet one another with a holy kiss, who do not love in word or tongue, but in deed and truth. [1 Peter 5:10] -- Grace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus. He began the Epistle with grace, ended with grace, and sprinkled grace throughout, in order to condemn the Pelagian error in every part of his speech and to teach that the Church of Christ can only be saved by his grace. And thoughtfully, when he said: Grace to you, he added: To all who are in Christ Jesus, signifying that what he wrote to a few Churches, that is, to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he wrote to all the Churches of Christ throughout the world. Just as John, in the Apocalypse, when he admonished the seven Churches of Asia individually as befitting each, added at the end of each, thus concluding: He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches (Apoc. II), plainly indicating that everything he wrote to any one Church, was written to all Churches of the faithful who have a discerning ear.

2 PETER 1

2 Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, etc. It is written later in this Epistle: Behold, beloved, I write to you this second Epistle. Hence it is clear that he wrote this to the same elect proselytes dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, to whom he had sent the first Epistle. He considers them equals to himself, not because they had received circumcision according to the Law, which, being a Jew by nature, he himself

held, but because they had received the same faith he had obtained through the illuminating grace of Christ. For it is not legal circumcision, but only evangelical faith that unites the peoples of the nations with the ancient people of God. But, since the same faith cannot save without works, it is rightly added: [2 Peter 1:1] -- In the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, the apostle Peter writes a letter to them, greeting those who have obtained an equal faith to his own, and exercise it through works of righteousness. Namely, the righteousness which human prudence has not discovered, nor legal institution teaches, but the Lord and our Savior speaking through the Gospel has shown, when he says: Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5). And again: You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder. But I say to you, etc. (Ibid.).

2 Peter 1:2

Grace and peace be multiplied to you, etc. In the first Epistle he wrote: Grace and peace be multiplied to you (1 Peter 1). But in this one: Grace and peace be fulfilled to you, because, of course, he wrote the former letter to those beginning, and this one to those more perfect. For peace and grace are multiplied to those advancing well in this life through faith, but will be fulfilled for those arriving in the other life through vision. Hence, well, when saying: Grace and peace be fulfilled to you, he added: In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because this is eternal life (he says), that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17). And again: If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8).

2 Peter 1:3

Just as His divine power has given us all things, etc. This statement depends on the previous sentences. The meaning is: Grace and peace be multiplied to you as you come to know our Lord Jesus Christ perfectly. And know this too through Him, that all things of His divine power have been given to us through His grace, which are sufficient for attaining life and preserving piety. Hence, He says: Because everything I have heard from My Father I have made known to you (John XV). And elsewhere: And the glory which You have given Me, I have given them (John XVII). But if it is read as some manuscripts have: Which has been given for life and piety, then the meaning

will be: So that you may understand how our Lord has given all things of His divine power to us according to the measure of our capacity, which power has been given for us to attain life and piety. For this form of expression is very common in the Scriptures; and it is called by grammarians ellipsis, that is, the omission of a necessary word, such as in the Psalm: For neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert mountains. It implies, for the way of escape is evident, for God is judge everywhere (Psalm LXXIV).

2 Peter 1: 3

Through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and virtue. And this too depends on the previous passage, because through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, we have recognized all the mysteries of His divinity by which we are saved. He called us by His own glory and virtue, for He did not send an angel to our salvation, nor an archangel, nor did He find in us any merit for which we were to be saved, but rather seeing us as weak and inglorious, He redeemed us by His own power and glory. Hence He says: You did not choose Me, but I chose you (John XV). [2 Peter 1:4] -- By which He has given us exceedingly great and precious promises. By which means, through the knowledge of Him, because the more perfectly one knows God, the more profoundly one feels the greatness of His promises.

2 Peter 1: 4

That through these things you may become partakers of the divine nature. He suddenly changes the person, and who had previously spoken about himself and his own things: He has given us precious promises, immediately turned to those to whom he was speaking: That through these, he says, you may become partakers of the divine nature. This he does not by chance, but providentially. Therefore (he says) the Lord has revealed to us, who by nature are Jews, who are born under the law, who are even physically instructed by his teaching, all the secrets of his divine power, therefore to us, that is, to his disciples, he has given the greatest and most precious promises of his Spirit, that through these even you who are from the Gentiles, who were not able to see him physically, might be made partakers of his divine nature by us who teach you what we have heard from him, by us consecrating you through his mysteries. Hence, very rightly he said above: May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, how all things of his divine power which have been given to us for life and piety, can also be taken

as said: May grace and peace be multiplied to you in this, that you may know our Lord Jesus Christ, even you, just as to us through him all the promises or gifts of his divine power, which lead to life and piety, have been given. So that just as we have received the promised gifts from him, or we confidently trust without any doubt that we will receive them, so also may you not doubt about his gifts.

2 Peter 1: 4

Fleeing from the corruption of lust that is in the world. He rightly says that the lust of the world has corruption, and therefore must be fled from, according to him who says: "Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent" (Ecclesiasticus 21), because there is also incorruptible lust, about which it is sung: "My soul has desired and fainted after the courts of the Lord" (Psalm 83). About which also in the book of Wisdom through a figure of speech called in Greek κλίμαξ, in Latin gradation, it is very beautifully reported: "The beginning," he says, "of wisdom is the most true desire for discipline" (Wisdom 6). Therefore, care for discipline is love, and love is the keeping of its laws. But keeping of the laws is the completion of incorruption. And incorruption makes one to be near to God. Therefore, the desire for wisdom leads to the eternal kingdom.

2 Peter 1: 5

But you, giving all diligence, supply virtue in your faith. Virtue in this place is placed not for strength and miracles, but for good conduct; which is rightly to be joined to faith, lest it be idle and dead without works: in which he rightly commanded that all diligence be added, because he who is soft and negligent in his work is brother to him who destroys his work. [2 Peter 1:5] -- And in virtue, knowledge. According to that of Isaiah: "Learn to do well, seek judgment." [2 Peter 1:6] -- And in knowledge, temperance. So that when they have learned to do well, immediately they abstain from evils, lest knowledge of heavenly things fall in vain, if one neglects to restrain himself from earthly temptations. [2 Peter 1:6] -- And in temperance, patience. It is always necessary that temperance is accompanied by patience, so that whoever has learned to restrain himself from the pleasures of the world may also endure adversities with a firm heart, armed for justice from the right hand and the left (2 Corinthians 6).

2 Peter 1:6

And in patience, godliness. So that he may be kind towards those whom he patiently endures, according to that of the apostle Paul: "Charity is patient, is kind" (1 Corinthians 13). [2 Peter 1:7] -- In piety, however, the love of brotherhood. So that no one renders the works of piety to their enemies with any other view than that of brotherly love. This, of course, obtaining in all temptation, aims at converting those whom one cannot teach or rebuke, to the affection of piety by praying or doing good. [2 Peter 1:7] -- In the love of brotherhood, charity. Here he specifically calls charity that by which we love the Creator, which, as the degrees of virtues advance, is rightly joined to the love of brotherhood, because neither God can be perfectly loved without a neighbor, nor a neighbor without God. Indeed, the love of God is superior to the love of neighbors, because we are commanded to love them as ourselves, but God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength (Mark XII), however, through the practice of brotherly love we ought to ascend to the love of the Creator. For he who does not love his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he does not see (1 John IV)?

2 Peter 1:8

For if all these things are present with you and abound, not empty, etc. He said if they abound, if with superior virtue they prevail against the wars of vices. [2 Peter 1:9] -- For he to whom these things are not present is blind, etc. The eye signifies knowledge, the hand signifies work. He is blind and groping with his hand who, not having the knowledge of righteous work, performs whatever seems right to him, and, ignorant of the light of truth, extends his hand to a work he does not see, lifts his steps to a path he does not foresee, and thus suddenly falls into the ruin of perdition, which he could not foresee. Such is everyone to whom these things that Peter speaks of are not present, because through the increments of spiritual virtues it is proper for us to reach the fellowship of divinity. On the contrary, Solomon, admonishing a wise listener: And let your eyelids precede your steps (Prov. IV). Which is clearly suggesting that in all our acts, we should diligently strive to foresee what we are to attain, carefully scrutinizing what is done according to God's will and what otherwise.

2 Peter 1:10

Wherefore, brethren, be more eager to make your calling and election sure through good works. Many are called, but few are chosen (Matt. 20, 22). The calling of all who come to faith is certain; but those who diligently add good works to the sacraments of faith they have received make their calling and election sure to those who observe them. Conversely, those who return to sins after their calling, when they depart from this life in these sins, already make it certain to all that they are reprobate. [2 Peter 1:10] -- By doing these things, you will never sin. He speaks of greater sins, which anyone who commits will not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God, and from which everyone who devotes himself to the aforementioned virtues remains immune before the Lord. Otherwise, there are minor sins, about which it is written: "There is not a just man upon earth, that does good" (Eccl. 7); and "in your sight no one living is justified" (Ps. 142).

2 Peter 1:11

For so an entrance will be abundantly supplied to you into the everlasting kingdom, etc. This passage is suited to that of the prophet Ezekiel, where speaking of a building set upon a mountain, he says: "And its ascent had eight steps" (Ezek. 40). And here indeed the blessed Peter enumerates eight steps of virtues, by which we must ascend, fleeing the corruption of worldly lust, to the habitation of the heavenly kingdom: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Of these steps the Psalmist surely speaks: "In his heart he has set his ascent" (Ps. 84), and elsewhere says: "They will go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion." (Ps. 84). [2 Peter 1:12] -- Wherefore I will always begin to admonish you about these things, etc. Why does he want to always admonish them about good works, those whom he says have knowledge and are confirmed in the present truth? Unless perhaps it is so that the knowledge they have learned they may exercise in good works, and the truth of which they are confirmed in presence they may guard with a fixed mind, lest ever through teachers of error they fall from the simplicity and purity of faith, concerning which teachers he speaks more in the course of the Epistle. And this sentiment agrees with that of blessed John, who says: "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it" (1 John 2). Therefore, the apostles write to those who know the truth, and ad-

monish them so that they might observe what they know. Whence also John, speaking, adds shortly after: "Let that which you have heard from the beginning remain in you" (Ibid.).

2 Peter 1:13

I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, etc. We usually make use of a tabernacle in journey or in war, and rightly therefore the faithful, as long as they are in the body and are away from the Lord, testify that they are in tabernacles, in which they may conduct the journey of this life and fight against the adversaries of the truth. [2 Peter 1:14] -- Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is very near. Most beautifully does blessed Peter call his demise not death, but the putting off of his tabernacle, because indeed for the perfect servants of God it is as if they cast off the bonds of the flesh, as travelers having completed their journey go to their own home for habitation instead of their tabernacle, as those deployed in expedition return to their fatherland after the enemy has been driven away or defeated. For they acknowledge only their own home, only their municipality, only their fatherland in the heavens. Of which also the apostle Paul says: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5).

2 Peter 1:16

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths, etc. Here he touches upon both pagans and heretics, the former of whom did not fear to call whatever pleased them gods; the latter, after receiving the mysteries of the true God, no longer paid attention to the divine Scriptures but instead tried to transfer them by badly interpreting them according to their own erroneous understanding. [2 Peter 1:18] -- And we heard this voice brought from heaven, etc. Some deny that this Epistle was written by the blessed Apostle Peter; had they carefully attended to this verse and what follows: When we were with him on the holy mountain, they would by no means doubt the author of this Epistle. For it is established, according to the faith of the Gospels, that Peter, along with his fellow apostles James and John, heard that aforementioned voice when the Lord was glorified on the mountain.

2 Peter 1:19

And we have the prophetic word made more certain. That is, the one where it is said from the person of the Mediator of God and men: The Lord said to

me, You are my Son, today I have begotten you (Psalm II). For if anyone (he says) considers our testimony to be unreliable, that in secret we saw the divine glory of our Redeemer, and heard the Father's voice directed to him, certainly no one will dare to contradict or doubt the prophetic word concerning this, which has long been included in the divine Scriptures and which all testify to be true. [2 Peter 1:19] -- You do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, etc. The sense of the order is: You do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place. For in this world's night, full of dark temptations, where it is difficult to find anyone who does not stumble, what would we be if we did not have the lamp of prophetic speech? But will the lamp always be necessary? Certainly not. Until (it says) the day dawns. For in the morning I will stand and contemplate (Psalm V). Meanwhile, it pertains to the nocturnal lamp that we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we will be (1 John III). And indeed, in comparison to the wicked, we are the day, as Paul says: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord (Ephesians V). But if we compare ourselves to that life in which we will be, we are still night, and we need a lamp.

2 Peter 1:19

And the morning star rises in your hearts. Who is this morning star? If you say the Lord, it is not enough. The morning star itself is our clear understanding. For it rises in our hearts, it will be illuminated, it will be manifested. Love will be as we now desire it to be, and since it is lacking, we sigh, and what it will be like, each will see in each other, just as we now see our faces in each other. [2 Peter 1:20] -- Understanding this first, that every prophecy of Scripture, etc. This verse depends on what was said above: You do well to pay attention; for those who pay attention to the words of the prophets do well indeed, that they may have the light of knowledge through these. They must first understand that none of the holy prophets proclaimed to the people their own doctrines of life by their own interpretation, but recommended to their listeners to act upon what they had learned from the Lord. They simply delivered to God's people, whether by speaking or writing, the heavenly secrets they had perceived in private, unlike the soothsayers of the Gentiles, who proclaimed to the crowds of the deceived the inventions of their own hearts as the resolutions of a divine oracle. Therefore, just as the prophets wrote not their own words but the words of God, so also their read-

er cannot use his own interpretation but must very carefully consider how the writer himself wanted his words to be understood.

2 Peter 1: 21

For prophecy never came by the will of man, etc. They could always foretell the future; but the Spirit itself filled their hearts whenever it wished; thus, it was not in their power to teach whatever they wanted, but they spoke only what they had learned, enlightened by the Spirit. We say this so that no one may dare to interpret the Scriptures according to their own will. Someone has ridiculously interpreted these words of the blessed Peter, saying that just as a flute receives the breath of a human to sound, yet does not understand the sound it produces because it is of an insensible nature; so the prophets, inspired by the Spirit of God, uttered what the Spirit willed, yet did not retain in their minds what they said, according to that line of Virgil: "It gives a sound without a mind." This is clearly a most shameless error. For how could they give such sound advice for living to their listeners, if, being like the insane, they did not know what they were saying? Why, then, are they called seers? How is it written: "The word that Isaiah saw" (Isaiah 2), or any other prophet, if not because in the hidden, most lucid vision of heavenly matters they understood the mysteries that they then clearly expressed to their listeners in words?

2 PETER 2

2 Peter 2:1

But there were also false prophets among the people, etc. This sect is called heresy in Latin, in Greek it is called hairesis, when someone, with foolish obstinacy, never ceases to follow the errors they have once adopted. Who does not know that this is characteristic of heretics? [2 Peter 2:1] -- And they deny the Lord who bought them, etc. Concerning this buyer, Paul also says: "For you were bought at a great price; glorify and carry God in your body" (1 Cor. 6). Rightly indeed do they bring upon themselves swift destruction, who, denying their Redeemer, refuse to rightly confess Him and glorify, and by doing good, to bear Him in their own body: which all heretics do; for Arius, who says that our Redeemer is lesser than the Father in divinity, and Photinus, who says: "Christ is a man, not God," and Manichaeus, who says: "Christ is only God, not truly man," and Ebion, who says: "Christ did not exist before Mary, He took His origin from her," and Apollinaris, who says:

"Christ is only God and flesh, never having taken a rational soul," and Pelagius, who says: "Christ is not the Redeemer of infants in baptism, because they, conceived without iniquities and born from their mother without sins, have no sin that must be forgiven to them, and therefore Christ is not the Savior of all the elect"; and other heretics with them indeed deny the Lord who bought them with the price of His own blood, because they proclaim Him not as truth reveals but as they themselves imagine. And therefore, made alien from the Redeemer, nothing is more certain than that they expect the pit of destruction.

2 Peter 2:2

And many will follow their debaucheries, etc. The way of truth will be blasphemed by heretics not only in those whom they draw out to associate with their heresy, but also in those whom by their most impure deeds and sacrifices, or the execrable mysteries they perform, they provoke to hatred of the Christian name, those who are unskilled thinking all Christians to be entangled in such wickedness. To whom Scripture says: "Through you My name is blasphemed among the nations" (Isaiah 52). [2 Peter 2:3] -- Their judgment has not ceased long ago. When 'long ago' signifies a past time and 'has not ceased' is a word in the present tense, it seems to mean nothing else but that the judgment of the perdition of the impious, which has already long begun, continually torments them presently and will never cease with any end. [2 Peter 2:4] -- For if God did not spare the angels who sinned. For many verses here conclude with one ending: The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials. For if, he says, God did not spare the angels who sinned, but consigned them to hell to be kept in chains of darkness until judgment; if, destroying the ancient world for its crimes by the flood, He saved righteous Noah; if, punishing the enormities of Sodom, He delivered Lot, a worshiper of justice, from the unjust; it is certainly known that the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to reserve the wicked for torment on the day of judgment. And it should be noted in what he says, that God did not spare the angels who sinned, because those evil angels were not created evil by God, but became evil by sinning.

2 Peter 2:4

But He handed over those dragged down by the howls of hell into Tartarus, etc. Another translation has this verse as: But pushing back into the prisons

of the darkness of hell, He handed them over to be reserved for punishment in judgment. Therefore, it shows that the punishment of the final judgment is still owed to the apostate angels, about which the Lord says: Go into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew XXV), even though they have already accepted this hell, that is, the lower murky air, as a prison. For as much as the sublimity of heaven is concerned, the space of this air can already be called hell, so also regarding the height of this same air, the earth which lies below can be understood as deep hell. But He calls the howls of hell the very prideful boastfulness by which the angels of His spirit swelled in arrogance against their Creator. For ropes are called howls, by which sailors hang sails so that, with the wind blowing, they leave the tranquility of the port and always trust themselves to the uncertain waves of the sea. To these appropriately howling ropes are compared the efforts of unclean spirits, who, as soon as they were raised up against the Creator, impelled by the winds of pride, were dragged into the depths of the abyss by their very efforts of elevation. Some codices have: But dragged down by the howls of hell, He handed them over into Tartarus, which signifies the voice either of utmost exaltation or of wailing in punishment. For they howl when they suffer either hunger or something else, unable to bear the excess of haughtiness, if any adversity occurs to them.

2 Peter 2:5

And He did not spare the original world. It is the same world in which the human race now dwells, which was inhabited by those who lived before the flood. Yet, nonetheless, that original world is rightly called another, as it is written in the following part of this Epistle that the world at that time, having been flooded by water, perished, and the heavens that existed before, meaning all the turbulent spaces of the air being consumed by the height of the increasing waters, and the earth, altered by the waters exceeding into another form. For although some mountains and valleys are believed to have been made from the beginning, they are not as significant as those now seen in the entire world. This could perhaps be denied, if we did not also now see the face of the earth changed by the subversion of the waters every year. This is believed to have happened even more so then, as the greater and more prolonged flood of waters besieging the earth flowed over it.

2 Peter 2:5

But He preserved Noah, the preacher of righteousness, etc. It is known to all that Noah was born in the tenth generation from Adam, but he is called the eighth because eight people survived the flood, of whom he was one. He mentions the number eight to subtly imply that the time of the flood signifies the test of the final examination, when, with all the reprobates condemned, all the righteous will receive the glory of eternal life. For there are six ages of the present world, the seventh is also now conducted, in that life where the souls of the saints enjoy eternal rest in a blessed Sabbath, and the eighth is to come at the time of the resurrection of all and the universal judgment. And he surnames Noah the preacher of righteousness, because by doing works of righteousness in the sight of all, he showed how it should be lived before the Lord. For he is not found to teach anyone by word, indeed not a single word is found spoken to God or man by him, but with the greatest virtue, in the whole construction of the ark, in the coming of the flood, in the beginnings of the following age, with a silent mouth but with the most prompt devotion of the heart, he obeyed the heavenly commands.

2 Peter 2:6

And the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc. Because he asserts that the cities of the impious were reduced to ashes, it should be understood in two ways. Because first, through fire, he reduced them along with the adjacent lands to ashes, and when he afterwards covered the places of the fire with the waters of the Dead Sea, he still wanted to preserve the surrounding region as a specimen of ancient punishment. For very beautiful fruits indeed grow, which also generate a desire to eat for those who see them. If you pluck them, they crumble and dissolve into ashes, and raise smoke, as if they still burned. Hence, in the Book of Wisdom it is said: "This [fire] rescued the righteous man fleeing from the wicked who were perishing as the fire descended upon Pentapolis." As a testimony to whose wickedness, it is evident that a scorched earth remains deserted, and at certain times the trees have fruit (Wis. X). It can be understood: And they also remain deserted and scorched. And this is what is also added here:

2 Peter 2:10

Giving an example of those who are going to act impiously. For even the fire which once punished the Sodomites plainly shows that the impious are to

suffer without end. And that their land remains scorched with smoke, that its most beautiful fruits have ashes within and stench, clearly signifies to all ages that carnal delight, although it may seem pleasing to the minds of fools for the present, reserves nothing for itself in the unseen but burning, so that the smoke of its torments ascends forever and ever.

2 Peter 2:7

And just Lot, oppressed, etc. Indeed, the holy man was tormented by both the unjust deeds and words of his neighbors; seeing these things daily, he was not able to correct them at all; but nevertheless, he conducted himself so prudently that neither by witnessing their disgraceful acts nor by hearing them did he taint the gaze of his chaste mind, but with unflagging intent, he pursued the actions of his own righteousness. Or certainly, he was righteous by sight and hearing, because those present saw and heard nothing in him except the works of righteousness and words; and no fame about him spread among the absent, except what pertained to righteousness, like the example of the blessed Job, who said: The ear that heard me blessed me, and the eye that saw me testified to me (Job XIX). And it is to be noted that the blessed Peter follows the example of the Lord's teaching in this place. For the Lord Himself, speaking in the Gospel about the day of judgment, recalls the sudden advent either of the flood or of the Sodomite fire, where the righteous were delivered, but the reprobate were caught in the snare of sudden destruction. And also in another place, when He intended to restrain the minds of His disciples from the pride of arrogance, He presented the example of the angelic fall, saying, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven (Luke X).

2 Peter 2:9

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, etc. He says the unjust are reserved for punishment on the day of judgment, not because they do not suffer torment for their merits even before the day of judgment, freed from the body, but because greater torments await them in judgment when, having received their body back, they will be punished, who are now tormented in spirit alone. Whence the Lord, reproaching those cities that refused to receive the word of the Gospel, concluded in this way: It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you. [2 Peter 2:10] -- But especially those who walk after the flesh in the lust of un-

cleanness. He speaks of fornicators, who will suffer greater torments in judgment for the guilt of their corruption than general iniquities. [2 Peter 2:10] -- And despise government, daring, self-willed. He speaks of the proud and arrogant, who will also endure severer punishments than the general ones.

2 Peter 2:10

They do not fear to introduce sects, blaspheming. He calls heretics those who, blaspheming the faith or life of the orthodox, introduce sects in their own name, that is, heresies, who themselves, with the former, will hear, for a stronger punishment awaits the stronger. [2 Peter 2:11] -- Where angels, though greater in strength and power, do not bring a blasphemous judgment against themselves. When he says: Where, it signifies in that they despise dominion, that they are daring, that they are self-pleasing, that they create heresies, that is, sects, that they blaspheme. By doing these things, the angels deserved to become demons and pay the penalties for their pride. For their spiritual nature did not suffer the obscenity of carnal desire to pollute them. Unless perhaps when they lure men into this, he indicates that they are to be judged for this also, just as for the other evils that they persuade men to commit.

2 Peter 2:12

But these, like irrational animals naturally, etc. Just as it is natural for irrational animals to often ignorantly fall into traps and destruction out of the need for food, so heretics, compared to foolish beasts, out of a desire to fulfill their own corruption, blaspheming the incorrupt and sound doctrine of the Catholic Church and life, bind themselves with the snares of eternal perdition by impious recklessness. The ecclesiastical history reports that such heretics existed in the times of the apostles: the Simonians, Menandrians, Basilideans, Nicolaites, Ebionites, Marcionites, and Cerdonians, and many others. Rightly, having said of them: Blaspheming in their own corruption they shall perish, he added: [2 Peter 2:13] -- Receiving the reward of injustice. The reward of injustice is the punishment he speaks of, which the works of injustice deserve, especially in those who, while they themselves are slaves to the corruption of the flesh, nonetheless blaspheme the conduct of those who live chastely, though they themselves are held by insane errors, they do not cease to disparage those who hold sound understanding.

2 Peter 2:13

Thinking of the delights of the day as impurities and stains. Pleasure is taken both in a good and an evil sense. In the good sense, it is called the paradise of delight, and as it is sung in the psalm: And they shall drink from the torrent of Your pleasure (Psalm 35). In an evil sense, as Solomon says: For youth and pleasure are vain (Ecclesiastes 11). But it is also used indifferently, according to what Sarah said: After I am old, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure? (Genesis 18). Therefore, good pleasure is rightly called the delight of the day, by which the saints delight in the Lord. However, evil pleasure belongs to the night, when the wicked perversely delight in performing deeds of darkness. It is rightly said of the unjust that they think of the pleasure of the day, the delights of impurity and stain, because many are so lazy, perverse, and shameless that, whilst engaging in the most impure and detestable pleasures, they nonetheless judge these to be the best and almost luminous. Some join the first word of this verse to the preceding verse, reading thus: Receiving the reward of unrighteousness as pleasure, and expound it according to what the apostle Paul said: God gave them over to the desires of their hearts in impurity, to dishonor their bodies among themselves (Romans 1). And a little later: Committing shameless acts, receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error. And as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind, to do what ought not to be done (Ibid.). But we thought it right to follow the distinction we found in the works of the blessed Pope Gregory.

2 Peter 2:14

Leading astray unstable souls. Whores are usually called “enticeresses,” derived from pollution, or from the beauty of their skin by which they lure the unsuspecting. Therefore, they lead astray unstable souls who, by teaching them wrongly, bring them under the various heretical doctrines as if corrupting them with sensual pleasures.

2 Peter 2:15

They followed the way of Balaam from Bosor, etc. Often, heretics propose such foolish doctrines and abominable sacraments that even the most dull-witted, the pagans, and those who completely lack understanding of divine knowledge, detest their madness. They refute their twisted paths and those contrary to God with healthier judgment. And what is worse, because it is

more frequent, sometimes many Catholics love the reward of unrighteousness so much that they are deservedly attacked by the unlearned, by laypersons instead of clerics. These are rightly compared to the prophet who is reproached by the words of a donkey speaking against its nature, yet is not deterred from his evil path. The name of the city from which Balaam is said to have come, Bosor, meaning either of flesh or in tribulation, aptly fits such people. Excessive indulgence in luxury provides no greater reason to adulterate the word of truth for the love of money or the desire for temporal things, than when they have enslaved themselves to the lusts of the flesh, clearly unworthy of apostolic praise, which glorifies true believers saying: But you, brethren, are not in the flesh but in the spirit (I Thes. V). And thus they are placed in tribulation, not in the sense that they suffer for the Lord, but rather in that which oppresses the spirits of the weak with the perverse examples of their actions, preventing them from rising to salvation or repentance. Also, the name Balaam itself, meaning a vain or precipitating people, suits such individuals. For those who willingly desert the known path of truth are nothing but a vain people, casting their listeners into perdition by preaching not what corrects them but what delights them erroneously. About whom it is well added:

2 Peter 2:17

These are wells without water, etc. Saint Jerome, placing these verses in the book against Jovinian, explains them thus: "Does it not seem to you that the apostle has described a different kind of ignorance?" For they reveal knowledge as if from wells, because they promise the rain of doctrines which they do not have, like clouds of prophecy toward which the truth of God reaches, and they are agitated by the whirlwinds of demons and vices. They speak great things, and all their speech is pride. But every one who exalts his heart is unclean, so that they who have slightly turned away from sins return to their error and are eager for the luxuries of foods and the delights of the flesh. For who does not gladly hear: Let us eat and drink, and we will reign forever (Wis. II; Isai. XXII; I Cor. XV)? The wise and prudent call them perverse who are sweet in speech.

2 Peter 2:22

For the truth of the proverb happened to them: The dog returns to its vomit, etc. He says this is a true proverb because he takes testimony from the Pro-

verbs of Solomon, which is placed there with explanation: As a dog, he says, which returns to its vomit, so is a fool who repeats his foolishness (Prov. XXVI). And he added from his own: And the sow that was washed returns to wallowing in the mire. Therefore, when a dog vomits, it certainly expels the food that weighed down its chest. But when it returns to the vomit, it is again burdened by what it had been relieved of. And those who lament their sins certainly confess and cast away the evil which had satiated them wrongly and weighed down their innermost thoughts; when they repeat it after confession, they take it up again. But the sow, when washed in the mire, is rendered filthier. And he who laments his sins but does not forsake them subjects himself to greater punishment because he scorns the very pardon which he could have obtained by weeping, and he wallows in muddy water as it were, because by his tears he withdraws the cleanliness of life, and before the eyes of God even those very tears become filthy.

2 PETER 3

2 Peter 3:1

Behold, dearly beloved, I now write to you this second Epistle, in which, etc. In which, he says, in the Epistles, or to those to whom he writes the epistles. [2 Peter 3:3] -- In the last days, in deception, mockers will come, mocking, namely, the faith and hope of Christians, as they promise to themselves in vain that the time of the resurrection will come. [2 Peter 3:3] -- Walking according to their own desires, etc. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says, "I beseech you, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand" (II Thess. II). Therefore, blessed Peter reproves and calls mockers those who assert that the coming of the Lord and His promises are delayed; Paul restrains those who believe that the day of the Lord is imminent. Hence, it is clear to all who love His coming that they should temper their mind in this opinion, so as not to suspect either that the same day of the Lord is near and will come sooner, nor again that it will come later, but we should only diligently ensure that, whether He comes sooner or later, He may find us prepared when He comes.

2 Peter 3:5

For this is hidden from them willingly, that the heavens existed long ago and the earth, out of water, etc. The earth consists out of water, for at the beginning of creation God said: "Let the waters be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear;" and it was so (Gen. I). It consists also by water by the word of God, because by divine arrangement the veins of water fill the whole depth within, just as we see the bodies of living creatures overflowing with veins of blood, lest they fail in dryness if the irrigation of water ceases. Finally, we see that with the heat of summer, the lands with their absorbed moisture wither away, and soon are turned into dust which the wind casts. Another Edition has: "The heavens existed long ago out of water and through water." But it signifies this humid and cloudy air. For Scripture is accustomed to call this air, and sometimes the heavens. Whence it is written: "The hawk in heaven knows its appointed time" (Jerem. VIII).

2 Peter 3:6

At that time the world perished, being flooded by water. At that time, referring to the heavens and the earth which he had previously mentioned. For through these things the world that had existed was destroyed. For the higher parts of the world were in no way touched by the flood. Therefore the earth perished, because being submerged and covered by waters, it not only lost the state of fruitfulness inherent to it for such a long time, but also, as we have taught above, in many places it received a different face from that which it had initially. The heavens likewise perished to the extent of this air-space. "For the water increased," as Saint Augustine says, "and occupied this entire space where birds fly." And thus certainly the heavens close to the earth perished, as it is said "the birds of the heavens." But there are also (he says) the heavens of the heavens higher in the firmament, but whether they too are to perish by fire, or if only these which perished by the flood will do so, is a rather more precise debate among the learned.

2 Peter 3:7

But the heavens and the earth which are now, etc. Therefore it is clear from the view of blessed Peter that the earth and those heavens which perished in the flood, and were restored after the flood, are affirmed to be destroyed by final fire.

2 Peter 3: 8

But this one thing, beloved, do not let it escape your notice, that one day with the Lord, etc. Some think this statement should be understood as though the day of judgment has such a length as a span of a thousand years, not considering that he does not simply say there will be one day like a thousand years, but: One, he says, day with the Lord is like a thousand years. Because in the knowledge of divine power, the past, the future, and the present equally abide. And the courses of time which seem long to us and those which seem short are of equal measure to the Creator of time, according to the Psalmist: For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night (Psalm 89), which are as nothing, their years will be. For just as it is understood that the Psalmist equates a thousand years not with the future day of judgment, but with the past day that has passed in the sight of the Creator, indeed he likens all our years, that is the whole time of this age, to a watch in the night, which is a fourth part of the night, so blessed Peter equates each day of the present age as a thousand years and a thousand years to each day with the Lord, that is, he asserts they are of the same measure.

Because evidently he sees all things, both small and great, equally. And indeed, if Peter wanted this to be understood only about the day of judgment, that it truly would be of such length as a thousand of our years, he could certainly have indicated his opinion more openly, nor would there be any need to add, with the Lord, because if that last day were of such length, it would appear to all men when it arrived. But the Apostle remembers these things to convince those whom he had mentioned earlier saying: Where is the promise of his coming? showing that the Lord is by no means forgetful of his promise or coming, to judge the living and the dead. But as he thus embraces each day of our age with His eternal memory, like a circuit of a thousand years, so he surveys a thousand years as the span of one day without effort, it is manifestly to be understood that He surely knows the end of all these days and years, and without any doubt He has also foreseen this, when the glory of His coming is to be revealed, when the promises are to be returned to the saints. Therefore it is rightly added:

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord does not delay His promise, etc. Therefore, He who knows all times, the latest and the ancient, does not delay His promise, but indeed shows this at the time which He predestined before all times to come. And therefore He still defers, so that the full number of the elect, which He decreed with the Father before the ages, may be fulfilled. Hence, in the Apocalypse, the souls of the martyrs who longed for the coming of His judgment and resurrection heard that they should rest yet a little time, until the number of their fellow servants and brethren should be completed. But those who understand the aforementioned judgment of blessed Peter as if he were saying that the day of judgment would last as long as a thousand years, refer this to the cause that it is necessary for those who depart from the body with some sins, yet are predestined to the lot of the elect, to be purged by fire for such a time, and then finally, with all sins forgiven, to come to life. But these do not see how impudent it is to believe that such a great company of the perfect and just, having received blessed and immortal bodies in the blink of an eye, would have to wait in the air or on earth for the end of the judgment for a space of a thousand years, and then finally, with their companions fully prepared, to hear the long-desired judgment: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom" (Matt. XXV).

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief, etc. Without a doubt, he speaks of those heavens which passed away in the flood, that is, this air close to the earth, which is destined to be destroyed by fire, occupying (as rightly believed) as much space as the water of the flood occupied. Otherwise, if anyone asserts that the higher heavens, where the sun, moon, and stars are set, will pass away, how does he wish to understand the Lord's saying: "Then the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven" (Matt. XXIV)? For if the place of the stars passes away, that is, heaven, by what reason can it be said on the same day of the Lord that the stars will either be darkened or fall, and that the place of the stars where they are fixed will pass away with fire consuming it?

2 Peter 3:10

But the elements will be dissolved by heat. There are four elements by which this world consists: fire, air, water, and earth, all of which that great fire will

consume. However, it will not consume everything to the extent that they will not exist fundamentally, but it will consume two to that extent, and it will restore two to a better appearance. Hence, it says in the following: [2 Peter 3:13] -- Yet there will be new heavens and a new earth. He did not say different heavens and a different earth, but the old and ancient ones to be changed for the better, according to what David says: In the beginning, you founded the earth, Lord, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain, and all things will grow old like a garment, and like a cloak you will change them, and they will be changed (Psalm 102). Therefore, those which will perish, grow old, and will be changed will certainly be consumed by fire, soon, with the fire departing, they will resume a more pleasing form. For the figure of this world has passed away, not the substance, just as the substance of our flesh does not perish, but its form will be changed, when what is sown is a natural body, it will rise a spiritual body (I Cor. 15). Concerning fire and water, we read nothing of the sort, but rather we have in the Apocalypse: And the sea is no more (Apoc. 21). We have in the prophets: And the light of a lamp will shine in you no more (Apoc. 18).

2 Peter 3:13

And we await His promises, in which righteousness dwells. Righteousness dwells in the future age, because then to each of the faithful a crown of righteousness will be rendered according to the measure of their struggle, which in this life cannot in any way be done, according to that of Solomon: I saw under the sun in the place of judgment wickedness, and in the place of righteousness iniquity. And I said in my heart: God will judge the righteous and the wicked, and there is a time for every matter (Ecclesiastes III). And again: I saw, he says, the oppressions that are done under the sun, and the tears of the innocent, and they had no comforter, nor power to resist their violence, being destitute of all help, and I praised the dead more than the living (Ecclesiastes IV). Therefore, he praised the innocent dead more than the living because the former are still in the struggle, but the latter are rewarded with the gift of eternal happiness. Hence, he lamented seeing the oppressions under the sun because he knew there is a just Judge above the sun, who dwells on high and regards the lowly (Psalm CXII), and above the sun are the mansions in which the righteous receive the rewards due to their righteousness. This can also be understood in light of the Psalmist's words: This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous will enter through it (Psalm

CXVII). And in Revelation, concerning the heavenly city, John says: Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and falsehood shall enter into it, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation XXI).

2 Peter 3:14

Wherefore, my beloved, as you wait for these things, strive to be found spotless, etc. These are the holy vigils of which the Lord said: Blessed are those servants whom the lord when he comes shall find watching (Luke XII). Indeed, he is watchful who keeps himself free from the defilement of vices, who, as far as it depends on him, has peace with all men, who, using the most blessed peace within himself, submits all the allurements of the flesh to the rule of the spirit. And rightly, when he said: Strive to be found spotless and blameless, he added before him, that is, before the Lord, because only he who is clean in the judgment of God is perfectly clean. Hence in praise of good spouses, it is said: They were both righteous before God (Luke I). Well, before God, because human judgments often fail.

2 Peter 3:15

And consider that the patience of our Lord is for salvation. Do not think that the Lord delays his promise, but understand that he is patiently waiting for this reason, that more might be saved.

2 Peter 3:15

Just as our most beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him. He recalls that Paul wrote to them, because even if Paul wrote to certain churches specifically, it is proven that he wrote generally to all the churches that are throughout the world, and which make up the one catholic church. And it should be noted that here Peter praises the wisdom of Paul, while Paul himself says about himself: "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. 15). Behold, Paul humbles himself, remembering his former unbelief, and prefers the innocence of the other apostles. Behold, the foremost of the apostles, as if forgetting his primacy and the keys of the kingdom given to him, marvels at the wisdom given to Paul. Because it is indeed the custom of the elect to admire the virtues of others more than their own, through which they incite themselves to progress. Likewise, it should be noted that Paul says in his Epistles: "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I op-

posed him to his face, because he stood condemned" (Gal. 2). Therefore, Paul reproves Peter in his Epistles, and yet Peter himself, rereading those epistles, judges them worthy of praise. Because indeed, that very thing in which he found himself deservedly reproved, he did not scorn as an injury, but gratefully accepted as a duty of devotion. Such mutual conduct is known not to just any mortals, but only to those who have learned from the Lord to be meek and humble of heart, who know how to honor one another surpassingly.

2 Peter 3:16

In which there are some things hard to understand, etc. All the Scriptures are corrupted by heretics. For there is no book of either the New or the Old Testament in which they have not understood many things perversely. But they have often perverted the Scriptures themselves from their status, by either removing, adding, or changing whatever their treachery dictated. As it is evident that the Arians erased from the Gospel what the Savior said: "Because God is spirit" (II Cor. III), because they did not want to believe that the Holy Spirit was Almighty God. He rightly calls them unlearned and unstable, because they have neither the light of knowledge nor the stability of mind, so that they might remain among the learned until they are educated. For the only remedy for the unlearned is to humbly provide their ears to the words of the learned with stability. Since heretics do not have the grace of stability, like light chaff in the wind, they are even taken away from the Church by the wind of pride. About whom it is well added:

2 Peter 2:1

To their own destruction. For those who attempt to corrupt the holy Scriptures and to disturb and pervert the Catholic faith bring condemnation upon themselves in this. However, the Church of Christ, having dispelled the darkness of errors, enjoys its true light. Hence, it is well said at the end of the Apocalypse, which is the closing and, as it were, the seal of all divine Scripture: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the book of life and from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Apocalypse XXII). The difficult things to understand in the Epistles of Paul, which he says are distorted by the unlearned and unstable, are especially those in

which he speaks about the grace of God that justifies the ungodly (Romans IV), that is, makes the ungodly righteous. For he himself says: Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans V). Those who did not understand this thought he was saying: Let us do evil that good may come (Romans III). But far be it from Paul to teach his listeners to do evil to achieve good, for his entire intention is to restrain from evil and to call as many as possible to do good.

But when he says, Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans V), he thereby commends the gift of grace more strongly, which is accustomed to forgive both great sins and lesser ones when people convert. And the greater the sins committed before conversion, the greater the forgiveness received through the gift of grace. Therefore the Apostle speaks thus about the sins we have already committed, so that no one should perish from despair of forgiveness because of the enormity of his crimes; but, as the enemies interpreted, he was not urging to commit more sins to receive greater good through them. Hence the blessed Peter rightly adds by way of admonition:

2 Peter 3:17

You therefore, brothers, being forewarned, be on guard, etc. Being forewarned, because foolish ones will introduce various errors, some denying the future judgment, some falsifying divine words, some interpreting wrongly, some loosening the restraints of luxury, others deceiving the hearts of the wretched with other fraudulent deceptions, be on guard, lest by any cunning of deceivers you might fall from the firmness of your faith. [2 Peter 3:18] -- But grow in grace, etc. According to that of the Psalmist: They will go from strength to strength, the God of gods will be seen in Zion (Psalm 83). [2 Peter 3:18] -- To Him be glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Glory always to the Savior God and our Lord, both now when amidst the daily pressures of adversities we still, placed in the flesh, wander far from Him, and especially then when He, long desired by all nations, coming, will have deigned to illuminate us with the presence of His vision. Meanwhile, because we sigh, we rightly and diligently sing: For one day in your courts is better than a thousand (Psalm 83).

1 JOHN 1

1John 1:1

What was from the beginning, etc. The blessed Apostle John wrote this Epistle about the perfection of faith and charity, praising the devotion of those who persevered in the unity of the Church; furthermore, he reproached the impiety of those who disturbed the peace of the Church with insane doctrines, especially Cerinthus and Marcion, who argued that Christ did not exist before Mary. He also wrote his Gospel on account of them, affirming in it both by his own words and the words of the Lord that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, while here he conveys in his own words what he learned from the Lord, refuting the foolishness of the heretics with apostolic authority. Hence, right at the beginning of the Epistle, he designates both the divinity and true humanity of the same God and our Lord Jesus Christ, saying: What was from the beginning, what we have heard. For the Son of God was indeed from the beginning, but the disciples heard and saw the same Son of God appearing in man with their eyes, which he elaborated more extensively in the Gospel. For what he says here: What was from the beginning, is what he states in the Gospel: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God (John I). And what he adds here: What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, is what he elaborates on there: And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father (John I). And lest it seem too little to say in what he says: What we have seen with our eyes, he added:

1John 1:1

That which we have seen and our hands have touched concerning the Word of life. For not only did they see the Lord with their physical eyes like the others, but they also perceived His divine power with their spiritual eyes. Especially those who saw Him transfigured on the mount, among whom was John himself. And when he says, "and our hands have touched concerning the Word of life," he refutes the madness of the Manichaeans, who deny that the Lord assumed true flesh; the apostles could not doubt the truth of this flesh, as they attested not only by seeing but also by touching; especially John himself who, accustomed to recline on His bosom at supper, touched His limbs more freely the closer he was. And even after His resurrection from the

dead, their hands touched concerning the Word of life, as they understood without any doubt that He had taken on true flesh, though now incorruptible, hearing Him say: "Touch and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have" (Luke 24). It is well said, "and our hands have touched concerning the Word of life," because as they proved the truth of His resurrected flesh by touching with their hands, they more surely knew Him to be the Word of life, that is, the true God. Hence Thomas, who was specially ordered to touch Him, immediately upon touching the flesh, confessed Him to be God, saying, "My Lord and my God" (John 20).

1 John 1:2

And the life was manifested, etc. He refers to that life which speaks in the Gospel: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11); which was manifested through divine miracles declared in the flesh, and the disciples present saw what they would testify to posterity with undoubted truth, when performing signs, as John himself wrote, He manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him (John 2). And because the apostle John testifies that he saw the life manifested with his co-apostles, the heretic Apelles should be confounded with his followers, who contends that the same life, that is, the Lord Savior, appeared to the world not as God in truth, but as a man in fantasy. [1 John 1:2] -- And we proclaim to you eternal life, etc. It was with the Father in eternal divinity, and appeared in time to the world in humanity.

1 John 1:3

What we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you, etc. Blessed John clearly shows that anyone who desires to have fellowship with God must first be united with the fellowship of the Church, learn that faith, and be imbued with its sacraments, which the disciples received from the Truth dwelling in the flesh itself. Nor in any way are those less associated with God who believe through the doctrine of the apostles, than those who believed through the Lord preaching in the world himself, except insofar as the quality of faith or works distinguishes them. Hence also concerning this fellowship of the saints, which they have in the Father and the Son, the Son himself, praying to the Father, says: Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given to me, that they may be one as we are one (John XVII). And a little later: I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me

through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us (John XVII).

1 John 1:4

And we write these things to you so that your joy may be complete. The joy of teachers is made complete when, through preaching, they lead many to the fellowship of the holy Church, and to the fellowship of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through whom the Church is strengthened and grows. Hence also Paul says to those whom he instructed in the faith: Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind (Philippians II). [1 John 1:5] -- And this is the message which we have heard from him, etc. By this statement, blessed John both shows the excellence of divine purity, which we are also commanded to imitate, saying: Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy (Leviticus XIX); and he refutes the insane doctrine of the Manicheans, who said that the nature of God was conquered and corrupted by the prince of darkness in war.

1 John 1:6

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, etc. He names darkness, sins, heresies, and hatreds. Therefore, the mere confession of faith alone is not sufficient for salvation, to which the testimony of good works is lacking. But neither does the rectitude of works without the simplicity of faith and love profit. For whoever is besieged by darkness in any part cannot have fellowship with Him in whom no iniquities occur. For what fellowship has light with darkness? (II Cor. VI). [1 John 1:7] -- But if we walk in the light, etc. The distinction of words is to be noted, because he says that God is in the light, but that we ought to walk in the light. For the righteous walk in the light, as they advance to better things by serving with works of virtue. But divine holiness, to which it is said: "But you are the same" (Ps. CI), is rightly remembered to be in the light, because being full goodness always existing, it does not find where it may advance. To the faithful it is said: "Walk as children of light" (Eph. V). For the fruit of light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. But God always exists as good, just, and true without any progress. If, therefore, we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. Because it evidently gives an indication that we are advancing by walking in the path of light, if we rejoice in the bond of fraternal fellowship, with which we likewise may reach the true light. But

even if we are found to do the works of light, if we seem to hold inviolable the rights of mutual love, we should not think that by our progress or industry we are able to be completely cleansed from sins. For it follows:

1 John 1:7

And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. For indeed, the sacrament of the Lord's passion both alleviated all past sins for us in baptism and forgives whatever we commit after baptism due to daily frailty, by the grace of the same our Redeemer. Especially when among the works of light that we perform, we humbly confess our errors to Him daily, when we receive the sacraments of His blood, when we pray for our debts to be forgiven as we forgive our debtors, when, mindful of His passion, we willingly endure each adverse thing. Remarkably, when speaking of the Lord, it is said: "And the blood of Jesus His Son"; indeed, the Son of God in the nature of divinity could not have blood; but since the same Son of God also became the Son of man, appropriately He calls the blood of the Son of God due to the unity of His person, to show that He truly assumed a body, truly shed His blood for us; and to refute the heretics who either deny that the true flesh was assumed by the Son of God or that the Lord Jesus truly suffered in the flesh which He assumed. Similar to this is what Paul says: "The Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20).

1 John 1:8

If we say that we have no sin, etc. This sentence avails against the heresy of Pelagius, which claimed that all infants are born without sin and that the elect in this life can progress to such an extent as to be without sin. For even when the prophet says: "Behold, I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin my mother bore me" (Psalm 50), we cannot be without guilt in the world, having come into the world with guilt. But the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses us from all sin so that our debts do not hold us under the power of our enemy, because the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, freely repaid on our behalf what He did not owe. For He who undeservedly paid the debt of death in the flesh for us, freed us from the debt of the death of the soul.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful, etc. Because we cannot be without sin in this life, the first hope of salvation is confession, and no one should consider themselves just or lift up their neck before the eyes of God. Then comes love, because charity covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4), which is consequently highly recommended to us with much praise in the following parts of this Epistle. Beautifully, both are suggested together, that we should both pray for our sins and obtain God's indulgence when we pray. Therefore, He is also called faithful to forgive sins, retaining the faithfulness of His promise, because He who taught us to pray for our sins and debts promised fatherly mercy and ensuing forgiveness. He also affirms Him to be just, because He justly forgives true confession. "That He may forgive us our sins," he says, "and cleanse us from all iniquity." He forgives daily and slight sins to the elect in this life, without which they cannot live on earth; He cleanses them after the dissolution of the flesh from all iniquity, bringing them into that life in which they neither wish to sin nor can. He now forgives greater temptations to those who pray, so they may not be overcome; He forgives the smallest, so they may not be injured; He then cleanses from all, so that no iniquity at all may exist among the blessed in the eternal kingdom.

1 John 1:10

If we say that we have not sinned, etc. For he himself said through a man filled with his Spirit: There is no just man on earth who does good and does not sin (Ecclesiastes 7). But even through himself, he taught us that we cannot be free from sins, as he commanded us to pray thus: Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6). Therefore, no one, being taught by Pelagius, should believe that he can live free from sins and debts, when he sees the apostles, being taught by the Lord, praying for their own sins. And elsewhere it is written: The just man falls seven times a day and rises again (Proverbs 24). For it is impossible for any of the saints not to sometimes fall into slight sins, which are committed through speech, thought, ignorance, forgetfulness, necessity, will, or surprise, and yet they do not cease to be just, because with the Lord's help, they quickly rise from guilt.

1 JOHN 2

1 John 2:1

My little children, I write this to you so that you do not sin. He is not contradictory to himself, who previously asserted that we cannot live without sin, but now says that he writes this to us so that we do not sin. But there he necessarily, providently, and beneficially reminded us of our fragility, so that no one should take pleasure in himself as if he were innocent, and by exalting himself through merits, perish more; here, he consequently exhorts us that if we cannot be free from all fault, we should nonetheless make every effort, as much as we are able, not to live negligently by indulging the frailty of our condition, but rather vigorously and vigilantly fight against all vices, especially the greater and more obvious ones, which, with the Lord's help, we can more easily overcome or avoid, so that, according to what Paul says: Let no temptation take hold of you except that which is human (1 Corinthians 10), that is, the kind that human frailty cannot completely avoid.

1 John 2:1

But if anyone sins, we have an advocate, etc. See how John himself maintains the humility he teaches; surely he was a righteous and great man, who drank the secrets of mysteries from the Lord's breast. Yet he did not say, "You have me as an advocate with the Father," but said, "We have an advocate. He said "we have," not "you have. He preferred to place himself among the sinners to have Christ as an advocate, rather than place himself as an advocate for Christ and be found among the condemned proud ones. However, it should not be said that bishops or leaders do not intercede for the people. For the Apostle prays for the people, and the people pray for the Apostle, who says, "Praying together for us and for you, that God may open to us a door of the word" (Colossians 4). And the Church prayed for Peter when he was in chains, and it was heard, just as Peter also prayed for the Church, because all members pray for each other. The Head intercedes for all, of whom it is written: "He is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Romans 8). For the only-begotten Son interceding for man means showing himself as man to the co-eternal Father. And for him to have prayed on behalf of human nature means he took up that same nature in the height of his divinity.

Therefore, the Lord intercedes for us not with voice, but with compassion, because what he did not want to condemn in the chosen ones, he preserved by taking it up. And rightly when he said we have Jesus Christ the righteous as our advocate with the Father, he added righteous; for a righteous advocate does not take on unrighteous causes: he will then defend us righteously in judgment, if we now know and accuse ourselves as unrighteous. For why should one not be righteous who already rages against his own unrighteousness through tears?

1John 2:2

And he himself is the propitiation for our sins. He who intercedes for us with the Father through his humanity, also propitiates for us with the Father through his divinity. [1 John 2:2] -- Not only for our own sins, etc. The Lord is not a propitiation only for those for whom John wrote while they were then living in the flesh, but also for the whole Church spread throughout the breadth of the world, from the first chosen to the last who will be born at the end of the world. By these words, he reproves the schism of the Donatists, who claimed that the Church of Christ was confined only to the borders of Africa. Therefore, the Lord intercedes for the sins of the whole world, because the Church, which He bought with His own blood, is spread throughout the entire world. That the whole world is in the power of the evil one does not contradict this statement, for there are those throughout the whole world who serve the evil one, that is, the ancient enemy.

1John 2:3

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Which commandments he means, he explains subsequently, that is, love. [1 John 2:4] -- Whoever says he knows Him but does not keep His commandments, etc. Christ is called the truth: "I am" (He says) "the way, the truth, and the life" (John XIV). Therefore, it is futile for us to boast about knowing Him when we do not keep His commandments. Nor should we consider it a great thing to know one God, since even demons believe, and tremble. But what it truly means to know God, he shows later, saying: [1 John 2:5] -- But whoever keeps His word, etc. Therefore, truly the one who keeps God's commandments and proves by his love has true knowledge of God. For to know God is to love Him. For whoever does not love Him clearly shows that he does not know how lovable He is. And he has not learned to

taste and see how sweet and pleasant the Lord is, who does not strive continuously to please Him through intent devotion.

1 John 2: 5

By this we know that we are in Him, etc. That is, through excessive love, even to pray for enemies, just as He did, saying, "Father, forgive them" (Luke XXIII). Also, to despise all the favorable aspects of the world with a strong mind, to willingly endure insults and reproaches, just as He said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Luke IX). [1 John 2:7] -- Dearest, I am not writing a new commandment to you, etc. The same love is also an old commandment, for it has been recommended from the beginning, and it is a new commandment because, with the darkness cast out, it infuses the desire for new light. Hence it is rightly added: [1 John 2:8] -- Which is true in him and in you, etc. Behold here is the new, for darkness pertains to the old man and the light truly to the new man. Finally, the Apostle Paul says: Put off the old man and put on the new one (Eph. IV); and again: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord (Eph. V).

1 John 2: 9

He who says he is in the light and hates his brother, etc. The Lord has commanded to love enemies; therefore, he who says he is a Christian and hates his brother is still in sins. And he rightly added "still," because all men undoubtedly are born in the darkness of vices, all remain in darkness until they are illuminated by the grace of baptism through Christ. But even the one who approaches the fountain of life with brotherly hatred to be reborn and to the drink of the precious blood to be redeemed, if he considers himself to be enlightened by the Lord, is still in darkness, nor in any way could he shed the shadows of sins who did not care to put on the entrails of charity. Hence it is that Simon, recently drenched by the waters of baptism, heard from him who had the keys of heaven: You have no part or lot in this matter; for I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity (Acts VIII). Because evidently neglecting the fellowship of brotherhood, he desired to buy the gift of the Spirit, by which the unity of the Church is preserved, with money and to have it privately.

1 John 2:10

He who loves... and there is no stumbling in him. That is, no offense; for he who loves his brother endures all things for the unity of unity. For much peace is for those who love your name (Psalm CXVIII), that is, charity, and there is no stumbling for them (Ibid.). And Paul says: Bearing with one another in love, striving to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. IV). [1 John 2:11] -- He who hates his brother is in darkness, etc. For he, ignorant, falls into hell, blind and unaware, withdrawing from the light of Christ who warns and says: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John VIII). [1 John 2:12] -- I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account of His name. He glorifies all his hearers, whom he had preceded in Christ, with the name of children, because, having been reborn of water and the Spirit, they had received the remission of sins. And lest you doubt that all faithful can rightly be called the children of preceding fathers, hear the prophet singing of the Church, "All the glory of the king's daughter is within" (Ps. XLIV); likewise to the same, "Instead of your fathers shall be your sons" (Ibid.).

1 John 2:13

I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. He calls fathers not by age, but by greater wisdom and maturity. For venerable old age is not counted by long duration nor by the number of years. Gray hairs, however, are the understanding of a man, and the mature age is an unspotted life (Wis. IV). For it is the role of fathers to remember ancient things, to know them, and to reveal these to the younger. Hence, it is written: "Ask your fathers, and they will tell you" (Deut. XXXII). And thus he rightly calls fathers those who have learned to know Him who is from the beginning, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and to faithfully preach to their hearers. [1 John 2:13] -- I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. Youth is a slippery time because of the incentives of the flesh, but fitted for battle due to the vigor of age. Hence, John writes to those youths who have, by the love of God's word, overcome the temptations of carnal delights. He writes also to those who, with greater perfection, despite persecutions inflicted because of the word of God, have bravely scorned all the plots of the wicked enemy.

1 John 2:13

I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. He calls little children those humble in spirit, who, the more they consent to be humbled under the mighty hand of God, the more sublimely know the mysteries of His eternity, just as the Son says to the same Father: You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to little ones (Luke X). [1 John 2:13] -- I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. He commends this and repeats it: Remember that you are fathers. If you forget Him who is from the beginning, you lose the fatherhood. [1 John 2:14] -- I write to you, young men, because you are strong, etc. Consider again and again that you are young men, fight so that you may conquer, conquer so that you may be crowned. Be humble, lest you fall in battle.

1 John 2:15

Do not love the world, etc. He writes this generally to all the children of the Church, both to those who are fathers through maturity of prudence and doctrine, and to those who are little children through the devotion of humility, and to those who are adolescents or young men because of the conquered trials of temptations. He commands all these alike to use this world only for necessity, but not to love it for excessive desires, as Paul also says: And make no provision for the flesh in its desires (Romans XIII). [1 John 2:15] -- If anyone loves the world, etc. Let no one deceive himself. One heart does not accommodate two loves so opposed to each other. Therefore also the Lord says: No one can serve two masters (Matthew VI); and again: You cannot serve God and mammon (Ibid.). For as the love of the Father is the fountain of all and the origin of virtues, so the love of the world is the root and kindling of all vices. Hence follows:

1 John 2:16

Since all that is in the world, etc. All that is in the world, he says, refers to all who dwell in the world with their minds, who inhabit the world with love; just as they inhabit heaven who have their conversation in heaven, whose hearts are above, although they walk in the flesh on earth. Therefore, all that is in the world, that is, all lovers of the world, have nothing but the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. By these names of vices, he comprehends all kinds of vices. For the lust of the flesh is all that pertains to

bodily pleasure and delights: among which the greatest are food, drink, and sexual intercourse: concerning which Solomon says: The leech has two daughters, saying, "Give, give" (Prov. 30). The lust of the eyes is all curiosity that arises in learning wicked arts, in contemplating obscene or superfluous spectacles, in acquiring temporal goods, in distinguishing and criticizing the vices of others. The pride of life is when someone boasts in honors. In these three only, human greed is tempted. By these, Adam was tempted and defeated. By the lust of the flesh, namely, food, when the enemy showed the forbidden fruit of the tree and persuaded him to eat. By the lust of the eyes, when he said: "Knowing good and evil, and your eyes will be opened" (Gen. 3). By the pride of life, when he said: "You will be like gods" (Ibid.).

By these, Christ was tempted and overcame. By the lust of the flesh, that is, food, when it is suggested: "Tell these stones to become bread" (Matt. 4). By the lust of the eyes, that is, curiosity, when he is admonished from the pinnacle of the temple to throw himself down, to see if he would be caught by angels. By the pride of life, that is, vain boasting, when all the kingdoms of this earth are shown to him on a high mountain and promised if he would worship.

1 John 2:16

Which is not from the Father, but from the world. The conflict of vices has not been naturally instilled in us by God the Father and Creator, but it is proven to have happened to us from the love of this world, which we have preferred to the Creator. For God made men upright, and they have sought out many inventions, as Solomon testifies. Hence James also says: "Let no man, when he is tempted, say he is tempted by God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one" (James 1). But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own desire. [1 John 2:17] -- And the world passes away, and its desire, etc. The world will pass away, when on the day of judgment it will be transformed by fire into a better form, so that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. And its desire will pass away, because the time for a life of luxury, or for any sin, will be no more. For on that day all their thoughts will perish (Psalm 145), those indeed which were directed toward the desires of this world; but he who does the will of the Lord, his thoughts will not perish with the passing world, but because he desired heavenly and eternal things, they remain unchangeable forever, because he will obtain the heavenly rewards he desired. Hence the

Lord said of the devoted woman, or rather of any soul that has perfectly followed his will: "Mary has chosen the best part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10). Therefore, whoever desires to remain undisturbed and at peace forever, let him embrace the things that do not pass away, let him follow the will of God who is eternal.

1 John 2:18

My little children, it is the last hour. The last hour, the last time of the age, which is now being carried out, he says, according to that parable of the Lord, where he narrates that workers in the vineyard are hired from the first hour, the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh. For at the first hour those who cultivated the vineyard of the Lord were serving the will of their Creator either by teaching or by living rightly from the beginning of the age. From the third hour, those from the times of Noah. From the sixth hour, those from the times of Abraham. From the ninth hour, those from the times the law was given. From the eleventh hour, those from the times of the Lord's Incarnation until the end of the age, are serving the heavenly commands: in which hour, both the coming of the Savior in the flesh and the future plague of the Antichrist, who would fight against the heralds of salvation, was marked by the prediction of the prophets. Whence it follows:

1 John 2:18

And as you have heard, that Antichrist comes, etc. He calls heretics Antichrists; but also those who, by perverse actions, destroy the Catholic faith which they profess, are rightly called Antichrists, that is, contrary to Christ; who all bear witness to that great Antichrist who will come at the end of the age, as to their head. Whence also Paul says of that one that the mystery of iniquity is already at work (II Thess. II). [1 John 2:18] -- Whence we know that it is the last hour. How do we know? Because many Antichrists have come. It can also be understood this way, that he says it was already then the last hour, because the persecution of that time, which was brought by heretics, had a great similarity to that last persecution which is to come just before the day of judgment, although this one only harassed the Church with foul tongues, that one will torment with fierce swords.

1 John 2:19

"They went out from us, but they were not of us. It seemed to be mourned as a loss when we heard: 'They went out from us'; but soon consolation is added,

when it is said: 'But they were not of us.' For it is evident that only Antichrists can go out from us, but those who are not opposed to Christ cannot in any way go out; for he who is not opposed to Christ, remains in His body. But there are those who are within the body of the Lord, while the body is still being healed, and perfect health will not be until the resurrection of the dead. They are in the body of Christ as evil humors; when they are vomited out, the body is relieved. So too the wicked, when they go out, the Church is relieved. 'They went out from us,' it says, but, 'do not be sad, they were not of us.' How do you prove it?

1 John 2:19

For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. Therefore, it must be seen that many who are not of us receive the sacraments of Christ with us. But temptation proves that they are not of us, for when temptation comes to them, like the wind they fly away, because they were not the grain. However, they will all fly away when the Lord's threshing floor begins to be winnowed on the day of judgment. If some indeed go out by sinning but return through repentance, they are not Antichrists, but are proven to be in Christ, if the end of this present life finds them remaining in the Church. [1 John 2:19] -- But so that it may be evident, because not all who are within us are of us. Therefore, by the permission of the Lord, some go out from the Church even before the final winnowing, showing that they were not members of the Church, nor did they belong to the body of Christ, so that it may be clearly manifest that not all who are placed inside with us and receive the sacraments of Christ are of us, but only those who do works worthy of those same sacraments in the unity of the Church of Christ."

1 John 2:20

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. The spiritual anointing is the Holy Spirit, whose sacrament is in the visible anointing. He says that all who have this anointing of Christ have the ability to discern the good and the evil, and that there is no need for them to be taught those things which the anointing itself teaches. And fittingly, when speaking about the heretics, suddenly turning towards his own listeners, he says that they have the anointing from the Holy One, to show them, by contrast, that the heretics and all Antichrists are deprived of the gift of spiritual grace, and do not pertain to the Lord, who has been accustomed to be called

Holy by the prophets, but rather they hold a place among the ministers of Satan, who have nothing of holiness and hold a position of perdition.

1 John 2: 21

I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, etc. For you know the truth of faith and life taught by the anointing of the Spirit, and you do not need to be taught, except that you should persist in what you have begun. [1 John 2:21] -- And because every lie is not of the truth. This verse depends on the above, and the sense is: We have not written to you as if you do not know the truth, but as though you know it: and also knowing this, that every lie is not of the truth. Behold, therefore, we are warned how to recognize the Antichrist. Christ says: I am the truth (John 14). But every lie is not from the truth. Therefore, all who lie are not from Christ. He does not say, some lie is from the truth. No one should deceive themselves, let no one delude themselves: every lie is not from the truth.

1 John 2: 22

Who is the liar, if not he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He had foretold that every lie is not from the truth, but since there are many kinds of lies that are not at all similar, now he sets forth the lie of denial of Christ as singular because this is such a heinous and abominable lie that in comparison to it, other lies either seem small or nonexistent. According to what was said to the sinning Jerusalem: Sodom was justified because of you (Ezekiel 16). This denial is proper to the Jews, that they say Jesus is not the Christ. But even heretics who wrongly believe about Christ deny Jesus is the Christ, because they do not think rightly about Christ; nor do they confess him as such as divine truth teaches, but as their vanity invents. Wicked Catholics also who despise obeying the commands of Christ deny Jesus is the Christ, to whom they do not render the due service of fear or love as to the Son of God but dare to contradict at their will as to a man of no power. Therefore, all these are proved to be liars and Antichrists, that is, contrary to Christ, as the Apostle attests who says: They profess to know God, but they deny him by their deeds (Titus 1).

1 John 2: 22

This is the Antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. With this sentence, he strikes both heretics and especially the Jews, who denying that Jesus is the Son of God, nonetheless claimed to have God as the Father, showing

them to confess the Father in vain if they deny the Son. Hence, the Lord himself, cursing them, said: If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here (John 8). [1 John 2:23] -- Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either, etc. Here he seeks the confession of the heart, the voice, and the work, as Paul sought when he said: And no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit; which is openly to say: No one can, unless by the grace of the Holy Spirit granted, serve the Lord Christ with perfect profession and action.

1John 2:24

That which you have heard from the beginning, let it remain in you, etc. He says, follow with all your heart that faith, those doctrines which you have received from the voice of the apostles from the earliest times of the nascent Church. For these alone are what make you partakers of divine grace. And if anyone says to you, "Behold, here is Christ, behold, there he is," do not believe it. For false prophets will arise, as the Lord foretold (Mark XIII). And you, he says, will remain in the Son and in the Father. He places the Son first, because as the Son himself says: "No one comes to the Father except through the Son" (John XIV); no one will see the glory of divine exaltation except he who is reborn through the sacraments of the humanity which the Son assumed. Or surely he named the Son first and then the Father for the reason that the Arians may not say that the Son should be believed to be lesser than the Father because he has never found to be named before the Father.

1John 2:25

And this is the promise which He Himself promised us, eternal life. As if you were asking for a reward, and you were saying: "Behold me, I keep what I have heard from the beginning, I obey; I endure dangers, labors, temptations, for maintaining this. What will be the fruit, what the reward? What will be given to me afterward?" And this, he says, is the promise which He Himself promised us, eternal life. Let the remembrance of the promised reward make you perseverant in your work. [1 John 2:26] -- These things I have written to you about those who deceive you. By deceivers whom he names, not only are heretics to be understood, who seek to turn away from the faith by wicked doctrine, but also those who, by allurements or by adversities of the world, detract the minds of the weak from the promise of eternal life, either by enticing them evilly or by frightening them.

1 John 2: 27

And the anointing which you received from Him, etc. This, he says, with the Lord's help, strive to ensure that the grace of the Holy Spirit, which you received in baptism, remains whole in your heart and body, according to what the Apostle Paul says: Do not extinguish the Spirit (1 Thess. 5). So it happens that with the Spirit teaching you inwardly, you need less to be taught by the instruction of men from outside. The anointing of which he speaks can be understood as the very love of God, which is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5), which most swiftly inflames the heart it fills to observe God's commandments. [1 John 2:27] -- But as His anointing teaches you about all things. Deservedly, he added 'about all things,' just as in the Gospel the Lord, speaking of the same Spirit to the disciples, says: He will teach you all things (John 14). Because unless the same Spirit is present in the heart of the listener, the speech of the teacher is idle. Therefore, let no one attribute to the human teacher what he understands from the teacher's mouth, for unless there is One who teaches within, the teacher's tongue labors in vain externally. Yet, the teacher should not cease to do what he can, according to what Paul says: I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (1 Corinthians 3).

1 John 2: 27

And it is true, and it is not a lie. By frequent repetition, he keenly emphasizes that what he preaches is true and free from all stain of falsehood, in order to restrain those who presume to preach otherwise, and diligently remind us that eternal life cannot be found otherwise than by following that purity of faith and work given by the apostles to the early Church, and by remaining steadfast in following and keeping it until the end of this life. This is similar to what the Apostle Paul says: Let no one deceive you with empty words, because of these the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 5). What is said in another translation: And it is true, and it is not a lie, refers to the previous verse, where it is said: But as His anointing teaches us about all things, signifying that the same anointing is true, that is, the Spirit Himself who teaches humans cannot lie.

1 John 2: 27

And as he taught you, abide in him. Do not be carried away by various and strange doctrines. In the faith and the tradition which he himself taught,

abide in him. For whoever perseveres to the end, he shall be saved (Matt. XXIV). [1 John 2:28] -- And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears, etc. Whoever remains in the Lord amidst the persecutions of the unbelievers, amidst the mockeries of carnal neighbors, has confidence in his coming, knowing that the patience of the poor will not perish at the end. But whoever is ashamed to either offer the other cheek to the one who strikes him or to patiently endure the reproach inflicted by a neighbor, or indeed other such things which the Lord commanded to observe, or certainly fears to publicly profess himself as a Christian in time of persecution, this one, undoubtedly, cannot have confidence at the coming of the Lord, for he has neglected to maintain the confidence of his profession in this life. Rather, he will be ashamed by Him at His coming. Hence it says: Whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, him the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his glory and that of His Father and of the holy angels (Luke IX).

1 John 2: 29

If you know that he is righteous, know that our righteousness is now by faith. Perfect righteousness is found only in angels, and scarcely in angels if compared to God. However, if any perfect righteousness exists in the souls and spirits that God created among the angels and saints, the righteous and the good, who fell by no lapse, were not brought down by pride, but always remained in the contemplation of God's word and found nothing else sweet except the one from whom they were created, in them is perfect righteousness. But in us, it began to be according to the Spirit through faith. Whence the Psalmist says: Begin to the Lord in confession (Psalm 146). He says, begin. The beginning of our righteousness is the confession of sins. You have begun not to defend your sin; you have already started righteousness. It will be perfected in you when you will be pleased to do nothing else. When death is swallowed up in victory, when no desire will titillate, when there will be no struggle with flesh and blood, when there will be the crown of victory, and triumph over the enemy, then there will be perfect righteousness. Therefore, if you know that he is righteous, he says, know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him; that is, of Christ. And because he has said, he is born of him, he encourages us now that we are born of him, so that we may be perfect. Listen of course to what follows.

1 JOHN 3

1 John 3:1

Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, etc. Great is the grace of our Creator, which has granted us to love Him, to know, and to be able: and thus to love, as children the father, when even this would be great, if we could love Him as faithful servants love masters, as devoted hirelings love masters. How, however, we ought to become children of God, the same John testifies in the Gospel: He came unto His own (he says), and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name (John I). Therefore, combining both testimonies, it is certain that through faith and love we become children of God. But also the doctrine of Pelagius and Arius is condemned by these matters. The heresy of Pelagius (who dared to say that men can be saved without the grace of God) is condemned in that it is said that love or the power is given to us by God, by which we receive the adoption of sons. Moreover, Arius, who said the Son is lesser than the Father and unlike Him, is refuted in that the same John says here, the Father gives us the love by which we are named and are children of God, and in the Gospel, he says through the Lord the Savior, power is given to believers to become the children of God. For it is certain that they are of one substance and the same power, who equally and indifferently bestow heavenly gifts upon men.

1 John 3:1

For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. In this place, he calls the lovers of the world. And this is what the same will say in judgment, seeing the glory of the saints whose faith they despised, they will say within themselves, groaning and repenting: These are they whom we once had in derision, and in a likeness of a reproach. We fools considered their life to be madness, and their end without honor. How are they counted among the children of God, and their lot among the saints (Wisdom V)? [1 John 3:2] -- Dearest, now we are children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. And Paul says: For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians III). A faithful one is dead through the extinguishing of the old life which was in sins, and has a new life in Christ through faith, the height of which is not yet visibly apparent to us.

1 John 3:2

We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him. And Paul explains this too in other words: When Christ (he says) your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory (Colossians III). He says we shall be like Him, for when we enjoy the immutable and eternal contemplation of divinity, we ourselves shall also be immortal. And indeed we shall be like Him, because we will be blessed; and yet, similar to the Creator because we are creatures; for who among the children of God will be like God? Even though this might also be thought to be said about the immortality of the body. And in this too we shall be like God, but only to the Son, who alone in the Trinity took on a body, in which He died, rose again, and raised it to the heights.

1 John 3:2

Because we will see Him as He is. To be God is to remain eternally and immutably. Whence to Moses He says: "I am who am" (Exod. III); and: "You shall say to the children of Israel: He Who Is has sent me to you" (Ibid.). Therefore, we will see Him as He is, when we will contemplate Him in the very substance of His divinity, which in this life is granted to no one among the elect. Even the legislator, who was accustomed to contemplating the Lord in an angelic guise, beseeched, saying: "Lord, show me Yourself that I may see You" (Exod. XXXIII), and heard from the same Lord: "No one shall see my face and live" (Ibid.). However, to him, for the merit of great sanctity, He said: "I will show you all good" (Ibid.). Hence Paul also said: "Now we see through a glass in a riddle, but then face to face" (I Cor. XIII). Therefore, what was answered to Moses is true, that no one can see the face of God and live (Exod. XXXIII), which is to say, no one living in this life can see Him as He is. Many have seen, but what the will of God chose, not what nature formed. And that which John said can rightly be understood as: "Beloved, we are children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we will see Him as He is.

Not as men saw Him when He willed, in the guise in which He willed, not in the nature which remained hidden in himself even when He was seen; but as He is, which was requested of Him by Moses when he said: "Show me Yourself" (Exod. XXXIII), by Him who spoke with him face to face. Not that anyone has comprehended the fullness of God, not only with the eyes of the

body but even with the mind itself. For it is one thing to see, another to comprehend fully by seeing. Therefore, what is seen is what is perceived as present in whatever way, but the whole is comprehended by seeing, as nothing of it is hidden from the one seeing, or of which the limits can be circumscribed, as nothing is hidden from you of your present will. However, you can circumscribe the limits of your ring. For example, I have given two examples, one of which pertains to the mind's sight, the other to the bodily eyes. For sight must be referred to both, that is, both to the eyes and the mind.

1 John 3: 3

And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, etc. Many say they have the hope of heavenly life in Christ, but they make this confession void by living negligently. However, he shows a clear sign of his hope of the hereafter in himself, who strives to give diligence to good deeds, being certain that no one will reach the likeness of God in the future otherwise, unless by sanctifying himself in the present, that is, by renouncing impiety and worldly desires, and by living soberly, justly, and piously, he imitates the holiness of God. We are commanded to imitate the purity of divine holiness according to the measure of our capacity, just as we are enjoined to hope for the glory of divine likeness according to our measure, that is, the measure of the creature. It is not to be believed that the Pelagian dogma is to be supported—what is said about man "He purifies himself"—as if anyone could sanctify himself by free will without divine aid. But he who has hope in the Lord purifies himself to the extent he can by striving, and by imploring His grace in all things, who says: "Without me, you can do nothing" (John XV); and saying to Him: "Be my helper, do not forsake me" (Psalm XXVI).

1 John 3: 4

Everyone who commits sin also practices lawlessness. Let no one say: sin is one thing, lawlessness another. Let no one say: I am a sinner but not lawless. For everyone who commits sin also practices lawlessness, because sin is lawlessness. The meaning of this statement is more easily understood in the Greek language in which the Epistle was written, for among them lawlessness is called *ἀνομία*, which means something done against or without the law, as the Greek term for law is *νόμος*. Therefore, when John says that everyone who commits sin also practices lawlessness, that is *ἀνομία*, and sin is law-

lessness, he clearly indicates that whatever sin we commit is against the law of God, as the Psalmist says: "I have considered all the sinners of the earth to be apostates" (Psalm 118). For all who sin are guilty of transgression, that is, not only those who scorn the knowledge of the written law given to them but also those who corrupt the innocence of the natural law we all received in our first parent, whether through weakness, negligence, or even ignorance. Moreover, the Latin term corresponds to the same reasoning since iniquity is called as if it is contrary to equity, and whoever commits sin also practices iniquity, and sin is iniquity. Because whoever sins clearly exists in opposition to the equity of divine law by sinning. However, lest we who cannot be entirely free from sins and iniquities lose all hope of salvation, let us see what follows about the Lord:

1John 3:5

And you know that He appeared to take away sins, etc. John the Baptist also bore witness to this about the Lord, saying: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. The Lord was able to take away sins because there was no sin in Him. Many and so great men came into the world perfect, but none of them could take away the sins of the world, because none could be without sin in the world. Therefore, let not Pelagius boast, nor let Julian, his follower, exalt himself, hearing that everyone who has hope in the Lord sanctifies himself. For no one takes away sins, which even the law, although holy and just and good, could not remove, except Him in whom there is no sin. He takes them away by both forgiving what has been done and helping that it may not be done, and by leading to a life where it is utterly impossible for them to be committed.

1John 3:6

Everyone who remains in Him does not sin. To the extent he remains in Him, to that extent he does not sin. [1 John 3:6] -- And everyone who sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. He speaks of the vision and knowledge of faith, with which the righteous even in this life delight in seeing God, until they reach the very form of His open vision in the future, of which it is said above: For we will see Him as He is. Therefore, everyone who sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. For if he had tasted and seen how sweet the Lord is (Psalm 34), he would by no means separate himself from the vision of His glory by sinning. And to the extent that the righteous recall

the abundance of His sweetness and exult in His justice (Psalm 145), to that extent they strive to keep themselves from sins, seeking to harmonize with His immutable and incomparable justice.

1 John 3:7

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, etc. And above: He purifies himself, it says, just as He is pure. Not that our righteousness or holiness can be equal to the divine, since it is written: There is none holy like the Lord (1 Samuel 2), but just as there is much difference between the face of a man and the image in a mirror, because the image is in imitation, the body in reality, and yet, just as here are eyes, so also there; yet the matter differs, but just as it pertains to likeness, so also we indeed have the image of God, but not the one which the Son, equal to the Father, has. For we also, according to our measure, if we were not in some way like Him, would by no means be called similar. Therefore he sanctifies us, just as He is holy. But He is holy in eternity, we are holy by faith. We are righteous, just as He is righteous. But He in the immutable perpetuity itself, we righteous by believing in Him whom we do not see, so that we may someday see.

1 John 3:8

Whoever commits sin is of the devil. Not deriving the origin of the flesh from the devil, as the Manichean impiously believes of all men, but taking the imitation or suggestion of sinning from him, in the same way that we become children of Abraham by imitating the faith of Abraham. And conversely, the Jews, who are children of Abraham, by abandoning the faith of Abraham, have become children of the devil, as the Lord says to them: You are of your father the devil (John 8). [1 John 3:8] -- For the devil has been sinning from the beginning. When he mentioned "from the beginning," he added the verb in the present tense, "sins." Because from the beginning when the devil started to sin, he has never ceased, neither restrained by the enormity of present punishments nor the fear of future ones. Therefore, it is said to be justified for anyone who neglects to turn away from sin. But the devil sins from the beginning, from that moment when he himself was made, when also the origin of all creatures began. For it is not to be doubted that angels were created among the first creatures, but while the others returned the glory of their condition to the praise of the Creator, he who was first created,

as soon as he beheld the height of his own brightness, swelled with pride against the Creator with his followers, and through that same pride, sinning from the beginning, was transformed from an archangel into the devil.

1John 3:8

The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil. All sinners are born of the devil in as much as they are sinners. Adam was made by God; but when he agreed with the devil, he was born of the devil, and begot all such as he was. That birth cast down to death; the second birth, which is baptism, raised up to life. That birth brings sin with it; the second birth frees from sin. Therefore Christ became man, to free mankind from sin; of which release it is rightly added: [1 John 3:9] -- Everyone who is born of God does not commit sin, etc. However, this is not said of every sin: for if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (1 John 1), but of the violation of charity, which one who has the seed of God, that is, the word of God, by which he is reborn, cannot commit within himself. For following this, he manifests it, saying:

1John 3:10

By this, the children of God and the children of the devil are made manifest, etc. Therefore, only love distinguishes between the children of God and the children of the devil. Those who have charity are born of God. Those who do not have it are not born of God. Have whatever else you will, if you do not have this alone, it profits you nothing. If you do not have others, have this, and you have fulfilled the law. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. And the fullness of the law is charity. [1 John 3:11] -- For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that you should love one another. The Lord saying: This is my commandment, that you love one another (John XV). [1 John 3:12] -- Not as Cain, who was of the evil one, etc. He explains how Cain was of the evil one because he himself had evil deeds. Therefore, where there is envy, brotherly love cannot exist; but the sin of the evil one, that is, the devil, is in such a heart, for the devil also cast out man through envy. Therefore, the righteous deeds of Abel signify nothing but charity. The evil deeds of Cain signify nothing but fraternal hatred. It is not enough that he hates his brother and envies good deeds (thus). Hence, men are distinguished. Let no one heed words, but deeds. Why, if he does not do

good for his brothers, shows what he has within himself? Men are tested by temptations.

1 John 3:13

Do not marvel, brothers, if the world hates you. He calls those who love the world worldly. Nor should it be wondered that those who love the world cannot love a brother separated from the love of the world and intent only on heavenly desires. For religion is an abomination to a sinner, as Scripture testifies. [1 John 3:14] -- We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers. Let no one falsely exalt himself over virtues, let no one measure the poverty of his own strength beyond measure: it gives open judgment, whoever is full of fraternal love, that he belongs to the lot of the elect, because he has earned a portion in the land of the living.

1 John 3:14

He who does not love remains in death. He speaks of the death of the soul. For the soul that sins, it shall die. For the life of the flesh is the soul, and the life of the soul is God. The death of the body is to lose the spirit, the death of the soul is to lose God. Hence it is certain that all who are born into this light are spiritually dead, carrying original sin from Adam, but by the grace of Christ, the faithful are regenerated so that they may live in the soul. Indeed the mystery of baptism and faith benefits only those who sincerely love their brothers, drawing them from death to life. And it must be noted that he does not say, "He who does not love will come into death," as if he were speaking of eternal punishment which awaits sinners in the future, but he says, "He who does not love remains in death." Surely in that very death from which he could rise even in this life, if he perfectly loved his brothers. Hence it is said in the Apocalypse: "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection (Apoc. XX); over these the second death has no power."

1 John 3:15

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer. If anyone despised brotherly hatred, would he also despise murder in his heart? He does not move his hands to kill a man, yet he is already considered a murderer by God. That man lives, but this one is already judged a killer. [1 John 3:15] -- And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Even if he seems to live among the saints through faith here, he does not have eternal life abiding in him. For when the time of retribution comes, he will be damned with

Cain who was of the evil one, even he who is guilty of this kind of murder, so as to disagree and dissent and have no peace with his brothers. Note that he does not say absolutely, "A murderer does not have life in him," but, "Everyone," he says, "who is a murderer." Certainly not only he who uses a weapon, but also he who follows his brother with hatred.

1John 3:16

In this, we have known the love of God, etc. What kind of perfect love ought to be in us, we have learned from the example of the Lord's passion. For no one has greater love than this, that one lays down his life for his friends (John XV). Hence Paul also says: But God commends His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly (Romans V). Blessed Peter was admonished to have this love, when the Lord said: Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep (John XXI); he responded that he loved Him, and immediately he heard: But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you, and carry you where you do not wish (Ibid.). This He said (says the evangelist) signifying by what death he would glorify God. For, to the one confessing love, He commended His sheep, teaching him to lay down his life for the same sheep as a testimony of perfect love. He, He said, laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. But perhaps someone says: And how can I have this love? Do not quickly despair of yourself, perhaps it is born, but not yet perfect. Nurture it, lest it be choked. And how, you ask, do I know that love is born in me which I should nurture? Listen to the following:

1John 3:17

Whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need, etc. Behold where love begins. If you are not yet fit to die for your brother, be at least fit to give from your possessions to your brother. For if you do not sympathize with your brother suffering hardship, indeed the love of the Father, from whom both of you were reborn, does not abide in you. [1 John 3:18] -- My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, etc. Namely, in deed, so that when a brother or sister is naked and in need of daily food, we give them what is necessary for the body. Similarly, when we see them lacking in spiritual gifts, let us provide to their need what we can. But in truth, let us give them these blessings with a sincere intention, and not for human praise, not out of pride, not to the injury of others who, though endowed with

greater means, have done no such thing. For any mind infected by such vices cannot dwell in the light of truth, even if it seems to show acts of love to its neighbors.

1 John 3:19

In this we know that we are of the truth. That is, when we perform acts of piety in truth, it is evident that we are of the truth, which is God, just as we imitate His perfection according to our capacity. [1 John 3:19] -- And shall assure our hearts before Him. This statement depends on what preceded. Because when we love our neighbors in deed and truth, we clearly know that we assure our hearts in the sight of the supreme truth. For all men, when they intend to do something, persuade their hearts to meditate on that thing to be done. But those who think evil would, if they could, hide these things from God; as He testifies who says: For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed (John 3); but those who meditate on doing good easily persuade their hearts to desire to be revealed before the divinity, which is a sign of the highest perfection when each one rejoices that his deeds or thoughts are seen by God. Hence, He subsequently says: But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God (Ibid.). Through true love, therefore, we know that we are of the truth, and that we assure our hearts before the same truth, that is, we persuade our hearts to have such thoughts as are worthy of divine sight.

1 John 3:20

For if our heart reproves us, etc. If our conscience itself accuses us within, because we are not doing our good works with the right intention, how can we hide our knowledge from Him to whom it is sung: Behold, Lord, you have known all things, and, Because the darkness will not be darkened from you, and the night will be illuminated like the day (Psalm 138)? [1 John 3:21] -- Beloved, if our heart does not reproach us, etc. If it truthfully answers us that we love, and that genuine love is in us, and not feigned, but sincere, seeking the brother's salvation, expecting no gain from the brother except his salvation; likewise, if our heart does not reproach us, notably when we say in prayer: Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matthew VI), we have confidence towards God, not in the sight of men, but where God Himself sees in the heart.

1 John 3: 22

And whatever we ask we shall receive from Him, etc. This is a great and desirable promise given to the faithful. But if anyone is so foolish and absurd as not to delight in heavenly promises, at least let him fear what wisdom terrifyingly thunders in contrast, saying: He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, his prayer will be abominable (Prov. XXVIII). Nor should it seem contrary to this statement of blessed John that Paul asked the Lord three times for the angel of Satan to depart from him, and could not obtain it (II Cor. XII), but was told: My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness (Ibid.). For even if we do not always receive what we ask for in prayer to our will, yet we receive the reward of devotion for our salvation, just as the same Paul praying to the Lord received not what he sought, but what was useful for him. But, on the contrary, the reprobate are often heard according to their will, even if not for their salvation. Whence also their head, the devil, was heard according to his will when he tempted blessed Job, but to his own damnation. For he was allowed to be tested, so that by being tested, he (the devil) should be punished. Therefore, when John said that whatever we ask we shall receive from Him, if we keep His commandments, as if you were asking what the commandments are, he immediately added:

1 John 3: 23

And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, etc. He placed the commandment in the singular number and subsequently added mandates to it, namely faith and love, because clearly these cannot be separated from each other. For neither can we rightly love one another without faith in Christ, nor can we truly believe in the name of Jesus Christ without fraternal love. And he says, let us love one another, as he gave commandment to us. That is, with pure love, not like thieves or perpetrators of any other crimes, who indeed love each other but not chastely. But he gave commandment to us when he said: This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you (John XV). For what is, As I have loved you, except: love for the purpose that I loved you, namely, that you may reach the heavenly kingdoms? And by what reward are these commands of faith and love kept? It follows:

1 John 3: 24

And he who keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in him. Let God therefore be your home, and be the home of God; abide in God, and let God abide in you. God abides in you to hold you, you abide in God so that you do not fall. Keep his commandments, hold onto charity. Do not separate yourself from faith in him, so that you glory in his presence, and you will remain secure in him, now through faith, then through sight. And he will remain eternally in you, as the Psalmist sings of him: They shall exult forever, and you will dwell in them (Psalm V). [1 John 3:24] -- And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. In the early times, the Holy Spirit fell upon believers, and they spoke in tongues which they had not learned. But now, because the holy Church does not need external signs, whoever believes in the name of Jesus Christ and has fraternal love bears witness to the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. For this is what the Holy Spirit does in a person, so that there is love in them. For love (says Paul) is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom. V). Yet because many, not having love, and by perverse doctrine tearing the unity of the Church, nonetheless contend that the Holy Spirit is in them, it is rightly added:

1 JOHN 4

1 John 4: 1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, etc. And who is it that tests the spirits or how they can be tested, the Lord teaches in the Gospel where he foretold such things as John already proves came in his time. Beware, he said, of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles (Matt. VII)? These are therefore the fruits by which evil spirits, who speak in false prophets, can be known—the thorns of schisms, and the rough thistles of heresies, by which they contaminate those who approach them incautiously, tearing their faith. Conversely, the fruits of the good, that is, love, joy, peace in the Holy Spirit, are aptly figured by the fragrance of the grapes and the sweetness of the figs. [1 John 4:2] -- In this is known the Spirit of God, etc. Confession in this place is understood not only as the Catholic faith but also as the good operation which is done through charity. Otherwise, some heretics confess, many schismatics, many

false Catholics, that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, but they deny their confession by their deeds, not having charity. For charity brought the Son of God to the flesh. And therefore, whoever does not have charity denies that He has come in the flesh, such a one is convicted of not having the Spirit from God. But He is the Spirit of God, who says that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, who says it not with the tongue, but with deeds, not by sounding, but by loving.

1 John 4:3

And every spirit that dissolves Jesus is not from God. He dissolves Jesus who denies either His divinity, or His soul, or His flesh, which the Catholic faith teaches that He truly has. He also dissolves Jesus who, by perversely interpreting or by perverse sight, corrupts the commands and words of Jesus. But also he who disturbs the unity of the holy Church, which Jesus came to gather, strives, as far as is in him, to dissolve Jesus. Nor is it surprising if such are not from God, who disband the works, words, or sacraments of God. For they are so far from God, that some of them who wished by evil doctrine to separate the divinity of Christ from human dispensation, have also erased this verse, where it is said, "And every spirit that dissolves Jesus is not from God," from this Epistle, lest their error be convicted by the authority of blessed John. Finally, Nestorius revealed that he did not know this sentence was inserted into the authentic copies, and therefore he did not fear to dissolve Jesus, and thus render himself foreign to God, saying that the blessed Virgin Mary was not the mother of God, but only of a man, such that he made another person of the man, another of the Deity; nor did he believe in one Christ in the Word of God and in flesh and soul, but preached separately another Son of God, another of man.

1 John 4:3

And this is the Antichrist of whom you have heard that he comes, etc. He comes with the imminent day of judgment, born into the world as that man more wicked than all others, the son of iniquity. And now he is already in the world, dwelling in the minds of those who resist Christ either by profession or by deed, without the remedy of repentance. [1 John 4:4] -- You are from God, little children, and you have conquered him. You have conquered the Antichrist by confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, that is, by having the charity that Jesus Christ taught when he came in the flesh,

which he also commends in the Gospel, saying: Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends (John XV). For how could the Son of God lay down his life for us, unless he was clothed in flesh, where he could die? Therefore, anyone who violates charity, no matter what he says with his tongue, by his life denies that Christ has come in the flesh, and he himself is the Antichrist. And you have conquered him, he says. But how have they conquered? Was it by the power of free will? Certainly not. Let Pelagius be silent, let John himself speak:

1 John 4: 4

Because greater is he who is in you, etc. He thus teaches them to maintain humility, so that they do not attribute victory to their own strength, and are overcome by the arrogance of pride. He teaches them to always have confidence and hope of victory in the midst of adversities, retaining in their memory that the Lord is greater to protect than the devil to attack. [1 John 4:5] -- They are from the world, etc. The Antichrists, that is, the heretics, even if they invoke the name of Christ or mark themselves with the sign of Christ, still they are from the world, that is, from the number of those who think worldly thoughts, who seek the lowly things, who are ignorant of celestial matters. And thus they speak of the world, namely by the reason of worldly wisdom opposing the Christian faith, saying that it cannot be that the Son of God is coeternal with the Father, that an untouched virgin gives birth, that flesh rises from dust, immortal, that a man brought forth from the earth perceives a dwelling in the heavens, that a newborn infant is held bound by the guilt of the first man unless reborn in Christ through the water of baptism is saved.

1 John 4: 5

And the world listens to them. For the hearts of the spiritual cannot be recalled to worldly and carnal senses from the simplicity of faith. But even the Catholics who, hearing that saying of the Lord: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you" (Matthew V); and again: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew VI), say they cannot in any way leave their injuries unavenged: these indeed are proved to be of the world, and hence they speak of the world. And because they do not have the

bowels of charity, they keep the inviolate mysteries of faith in vain. Nor can they be without the name of Antichrist, who are shown to be opposed to the commands of Christ.

1John 4:6

We are of God. He who knows God, etc. For the carnal man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. Therefore, he who does not want to hear the preachers of charity is undoubtedly known not to know God, nor to be of God, because he has neglected to imitate the charity that God has exercised towards men. [1 John 4:6] -- In this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. In this, indeed, because he who listens to us has the Spirit of truth; he who does not listen to us has the spirit of error. And this is the distinction of spirits, about which he warned above, saying: "Test the spirits to see whether they are of God." But let us see what he is about to admonish, in which we should hear him:

1John 4:7

Beloved, let us love one another, etc. He has highly recommended charity, which he said is from God; he is about to say more, let us listen attentively: [1 John 4:7] -- And everyone who loves is born of God, etc. What more could be said? God is charity. Therefore, to act against charity is to act against God. Let no one say: I sin against man when I do not love my brother, and it is an easy sin against man, if I do not sin against God alone. How do you not sin against God, when you sin against charity? God is charity. [1 John 4:9] -- In this God's love appeared in us, etc. As the Lord himself says: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John XV); and thus the love of Christ for us is proven, because he died for us. The Father's love is also proven in us, because he sent his only Son to die for us. Thus also the Apostle Paul says: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things (Rom. VIII)?

1John 4:10

In this is love, etc. We did not love him first. For he loved us to the extent that we might love him. Grace indeed goes before man, that he may love God, by which love he works good things. Whence the Psalmist says: My God, his mercy shall anticipate me (Ps. LVIII). [1 John 4:10] -- And he sent his Son to be the propitiation, etc. And this is the greatest sign of divine love

for us, because when we did not yet know how to ask him for forgiveness for our sins, he sent his Son to us, who, to those believing in him, would grant pardon freely and call us to the fellowship of paternal glory. In some Codices, this verse is read thus: And he sent his Son to be the altar sacrifice for our sins. The altar sacrifice means a sacrificer. For the Son of God sacrificed for our sins not by offering cattle, but by offering himself. Hence Paul rightly admonishes, saying: Therefore be ye imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor (Eph. V). In agreement with this is what John also here adds in exhortation, saying:

1 John 4:11

Beloved, if God so loved us, etc. What then follows:

1 John 4:12

No one has ever seen God. A greater discussion is needed, since the Lord promises that the pure in heart will see God, and He says of the saints that their angels always see the face of the Father in heaven. John also stated this in his Gospel, where he consequentially adds how God can be seen, saying: The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John I). Blessed Father Ambrose explained it thus: "And no one has ever seen God, because the fullness of the divinity dwelling in God has been seen by no one, comprehended by neither mind nor eyes. For 'seeing' must be referred to both. Hence when it is added: The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him, it is a vision of the mind rather than of the eyes being spoken of. The form is seen, the power is narrated. The former is comprehended by eyes, the latter by the mind. Likewise, blessed Augustine in his book on seeing God, discussing the same question: "Therefore (he says), with the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, narrating with ineffable narration, a rational, pure, and holy creature is filled with the ineffable vision of God. We will achieve this when we have become equal to the angels, for we shall see face to face (I Cor. XIII).

As visible things are seen by the senses of the body, no one has ever seen God: because if He was ever seen in any way, it was not as a natural object is seen, but He willed to be seen in the form He chose, with His nature remaining hidden and unchangeable in Himself. But in the way He is seen as He is (I Cor. XIII), perhaps He is now seen by some of His holy angels. But by us,

He will be seen in that way when we shall have become equal to them. And after some propositions, expounding the sentence of Saint Ambrose, Augustine says, "No one has ever seen God, either in this life as He is, or even in the life of angels, as these visible things are perceived by bodily vision, because the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. Therefore, it pertains not to the vision of bodily eyes, but to the vision of minds. And after these many words: "To that vision (he says) by which we will see God as He is (I Cor. XIII), He admonished pure hearts. Because, indeed, bodies are by customary speech called visible, thus God is called invisible so that He may not be believed to be a body.

It does not mean that He would deprive pure hearts of the contemplation of His substance, since this great and highest reward is promised to those who honor and love God, as the Lord Himself said when He visibly appeared to bodily eyes, and He promised to show Himself invisibly to pure hearts: Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and show myself to him (John XIV). For His nature is equally invisible with the Father, just as it is equally incorruptible. Paul listed these consecutively, saying: Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, he commended the divine substance in a manner he could to humans through preaching. Therefore, God is an invisible reality, to be sought not with the eye but the mind. But just as if we wanted to see the sun, we would purify the eye of the body from which light can be seen; so also, wanting to see God, let us purify the eye of the heart with which God can be seen: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matthew V). But since this vision is hoped for in the future, what must we do now, while still in the body, wandering away from the Lord? What solace should we use when divine vision is not yet permitted to us?"

1 John 4:12

If we love one another, God abides in us. But let no one think that this love, in which God abides, is preserved by a certain lax and lazy gentleness, indeed not by gentleness but by leniency and negligence. This is not charity, but languor; charity should burn fervently to amend and correct. But if morals are good, let them delight; if they are bad, let them be amended and corrected. Therefore, if we love one another with sincere and disciplined charity, God abides in us, manifested indeed by the works of that very charity, even though He does not yet appear visibly. [1 John 4:12] -- And His charity is per-

fectured in us. However, it must be inquired how he says that the perfection of divine charity consists in mutual love, since the Lord in the Gospel pronounces that it is not a great thing if we love those who love us, unless that same love extends also to enemies, about whom he here seems completely silent? Unless perhaps we should love even these enemies with the gaze of fraternal love, so that they do not always remain enemies, but repent from the snares of the devil and join us in a genuine covenant. If we love one another, he says, God abides in us, and His charity is perfected in us. Begin to love, you will be perfected. You have begun to love, God has begun to dwell in you, so that by dwelling more perfectly He may make you perfect.

1 John 4:13

In this we know that we abide in Him, etc. This very thing, because He gave His Spirit to you, how do you know? Ask your own inner parts. If they are full of charity, you have the Spirit of God, as Paul attests, who says: Because the charity of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us (Rom. V). [1 John 4:14] -- And we have seen and testify, etc. Let no one despair of salvation, because although the diseases of crimes that weigh one down are great, the omnipotent physician has come to save. Yet let each remember that the same Son of God who came gently to save, will come sternly to judge. [1 John 4:15] -- Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, etc. He speaks of the perfect confession of the heart, which can neither be corrupted by the deceit of heretics who wrongly persuade, nor be shattered by the tortures of pagan persecutors, nor falter by the examples of fleshly brothers, nor waver by the sluggishness of one's own weakness. For there are those who even deny by words that Jesus is the Son of God, of which many are reported to have been at that very time when John wrote this. Likewise, there are those who confess in words, but deny in actions. Hence it is well stated now: Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God, he said a little above: If we love one another, God abides in us, surely insinuating that whoever has love for his brothers, he truly testifies that Jesus is the Son of God.

1 John 4:16

And we have known and believed the love that God has in us. We have known that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the Father sent him as the Savior of the world. And we believe the love that God has in us, because evid-

ently when He had His only Son, He did not want Him to be alone, but so that He might have brothers, He adopted those who would possess eternal life with Him. [1 John 4:16] -- God is love. He already said that above, behold he says it again. Love could not be commended to you more than by saying God. Perhaps you were going to scorn the gift of God: will you scorn God as well? [1 John 4:16] -- And he who abides in love, abides in God, and God in him. Conversely, those who contain and those who are contained live in each other. You dwell in God, but so that you may be contained; God dwells in you, but so that He may contain you lest you fall, because as the Apostle says of love itself: Charity never fails. How does he fall whom God contains?

1John 4:17

In this, love is perfected with us, etc. He says how each one may test how much he has progressed in love. Whoever has confidence on the day of judgment, love is perfected in him. What is it to have confidence on the day of judgment? It is to not fear the coming of the day of judgment. For when someone first converts himself from wicked deeds by repenting, he begins to fear the day of judgment, lest, namely, when the Just Judge appears, he himself, being unjust, be condemned. However, encouraged by a good life in the process, he learns not to fear what he once feared, but rather to wish for the coming of the awaited one for all nations, hoping that he will be crowned with the saints by the merit of good actions. From where we can have confidence on the day of judgment, he explains more fully by adding:

1John 4:17

Because as He is, so are we in this world. Can a man indeed be as God? But it should be remembered what was said above, that "as" does not always refer to equality, but it refers to a certain similarity. For when you say, "As I have ears, so too does the image," is it entirely so? Yet still you say "as." So if we are made in the image of God, why are we not as God? Not in equality, but in our own measure. Therefore, confidence is given to us on the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world—namely by imitating the perfection of love in the world, of which He daily provides us an example from heaven. Concerning this, the Savior in the Gospel says, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you and slander you, so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven, who makes His sun rise on the good and the bad, and rains on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5).

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love. In that particular love which, in imitation of divine goodness, knows how to do good even to enemies and to love them. [1 John 4:18] -- But perfect love casts out fear. This fear, of course, of which it is said: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm CX). By which anyone fearing begins works of justice, lest the strict Judge come, and finding himself less chastened, be condemned. This fear is cast out by the love which, on account of its merit of justice, has confidence on the day of judgment. But also the fear of present adversities, perfect love expels from the soul. The one who supplicates to the Lord sought to have, saying: Deliver my soul from the fear of the enemy (Psalm LXIII). The one who had it said: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? etc. (Romans VIII).

1 John 4:18

Because fear has torment. The heart is tormented by the conscience of sins, because justification has not yet been made. Therefore, in the Psalm, concerning this very perfection of justice, "You have turned (he says) my mourning into joy for me; you have removed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness, that my glory may sing praise to you, and not be silent" (Psalm XXIX), that is, there may not be anything to pierce my conscience. Fear pierces, but do not be afraid: love enters, which heals what fear wounds. [1 John 4:18] -- But whoever fears is not perfect in charity. Because clearly fear has punishment, as a doctor's surgery has punishment; although just as the doctor's surgery brings hoped-for health, so fear follows desired charity. Nor should it be thought that the words of Blessed John are contrary to what the Psalmist says: "The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring forever and ever" (Psalm 19). For there are two fears: one by which men fear God lest they be cast into hell; this is the fear that introduces charity, but it comes so that it may go out. For if you still fear God because of punishments, you do not yet love whom you thus fear; you do not desire good things, but you avoid bad ones; but because you avoid bad things, you correct yourself, and begin to desire good things. When you begin to desire good things, that holy fear will be in you, namely lest you lose those good things, not so that you may not be cast into hell, but lest the presence of the Lord whom you embrace may desert you, whom you wish to enjoy forever.

1 John 4:19

Therefore, let us love God, etc. Let us love because He first loved us. For how could we love unless He had first loved us? Hence He Himself says in the Gospel: "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15). Thus, we will be perfect in charity if, just as He first loved us for the sake of our own salvation, so we also love Him solely for the sake of love. But because there are those who love God only in words, it is wisely added: [1 John 4:20] -- If anyone says, 'I love God,' etc. How do you prove that he is a liar? Listen: [1 John 4:20] -- For he who does not love his brother, etc. He who loves his brother loves God. It is necessary to love God in order to love love itself. For God is love. And lest anyone dare to say: "And what does it hinder to love God, even if I do not love my brother?" it is rightly added:

1 John 4:21

And this commandment we have from God, etc. For how can you love him whose command you hate? Who is it who says: I love the emperor, but I hate his laws? Not so the true lover of God, but: See (he says) that I have loved your commands, O Lord (Psalm CXVIII). And therefore he confidently adds: Quicken me in your mercy (*Ibid.*).

1 JOHN 5

1 John 5:1

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, etc. Who is it who believes that Jesus is the Christ? He who lives as Christ commanded. Let no heretic, no schismatic say: And we also believe that Jesus is the Christ. For even demons believe and tremble, and they confessed, as we read in the Gospel, and knew that he was the Christ. But because they do not have love and works of truth, they are not from God. [1 John 5:1] -- And everyone who loves the one who begot, loves also the one, etc. With marvelous skill in preaching, blessed John took care to incite us to the love of our neighbor, first noting that everyone who perfectly believes is born of God, then suggesting how just it is that the one who loves God should love also the one born of God. For if anyone is so slow as to neglect to love a man because he is a man, because he endures the same pilgrimage on earth with him, he should be admonished to at least love him for this reason, that he is born of God, that he is made a partaker with him of divine grace, that he expects the same rewards of heavenly life with him. Indeed, this exhortation particularly per-

tains to those who have not only become our brothers by the companionship of human nature but also by the profession of faith. However, because there are some who love their neighbors but because of kinship or for some temporal benefit, the holy evangelist rightly reveals what true neighborly love is by adding:

1 John 5: 2

In this we know that we love the children of God, etc. Therefore, he alone is proven to love his neighbor rightly who is known to burn with the love of the Creator. And lest anyone deceive himself about the love of the Creator, professing that he loves by word alone, after having said: In this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, he added, and we keep His commandments. [1 John 5:3] -- For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. The Lord Himself says this: If anyone loves me, he will keep my word (John XIV). Therefore, the proof of love is the exhibition of work. For we truly love if we constrain ourselves to His commandments from our will. For he who still flows with illicit desires certainly does not love God, because he contradicts Him in his will.

1 John 5: 3

And His commandments are not burdensome. The Lord Himself says: My yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. XI). It should not appear contrary to the words of the Lord or blessed John that the Lord Himself says elsewhere that the gate is narrow, and the way is hard that leads to life (Matt. VII); and the prophet says to Him: For the words of your lips, I have kept hard ways (Psalm XVI); and the apostle: For through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts XIV). For what is inherently hard and rough, the hope of heavenly rewards and the love of Christ makes light. Indeed, it is hard to suffer persecutions for righteousness, but what makes it sweet is that for those who suffer thus, the kingdom of heaven belongs. Hence it is well added: [1 John 5:4] -- For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. Therefore, God's commandments are not heavy because all who devote themselves to them in true devotion equally despise the adversities and blandishments of the world with equal mind, even loving death itself as the entrance to the heavenly homeland. And lest anyone trust that he can overcome the world or its luxuries or labors by his virtue, it is deliberately added:

1 John 5: 4

And this is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith. Specifically, that faith which works through love; that faith by which we humbly seek the help of Him who said: In the world you will have tribulations, but take courage, I have overcome the world (John 16). [1 John 5:5] -- Who is he that overcomes the world, etc.? He overcomes the world who, believing that Jesus is the Son of God, combines works worthy of that faith. But does the faith and confession of His divinity alone suffice for salvation? See what follows. [1 John 5:6] -- This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. He who was the eternal Son of God became man in time, so that He who created us by His divine power might recreate us by the weakness of His humanity. He came by water and blood, namely the water of baptism and the blood of His passion. He not only deigned to be baptized for our cleansing to consecrate and deliver to us the sacrament of baptism, but also gave His blood for us, redeeming us by His passion, that we might be nourished unto salvation by the sacraments.

1 John 5: 6

And the Spirit is He who testifies because Christ is the truth. When the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, bearing witness to Him as the truth, that is, the true Son of God, the true mediator between God and men, the true Redeemer and Reconciler of mankind, who is indeed free from all stain of sin, truly able to take away the sins of the world. As also the Baptist, understanding when he saw the coming of the same Spirit, said: He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, Upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, He it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God (John 1). Therefore, since the Spirit testifies that Jesus Christ is the truth, He calls Himself the truth, the Baptist proclaims Him as the truth, the son of thunder evangelizes the truth, let the blasphemers be silent, who maintain that this is a phantasm; let the memory of those perish from the earth who deny that He is truly either God or man.

1 John 5: 7

Since there are three who bear witness on earth, etc. The Spirit has borne witness that Jesus is truth, when it descended upon Him at His baptism. For if he were not truly the Son of God, by no means would the Holy Spirit have

come to Him with such a great manifestation. Water and blood also bore witness that Jesus is truth, when from His side on the cross, after He had died, they flowed out: which could not have happened at all, if He did not have a true nature of flesh. And also this that before His passion, when He prayed, His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22), gives testimony to the truth of the flesh He had assumed. Nor should it be ignored that in this also blood and water bore witness to Him, that from His side after death they flowed out vividly, which was against the nature of dead bodies, and therefore was apt for mysteries, and was fitting as a testimony of the truth, namely showing that the very body of the Lord would live more gloriously after being resurrected, and that His very death would grant us life. This too, that His sweat fell to the ground like drops of blood, bore witness to that holy mystery that He would wash the whole Church all over the world with His blood. Therefore, there are three who bear witness to the truth.

1 John 5:7

And (he says) the three are one. For these remain indivisible, and none of them is separated from its connection, because divinity is not to be believed without true humanity, nor humanity without true divinity. But in us also these are one, not by nature of the same substance, but by the operation of the same mystery. For, as the blessed Ambrose says: "The Spirit renews the abiding, water leads to washing, blood pertains to redemption." For the Spirit has made us sons of God through adoption, the wave of the sacred font washes us, the blood of the Lord has redeemed us. Therefore, one invisible, the other visible testimony, follows the spiritual sacrament.

1 John 5:9

If we accept the testimony of man, the testimony of God is greater, etc. Great is the testimony of man that he gives concerning the Son of God, saying: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand" (Psalm 109). And from the person of the Son himself: "The Lord said to me: You are my Son" (Psalm 2). And likewise from the person of the Father speaking about the Son: "He will call upon me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation'" (Psalm 88). "My Father," because I am the Son of God. "My God," because I am man. "The rock of my salvation," because I will suffer and be saved from death. "And I (he says) will make him my firstborn, the highest of the

kings of the earth" (Ibid.). This is a great and true testimony, worthy of all acceptance. The testimony of man concerning the Son of God is great, but much greater is the testimony of God, who has testified himself about his Son when, speaking from heaven, he said: "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3). Great is the testimony of the forerunner, who, bearing testimony about the Son of God, said: "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 3). Greater is the testimony of the Father, who sent the Holy Spirit upon him, whom he was always full of, even visibly.

1 John 5:10

He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony of God in himself. He who thus believes in the Son of God, so as to practice in work what he believes, has the testimony of God in himself. Surely this is because he also may rightly be counted among the number of the sons of God, as the only Son of God promises to his faithful: "If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him" (John 12). If you have deserved to have the testimony of God, if you possess God as a witness of your unblemished faith, what does the infamy of men, what does even persecution harm you? For if God is for us, who can be against us?

1 John 5:10

Whoever does not believe in the Son makes him a liar, etc. In vain the Jews and heretics think they believe in and venerate the Father, as long as they despise Christ and refuse to believe in him. For he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Those who do not believe in the Son, who says "I and the Father are one" (John 10), and when Caiaphas asked, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14), he replied: "I am" (ibid.); but they argue that he is either not the Christ, or not the Son of God, or not similar to the Father, they certainly make the Father a liar, because they do not believe the testimony he has testified about his Son: namely, in what I mentioned before: "You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased" (Luke 3); and even in what he testified when the hour of passion was imminent, while he was praying and saying: "Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name" (John 12), he responded, even the crowd hearing from heaven, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again" (ibid.), truly signifying himself as God the

Father in the heavens of him who, as a true man, was about to suffer death on earth.

1 John 5:11

And this is the testimony, that God has given us eternal life. He said, He has given us eternal life. And he who speaks, still living a temporal life and subject to death in the flesh. But he has given us eternal life, just as he has given us the power to become children of God to those who believe in his name. For to know that the power to have eternal life has been given by God, listen to the prophet: "Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit," and so on to the end of the psalm (Psalm 33). Therefore he has given us eternal life, but still to those wandering on earth in hope, which he will give in heaven to those who arrive to him in reality.

1 John 5:11

And this life is in His Son. Namely, in the faith and confession of His name, in the reception of His sacraments, in the observance of His commandments. Hence He Himself also said: No one comes to the Father except through Me (John XIV). And Peter about Him: Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts IV). [1 John 5:12] -- He who has the Son, has life, etc. So that it may not seem too little to say that life is in the Son, he added that the Son Himself is life. Which the Son, glorifying the Father, also showed when He said: For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself (John V). But how the same life which is common to both the Son and the Father also enlightens believers, the same Son elsewhere intimates in prayer to the Father: As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John XVII).

1 John 5:13

These things I have written to you, that you may know that you have eternal life, etc. That you may know, he says, that you may be certain of your future blessedness, who believe in Christ, so that you are not deceived by the fraud of those who deny that Jesus is the Son of God, and therefore assert that nothing will benefit those who have believed in His name. And the won-

drous madness of heretics, who, though the Son of God is referred to throughout this entire Epistle, still assert that Christ is not the Son but a creature of God. Which in no way do they read, except when His humanity is mentioned.

1 John 5:14

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, etc. He provides us with great confidence to hope for heavenly goods from the Lord, because even in this life, whatever we ask of him in a salutary manner, we obtain, according to what he himself promises believers in the Gospel: "I say to you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark XI). But it must be noted that we are heard by the Lord when praying in such a way, provided we ask for what he has commanded. He himself says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew VI). Hence, John rightly interposed after saying, "Whatever we ask, we receive from him," by adding, "according to his will." Therefore, we are commanded to have full and undoubted confidence of being heard only regarding those things which align not with our own benefits or temporal comforts but with the Lord's will. This is also to be included in the Lord's Prayer: "Your will be done" (Matthew VI), that is, not ours. For if we remember the Apostle's words: "For we do not know what to pray for as we ought" (Romans VIII), we understand that sometimes we ask for things contrary to our own salvation, and it is most beneficial for us that those things we ask are denied by him who perceives our benefit more rightly than we do. This undoubtedly happened even to the teacher of the Gentiles himself.

1 John 5:15

And we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, etc. He repeatedly emphasizes the same points previously stated, to encourage us to pray more energetically. But the objection remains that we should ask according to the will of our Creator. This can be understood in two ways: both that we ask for those things he desires, and that we come to petition him in the manner he desires us to be. This means to have faith that works through love (Galatians V), and above all, to remember that gospel command: "And whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark XI). [1 John 5:16] -- Who knows his brother to sin a sin not unto death, etc. These and

such things are asked according to the will of the Lord, which pertain to the duty of brotherly love. He speaks, however, of daily and light sins, which as they are difficult to avoid, so also are easily cured. But regarding the manner in which this mutual request should be carried out for sins, James more clearly indicates, saying: Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another that you may be saved (James V). If, therefore, by speaking, or thinking, or forgetfulness, or ignorance you have perhaps erred, go to your brother, confess to him, ask for intervention. If he purely confesses to you, making you aware of his own frailty, and you piously intercede for his errors, correct him. But these things are said about lighter sins. Moreover, if you have committed something more serious, bring in the elders of the Church, and at their examination, punish yourself.

1 John 5:16

There is a sin unto death, etc. A great question arises here, because blessed John clearly shows that there are certain brothers for whom we are not instructed to pray, whereas the Lord even commands us to pray for our persecutors. This can only be resolved by admitting that there are some sins among the brothers which are more grievous than the persecution by enemies. Therefore, the sin of a brother unto death occurs when, after the knowledge of God, which is given through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, someone attacks the brotherhood and is inflamed with envy against the very grace by which they were reconciled to God. However, a sin not unto death is if someone has not withdrawn love from their brother but has not shown the duties owed to brotherhood due to some weakness of mind. Therefore, the Lord on the cross says: Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23). For they had not yet become participants in the grace of the Holy Spirit, nor had they entered the communion of holy brotherhood. And blessed Stephen prays for those by whom he was being stoned because they did not yet believe in Christ, nor did they fight against that common grace. And the apostle Paul, for this reason, I believe, does not pray for Alexander because he was already a brother; and he had sinned unto death, that is, by attacking brotherhood with envy.

But he prays that those who had not severed love but had succumbed to fear be forgiven. For he thus says: Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord will repay him according to his works; whom do you also avoid, for he has greatly resisted our words (2 Tim. 4). Then he adds for

whom he prays, saying: At my first defense, no one stood with me, but all forsook me; may it not be charged against them (*Ibid.*). However, a sin unto death can be understood as one for which someone is forbidden to pray, because a sin that is not corrected in this life, its forgiveness is sought in vain after death. But if we carefully inspect the following, the previous sense of this reading seems to align more with its tenor. For it continues:

1 John 5:17

All iniquity is sin, etc. Such is the diversity of sins, he says, that everything which deviates from the rule of equity is counted among the sins, although small sins cannot in any way take away or diminish the merit of righteousness from the just, as long as they are those without which this life cannot be lived, and likewise there are certain sins so discordant with all justice, committed with such iniquity, that without any contradiction, unless they are corrected, they lead their perpetrator to eternal punishment. Concerning which it is written: The soul that sins shall die (*Ezekiel 18*). Blessed John's statement clearly repudiates the inept argument of the Stoics, who dared to say against all human sense and to affirm that all sins are equal, saying it makes no difference whether a man steals a human being, an ox, or a chicken, because it is not the animal but the intention that constitutes the crime. Jovinian the heretic followed them, asserting that there is no distinction between marriage and virginity, claiming that those who abstain in no way should be preferred in any privilege of recompense over those who simply partake in feasting. Therefore, everything that is unjustly committed or thought is to be referred to as sin. But there are some sins unto death, about which the Apostle says: For those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (*Galatians 5*).

1 John 5:18

We know that everyone who is born of God does not sin. Sin, namely unto death. This can be understood about all mortal crimes, and specifically that which violates brotherhood, as we have explained above. But also, the sin unto death can be said to be rightly understood as the sin prolonged up to the time of death, which everyone born of God does not commit. After all, King David committed a mortal crime. For who does not know that adultery and murder deserve eternal death? But yet David, because he was born of God, because he belonged to the society of the children of God, he did not

sin unto death, because he immediately obtained forgiveness for his guilt by repenting. [1 John 5:18] -- But the generation of God preserves him, etc. The grace of Christ, by which the faithful are reborn, preserves those who are called holy according to the purpose, so that they do not commit sin leading to death; and if they err in anything due to the frailty of human condition, it protects them from being touched by the malignant enemy. Furthermore, it must be said, we remain in the generation of God as long as we do not sin; indeed, those who persevere in the generation of God cannot sin, nor be touched by the malignant. For what communion has light with darkness, Christ with Belial (II Cor. VI)? Just as (he says) day and night cannot be mixed, so righteousness and iniquity, sin and good works, Christ and Anti-christ, the malignant one and the generation of God.

1 John 5:18

We know that we are born of God, etc. We are of God, regenerated by His grace and baptism through faith, and saved so that we may endure in faith. However, the lovers of the world are subjected to the enemy, either never freed from his dominion by the wave of regeneration, or after the grace of regeneration, returned again to his dominion by sinning. Not only the lovers of the world but also those who are recently born and do not yet have discernment of good and evil, because of the guilt of the first violation, belong to the kingdom of the evil enemy unless by the grace of the kind Creator they are rescued from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1). Hence, he did not simply say that the world is in the evil one but added, And (he says) the whole world is placed in the evil one. For as blessed Ambrose says: "We are all born under sin, whose very birth is in defect." And Pelagius strives in vain to affirm that infants recently born have no need of the grace of baptism to be reborn, because they are said to be born as clean from all stain of sin as Adam was created in paradise, deriving no stain of original guilt from him, and being guilty of nothing until they begin to sin by their own will. But as for us, setting aside the poisons of the Antichrists, which are condemned and expelled from the Church all through this Epistle by the one who drank from the breast of the Lord, the fountain of life, let us hear in the closure the good word of salvation which he pours out for us. Let us observe the works of the supreme King which he tells of. The following ensues:

1 John 5: 20

And we know that the Son of God has come, etc. For what could be clearer than these words? What could be sweeter? What could be said more strongly against all heresies? Christ is the true Son of God. The Father of Christ Jesus our Lord is the true God. The eternal Son of God came temporally into the world, who was in the world, and through whom the world was made. Nor did He come for any other reason than for our salvation, that is, to give us the understanding to know the true God. For no one could come to life without divine knowledge, no one could know God except by His teaching: as He Himself says: And no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and whom the Son wills to reveal Him (Luke X). It is implied: both the Father and the Son. For the Son reveals both, who, appearing visibly in the flesh, has deigned to now reveal the secrets of divinity through His Gospel.

1 John 5: 20

This is the true God, and eternal life. He had said that the Son is the true God, and repeatedly affirms that this one is the true God. He says that this one is eternal life. Not in the way eternal life is promised to us, which takes us from time and places us so that we never cease living well; but the Son is life, always remaining without the beginning of time, always remaining without end. [1 John 5:21] -- Little children, keep yourselves from idols. You who have known the true God, in whom you have eternal life, keep yourselves from the doctrines of heretics, which lead to eternal death, because, like those who make idols in place of God, they change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible things with perverse teachings (Rom. I). Keep yourselves from love of money, which is the service of idols. Be careful not to prefer any worldly allurements over the love of the Creator. For this too will be counted among idols, so that having the care and diligence for truth alone, you may deserve to rejoice endlessly in its vision. For the world passes away, and its desire. But whoever does the will of the Lord remains forever (1 John II).

2 JOHN

2 John 1: 1

The Elder to the elect lady and her children, etc. Some think that this and the following epistle are not of John the apostle, but of a certain presbyter

John, whose tomb is shown to this day in Ephesus. Papias, too, the hearer of the apostles, and bishop in Hierapolis, often mentions him in his works. But now the general consensus of the Church holds that John the apostle also wrote these epistles, because they truly show much similarity in words and faith with his first epistle, and with similar zeal detest heretics. John calls himself the Elder either because he was advanced in age when he wrote these epistles, or because the name "elder" or "presbyter" was fitting for a bishop due to maturity in wisdom and gravity. Hence Peter also says: "The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Peter 5). The Elder, he says, to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, that is, I love with true love, namely, that which is according to God. Or certainly, I love those whom I consider persevering in the truth.

2 John 1:1

And not I only, but also all, etc. Because he begins to write against heretics, as they have fallen from the truth of the faith, he rightly recalls that there is one love in the Holy Spirit among all who have known the truth, to frighten those who, being few, have separated themselves from the society of the many Catholics with their unanimity and multitude. Indeed, all the Catholics throughout the world follow one rule of truth; but not all heretics and infidels agree in a unanimous error, rather they assault each other no less than they do the path of truth itself. [2 John 1:2] -- For the truth's sake, which dwells in us, etc. He says, we love you and yours for no other reason than for the truth of the faith, which always remains invincible in us, for we find that you also invincibly guard the same.

2 John 1:3

May grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father be with you, etc. Since the heretics of that time, namely Marcian and Cerinthus, denied that our Lord Jesus Christ was truly the Son of God and attributed his beginning to human birth, John rightly recalls him as the Son of God the Father to refute these blasphemers. He also testifies that grace, mercy, and peace are to be given to the faithful by him just as by God the Father, to demonstrate that he is equal and co-eternal with the Father, signifying that his gifts are the same as those of the Father. As the Lord himself, speaking of his and the Father's consubstantiality, said: "For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise" (John

V). [2 John 1:5] -- And now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing a new commandment to you, etc. By this word, he reproaches the heretics, who were attempting to introduce new doctrines, leaving behind what they had heard from the apostles, and thereby disrupting the bonds of brotherly charity. Therefore, he says that he is by no means writing a new commandment but merely urging that the old faith and unblemished charity remain in all things.

2 John 1:7

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, etc. This can also be understood concerning the heretics who indeed confess Jesus Christ incarnate but do not rightly perceive some part of his faith, such as his true flesh, true soul, true divinity, true Father God, true Holy Spirit, omnipotent God, or any other thing that true faith confesses. It can also be taken concerning the Jews, who wholly deny Jesus Christ, swear that Christ has not yet come in the flesh for the salvation of the world, but expect the Antichrist to come for their destruction. [2 John 1:9] -- Everyone who goes ahead and does not remain in the teaching, etc. Note the difference in words, and embrace the truth of the faith. He says that whoever does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God, but whoever remains in his teaching has both the Son and the Father, to show that the Father and the Son are one true God, and to convict those of falsehood who assert that the Son is either not God, or is posterior or inferior to the Father.

2 John 1:10

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, etc. John speaks thus about schismatics or heretics to be detested, what he taught in words, he also practiced in deeds. For his most holy listener and strongest martyr Polycarp, the bishop of the Smyrnaeans, recounts that at a certain time, while he had entered the baths at Ephesus for the sake of washing, and had seen Cerinthus there, he immediately jumped out and left without washing, saying: "Let us flee from here, lest even the baths collapse in which Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is bathing." The same Polycarp also, when he once met Marcion, who said to him: "Recognize us," he replied: "I recognize, I recognize the firstborn of Satan." Such caution did the apostles and their disciples use in religion at that time, that they would not permit even a word's communion with any of those who had deviated from the truth; as

Paul also says: A man that is heretical, after a first and second admonition, avoid, knowing that such a one is perverted and sins, being self-condemned (Tit. III).

2 John 1:13

The children of your sister, the Elect, greet you. Just as he prohibits us to greet the adversaries of the truth, so, conversely, he greets the elect on behalf of the elect, so that the faithless may be detested by all the good, possibly to correct them in this way, and that the peace and love among the faithful may always increase.

3 JOHN

3 John 1:1

The elder to the beloved Gaius, etc. Who and what kind of person this Gaius was, is revealed in the course of the Epistle. Because clearly he accumulated good deeds in addition to the faith in Christ which he had received, and although he was not sufficient for preaching the word himself, he rejoiced to sustain those who did preach with his resources. We believe this Gaius to be the one whom Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Romans, saying: "Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you" (Rom. XVI). For he was accustomed to be called a host both as one who receives and is received, he was the host of the entire church because he kindly received all who came to him, namely both the preachers and the hearers of the word, as the following parts of this Epistle clearly declare. Hence, John also loves him in the truth, that is, he appears to love him only with the view of eternal goods, not for the sake of temporal benefits. But it seems that Gaius was in Corinth, from the fact that Paul, having stayed in that city, wrote the Epistle to the Romans, whom he greets in his name. And also in the Epistle to the Corinthians, he mentions Gaius as a citizen of Corinth, saying: "I thank my God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that you were baptized in my name" (I Cor. I).

3 John 1:2

Beloved, I pray that in all things, etc. He says, I frequent prayers to the Lord, that you may complete well what you do well. And just as now your soul, that is, the internal intention of your mind prospers, that is, advances in abundant works of alms, and the liberality of a bountiful mind, and the resources of money which you share with the needy, so may you always be able to lead

a life full of virtues with the Lord's help. [3 John 1:4] -- I have no greater joy than this, etc. That is, that I recognize those whom I have begotten to God by preaching or baptizing, observing the truth both of right faith and good operation. [3 John 1:5] -- Beloved, you act faithfully in whatever you work for the brethren, etc. You act faithfully, he says, as if he said: Just as you are truly faithful, so you act, showing your faith by your works.

3 John 1:7

For they went out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. When it says for the name, it is to be understood as of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the ancients spoke in this manner. And for two reasons, they went out for the name of the Lord, either to preach, evidently coming of their own accord in the name of Him, or because of the faith and confession of the holy name, they were expelled from their homeland by their fellow citizens or relatives.

3 John 1:8

Therefore, we ought to support such men, etc. The blessed John, who had left all things for Christ, aligns himself with the person of believing rich men, so that he might make them more eager to have compassion on the poor and strangers: nor should it be doubted that he could have truly said what we read Paul to have said: "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so laboring you must help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20). But he calls them co-workers of the truth, because he who provides temporal support to those who have spiritual gifts, becomes a co-worker in those spiritual gifts themselves. For since there are few who have received spiritual gifts, and many who are rich in temporal things, by this the rich incorporate themselves into the virtues of the poor, while they share their riches with these holy poor. Hence the Lord also says: "Whoever receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and whoever receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward" (Matthew 10).

3 John 1:9

I would have written to the church, but he who loves to have the preeminence among them, etc. Diotrophes, it seems, was an arch-heretic of that

time, someone proud and insolent, preferring to usurp the preeminence of knowledge by teaching new doctrines, rather than humbly listening to the commands of the ancient holy Church, which John preached. Hence, aptly, Diotrephes is humorously derided, or interpreted as "mad elegance," to signify with his name even the perfidy of his heart. [3 John 1:10] -- For this reason, if I come, I will bring up his deeds. That is, by openly reproving, I will bring his works to the knowledge of all. Just like the apostle Paul said: "What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod?" [3 John 1:10] -- He acts, talking against us with malicious words. It should be noted that we should not arouse the tongues of detractors by our fault, lest they perish, but we should equally bear those that are incited by their own malice, so that merit may increase for us; sometimes, however, we should also curb them, lest while they disseminate evil about us, they corrupt the hearts of the innocent who could have heard good things. Hence John reproved the tongue of his detractor, lest those who could have listened might not hear his preaching and remain in their wrong ways.

3 John 1:11

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He reveals that he desires him to imitate what is good by adding: [3 John 1:12] -- Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone. That is, he himself welcomed the weak and supported the needy for the sake of the truth. Therefore, Gaius should also imitate him, so that he too may be worthy of the praise of all. [3 John 1:15] -- Peace to you. The friends greet you, etc. He sends greetings of peace and health to friends, showing by this that Diotrephes and other enemies of the truth are foreign to your peace and salvation.

J U D E

Jude 1:1

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, etc. Jude the apostle, whom Matthew and Mark call Thaddeus in the Gospel, writes against the same corruptors of the faith whom both Peter and John condemn in their Epistles. [Jude 1:3] -- Beloved, making all diligence to write to you, etc. He speaks of their common salvation, that salvation which was common to both him and them. For the salvation, faith, and love of Christ are one and common to all the elect. [Jude 1:3] -- Exhorting to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Exhorting them not to learn another faith than that which was

once delivered to them by the apostles, but always to contend for it even unto death. [Jude 1:4] -- Certain men have crept in, etc. He means into this judgment, into this condemnation, which the impious deserve by their actions. Hence the Lord says: And they shall come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment (John V), that is, condemnation.

Jude 1:4

Perverting the grace of our Lord into licentiousness. The grace of our Lord has softened the hardness of the law, because when it said, If anyone does this or that, let them be stoned; if anyone does this or that, let them be burned with fire; the Lord, having relaxed the strictness of the law, gave through the grace of the Gospel the license to purge committed crimes through penance and the fruits of almsgiving. But they pervert this grace of His into licentiousness, who now sin all the more freely and easily, as they see themselves less immediately examined by the harshness of the law for their admitted crimes. [Jude 1:4] -- And denying the only Sovereign and Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only Sovereign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, just as the Father is the only Sovereign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, and just as the Holy Spirit is the only Sovereign with the Father and the Son. The whole Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the only Sovereign. For whichever person you name in the same holy and indivisible Trinity, it is the only God. And when you name the whole Trinity together, you name the only true God. Hence it is rightly understood that any heretics who deny that the Father of Christ is the true, good, and just God deny our only Sovereign and Lord. Whoever denies that Jesus Christ is the true Son of God, they also deny our only Sovereign and Lord. Whoever diminishes the power of the Holy Spirit, they also contradict the majesty of our only Sovereign and Lord, for the same Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is undeniably our only Sovereign and Lord.

Jude 1:5

I wish to remind you, although you know these things once and for all. Namely, knowing all the mysteries of the faith and not needing to hear new teachers as if they were holier. [Jude 1:5] -- Because Jesus, saving the people from the land of Egypt, etc., he calls Jesus not the son of Nave, but our Lord, showing first that he did not have his beginning from the birth of the holy

Virgin, as the heretics affirm, but according to the mystery of his name, he has existed as the eternal God for the salvation of believers; then indicating that in the same way he mercifully saves believers, he also justly condemns the unbelievers. For just as he first saved the humble who cried out to him from the affliction of Egypt, he later cast down the proud who murmured against him in the wilderness. He emphasizes this so that we now remember that he saves believers through the waters of baptism, which the Red Sea signified, so that even after baptism he demands a humble life in us, apart from the filth of vices, such as the conversion of the wilderness in its seclusion rightly indicated. Indeed, if anyone defiles this life, whether by deviating from the faith or by acting wrongly, just as if returned in heart to Egypt, he will merit to perish among the wicked rather than reach the promised homeland of the kingdom. Alternatively: Secondly, he destroyed those who did not believe, because as a just judge, he strikes some now and later due to their faults. He frees solely those from punishment whom he transforms in suffering. For those whom present evils do not correct, they lead to future evils.

Jude 1:6

The angels, indeed, who did not keep their own position, etc. And in this sentence, as in the previous one, we must first remember that Jesus our Lord punished the transgressing angels. For He, the man born at the end of the ages from a Virgin, who received the name Jesus by the angel's declaration, being God born from the Father before all ages, arranged every creature with the Father as He willed, and from the beginning condemned the haughty angels under the darkness of this air, reserving them for greater punishment on the day of judgment. And therefore, rightly are they to be condemned who contend that Christ Jesus was not true God, but only a man, and born of both genders. Furthermore, it must be inferred that He who did not spare the sinning angels will not spare haughty men either; but those who did not keep their position, namely, by the grace of adoption made sons of God, but forsook their abode, that is, the unity of the Church, in which they were reborn unto God, or certainly the seats of the heavenly kingdom which they would have received if they kept the faith, He will also condemn severely before the judgment and more severely in the universal judgment.

Jude 1:7

As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighboring cities, etc. Because He had given an example of condemnation in those who solely deny the Sovereign and our Lord Jesus Christ, by recalling the ruin of the murmuring and unfaithful people in the desert, or those rising against the author of the wicked angels, so He gives an example of the punishment of those who turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into licentiousness, recalling the burning of Sodom. [Jude 1:8] -- Similarly, those who indeed defile the flesh, etc. It must be understood that these, like the Sodomites who defiled the flesh, are also to be damned, like the unbelieving people who blasphemed the majesty of divine power, like the angels who despised the dominion of their Creator.

Jude 1:9

When Michael the archangel was disputing with the devil, etc. From which Scriptures Jude took this testimony is not easily clear. But it should be known that we find something similar to these things in the prophet Zechariah. For he says: Because the Lord showed me Jesus the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan stood at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to Satan: The Lord rebuke you, Satan, and the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you (Zech. III). But it is very easy to understand in this place that Jesus the high priest desired the people of Israel to be freed from Babylonian captivity and to return to their homeland. But Satan opposed him, not wanting the people of God to be liberated, but rather to be made slaves to enemies and nations; and therefore the angel who was the helper of the people rebuked him and removed him from the injury against that same people. But when Michael contended with the devil about the body of Moses, we have no certainty. However, there are those who say that the same people of God were called the body of Moses, because Moses himself was part of that people; and so Jude, having read what was done about the people, could rightly say it was done about the body of Moses. But wherever and whenever this dispute between the angel and the devil took place, it should be diligently considered, because if Michael the archangel did not wish to say a blasphemy to the devil opposing him, but restrained him with modest speech, how much more should all blasphemy be avoided by men, and especially lest they offend the majesty of the Creator with undisciplined words.

Jude 1:11

Woe to them who have gone in the way of Cain, etc. They go in the way of Cain, who assume for themselves the name of learned men out of envy for their betters to be honored. And they pour themselves out in the error of Balaam, who for the love of earthly goods, attack the truth which they themselves know. They perish in the contradiction of Korah, who descended alive into the inferno, whoever separates themselves from the unity of the Holy Church with the desire of undue primacy, knowing and foreseeing how much evil they carry, yet they descend to the abyss of crimes. And indeed the Lord reproached Cain for thinking of fratricide, but envy did not let him be saved. Balaam, however, desiring to walk against the people of God, the Lord forbade, but the love of money hindered him from obeying. Moses tried to calm Korah, who was boasting, speaking for the Lord; but his pride made him incurable. Thus indeed, thus do heretics act, who, scorned by the rebuke of the holy Church, refuse to be corrected; rather they strive to kill their brothers with the sword of evil doctrine, as Cain did, deceive them with evil counsel as Balaam did, and rise up against catholic teachers as Korah did, to their own destruction.

Jude 1:12

These are spots in their feasts, etc. He who sins is stained: the stain is the very crime that contaminates its perpetrator. And therefore he calls the heretics, whom he accuses, stains; because they not only perish themselves in their feasting and drunkenness, whether carnal or spiritual, but they also destroy and pollute others. [Jude 1:12] -- Clouds without water, etc. The saints are preachers, who, having their conversation in the heavens, shine with miracles, and rain with words. Of whom it is said to God: And your truth reaches to the clouds. But heretics are clouds without water, who have placed their mouth in the heavens by their proud words; but they do not water the hearts of their listeners with the water of wisdom, who are carried away by the winds, as if by the suggestion of invisible spirits, and are caught up in various errors of vices.

Jude 1:12

Autumnal trees, fruitless, twice dead, uprooted. A tree is dead which does not bear good fruit; but one that has also produced the fruit of evil work is called a twice-dead tree. And if he who refuses to bear the fruit of good work is said

to be cut down for his barrenness and cast into the fire; what punishment do you think he deserves, who either by acting wickedly or by perverting others has brought forth the most wicked fruits? Nor is it surprising if fruitless and twice-dead trees are said to be uprooted, which are proven to be. For it is said of the saints: Rooted and grounded in love (Ephes. III). But those who do not fear to uproot themselves from the firmness of love, and justly admit if they seem to have any good fruit. Such men are deservedly compared to autumnal trees, to show their salvation is hopeless. For in the time of autumn not only no fruits are born; but also those that were born and ripened usually fall. To this time are compared those who neglect to bear the fruits of faith themselves and strive to uproot and convert into vain endeavors those good deeds which they see faithful people perform.

Jude 1:13

Wild waves of the sea foaming out their own shame. The wild waves of the sea are perverse teachers, who are always restless in themselves, swollen, dark, and bitter, and never cease to attack the peace of the Church, which is the stability and firmness of the faithful. But such men are rightly said to foam out their own shame, because, like swollen waves, the higher they rise in pride, the more they are confused, dissolving into the lightest foam and perishing.

Jude 1:13

Wandering stars, for whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever. The wandering stars, which are seven, never rise or set in the same place where they did the day before; but sometimes they descend to the lowest part of the winter zone, sometimes they ascend to the highest part of the summer zone, sometimes they return to the middle line of the equinoctial zone. Thus indeed, thus are the heretics, who promising the light of truth, never persist in the same state of teaching; but now in this way, now in that way, shaping their doctrine, they themselves clearly show how contemptible is the display of light which they promise. And indeed among the planets, that is the wandering stars, the most well-known are the moon, the morning star, which is also the evening star. These are sometimes taken in a good sense, when the sun is the Lord, the moon is the Church, the morning star is John the Baptist, who, by being born, preceded the Lord about to be born in the flesh and by providing testimony to the light. But we also read about the sun in a

bad sense, as the Lord says about the seeds sown on rocky ground: And when the sun rose, they were scorched (Matthew 13). Which he himself explains further: When persecution arises because of the word, they quickly fall away (ibid). Therefore, the sun's heat indicates the fervor of persecution. We read about the moon in a bad sense:

A fool is changed like the moon (Ecclesiasticus 27). The morning star in a bad sense: How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star (Isaiah 14)? This can be understood not only about the devil's first fall, but also about his members who fall from the Church through heresy. The evening in a bad sense: You cause darkness to be fall upon the children of earth (Job 38). Because both the Antichrist and his ministers, although they transform themselves as angels of light, do not bear witness to the divine light, like the morning star to the sun; but they rather show the works of darkness to their followers; similar to the star called the evening star, which appearing in the west in the evening, is the precursor of the ensuing night. It says, Wandering stars, for whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever. For rightly they will be sent into the darkness of eternal torment, who were bringing the darkness of errors into the Church of God under the name of light. Deservedly they will be struck by the storm of punishment, who, like sea storms, were disturbing the peace of the faithful.

Jude 1:14

Prophecies were made about them by the seventh from Adam, Enoch, etc. He does not speak against all men, but against all the impious, leaving none of them unpunished. It is added about them: [Jude 1:15] -- And to convict all the impious. He actually states that the seventh from Adam is Enoch, who prophesied these things, to confirm by example what he stated above: Because the impious men who long ago were designated for such judgment had slipped in at his time to subvert the faith of the pious.

Jude 1:15

And to convict (he says) all the impious of all their deeds of impiety, etc. This sentiment is indeed true, because the Lord, coming in judgment, will convict the impious not only of deeds but also of words, and will judge the wicked; however, it should be known that the book of Enoch, from which this is taken, is classified among the apocryphal Scriptures by the Church, not because the sayings of such a great patriarch can be in any way dismissed

or should be considered false, but because the book offered under his name does not seem to have been truly written by him, but published by another person under his title. For if it were truly his, it would not be contrary to sound faith. But now, because it contains many incredible things, among which is the account of the giants not having human fathers but angels, it is clear to the learned that the writings that are tainted with falsehood are not those of a truthful man. Hence, this same Epistle of Jude, because it bears testimony from an apocryphal book, was rejected by many in the early times. However, due to its authority, antiquity, and use, it has merited to be counted among the holy Scriptures, especially because Jude took such testimony from an apocryphal book which is conspicuous for the clear truth of its true light rather than being apocryphal and dubious.

Jude 1:16

These are murmurers, grumblers, etc. The more anyone murmurs and grumbles about the present labors of the Church, the less they have extinguished the desires of the flesh within themselves. But on the contrary, holy Daniel and other men of heavenly desires, as diligently as they only desire the things above, so much more scornfully do they despise all passing things that seem adverse. [Jude 1:19] -- These are they who separate themselves, etc. Therefore, they reprobate themselves by separating from the lot of the righteous, hence they are sensual, that is, following the lusts of their own soul, because they have not merited to possess the Spirit of unity by which the Church is gathered together, by which it is made spiritual. Therefore, they dissolve, because they lack the bond of charity. [Jude 1:20] -- But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, etc. We pray in the Holy Spirit when, pierced by divine inspiration, we seek heavenly aid to receive the goods which we cannot possess by ourselves. Therefore, the blessed Jude instructs us to build ourselves up on the foundation of holy faith, to thus join ourselves as living stones to the house of God, which is the Church; he thus commands us to keep ourselves in the love of God, so that we never presume on our own strength, but hope in the aid of divine protection. Let no one according to the dogma of Pelagius declare that he can be saved by himself, but let us all seek the coming of the Holy Spirit into us, by which inspired we may be able to pray more fervently, lest perhaps we be separated from the society of the Holy Church with those who do not have the Spirit and therefore continue to be sensual.

Jude 1:22-23

And of some have compassion, making a difference: others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh, etc. What he said with fear must be joined to all three things he proposed. Because whoever reproves apostates and shows them as damnable must act in fear, lest perhaps he or his loved ones suffer something similar. And whoever rescues another from the fire of vices by chastising him, must consider himself lest he also be tempted. And whoever shows mercy to a penitent neighbor must also do this carefully, lest perhaps he becomes more severe or more lenient than is just. [Jude 1:23] -- Hating even the garment stained by the flesh. By "garment of the flesh" he means our body. However, we should not hate our body, but we should hate this stained condition in every way, and as much as we can act to make it spotless, so that what is carnal may deserve to become spiritual. Since this is not achieved by our own will, but must be accomplished by the grace of God, it is rightly added:

Jude 1:24

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling, etc. It rightly says here that we will be placed in exultation before the presence of God's glory, whom he previously admonished to serve God in fear. For the more fearful we are about our actions in the present, the more we will rejoice about our deserved reward in the future. [Jude 1:25] -- To the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory and majesty. This clause attributes equal and co-eternal glory and kingdom to both the Father and the Son, before all and through all ages. It also refutes the error of those who believe the Son to be less or posterior to the Father, when it says that glory, majesty, dominion, and power belong to God the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. And this not from the beginning of any time, but before all ages, and now and for all ages of ages. Amen.

PART FOUR

Commentary on Revelation

The Revelation of John as the life of the Church.

Commentary on Revelation

THE VENERABLE BEDE

AD 673–735

The first of Bede's commentaries, written for a brother named Eusebius. He reads the Revelation of John as a description of the whole life of the Church from the first coming of Christ to the last day, and not only of the end of the world. He follows the older African teacher Tyconius, whom Augustine had admired.

PREFACE

To the most beloved brother Eusebius, greetings from Beda. The Apocalypse of Saint John, in which God has deigned to reveal the internal battles and fires of His Church through words and figures, seems to me (brother Eusebius) to be divided into seven sections. In the first section, after a copious preface, to strengthen the faith of the weak and to enumerate the Lord's sufferings and subsequent glories, the Church sees one like the Son of Man clothed; who, after mentioning what specifically has been done or is to be done in the seven churches of Asia, describes the general struggles and triumphs of the whole Church. Here, in the sixth place, He advisedly subjects the Jews to the Church and foretells the temptation of the entire world, promising that He Himself will come soon; but in the seventh place, He places the lukewarm Laodicea. For when the Son of Man comes, do you think He will find faith on earth (Luke XVIII)?

In the second section, after describing the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders in the throne of God, He sees the Lamb open the seals of the seven-sealed book, revealing the future conflicts and triumphs of the Church. Here, according to the custom of this book, He maintains the order up to the sixth number, and passing over the seventh, He recapitulates and concludes two narratives as if following an order with the seventh. But this recapitulation must be understood according to places: for sometimes He recapitulates from the origin of the Passion, sometimes from the middle time,

sometimes only from the final tribulation itself, or shortly before it. He nevertheless keeps it fixed that He recapitulates from the sixth. But the third section, under the guise of seven angels sounding trumpets, describes various events of the Church. The fourth section, under the figure of a woman giving birth and the dragon pursuing her, reveals the labors and victories of the same Church; and to each of the armies, He rewards worthy prizes. Here also the sayings and deeds of the seven angels are mentioned, although not in the same manner as before. For with mystical wisdom, this number is almost everywhere preserved, as it is also John's custom, in the Gospels and Epistles, to say nothing tepidly and briefly.

But the fifth section, through seven angels, poured out seven last plagues upon the earth. The sixth describes the condemnation of the great harlot, that is, the impious city. The seventh shows the adornment of the Bride of the Lamb, namely, the holy Jerusalem descending from heaven from God. I have thought it worthwhile to briefly mention the seven rules of Tyconius, a man very learned among his peers, by which those who study the Scriptures are greatly helped in understanding them. The first of these is about the Lord and His body, when the transition is made from the head to the body or from the body to the head, and yet it does not depart from the same person. For one person speaks, saying: "As a bridegroom has put a mitre on me, and as a bride adorned me with ornament"; and yet it must be understood what belongs to the head, what to the body, that is, what to Christ, what to the Church.

The second is about the twofold body of the Lord, or rather about the true and the simulated body of the Lord, as Saint Augustine preferred to call it. For the Church says: "I am black and beautiful, like the tents of Kedar, and like the curtains of Solomon" (Cant. I). She did not say: "I was black and now I am beautiful"; but she said she was both, because of the communion of the sacraments and because of the temporary mixture within the one net of good and bad fish. For the tents of Kedar pertain to Ishmael, because he will not be heir with the son of the free woman. The third is about promises and the law, which can be called in another way about the spirit and the letter, or about grace and the commandment. This seems to Saint Augustine more a great question than a rule, which is to be used in solving questions. For it is the one the Pelagians, not understanding, either founded their heresy or increased it.

The fourth is about species and genus. For species is a part, but genus is the whole of which that part is. Just as each city is a part of the whole province, and each province is a part of the whole world. Hence, these words have come into popular knowledge, so that even the unlearned understand what is specifically or generally established in any imperial command. This is also done concerning men, just as the things said about Solomon exceed his measure, and are more clearly related to Christ and the Church, of which he is a part. The species is not always exceeded. For often such things are said that either also or perhaps only most clearly fit him. But when the transition is made from the species to the genus, as if the Scripture were still speaking of the species, there the reader's attention must be alert.

The fifth rule he presents, which he calls concerning times, can also (as it seems to me) be called concerning numbers. He says it operates through the figure of synecdoche or legitimate numbers. The figure of synecdoche is either from a part to the whole or from the whole to a part. By this mode of speech, even the question about the resurrection of Christ is resolved; for the last part of the day on which He suffered, unless taken for the whole day, that is, including the previous night; and the night in whose last part He rose, unless taken for the whole day, that is, including the dawning day of the Lord, cannot be three days and three nights, in which He predicted He would be in the heart of the earth. He calls legitimate numbers those which divine Scripture commends more prominently, such as seven, ten, or twelve, by which often either the universality of time or the perfection of something is designated. As: "Seven times a day I have praised You" (Psalm 118), is nothing else but "His praise shall always be in my mouth" (Psalm 33). They also have the same value when multiplied by ten, as seventy and seven hundred; whence the seventy years of Jeremiah can be spiritually understood for the whole time during which the Church is among strangers, either by themselves, as ten times ten is one hundred, as twelve times twelve is one hundred forty-four, by which number the universality of the saints is signified in the Apocalypse.

The sixth rule Tyconius calls recapitulation. For certain things are said in the Scriptures as if they follow in the order of time or are narrated in the continuity of things, when the narration secretly refers back to earlier things that were omitted. As in Genesis it is said: "These are the sons of Noah in their tribes and languages. From these the islands of the nations were divided

over the earth" (Gen. 10). And immediately: "But the whole earth was of one language and of one speech" (Gen. 11). It seems to have been said as if at the time they were dispersed there was one language for all, when rather, by recapitulating, it secretly added: How the languages were divided. The seventh rule of the same is about the devil and his body. For sometimes it is said of the devil what can be recognized not in him, but in his body, as the Lord, exposing the frauds and powers of the same enemy to blessed Job, among other things says: "Will he make many supplications to you, or speak soft words to you? For it is not read anywhere that the devil himself is going to do penance, but his body, which, condemned at the end, will say: "Lord, Lord, open to us" (Luke 13). These rules, therefore, not only in the Apocalypse, that is, in the Revelation of Saint John the Apostle, which the same Tyconius both understood vividly and discussed truly and sufficiently catholicly, except for those places in which, attempting to defend the schism of his party, that is, the Donatists, he laments the persecutions which they suffered from the religious emperor Valentinian, that is, as heretics, with their churches and peoples, houses and possessions handed over to the hands of the Catholics, and the priests driven into exile, and calling these martyrdoms, he boasts that these were foretold in the same Apocalypse; but whoever diligently considers it will find the same rules also operate in all canonical Scripture, and especially prophetic. Indeed, following the sense of this author in this work, we have omitted some things he placed extrinsically for the sake of brevity;

but many things that seemed open and not worth searching out to him as a clever man, and who, as it is said of him, flourished like a rose among thorns, as far as we could touch them by the tradition of teachers, by the memory of reading, or even by the grasp of our sense, we took care to add. For we also have this precept, that we should return the received talents with interest to the Lord. And since it pleased us to divide the mentioned work into three books for the sake of refreshing the mind, for somehow, as blessed Augustine says, "thus the attention of the reader is refreshed at the end of the book, as the labor of the traveler by an inn," nonetheless, to make the finding easier for seekers, the same uninterrupted series of chapters, as I had formerly distinguished in brief prefaces in the book itself, seemed to be preserved throughout. Indeed, thinking it necessary to consider the sluggishness of our nation, that is, of the English, which not long ago, that is, in the times of blessed Pope Gregory, received the seed of faith, and the same has

cultivated it rather tepidly as far as reading is concerned, I decided not only to elucidate the meanings but also to compress the sentences. For brevity more than lengthy discourse is usually impressed on the memory. I wish you to fare well in Christ, most beloved brother, and to always deign to be mindful of your Bede.

Epigram on Blessed John and His Apocalypse

While John is exiled from the human world And forbidden to see the kingdoms of Coos' sun, Rejoicing, the beloved of the Lord enters the hall of heaven, Rejoices to be present with the choirs of the high throne of the King. Here, where he turns his sacred eyes on the subject world, He sees the ships driven by waves running everywhere, And Babel and Jerusalem clashing in mixed camps, Here and there, taking turns in hurling weapons and fleeing. But the white-clad soldier who follows the gentle Lamb With the leader receives the blessed kingdoms of heaven. The scaly serpent, through dark Tartarus, submerges his troops In flames, plague, and famine destroys his own. His face, his purpose, the order of the war, The art, the phalanx, the palm, or the weapons, While I would like to reveal, wandering through the broad fields of the ancients I have picked a few seeds from the sacred fields,

Lest a greater abundance of the table breeds disdain, Or such a banquet prevents the preparation of the slender guest. Therefore, if my dishes please your lips, Give praise to the God reigning above the stars. Otherwise, embrace, I pray, the friendly minds, Breaking with pumice what I sing.

CHAPTER 1

Revelation 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, etc. The Church, founded by the apostles, by what course it was to be spread and by what end it was to be completed, had to be revealed to strengthen the preachers of the faith against the adversities of the world. John, as is his custom, referring the glory of the Son to the Father, testifies that Jesus Christ received the revelation of the mystery from God. [Revelation 1:1] -- Which must shortly come to pass. That is, what is about to happen to the Church in the present time. [Revelation 1:1] -- And he signified it. He intertwined the same Apocalypse with mystical words, lest it be despised by being manifest to all. [Revelation 1:1] -- Sending by his angel. For the angel used the figure of Christ to John, as will be more clearly apparent in the following.

Revelation 1:1

To his servant John. That through John, who, by the singular privilege of chastity, deserved to see these things before others, he might make the same known to all his servants. [Revelation 1:2] -- Who bore witness to the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus, etc. Lest you doubt the person of John, it is he who bore witness to the eternal Word of God and the same incarnate, as he saw, saying: We have seen his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father (John 1). [Revelation 1:3] -- Blessed is he who reads, etc. Therefore, teachers and hearers are blessed, because the short time of labor is followed by eternal joys for those who keep the word of God. [Revelation 1:4] -- John to the seven, etc. Through these seven churches, he writes to the whole Church. For the universality is often designated by the number seven, as this whole age is revolved in seven days.

Revelation 1:4

Grace to you, etc. He wishes us grace and peace from the eternal God the Father, and from the sevenfold Spirit, and from Jesus Christ, who in the assumed man bore witness to the Father. He names the Son third, of whom he was going to speak more. He names him last as well, because he is the first and the last, since he had already named him in the Father by saying, who is to come. [Revelation 1:5] -- The firstborn of the dead, etc. This is what the Apostle says: We have seen Jesus Christ crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death. And elsewhere, explaining the disgrace of the cross, he added: Therefore God also has exalted him and given him a name that is above every name. [Revelation 1:6] -- And made us a kingdom, etc. Because the King of kings and heavenly Priest, by offering himself for us, has united us to his body, none of the saints is spiritually devoid of the office of priesthood, since he is a member of the eternal Priest.

Revelation 1:7

Behold, he comes with the clouds, etc. He who first came hidden to be judged will then come manifest to judge. He mentions this to strengthen the Church to endure sufferings, now oppressed by enemies, but then to reign with Christ. [Revelation 1:7] -- And those who pierced him, etc. Seeing him in the same form as a powerful judge in which they judged him as insignificant, they will lament themselves in late repentance. [Revelation 1:7] -- Even so, Amen. He affirms it without doubt by interposing "Amen," knowing

most certainly that it will happen as revealed by God. [Revelation 1:8] -- I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, etc. The beginning, whom none precedes; the end, to whom none succeeds in the kingdom. [Revelation 1:8] -- Who is, and who was, etc. He said the same of the Father. For God the Father also came and is to come in the Son.

Revelation 1:9

I, John, etc. He hints at the person, place, time, and cause of the vision. He testifies that he saw it also in the Spirit, lest he be thought deluded by a fleshly apparition. [Revelation 1:9] -- Was in the island, etc. The story is known, that John was banished to this island by Caesar Domitian because of the gospel, to whom it was fittingly given to penetrate the secrets of heaven when he was forbidden to exceed certain earthly spaces. [Revelation 1:10] -- I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. He also indicates a suitable time for the spiritual vision. For Scripture often expresses the fixed limits of causes, as often of place, body, or air, so also of time. For the angels visit Abraham at noon, Sodom in the evening. Adam feared at the voice of the Lord walking in the afternoon. And Solomon received wisdom at night, which he would not keep.

Revelation 1:10

And I heard behind me, etc. He is first admonished by the voice to turn his sight to the vision. [Revelation 1:11] -- And send to the seven churches, etc. The Church of Christ was not then only in these places, but the fullness consists in the number seven. Asia, which is interpreted as elevation, designates the proud height of the world in which the Church sojourns; and, as is the custom of divine mystery, the genus fits the species. For the Apostle Paul also writes to seven churches; not, however, the same as John. And although these seven places are a figure of the whole sevenfold Church, yet specific things happened in these which he reproaches or praises. [Revelation 1:12] -- And having turned, etc. Here the form of the Church is beautifully described, bearing the light of divine love in the brightness of a pure heart. According to what the Lord says: "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning" (Luke XII). He designates the perfection of its interior and exterior by the two parts of the number seven, while each one, consisting of the four qualities of the body, loves the Lord God with all their heart, all their soul, and all their strength.

Revelation 1:13

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man. He says "like unto the Son of Man" after He had ascended into heaven with death conquered. For even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer know Him. But well, "in the midst." For He says, "All those around Him shall offer gifts." [Revelation 1:13] -- Clothed with a garment down to the foot. The "garment down to the foot," which in Latin is called a tunic reaching to the ankles, and is a priestly garment, shows the priesthood of Christ, by which He offered Himself as a sacrifice to the Father on the altar of the cross for us. [Revelation 1:13] -- And girt about the paps with a golden girdle. He calls the two testaments the paps, with which He nourishes the holy body connected to Him. For the golden girdle is the chorus of saints, adhering to the Lord with concordant charity, embracing and keeping the testaments (as the Apostle says) in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephes. IV).

Revelation 1:14

His head and his hairs were white like wool, etc. The antiquity and immortality of majesty are shown in the whiteness of His head, to which all the chief ones cling like hair, resembling wool because of the sheep that will be on the right hand, and like snow because of the countless multitude of the purified and the chosen given by heaven. [Revelation 1:14] -- And his eyes were as a flame of fire. The eyes of the Lord are the preachers, providing spiritual fire and light to the faithful, and burning to the unbelievers. [Revelation 1:15] -- And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. The fiery feet represent the Church of the last time, which is to be examined and tested by severe tribulations. Fine brass is brass brought to a golden color by much fire and medicine. Another translation, which says like the brass of Lebanon, signifies the Church in Judea, whose mountain is Lebanon, to be persecuted especially at the end. For the temple often received the name of Lebanon, to which it is said: "Open, O Lebanon, your gates, and let fire devour your cedars" (Zach. XI).

Revelation 1:15

And his voice as the sound of many waters. The voice of confession and preaching and praise resounds not only in Judea but among many peoples. [Revelation 1:16] -- And he had in his right hand seven stars. In the right

hand of Christ is the spiritual Church. "The queen stood at your right hand in gilded clothing" (Psalm XLIV). To whom standing on His right, He says: "Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom" (Matt. XXV). [Revelation 1:16] -- And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. Who judging visible and invisible things, after He has slain, has the power to cast into the hell of fire. [Revelation 1:16] -- And his face was as the sun shining in its strength. As he appeared to the disciples on the mountain, so will the Lord appear to all the saints after the judgment. For the impious will see in the judgment him whom they pierced (John XIX). However, this entire appearance of the Son of Man also applies to the Church, with whom Christ has become one in nature, granting it the honor of priestly and judicial power, and that it may shine like the sun in the kingdom of his Father (Matt. XIII).

Revelation 1:17

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet. As a man, he trembles at the spiritual vision, but the Lord's mercy dispels human fear. [Revelation 1:17] -- Fear not; I am the first and the last. The first, because all things were made through him. The last, because all things are restored in him. [Revelation 1:18] -- And I have the keys of death and Hades. He says, not only have I conquered death by resurrection; but I also have dominion over death itself. He also granted this to the Church by breathing the Holy Spirit upon it, saying, "Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven," and so forth. [Revelation 1:19] -- Write therefore the things which you have seen, etc. Make known to all the things you alone have seen, namely, the various labors of the Church, and the wicked mixed with the good in it, until the end of the world.

Revelation 1:20

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. That is, the rulers of the churches. For the priest, as Malachi says, is the angel of the Lord of hosts (Mal. II).

CHAPTER 2

Revelation 2:1

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write. He reproaches part of this church according to the quality of its name and praises part. For Ephesus is said to be interpreted as a great fall and my will in it. [Revelation 2:1] -- These things says he who holds the seven stars in his right hand. That is, he holds you in his hand and governs and controls you by his power. [Revela-

tion 2:1] -- Who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Who, moving among you, investigates the hearts and loins of each one. [Revelation 2:2] -- I know your works, and your labor, etc. I see you, he says, diligently performing good works and patiently enduring the intolerable wrongs of the wicked; examining carefully the words and deeds of false apostles, you have not in any way wished to yield to them.

Revelation 2:4

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love, etc. In some matters, indeed, you have abandoned the love you began with, which, unless they recover, I will deprive them of the promised light. However, in some matters, you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which are revealed in the following, that is, idolatry and fornication. [Revelation 2:7] -- He who has an ear, let him hear, etc. What he writes to each, he demonstrates he says to all churches. For it was not only the church of the Ephesians that was to be removed from its place if it did not repent, nor is the seat of Satan only in Pergamum and not everywhere. Thus, the other matters of each individual church are common to the whole Church. [Revelation 2:7] -- To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God. The tree of life is Christ, in whose vision in the heavenly paradise, and in the present body of the Church, the holy souls are refreshed.

Revelation 2:8

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write. He suggests to this church to endure persecution, to which the name also agrees. For Smyrna means myrrh, which signifies the mortification of the flesh. [Revelation 2:8] -- These things says the first and the last, who was dead and came to life. Who both created all things and restored all things by dying. A fitting preface for urging patience. [Revelation 2:9] -- I know your tribulation and poverty, but you are rich. For blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Which Fortunatus beautifully explained in a short verse, saying: "The poor in their narrowness reign by having God." [Revelation 2:9] -- Those who say they are Jews and are not. They profess to know God, but deny him by their deeds. For Jew is the name of religion. Hence also the Apostle: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter."

Revelation 2:10

Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested. These words apply to the universal Church, against which the devil always exercises inextricable enmities. [Revelation 2:10] -- And you will have tribulation ten days. This signifies the whole time in which the necessary commandments of the Decalogue are present. For as long as you follow the light of the divine word, it is necessary to endure the prison of the adversarial enemy. Some understand the ten persecutions of the nations from Caesar Nero to Diocletian to be signified. [Revelation 2:10] -- Be faithful unto death, etc. He shows to what extent the ten days reach, advising to keep the faith unto death. [Revelation 2:11] -- He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. He who remains faithful until the death of the flesh will not fear the eternal death of the soul.

Revelation 2:12

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write. Pergamum is interpreted as "dividing their horns," meaning he who by judging distinguishes between the virtue of the faithful and the treachery of the Nicolaitans, so that the horns of sinners are broken, and the horns of the just are exalted. [Revelation 2:12] -- These things says he who has the sharp two-edged sword. He fittingly prefaces with judicial power, who is to reward the victors and render punishment to those who err. [Revelation 2:13] -- I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is, etc. I approve of your patience, which, residing among the reprobates who are the throne of the devil, worships me not only by name, being called Christian, but with whole faith even in times of bloody persecution. But I disapprove that I see seducers and false teachers among you. [Revelation 2:13] -- And in those days my faithful witness Antipas, etc. Some understand Antipas as a martyr who suffered in Pergamum, others as the Lord Christ, who is still killed by unbelievers, as much as it lies in them.

Revelation 2:14

Eating things sacrificed to idols and committing fornication. These are the principal things by which carnal people are militant, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame. But every evil work is idolatry and spiritual fornication. [Revelation 2:15] -- Holding the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. The Nicolaitans are named after Nicholas the deacon, who, as Clem-

ent reports, was reprimanded for the zeal of a very beautiful wife and responded that anyone who wished could take her as his wife. Because of this, unbelievers taught that the apostles allowed all communal and promiscuous unions of women. It is said that the Nicolaitans also preached some fabulous and nearly pagan things about the beginning of the world, and did not separate their food from what was offered to idols. [Revelation 2:17] -- To him who overcomes I will give hidden manna. He who despises the enticement of the flesh, although hypocrites may urge it, will justly be filled with the sweetness of the invisible bread that came down from heaven.

Revelation 2:17

And I will give him a white stone. That is, a body now made white by baptism, then shining with the glory of incorruption. [Revelation 2:17] -- And on the stone a new name written. That we may be called and may be the sons of God. [Revelation 2:17] -- What no one knows except the one who receives it. Because he who says he knows God and does not keep His commandments is a liar. The hypocrite does not taste how sweet the Lord is. [Revelation 2:18] -- And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write. Thyatira is translated as sacrifice. The saints offer their bodies as a living sacrifice. [Revelation 2:18] -- These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire. He explains what the flaming eyes are below, saying: I am he who searches the minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

Revelation 1:15

And his feet are like fine brass. And he explains that the latter works of this church are more numerous than the former. [Revelation 2:20] -- But I have this against you, that you permit the woman Jezebel, etc. Indeed, you are commendable in your work and faith, but you are reproachable in this, that you do not rebuke with worthy denunciation the synagogue of pseudo-apostles, who falsely claim to be Christians. The name Jezebel, which signifies a flow of blood, is fitting for heretics. And it is conjectured that there was a woman in the aforementioned church teaching these crimes, who was a figure of all Jezebel throughout the world, to whom he also threatens clear vengeance. [Revelation 2:20] -- To seduce my servants to commit fornication, etc. Certainly, under the name of Christ, she taught spiritual fornication and idolatry. For how could she openly teach the worship of idols, who called herself a prophet in the Church?

Revelation 2: 22

Behold, I will cast her onto a bed. By God's just judgment, it happens that she lies in the bed of eternal punishment, who led the wretched into the bed of lust. [Revelation 2:23] -- And her children into death. Here he calls the posterity and works of the woman her children, threatening them with not the momentary death of the body but the eternal death of the soul. [Revelation 2:23] -- And all the churches shall know that I am he who searches minds and hearts. In minds, he signifies desires; in hearts, thoughts. [Revelation 2:23] -- And I will give to each of you according to your works. Therefore, our works and words can be known to men, but only He who sees knows what each one thinks, what each one desires, and where each one wishes to arrive through them. By what consequence is he called the knower of hidden things, punishing fornication and idolatry, which are manifest crimes, unless because these can also be called offenses even in the smallest? "You will destroy all who commit fornication away from You" (Psalm LXII). And the same apostle John, who hears these things, concluded when discussing false brothers: "Little children," he said, "keep yourselves from idols" (1 John V).

Revelation 2: 24

To you I say, and to the rest who are in Thyatira. Just as he urges the impious to repent and threatens them with punishment, so he encourages the pious to patience with promises of eternal rewards. [Revelation 2:24] -- Who have not known the depths of Satan, etc. Just as those who work iniquity do not know God, even though they may preach Him. Likewise, God, although He knows all, does not recognize the workers of iniquity. [Revelation 2:24] -- I will put upon you no other burden, etc. I will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. Otherwise, he says, be wary of false prophets (Matt. VII). For I do not send you new doctrine, but what you have received, keep it until the end. [Revelation 2:26] -- To him who overcomes falsehoods and keeps my commands, etc. The Church has this power in Christ, as the body in the head. In whom, according to the Apostle, God has given us all things (Rom. VIII).

Revelation 2: 27

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron. He governs the meek with inflexible justice, so that they may bear more fruit; but he destroys the obstinate, so that they either perish eternally, or the earthly desires and muddy affairs

of the old man are crushed in them, whatever has been contracted and ingrained from the mire of sins. [Revelation 2:28] -- And I will give him the morning star. Christ is the morning star, who, after the night of the world has passed, promises and reveals to the saints the light of eternal life.

CHAPTER 3

Revelation 3:1

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write. He reproves this angel, that is, the priest, for being less diligent in correcting evils. However, he praises some who walk in white garments, to whom the name of the Sardis stone, indeed precious, is fitting. [Revelation 3:1] -- I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and you are dead. You appear to be alive, but if you do not watch in correcting the wicked, you will be counted among the dead. [Revelation 3:2] -- For I have not found your works perfect before my God. The works of a ruler are not perfect before God if he does not strive to rouse others, even if he seems blameless to men. [Revelation 3:3] -- I will come upon you as a thief. As in the parable of the gospel, so here by the example of a thief to be avoided, he warns to be vigilant.

Revelation 3:4

But you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments. He did not say a few people, but a few names. For he calls his own sheep by name; he knows Moses by name, and he writes the names of his saints in heaven. [Revelation 3:5] -- He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments. He urges everyone to the habit of those who have kept the seamless robe of baptism unblemished. [Revelation 3:7] -- And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write. Philadelphia is interpreted as brotherly love, which is promised the open door of the kingdom and to be loved by the Lord. [Revelation 3:7] -- These things says the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David. That is, the royal authority, whether born from the lineage of David or because the prophecy of David was revealed through the dispensation of Christ.

Revelation 3:7

Who opens and no one shuts, etc. The secrets of the divine law are revealed to the faithful by the power of Christ alone and are closed to the unfaithful. [Revelation 3:8] -- Behold, I have set before you an open door, etc. The door of heavenly knowledge, which Christ has opened to his Church, is never

shut by any force or effort. [Revelation 3:8] -- Because you have a little strength, etc. He shows the reason that this church deserves these gifts, because it does not trust in its own strength but in the grace of Christ the King. It is the praise of the protecting God and the devotion of the Church that the door of victory is opened to one of little faith, and that little strength is strengthened by faith. [Revelation 3:9] -- Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not. He promised this to the whole Church at that time, because not only in Philadelphia did they believe from the synagogue of the Jews, as we find in the Acts of the Apostles.

Revelation 3:10

Because you have kept my word of patience, etc. Because you have kept my example in enduring adversities, I will in turn keep you from imminent tribulations; not indeed that you will not be tempted, but that you will not be overcome by adversities. And although the Church is always exercised by adversities, here the hour of temptation and the humiliation of the Jews under the time of Antichrist can be signified, so that as in the following in the sixth order often, so also here in the sixth angel the final persecution is designated. In which indeed the evil Jews, deceiving and being deceived, but others, by the teachings of the great prophet Elijah, understanding the law spiritually and incorporated into the members of the Church, are believed to be strongly victorious over the enemy. [Revelation 3:11] -- Behold, I come quickly. Hold fast what you have, etc. Lest you grow weary in enduring. For I will quickly help, lest perhaps, if you fail, another receives the reward decreed for you. Thus, the number of saints, which is fixed with God, cannot be shortened by the treachery of growing tares. If indeed a crown is given to another when lost, the place of him who lost what he held is not vacant.

Revelation 3:12

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, etc. He who overcomes adversities for my sake will gloriously fear no further loss of adversity in the temple of the Church. These pillars, that is, holy men, now strengthen the Church by supporting it, then will adorn it by standing out, just as those two in the doors of Solomon's temple. [Revelation 3:12] -- And I will write on him the name of my God. Because indeed by adoption we are called sons of God. [Revelation 3:12] -- And the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem. He will be associated with the unity of the Church,

which by heavenly grace is regenerated into a new life. [Revelation 3:12] -- And my new name. This is the Christian name, not because it is new to the Son of God, who had this glory before the world was made, but new to the Son of Man who was dead and has risen, and sits at the right hand of God.

Revelation 3:14

And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write. Laodicea is called the beloved tribe of the Lord, or they were in the vomit. For there were those to whom he would say: I will begin to spew you out of my mouth. And to others he says: I rebuke and chasten those whom I love. From the Greek, it is interpreted as the just people. [Revelation 3:14] -- These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, etc. Amen is truly or faithfully interpreted. Therefore, Christ, who is in the essence of divinity the truth, reminds us that he is made the beginning of the creation of God through the mystery of the Incarnation, so that through these things he conforms the Church to endure sufferings. [Revelation 3:15] -- I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot, etc. You are neither fervent in faith nor entirely unfaithful. If you were still unfaithful, the hope of conversion would still remain for you; but now, because you do not do the will of the Lord that you have known, you will be cast out from the bowels of my Church.

Revelation 3:17

Because you say, "I am rich and increased with goods," etc. Content with faith alone, you falsely claim the riches of righteousness for yourself, but if you truly desire to be rich, buy the fervor of charity tested in the flame of tribulations, having left everything, and anoint the eyes of your mind not with the stibium of deceptive boastfulness but with the eye salve of divine knowledge. To anoint the eyes with eye salve is to merit the understanding of the holy Scriptures through the execution of good works. [Revelation 3:19] -- Those whom I love, I rebuke and chasten. Do not refuse to suffer adversities, since this is a special sign of being loved by the Lord. [Revelation 3:19] -- Be zealous therefore, and repent. He shows that there were those there who should have been emulated and followed. [Revelation 3:20] -- Behold, I stand at the door and knock, etc. I indeed knock at the door of your heart with the right hand of exhortation, which if you receive willingly, you will be deemed worthy to have me as a dweller and co-heir.

Revelation 3:21

To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne. He says he will make the confessor a participant in power and judgment. He has made us sit together, he says, in the heavenly places in Christ. [Revelation 3:21] -- As I also conquered, and sat down with my Father on his throne. The Lord, having conquered, sat on the throne with the Father, because after the struggles of the passion, after the victory of the resurrection, He more clearly showed Himself to all that He was equal to the Father's power. Note that in each church, the Lord first reveals His power, then reviews the works of the church, either to be praised or blamed, always intermingled with admonition. Finally, He repays the due reward, which can be understood in the present and in the future, to both parties. When He adds: He who has ears, let him hear, it is undoubtedly fitting to understand the ears of the heart for obedience to the commandments.

CHAPTER 4

Revelation 4:1

After this, I looked, and behold, a door open in heaven. After describing the works of the Church, what it was and what it would be like, he recapitulates from the birth of Christ, intending to say the same things differently. For he repeats the entire time of the Church in various figures in this book. Behold, he says, a door open in heaven. Fittingly, he sees a heavenly door about to ascend, to whom high mysteries are promised to be revealed. Or because Christ is the door, he who believes in Him born and suffered ascends to heaven, that is, to the height of the Church, and sees future spiritual events as he says. [Revelation 4:2] -- And immediately I was in the Spirit. And the first voice which I heard. Certainly similar to the previous voice, which had said: What you see, write in a book (Rev. 1).

Revelation 4:2

And behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sitting on the throne. The Lord inhabits the church placed in heavenly conversation. Pope Gregory interprets the throne of God in the vision of Micah as angelic powers. Presiding higher in their minds, He disposes all things below. [Revelation 4:3] -- And he who was sitting was like the appearance of a jasper and a sardius stone. Jasper's color signifies water, sardius fire. With these two, we know the judgment is celebrated. For as it was in the days of Noah, so will be the com-

ing of the Son of Man (Matt. 24). [Revelation 4:3] -- And a rainbow was around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. The rainbow, which is made by the sun shining on clouds, and after the flood was first made a sign of propitiation, by the intercession of the saints whom the Lord illuminates, signifies the Church being fortified. They are well compared to the emerald stone of great greenness; for as they expect an imperishable inheritance with perfect faith, they also powerfully protect others by praying.

Revelation 4:4

And around the throne were twenty-four thrones, etc. He sees the same Church, which he had seen as one seat because of the fellowship of faith, generated from the patriarchs and apostles through the double testament, in twenty-four thrones, sitting because of its judicial dignity in Christ. For all members will sit and judge, but in one and through one head. For how can the saints sit in judgment, standing at the right hand of the Judge? The twenty-four elders can also be understood as those who complete the perfection of work, which is commended by the number six, with the clear preaching of the Gospel. For four times six makes twenty-four. [Revelation 4:4] -- Clothed in white garments, and on their heads were golden crowns. That is, clothed in good works, seeking heavenly joys with the perpetual memory of the mind. For often the mind is understood by the name of the head.

Revelation 4:5

And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning and voices and peals of thunder. This is what Mark says: But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the accompanying signs (Mark 16). [Revelation 4:5] -- And seven burning lamps before the throne, etc. He speaks of the one Spirit in a sevenfold way, for there is one Spirit. But the sevenfold nature is perfection and fullness. Having mentioned the Holy Spirit, it is fitting that the wave of baptism follows, in which the same Spirit is believed to be received. [Revelation 4:6] -- And before the throne, there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. This refers to the faith of true baptism, which is related to glass, in which nothing different is seen on the outside than what it bears within. The grace of baptism is also figured by crystal, which is formed from water into ice and a precious stone.

Revelation 4:6

And in the midst of the throne and around the throne, there were four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind. All parts of the throne of God, that is, the Church, are filled with the light of the Gospel from the knowledge of past and future things. [Revelation 4:7] -- And the first living creature was like a lion, etc. These living creatures are interpreted in various ways. But blessed Augustine, according to the order of this book, says that Matthew is understood in the lion, who narrates the royal lineage of Christ, who also conquered as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. For the cub of the lion is Judah (Gen. 49). And in whom, as a king, he is feared by a king, worshipped by the magi. Where also the king reckons with his servants, the king makes a marriage for his son, and finally, the king separates the sheep from the goats. Luke is in the calf, which was a great sacrifice in the law. For not only are his beginnings around the temple and sacrifices, but it also concludes: And they were continually in the temple praising and blessing God (Luke 24). The face of a man signifies Mark, who, saying nothing of the royal or priestly power of the Lord, simply narrates the deeds of the man Christ. But John is the eagle, who sharply looks at the birth of the Word like the rising sun. The living creatures sometimes signify the evangelists, sometimes the whole Church. Whose strength is shown in the lion, sacrifice in the calf, humility in the man, sublimity in the flying eagle.

Revelation 4:8

Each of them had six wings. By the perfection of their doctrine, they lift the Church to the heights. For the number six is called perfect because it is completed by its own parts. For one, which is the sixth part of six, and two, which is the third, and three, which is half, make up the same six. Alternatively, the six wings of the four living creatures, which are twenty-four, signify the same number of books of the Old Testament, by which the authority of the evangelists is supported and the truth is confirmed. [Revelation 4:8] -- And around and within they are full of eyes, etc. The holy Church vigilantly regards itself both before God and before men. The Psalmist had seen its inner eyes when he says: All the glory of the king's daughter is within (Ps. 45). And the outer eyes when he immediately adds: In embroidered garments, she is led to the king (Ibid.). Alternatively, whether you attend to the letter or seek the allegory, you will always find light from the Gospel. Another translation

has: Full of eyes before and behind. Because the light of the Gospel shines into the mysteries of the law and infuses the world with the splendor of the new grace.

Revelation 4:8

And they had no rest day and night, etc. The holy creatures, throughout the time of the age, affirm the single dominion of the Deity, the omnipotence and eternity of the Holy Trinity, with the perpetual praise of the intellectual creature remaining in the heavens. [Revelation 4:10] -- The twenty-four elders fell down before Him who sits on the throne and worshipped. When the creatures resound in praise, that is, when the evangelists proclaim the dispensation of Christ, the whole Church, which consists of leaders and peoples (for this is what the doubled number twelve signifies), immediately falls on its face and worships Him who lives forever and ever. [Revelation 4:10] -- And they cast their crowns before the throne. Namely, assigning whatever virtue, whatever dignity they had. For He created all things out of nothing.

CHAPTER 5

Revelation 5:1

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written within and on the back. This vision demonstrates to us the mysteries of the Holy Scripture revealed through the Incarnation of the Lord. Its harmonious unity contains the Old Testament as if externally, and the New Testament internally. [Revelation 5:1] -- Sealed with seven seals. That is, either covered with the fullness of all hidden mysteries or written by the disposition of the sevenfold Spirit. [Revelation 5:2] -- And I heard a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice: Who is worthy to open the book? This signifies the preaching of the law. For many prophets and righteous men desired to see what the apostles saw (Matt. 13). And about this salvation, as Peter says, the prophets sought and searched diligently (1 Pet. 1). This is the book which in Isaiah is sealed both to the one who can read and to the one who cannot. Yet even there its opening is proclaimed thus: In that day the deaf will hear the words of the book (Isa. 29). And concerning it, Ezekiel says: And I saw, and behold, a hand was sent to me, in which was a scroll, and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without (Ezek. 2). He also added what John was silent about, namely, what was written in the book, saying: And there were written therein lamentations, mourning, and woe (Ibid.). For the entire

series of the Old and New Testaments warns us to repent for sins, to seek the kingdom of heaven, and to flee from the lamentations of hell.

Revelation 5:3

And no one was able in heaven or on earth, etc. Neither angel, nor any of the righteous even freed from the bond of the flesh, could reveal or investigate the mysteries of the divine law, nor look upon it, that is, to contemplate the splendor of the grace of the New Testament. Just as the children of Israel could not look upon the face of the giver of the Old Testament, which contains the New. [Revelation 5:4] -- And I wept much. Recognizing the common misery of the human race, he grieved. [Revelation 5:5] -- And one of the elders said to me: Weep not, etc. He is forbidden to weep, because the mystery that had long been hidden was already fulfilled in the passion of Christ, when He gave up the spirit and the veil of the temple was torn (Mark 15). To whom it is said: You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you have gone up to the prey, my son (Gen. 49), etc. He follows and describes how and where the Lion of the tribe of Judah conquered.

Revelation 5:6

And I saw in the midst of the throne ... a Lamb standing as if slain. The same Lord who is the Lamb by dying innocently, also became a lion by bravely overcoming death. Tyconius says the lamb represents the Church, which in Christ has received all power. [Revelation 5:6] -- Having seven horns and seven eyes. The Spirit in Christ is sevenfold, due to the eminence of power: compared to horns, due to the illumination of grace, to eyes. [Revelation 5:7] -- And he came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. The book from the right hand of God, the dispensation itself of the Incarnation, is said to have been received by the Son of Man from the Father and from Himself, according to what He is as God, because both, along with the Holy Spirit, dwell on the throne. For Christ, who is the Lamb in humanity, is Himself the right hand of the Father in Deity.

Revelation 5:8

And when He had opened the book, etc. When by His passion the Lord proved that the proclamations of both Testaments were fulfilled in Him, the Church, giving thanks, also offers itself to sufferings, so that, according to the Apostle, it may complete in its flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions (Col. 1). For in the harps where strings are stretched on wood, the bodies

ready to die are signified; by the bowls, the hearts open wide in the breadth of charity are signified. [Revelation 5:9] -- And they sang a new song, etc. They celebrate the sacraments of the New Testament, which are completed in Christ, praising His very dispensation, which they confess belongs to Christ alone. [Revelation 5:9] -- And you have redeemed us to God by your blood, etc. Here it is further declared that the creatures and elders are the Church, which has been redeemed by the blood of Christ and gathered from the nations. It also shows in which heaven they are, by saying: And they will reign on the earth. And I saw and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and the creatures, and the elders.

Revelation 5:11

And their number was thousands upon thousands. Innumerable thousands of people flocking to the Church praise God. [Revelation 5:13] -- To whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given. For if the righteous are called the children of God, why not also the angels? Although the heavenly hosts can also sing this by rejoicing in our redemption. As the holy Pope Gregory explained, adding: "For the voice of the angels in the praise of the Creator is the very wonder of inner contemplation." [Revelation 5:14] -- And the four living creatures said Amen, etc. As the people in the Church resound with praises to the Lord, the teachers confirm the same and, by the example of their lives, together worship the Lord.

CHAPTER 6

Revelation 6:1

And I saw when the Lamb had opened one of the seals. Since the signs are first loosened and then the book is opened, He wisely reversed the usual order. For the Lord, by suffering and rising again, taught that He is the end of the law. And ascending into heaven, sending the Holy Spirit, He strengthened the Church with the gift of a more secret mystery. Therefore, He opened the book then, and now He loosens its seals. In the first seal, the glory of the primitive Church; in the following three, the threefold war against her; in the fifth, the glory of those who triumphed in this war; in the sixth, those things that will come in the time of the Antichrist, with a brief recapitulation of the previous ones; in the seventh, he sees the beginning of eternal rest. [Revelation 6:1] -- And I heard one of the four living creatures

saying: Come and see. We too are admonished with great voices of the Gospel to behold the glory of the Church.

Revelation 6:2

And behold a white horse, etc. The Lord presides over the Church, which by grace is whitened beyond snow, and bearing the arms of spiritual doctrine against the wicked, receives the victor's crown among His own. Of whom it is said: He received gifts among men (Ps. 68). In which, even presiding in heaven, He was persecuted by Saul. [Revelation 6:3] -- And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature, etc. We are also commanded to diligently observe the opposing cavalry, so that just as joy is taken from the Church's successes, caution is taken from foreknowledge of adversities. [Revelation 6:4] -- And another horse went out, fiery red. Against the victorious and conquering Church went out a fiery red horse, that is, a perverse people, bloodthirsty from their rider, the devil. Although we have read in Zechariah of the red horse of the Lord; but that one is red with His own blood, this one with another's.

Revelation 6:4

And the one sitting on it was given power to take peace from the earth. Namely, his own peace. But the Church received the eternal peace which Christ left to it. [Revelation 6:4] -- And a great sword was given to him. Either against those who become apostates of the faith, or against those whom he makes martyrs. About this, it is said to blessed Job: He who made him applied his sword (Job 40), meaning either that he should not tempt the saints as much as the wicked one wishes, or that vengeance for his fury should return upon himself. [Revelation 6:5] -- And behold, a black horse, etc. The black horse represents a crowd of false brothers, who have the balance of right profession, but harm their companions through works of darkness. For when it is said, in the midst of the creatures, Do not harm, it is shown that there is someone there who harms. About this advancing horse, the Apostle says: Fightings without, fears within.

Revelation 6:6

A measure of wheat for a denarius, etc. He says, Beware lest you scandalize your brother by a very bad example, for whom Christ died and who bears the marks of the sacred blood and chrism. For whether by the merits of the perfect, or even of the least, anyone in the Church imbued with faith in the

Holy Trinity is redeemed at the same perfect price of the Lord's blood. And not without reason is the perfection of faith or work expressed by a double measure and not a single one, which both consist in the root of twin charity. [Revelation 6:8] -- And behold, a pale horse, etc. Heretics who mask themselves as Catholics, worthy of the inhabiting death, drag after them a host of the lost. For the devil and his ministers are metaphorically called death and hell, as they are the cause of death and hell for many. It can also be simply understood that here the spiritually dead, there eternal punishment follows.

Revelation 6:8

And power was given to him over a fourth of the earth. Behold, the madness of Arius, born in Alexandria, reached as far as the Gallic Ocean, not only persecuting the pious bestially with famine of the word of God but also with physical sword. Another version translates it as a fourth part, because the three evil horses, relying on the devil as their leader, ride against the fourth cavalry of the Church. [Revelation 6:9] -- And when he had opened the fifth seal, etc. Because he had said that the Church is greatly afflicted in the present, he also speaks of the glory of souls after the punishment of bodies. I saw, he says, them under the altar, that is, in the sanctuary of eternal praise. For the golden altar, placed inside and near the ark of the Lord's body, does not offer flesh and blood, but only the incense of praise to the Lord. And those who now present their bodies as a living sacrifice will then, with the bonds of the flesh broken, sacrifice the sacrifice of praise to Him (Ps. 116). It can also be through a hyperbaton, that he saw not under the altar but those killed under the altar, that is, under the testimony of Christ's name, as it is said of the Maccabees: They fell under the covenant of God (2 Macc. 7).

Revelation 6:10

And they cried out with a loud voice, saying. The great cry of souls signifies their immense desire for what they know the Lord wishes to do. For it is not proper to believe they desire anything against God's will, as their desires depend on His will. [Revelation 6:10] -- How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You not judge and avenge, etc.? They do not pray out of hatred for their enemies, for whom they interceded in this world, but out of love for justice, which they, as near the Judge, harmoniously support. They pray for the day of judgment to come, when the kingdom of sin will be destroyed and the resurrection of extinguished bodies will arrive. For we too, although com-

manded to pray for our enemies, nonetheless say to the Lord in our prayers: Your kingdom come (Matt. 6). [Revelation 6:11] -- And each of them was given a white robe. Now, the souls of the saints have individual robes, rejoicing in their blessed immortality. But when their bodies rise again, according to Isaiah, they will possess double in their land.

Revelation 6:11

And it was told to them that they should rest for a little while longer, etc. The desire for resurrection is not denied, but it is deferred due to the increase of the brethren yet to be gathered. For even the joy of the souls can be symbolized by the white robes, when, with the Lord revealing to them, they learn both that the wicked are to be damned at the end and that many will be joined to their number through martyrdom until the end of the world. Filled with internal charity, they prefer their joy to be deferred until the number of their brethren is completed. [Revelation 6:12] -- And I saw when He opened the sixth seal, etc. With the opening of the sixth seal, the final persecution is announced, and just as the world was shaken with darkness and fear when the Lord was crucified on the sixth day, it will be so again.

Revelation 6:12

And the sun became black as sackcloth. As if the power of Christ were hidden, or His doctrine temporarily obscured, or as if He were veiled from defense, when the ministers of Antichrist are allowed to attack the servants of Christ. [Revelation 6:12] -- And the whole moon became like blood. The Church will shed blood for Christ more than usual. He said the whole moon, because the final commotion will be worldwide, whereas previously it was, as written, localized. [Revelation 6:13] -- And the stars fell to the earth, etc. Those who shine outwardly in the Church, driven by the wind of the final persecution, will be shown to have been earthly. Their deeds are rightly compared to the gross, immature, useless, and perishable fruits of the fig tree. [Revelation 6:14] -- And the sky receded like a scroll being rolled up. Just as a rolled-up scroll contains mysteries within but nothing apparent outside, so will the Church, known only to its own, retreat discreetly to avoid persecution, hidden from outsiders.

Revelation 6:14

And every mountain and island was moved from its place. Mentioning various members of the Church according to their roles or strengths, he predicts

that none will be exempt from this upheaval, but the movement will differ—good people will avoid by fleeing, while the wicked will be driven by following. [Revelation 6:15] -- And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders. We understand kings as powerful people. He means to encompass every rank and condition. Besides, who but the persecutor will be kings then? [Revelation 6:15] -- They hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains, etc. When the weaker ones seek to be strengthened by the examples of the high ones in the Church, to be fortified by their advice, and to be protected by their warnings and prayers, they figuratively ask these mountains to fall on them through their compassionate affection. For the high mountains are a refuge for the deer, and the rocks a shelter for the hedgehogs (Ps. 104:18).

Revelation 6:16

And hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. So that He may find us not as reprobates, but stable in faith when He comes, with our sins covered by the intercession of the saints and the mercy of God. [Revelation 6:17] -- And who will be able to stand? Certainly, the one who now strives to watch, to stand firm in faith, and to act manfully. If you interpret this earthquake literally as referring to the very day of judgment, it is not surprising that earthly kings and princes, fearful of the holy mountains, seek refuge, as we read has already happened in the case of the rich man clothed in purple and the poor Lazarus.

CHAPTER 7

Revelation 7:1

After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. That is, the four principal kingdoms, namely, those of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. For just as in the previous seals, after witnessing the manifold conflicts of the Church, he saw the joys of the triumphant souls; so also now, he is about to prove with examples what victory follows the kingdom of the Antichrist, succeeding the preceding kingdoms of the world, which have already yielded to the rule of Christ's Church. For great causes must be confirmed by greater arguments. [Revelation 7:1] -- Holding the four winds of the earth, etc. By their own power, they, in a way, suffocate everything, allowing no one to breathe freely under their jurisdiction. The diversity of provinces on land, the islands in the sea, and the various qualities

and conditions of men in the trees are signified. Alternatively, the four angels are to be understood as the same as the four winds, according to the prophecy of Daniel saying: Behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea, and four great beasts came up from the sea (Dan. 7).

Revelation 7:2

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, etc. The Lord born in the flesh, who is the angel of great counsel, the messenger of the Father's will, visited us as the rising sun from on high (Luke 1), bringing the banner of the cross to mark the foreheads of His own. [Revelation 7:2] -- And he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels. The great voice of the Lord is the sublime preaching: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. [Revelation 7:3] -- Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees. Since the Lord has suffered, not only has the power of the adversary been crushed, but also the dominion of worldly principalities, as we both see with our eyes and read in the statue that the stone from the mountain shattered. [Revelation 7:3] -- Until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads? For this reason, the dominion of the nations has been broken, so that the faces of the saints could be freely marked with the sign of faith, to which they had resisted. For the very shape of the cross signifies the Lord's kingdom extended everywhere, as the ancient saying proves: Look at the world divided into four distinct parts, to prove that the kingdom of faith holds all things.

Revelation 7:3

For it was not in vain that the tetragrammaton, the name of the Lord, was written on the forehead of the high priest, because this is the sign on the forehead of the faithful, about which it is sung in the Psalm for the winepresses: O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is Your name in all the earth (Ps. 8), and so forth, until it says: That You may destroy the enemy and the avenger (Ibid.). [Revelation 7:4] -- And I heard the number of those who were sealed, etc. This finite number signifies the innumerable multitude of the whole Church, which is generated from the patriarchs, either by descent of flesh or by imitation of faith. For if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed (Gal. 3). For the increase of perfection, it pertains that twelve is multiplied twelve times, and to the total is perfected as a thousand, which is a solid squared number, signifying the stable life of the Church. Therefore, it is often figured by the number twelve because it stands firm in the faith of

the Holy Trinity in a fourfold world. For thrice four is the perfect number, a double portion. Finally, the apostles, who were chosen to preach the same faith to the world, were twelve, indicating by their number the mystery of their work.

Revelation 7:5

From the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand sealed, etc. It is fitting that he begins with Judah, from which tribe our Lord arose; and he omits Dan, from whom it is said the Antichrist is to be born, as it is written: Let Dan be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels, so that its rider falls backward (Gen. 49). For he did not intend to describe the order of earthly generation but to expound the virtues of the Church according to the interpretation of the names, which hasten from confession and praise to the right hand of eternal life. This is the meaning of the names Judah, who is placed first, and Benjamin, who is placed last. Therefore, Judah is first, which is interpreted as confession or praise, because no one attains the summit of good works before the beginning of confession. And unless we renounce evil deeds through confession, we cannot be formed rightly. The second is Reuben, which is interpreted as seeing the son. The Psalmist testifies that works are designated in the sons when he says among the blessings of the blessed man: Your sons will be like olive shoots (Ps. 128). And further: May you see your children's children (Ibid.). For one who fears the Lord is blessed, not only if he has begotten sons and received grandchildren, but because in sons are works, and in sons of sons, the fruits of works, that is, the eternal reward is designated.

Therefore, after Judah comes Reuben, that is, after the beginnings of divine confession and praise, the perfection of action follows. But because through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14), after Reuben comes Gad, which is interpreted as temptation or armed. After the beginning of good works, a man must be tested by greater temptations and girded for more serious battles, so that the strength of his faith may be proven. Solomon says: My son, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare your soul for temptation (Sirach 2). And the Psalmist likewise: You have girded me with strength for battle (Ps. 18). And because we bless those who have endured suffering, therefore after Gad is placed Asher, that is, blessed, in a very fitting order. Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been tested, he will receive the crown of life (James 1). Because by the

faithful promise of this blessedness they are not distressed but, rejoicing in hope, are patient in tribulation, they sing with the Psalmist: You have enlarged me in distress; and again: I ran the way of your commandments, when you enlarged my heart (Ps. 119); and with the mother of blessed Samuel, they exultingly say: My mouth is enlarged over my enemies, because I have rejoiced in your salvation (1 Sam. 2). Therefore, Naphtali follows, which means enlargement. And Manasseh follows him, which is interpreted as forgetting or necessity.

The mystery of this name warns us to forget the things that are behind, taught by the anguish of present temptations, and to stretch forth to the things that are before, according to the Apostle, so that we may make provision for the flesh, not in its desires, but bound only by the necessity of human condition (Phil. 3). For which the Psalmist, sighing for better things, prayed: Deliver me from my necessities (Ps. 25). Simeon, which means heard the sorrow or name of habitation, is placed under this, so that by the quality of this name it is more clearly instilled what is to be held here and what is to be healthily expected. For to those who here mourn fruitfully in penitence, the joy of heavenly habitation will be given. To whom it is also said: Your sorrow will be turned into joy (John 16). Therefore, Levi is added, which means added. In which we understand either those who buy the eternal with the temporal, as Solomon says: The ransom of a man's life is his wealth (Prov. 13), or those who, following the counsel of God, receive a hundredfold in this world with tribulations, and in the world to come, eternal life (Mark 10). What is written also agrees with this: He who increases knowledge increases sorrow (Eccles. 1). For to blessed Job, the bitterness of tribulations was added so that, being proven, the reward of a greater prize would be given. Hence Issachar follows in proper order, which means reward.

For as the Apostle teaches, the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us (Rom. 8). It is more fruitful to fight where a certain reward is hoped for. This, however, God works and perfects in the habitation of strength, which is called Zebulun, when strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12), so that the body which enemies consider weak, and through whose matter they also try to bring about the soul's destruction, experiences invincibility with God's comfort and happy increase follows. This name Joseph indicates, signifying the addition of gifts of grace. Whether you understand the double repayment of

talents as profits of spiritual benefit, or you take it in those things which are returned to the Redeemer God by the faithful in their religious devotion. And to understand that all those whom both the order and the interpretation of the names placed here significantly indicate will be on the right hand of Christ the eternal King in the future judgment, Benjamin, as I previously mentioned, is placed last, meaning son of the right hand; as if he were the end of the order, with the last enemy death destroyed (1 Cor. 15), the happiness of the eternal inheritance will be given to the elect, whether each faithful one is called the son of the right hand, or the whole assembly of the Church, of which it is sung: The queen stands at your right hand in gold of Ophir, adorned with varied colors (Ps. 45).

Therefore, twelve thousand are sealed from each tribe, because in whatever virtues individual faithful advance, it is necessary that they are always strengthened and formed by the faith of the ancient fathers. For it is most certain that the number twelve often signifies the form of the teachers or the whole Church because of the sum of the apostles or patriarchs. Whether in confession, they are praiseworthy like Judah, or in Reuben, distinguished by the offspring of works, or in Gad, strong in the exercise of temptations, or in Asher, blessed in the victory of struggles, or in Naphtali, enlarged by the abundant works of mercy, or in Manasseh, forgetful of past things, or in Simeon, still sad in the valley of tears but always rejoicing in the name of habitation, sighing for the heavenly Jerusalem, or in Levi, rejoicing in the promises of present and future life, founded in eternal good with temporal goods added, or in Issachar, firm in the contemplation of future reward, or in Zebulun, who lay down their lives for Christ, or in Joseph, who strive for the increase of spiritual substance, and offer something more over God's commandments, either in virginity or in the quantity of their possessions, or in Benjamin, who with indefatigable vows expect the right hand of eternal happiness, each one in his profession fits the rule of the preceding fathers as if sealed with the number twelve, and from the merits of each individual person, the most perfect beauty of the Church is collected as if in the sum of one hundred and forty-four thousand.

Revelation 7:9

After these things, I saw a great multitude, which no one could number. Having finished the recapitulation, which he had interposed for the sake of example, he returns to the order, proclaiming the glory of those who will

overcome the wickedness of the final persecution. And what follows: From all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, etc., it can also be understood thus, that, having enumerated the tribes of Israel, to whom the Gospel was first preached, he also wishes to commemorate the salvation of the Gentiles. [Revelation 7:9] -- Clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands. By robes he hints at baptism, by palms, the triumph of the cross, and that they have overcome the world in Christ. Although the clarity which is given through the Holy Spirit is also signified by the robes. [Revelation 7:10] -- And they cried out with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb. With a loud voice, that is, with great devotion and unceasing praise, they profess that the Father and the Son reign on the throne, that is, in the Church, with the Holy Spirit likewise reigning together. For it is said: To the One sitting on the throne, and to the Lamb (Apocalypse V), as it is said in the Gospel: That they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John XVII). It is understood: That they may know the one true God.

Revelation 7:11

And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the living creatures. In all the angels he showed the persons of the great multitude worshipping the Lord. He says, All who are around him shall offer gifts (Psalm LXXV). [Revelation 7:11] -- And they fell before the throne on their faces, etc. Neither the multitude, nor the living creatures, nor the elders are mentioned in this place as worshipping, but only the angels. For they are the multitude, they are the living creatures and the elders. Although it can also be understood of those angelic spirits, of whom it is said, rejoicing in the salvation of the Gentiles: Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people, and let all the angels of God worship him (Romans XV). [Revelation 7:12] -- Blessing and glory and wisdom, etc. The Church offers to the Lord a sevenfold praise of virtues, which it confesses to have received from him in each of its members.

Revelation 7:13

And one of the elders said to me: Who are these who are clothed in white robes, and where did they come from? etc. He asks this to teach. [Revelation 7:14] -- And he said to me: These are those who have come out of great tribulation. Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts XIV). But who does not know that the tribulation of the Antichrist will

be greater than the others? [Revelation 7:14] -- And they washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. He does not speak only of the martyrs. For they are washed in their own blood. But the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, cleanses the whole Church from all sin (II Corinthians VII), therefore they are before the throne of God. For they are deemed worthy to stand in the service of God there, who here amid adversities are faithful confessors of his name.

Revelation 7:15

And they serve him day and night in his temple. Speaking in our manner, he signifies eternity. [Revelation 7:15] -- And he who sits on the throne will dwell over them. The throne of God is the saints, upon whom and in whom God dwells forever. [Revelation 7:16] -- They will neither hunger nor thirst anymore. This is what the Lord himself promised: "I am," he says, "the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst" (John VI). For blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied (Matthew V). [Revelation 7:16] -- Neither shall the sun strike them, nor any scorching heat. "We have passed," he says, "through fire and water, and you have brought us to a place of refreshment" (Psalm LXV). [Revelation 7:17] -- For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them. He says that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, who had previously said that the Lamb received the book from the one seated on the throne, teaching that the Church has one throne with the Father and the Son, in which through faith one dwells, the whole Trinity, God.

Revelation 7:17

And he will lead them to the fountains of living waters. Surely to the fellowship of the saints, who are the fountains of heavenly doctrine. It can also signify the vision of God himself, in whom are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As David says: "As the deer longs for the fountains of water, so my soul longs for you, O God" (Psalm XLI). [Revelation 7:17] -- And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Having attained the fullness of immortal joys, all sorrow will be entirely consigned to oblivion. For blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. But the vision of this robed multitude can also be understood of the present time, where we are saved by hope, and what we do not see we wait for with patience.

CHAPTER 8

Revelation 8:1

And when he had opened the seventh seal, etc. After the destruction of the Antichrist, a brief rest is believed to come in the Church, about which Daniel predicted thus: "Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days" (Daniel XII). Which blessed Jerome explains thus: "Blessed," he says, "is he who, after the Antichrist is killed, awaits beyond the one thousand two hundred and ninety days, that is, three and a half years, forty-five days, during which the Lord and Savior is to come in his majesty." But why there is a silence of forty-five days after the killing of the Antichrist is known to divine knowledge. Unless we might say: the delay of the kingdom of the saints is a test of patience. Note that in the sixth seal he sees the greatest pressures on the Church, in the seventh he sees rest, because the Lord, crucified on the sixth day, rested on the Sabbath, waiting for the time of resurrection. Thus far about the opening of the sealed book and the six seals. Now he recapitulates from the beginning, intending to speak the same things differently.

Revelation 8:2

And I saw seven angels standing before God, etc. The Church, often commended by the number seven, is devoted to the duty of preaching, the first trumpet signifying the common destruction of the impious by fire and hail; the second, the devil expelled from the Church, more fervently inflaming the sea of the world; the third, heretics falling away from the Church, corrupting the rivers of the Holy Scripture; the fourth, the downfall of false brethren in the obscurity of the stars; the fifth, the greater infestation of heretics preceding the time of the Antichrist; the sixth, the open war of the Antichrist and his followers against the Church, and, by recapitulation from the coming of the Lord, the insertion of the destruction of the same adversary; the seventh, the day of judgment, when the Lord will render the reward to His own and will destroy those who have corrupted the earth.

Revelation 8:3

And another angel came. He did not say, "Then he came," but proposing that the angels had received the trumpets, he goes back to explain how they had received them. For although the Church preached before the coming of the Lord, it was not everywhere, until it was confirmed by His Spirit. [Revelation

8:3] -- And he stood before the altar, having a golden censer. Clearly, he appeared in the sight of the Church, having become the censer, from which God received the odor of sweetness, and was propitiated towards the world. Another Edition has "Upon the altar," which means that He offered His golden censer, that is, His immaculate body conceived by the Holy Spirit, upon the altar of the cross to the Father for us. [Revelation 8:3] -- And there was given unto him much incense, etc. From the prayers of the saints he offered the incense. For to them the Church entrusted its prayers, saying: "Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight" (Psalm 140). It is said that he received from the prayers of the saints and offered it, because through him the prayers of all can sweetly reach God.

Revelation 8:4

And the smoke of the incense ascended from the prayers of the saints, etc. Christ the Lord offering Himself as a sacrifice of sweetness made the compunction of the hearts of the saints acceptable, which, being born from the inner fire, usually stirs up tears like smoke. [Revelation 8:5] -- And the angel took the censer, etc. Rightly he introduces the censer filled with fire. For God does not give the Spirit by measure (John 3). This we properly know was fulfilled in the humanity of Christ, in whom all the fullness of the Divinity dwells bodily (Colossians 2). [Revelation 8:5] -- And he cast it into the earth. Thus also the Lord in the Gospel: "I came to cast fire upon the earth" (Luke 12). [Revelation 8:5] -- And there were thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake. With the thunder of divine threat, and the voice of exhortation, and the lightning of miracles, He moved the earth, some following, others preceding, these saying: "He is good," but others: "No, but he deceives the people" (John 7).

Revelation 8:6

And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound the trumpets. The Church, inflamed with the sevenfold spirit, prepared itself confidently to preach, intending to cast down the glory of the world with heavenly trumpets, as if to topple the walls of Jericho. For that seven-day circuit also indicates the entire time of the Church. [Revelation 8:7] -- And the first angel sounded the trumpet. Rightly, the preaching of the plagues of the trumpet, which is a sign of war, is compared. "Lift up your voice like a trumpet and declare to my people their transgressions" (Isaiah

58). And elsewhere, “Set the trumpet to your lips, like an eagle over the house of the Lord” (Hosea 8), that is, preach loudly that Nebuchadnezzar will come to destroy the temple. [Revelation 8:7] -- And there was hail and fire, mixed with blood, etc. It is proclaimed by the voice of preachers that the punishment of hell is due for bloodstained deeds, saying: “From excessive heat they will pass by the waters of snow” (Job 24). The name blood can also mean the death of the spiritual soul itself. Tyconius interprets this verse thus: “the wrath of God was made, which had in it the death of many.”

Revelation 8:7

And a third part of the earth was burned up, etc. The life of the good consists in teachers and listeners. “Blessed is the one who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy” (Revelation 1). The third part of the wicked lacks both of these. For good earth, bringing forth fruit with patience (Luke 8), receives blessing from the Lord (Psalm 23). But the bad produces thorns and thistles, whose end is in burning. Thus, the farmer Father cultivates the fruitful tree, but cuts down the barren one, providing it as fuel for the fire (Matthew 7). [Revelation 8:7] -- And all green grass was burned up. All flesh is grass (Isaiah 40), which now, fattened with the softness of luxury, loses the flower of beauty under the burning sun of judgment, and, as the Lord says, today it is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven (Matthew 6). Tyconius says about the third part in this place. He calls the third part the internal enemies. However, anything outside the Church is called the third part, and the Church is the third part, which fights against the double evil.

Revelation 8:8

And as it were a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea, etc. With the growth of the Christian religion, the devil, swollen with pride and burning with the fire of his fury, was cast into the sea of the world, with the Lord saying: “If you say to this mountain, be taken up and cast into the sea, it will be done” (Mark 11). Not that he was not there before, but that, having been cast out from the Church, he began to rage more greatly against his own, inflicting spiritual death on them with the pride of carnal wisdom. For to think according to the flesh is death (Romans 8). But the apostles were not taught by flesh and blood, but by the Father who is in heaven (Matthew 16). For in that sea, they steered the ship of faith which offered itself to be trodden by the feet of the Lord.

Revelation 8:9

And a third of them died, those that had souls in the sea. He said, "those that have souls," to show that the spiritually living were dead. Just as the Apostle says of the voluptuous widow: "Living," he says, "she is dead" (I Tim. V). [Revelation 8:9] -- And a third of the ships perished. Another Edition, by saying "And they corrupted a third of the ships," signifies that the third that died killed another third, that is, the succeeding one, with harmful tradition and useless imitation of doctrine. [Revelation 8:10] -- And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, etc. Heretics, whom Jude the apostle calls stars of seduction, falling from the height of the Church, try to infect the springs of divine Scriptures with the flame of their wickedness. They are not afraid to falsify not only the meaning but also the words frequently. They are worthy of the name "wormwood," whose slight mixing tends to embitter great sweetness.

Revelation 8:11

And many men died from the waters. For many (as the Apostle says) follow their luxuries, through whom the way of truth is blasphemed (II Pet. II), yet for the people of God, as Moses teaches, every wave of the waters is drinkable. [Revelation 8:12] -- And a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, etc. The beauty of the Church, like a shining star, is often obscured by false brethren, who make it shine less by their defection, whether in the prosperity or adversity of the world. [Revelation 8:12] -- And a third part of the day did not shine, and likewise a third part of the night. Another Edition has it thus: And a third part of the day appeared, and likewise of the night. That is, it was struck so that a third part of the day and a third of the night might appear, which belong to Christ and which to the devil. I say, it was struck for this purpose, that, being handed over to their own wills, with sins overflowing and becoming insolent, it might be revealed in its time.

Revelation 8:13

And I saw and heard the voice of one eagle flying through the midst of heaven, etc. The voice of this eagle flies daily through the mouths of the eminent doctors in the Church, when they gravely announce to the lovers of the earth the wickedness of the heretics, the savagery of the Antichrist, and the day of judgment to come, saying: In the last days, perilous times will come, and men will be lovers of themselves (II Tim. III); and further: Men of cor-

rupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith (*Ibid.*), and elsewhere: Then shall that Wicked be revealed, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped (*II Thess. II*). And again: The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction will come upon them (*I Thess. V*).

Revelation 8:13

Concerning the other voices of the three angels. Not that the trumpets of the angels bring plagues to the world, but that each one announces the coming or future events in their own time.

CHAPTER 9

Revelation 9:1

And I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, etc. The flame of heretics, which he had mentioned briefly, he explains with what kindling it has grown: indeed, the ancient enemy, whom the Lord saw falling like lightning from heaven (*Luke X*), opened the hearts of his own with a blasphemous doctrine, and taught them, as if they were smoke, to seek high places, to speak iniquity in lofty terms. [*Revelation 9:2*] -- And the smoke of the pit arose, like the smoke of a great furnace, etc. Proclaiming the great furnace, that is, the final persecution, the heretical madness rages, not only attempting to obscure the light of the weaker ones, who, like the air, touch the boundaries of the earth and heaven in some way, but also striving to obscure the light of the exalted ones, though not able to extinguish it. For even the elect will be led into error, if possible (*Matthew XXIV*).

Revelation 9:3

And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth. Just as the saints are the body of Christ, and members from a member, so also the members of the flesh of the dragon are joined together, one being born from another, and the smoke of heretical blindness generates the pride of the wicked, harming them with its mouth. But those who are shaken off by pride do not forsake earthly things. For even the smoke from which they are born, though it seeks high places, always fails in itself. [*Revelation 9:3*] -- And power was given to them, etc. Heretics are compared to opposing powers, seemingly innocent in appearance, but holding poison within their hind parts. [*Revelation 9:4*] -- And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing. He shows that the locusts are

men, who are sent not to harm the grass, but men. For grass here is simply understood as men.

Revelation 9:4

Except those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They are said to have the seal of God on their foreheads, by whom it is properly held. Whose number above the angel who brought the seal of the living God from the rising of the sun has counted as inviolable and fixed. For he wished to use the manner of speaking here, by which it is said: No one can say that Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians XII), that is, perfectly and truly. [Revelation 9:5] -- And it was said to them that they should not kill them, etc. Although heretics, empowered by secular authority, are allowed to attack the good temporally, they cannot kill the soul, as the Lord says. For the time of the world is signified by five months, because of the five-part sense which we use in this life. That another translation contains six months agrees with the same sense because of the six ages of the world.

Revelation 9:5

And their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. Just as the scorpion spreads poison from its hind parts, so the impiety of the wicked harms from behind, when it compels temporal things, which are behind, to be preferred to eternal goods by threats or blandishments. This scorpion, contrary to the parable of the Gospel, the generation of vipers hands over to its offspring. [Revelation 9:6] -- And in those days men will seek death, and will not find it. Preferring to end a miserable life with a quick death. As blessed Cyprian lamented under the Decian storm: "To those willing to die, he says, it was not permitted to be killed." [Revelation 9:7] -- And the shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared for battle. That is, like the last persecutors. For in the last battle, which he will describe in the following angel, he says that horses fight. Or simply as horses are driven into battle not by their own reason, but by the impulse of their rider, so evil teachers, driven by a demonic spirit, attack the Church.

Revelation 9:7

And on their heads were crowns like gold. The twenty-four elders, who are the Church, have golden crowns. But these, pretending to be like gold, falsely imagine foolish triumphs of victory. [Revelation 9:7] -- And their faces were like the faces of men, etc. In their human face, a simulation of

reason; in the hair of women, flowing and effeminate habits; in the teeth of lions, which both tear apart and often bring a natural stench, the ferocity of the mind and the fame of bad doctrine; and in iron breastplates, hardened hearts against the truth, he notes. Those who have a form of godliness but deny its power (2 Tim. III), come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves (Matt. VII). [Revelation 9:9] -- And the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots of many horses running into battle. It is more terrifying than it is to be explained, that so much strength grows in this army. First, the smoke rises. Then it brings forth locusts, which are first compared to scorpions, and soon to horses and lions. Their strength would suffice if they did not also come armored. Now, indeed, they are called to be both flying and like chariots fighting.

Revelation 9:10

And they had tails like scorpions, etc. Just as a scorpion walks gently but strikes with its tail, so the fraudulent destruction of the wicked appears pleasant and harmless on the surface, but while it secretly kills, it covertly brings death. [Revelation 9:10] -- Their power to harm men was for six months. This again suggests this life, where lies can prevail either to capture the useless or to torment the spiritually strong temporarily. [Revelation 9:11] -- And they had over them a king, the angel of the abyss. Although God, who is supremely good, permits an angel fitting for such people to preside over them by hidden but just judgments. [Revelation 9:12] -- One woe is past, and behold, two woes are still to come. Since he predicted that three woes were to come, he now mentions that one has already come in heretical deceit, but two remain, which will occur in the time of the Antichrist and on the day of judgment for the wicked.

Revelation 9:13

And the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, etc. The sixth angel represents the preachers of the final battle, who, at the prompting of the Gospel, expose the frauds of the Antichrist. The horns of the golden altar indeed represent the preeminent Gospels of the Church. [Revelation 9:14] -- Release the four angels, etc. It indicates how much the ancient enemy with his satellites will persecute the Church at the end of the world, who from the time of the Lord's passion has been shut up in the hearts of the impious, so that he cannot harm as much as he would like, restrained by divine power. For the Eu-

phrates, which is a river of Babylon, signifies the power of the worldly kingdom and the waves of the persecutors. This is the great mountain that he had predicted would be cast into the sea, burning with fire. [Revelation 9:15] -- And the four angels were released. In the manner of prophecy, which designates to us things to come, he himself sees the events in the spirit. He called them four angels because that persecution will rage in the four parts of the world. These are the ones he previously saw standing at the four corners of the earth, and were prevented from harming the earth and sea for the sealing of God's servants.

Revelation 9:15

Who were prepared for the hour, and day, and month, etc. Malignant spirits, who at every moment of hours and times hunger for human death, will then be allowed to rage more freely to opportunely destroy the Church. What do you think they will do when released, who now harm so much while bound? [Revelation 9:16] -- And the number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. This number designates the deceptive duplicity of the perverse army. Which another translation, saying "twice ten thousand times ten thousand," can be more easily understood; and this number is also opposed by the evangelical parable to the king having ten thousand (Matt. IV), as the duplicity of the wicked resists the simple faith of Christ, to whom thousands of thousands minister and ten thousand times ten thousand stand (Dan. VII). [Revelation 9:17] -- And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and those who sat on them, etc. The malignant spirits, in whose hearts they preside, are clothed with their punishments. For we read that those worshipping the beast are to be tormented with fire and sulfur, and the smoke of their torment will ascend forever and ever. Note that in the plague of locusts he did not say he saw horsemen, but only horses. Here indeed, the magnitude of the persecutions shows the open presence of the opposing power. Thus, here the heads are of lions, while there the faces are indeed human, but the teeth are only bestial. Because often heretics show some humanity, but the ministers of the final storm extort what they persuade by words and signs even through punishments.

Revelation 9:17

And from their mouths proceeds fire and smoke and sulfur. He shows what he had said about hyacinth smoke. But these things do not clearly come out

of their mouths, but by harmful preaching, they generate punishment for themselves and their listeners. For, he says, I will bring forth a fire from the midst of you, which shall devour you (Ezek. XXVIII). [Revelation 9:19] -- For the power of the horses is in their mouths, and in their tails. That is, in speech and in action; for the prophet teaching lies, he is the tail. Who covers in a certain way the blind and unclean part with the volubility of a flattering tongue, saying to the wicked: You are good. [Revelation 9:19] -- For their tails are like serpents, etc. False teachers, like the ancient serpent who deceived man, supported by the patronage of rulers, harm more than if they persuaded only by speech. He sits, he says, in ambush with the rich (Ps. X).

Revelation 9:20

And the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues, etc. Because he had described false Christians and heretics, now, to encompass the entire body of the devil, he also mentions the error of the Gentiles, to whom it benefits nothing not to be killed by these plagues, as it is evident they will continue in their Gentile malice even then. For in that persecution the Gentiles will not be compelled to consent to the aforementioned but will die in their own unbelief. [Revelation 9:21] -- And they did not repent of their murders, etc. To their impious religion, they also add wicked morals. After describing the cruelty of the Antichrist, he, in his manner, recapitulates the beginning of Christ's birth and the glory of the Church to show the ruin of the same.

CHAPTER 10

Revelation 10:1

And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. The Lord, the angel of great counsel, descended from heaven, clothed with the cloud of flesh. As Isaiah also says: Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and will come to Egypt (Isaiah XIX), and a rainbow was upon his head. Around the good, the promise of propitiation remains. [Revelation 10:1] -- And his face was like the sun, etc. With the face of the Lord shining, that is, his knowledge manifested through the glory of the resurrection, his feet are prepared to evangelize and proclaim peace on the mountains (Romans X), illuminated by the fire of the Holy Spirit, and established like pillars. For James, Cephas, and John seemed to be pillars of the Church. [Revelation 10:2] -- And he had in his hand a little book open. This is the book previously mentioned, which, long closed by its cover, was finally opened by

the grace of the Lord, so that, according to the prophet, even the deaf might hear the words of the book (Isaiah XXIX). And his face deservedly shines like the sun, because he now carries the book open.

Revelation 10: 2

And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land. The preaching of the Christian faith is spread by land and sea. But, allegorically, stronger members are set in greater dangers, and others in suitable places. For God does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Corinthians X). [Revelation 10:3] -- And when he cried out, the seven thunders uttered their voices. When the Lord preaches mightily, the Church, also full of sevenfold grace, raises its voices to preach. For the lion roars, who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken, who will not prophesy (Amos III)? For the seven thunders are the same as the seven trumpets of which he speaks. [Revelation 10:4] -- And when the seven thunders had spoken, I was about to write. For earlier he heard: What you see, write in a book (Revelation I).

Revelation 10: 4

Seal up what the seven thunders have spoken, and do not write it down. The mysteries of the Christian faith are neither to be shown to all indiscriminately, lest they become cheap, nor hidden from the worthy, lest they be entirely unknown. Hence, later he heard: Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book (Revelation XXII). Both are comprehended in one verse in Daniel, where it is said to him through the angel: Seal the book and shut up the words until the appointed time (Daniel XII). [Revelation 10:5-6] -- And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore, etc. The angel swears by the one who lives forever, as Christ, coming in the name of the Father, confirms his words with his unchangeable truth: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Matthew XXIV).

Revelation 10: 6

Who created heaven and the things that are in it, etc. Standing on the sea and land, and reaching up to heaven, he fittingly swears by the Creator of heaven, earth, and sea. [Revelation 10:6] -- Because time shall be no more. Indeed, as the psalm says, there will be a time for the wicked forever (Psalm LXXX), but the mutable variety of secular times will cease at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise incorruptible, and

their inheritance will be forever (1 Corinthians XV). [Revelation 10:7] -- The mystery of God will be finished, etc. The mystery which is now preached will then be completed, when the wicked will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew XXV). [Revelation 10:8] -- And the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again, etc. As the Lord reveals the mysteries of the future time, saying: For the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew X), the Church is also admonished to take up the same book of preaching. Although these words can also be fittingly applied to John himself, who would return to preach after exile.

Revelation 10: 9

And I went to the angel, saying to him that he should give me the book. Let him approach the Lord who wishes to receive the mysteries of teaching. [Revelation 10:9] -- And he said to me: Take the book and devour it. That is, insert it into your innermost parts and inscribe it in the breadth of your heart. [Revelation 10:10] -- And it will make your belly bitter, etc. When you receive it, you will be delighted by the sweetness of the divine word, but you will feel bitterness when you begin to preach and act upon what you have understood. Or indeed, it should be understood according to Ezekiel, who, when he said he had devoured the book, added, And I went in bitterness in the indignation of my spirit. [Revelation 10:11] -- And he said to me: You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations. He explains what the book eaten and the sweetness mixed with bitterness signify, namely, that, being freed from exile, he would preach the Gospel to the nations, sweet indeed with love, but bitter with the persecutions to be endured.

CHAPTER 11

Revelation 11: 1

And a reed like a rod was given to me. In the reed, he received the ministry of writing the Gospel, which is not superfluous in vain elegance, but like a rod of righteousness, the rod of the kingdom of God (Hebrews I). For he describes the eternal kingdom of Christ. [Revelation 11:1] -- Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar. He said rise, not because John was hearing these things while sitting, but because with this word he rouses the hearts of each one to measure the evangelical Scripture and deeds. For there they find how much each one advances and how much they conform to the divine rule. [Revelation 11:1] -- And those who worship in it. Because not all who

seem to worship in it do so, just as he who confesses me. Finally, he commands that a part not be counted, saying:

Revelation 11:2

But the court which is outside the temple, cast out, etc. Those who are joined to the Church in name only, and neither approach the altar nor the holy of holies, are cast out from the rule of the Gospel and joined with the Gentiles. For all the glory of the king's daughter is within (Psalm XLIV). [Revelation 11:2] -- And they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. Not only are they expelled from the Church, but they also, together with their Gentile allies, attack the same Church for three and a half years. It is not that they will trample it only during that time, that is, the time of the Antichrist, but because the entire body of the wicked, as if belonging to its own head, is already now working in the ministry of iniquity. [Revelation 11:3] -- And I will give to my two witnesses, etc. Lest the savagery of the wicked frighten the listener, he recalls that the Church, united from two peoples, will be illuminated by the grace of virtues. And it is always looking at its head, namely Christ teaching in the flesh, and it is said to prophesy for three and a half years. The months of three and a half years, that is, thirty times forty-two, make up one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Daniel, however, writes of one thousand two hundred and ninety days for the same time, in which the abomination of desolation is to be set up.

Revelation 11:3

Clothed in sackcloth. That is, in penitential mourning. As the prophet says: But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth (Psalm XXXV). [Revelation 11:4] -- These are the two olive trees, etc. The Church, illuminated by the light of the two Testaments, always stands by the commands of the Lord. For the prophet Zechariah saw one seven-branched candlestick, and these two olive trees, that is, the Testaments, pouring oil into the candlestick. This is the Church with its unfailing oil, which makes it burn with light in the world. [Revelation 11:5] -- And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth, etc. If anyone harms the Church, he is consumed by the fire of judgment, reciprocating the harm. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword (Matthew XXVI). Hence, the Chaldean flame, which was cast on the children of God, consumed the ministers of impiety themselves. Or spiritually, by the prayers of the Church's

mouth, one is consumed by spiritual fire to be changed for the better. Coals of fire, he says, you will heap upon his head (Romans XII).

Revelation 11: 6

These have the power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls, etc. All power in heaven and on earth is given to the Church in Christ, with the keys to bind and loose entrusted to it (Matthew XXVIII). But spiritually, the heaven is shut so that it does not rain, so that the blessing does not descend on the barren earth from the Church. As the Lord said about the vineyard of His Father: I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it (Isaiah V). [Revelation 11:6] -- And they have the power over waters, etc. They not only withhold waters but also make those that descended useless, which is to turn waters into blood. The good fragrance of Christ emanating from the Church, to some is the smell of death unto death, to others the smell of life unto life (2 Corinthians XVI).

Revelation 11: 7

And when they have finished their testimony, the beast, etc. He openly shows that all these things happen before the final persecution by saying, When they have finished their testimony, that is, the testimony they bear up to the revelation of the beast, which is to emerge in the hearts of the impious. Not that they will not continue to bear the same testimony then, strongly resisting the enemy, but that at that time the Church is believed to be deprived of the grace of virtues, while the adversary openly dazzles with signs of deceit. For want will precede his face, as the Lord says (Job XLI). [Revelation 11:7] -- And will overcome them and kill them. He will overcome those who succumb and kill those who are slain for the name of Christ with praiseworthy patience. Or if he overcomes and kills spiritually, we will understand a part of the witnesses. As the Lord says in the Gospel: They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you (Matthew XXIV). Which the evangelist Luke suggests in part by saying: They will kill some of you (Luke XI).

Revelation 11: 8

And their bodies will lie in the street of the great city. If they persecuted me, he says, they will also persecute you. It is therefore not surprising if the city of the impious, which did not fear to crucify the Lord, also holds His servants in derision, even those who have been killed. Such things are often recorded in ecclesiastical history. [Revelation 11:8] -- Which is spiritually called Sod-

om, etc. That is, mute and dark, having neither the light of faith nor the voice of confession. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans X). These provinces were visibly struck with these plagues, that is, with devouring fire and water turned into blood, as a sign of spiritual punishment. [Revelation 11:9] -- And those from the peoples and tribes, etc. He did not say: The peoples and tribes will see, but many from the peoples, who, while others believe, openly mock the saints.

Revelation 11:9

And they will not allow their bodies to be laid in tombs. He spoke of their intention and opposition. Not that they are able to prevent the Church from being remembered. As: Neither do you enter yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in (Matthew XXIII), while they enter, though being opposed by them. But they will clearly act concerning the bodies of the living and the dead, for they will not allow the living to be gathered for sacred celebrations in memory, nor the dead to be commemorated, nor their bodies to be buried in memory of the witnesses of God. [Revelation 11:10] -- And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them. Whenever the righteous are afflicted, the unjust rejoice and feast, just as, when the wicked prosper, the poor are inflamed. [Revelation 11:10] -- For these two prophets tormented them. Because of the plagues with which the human race is scourged on account of the Testaments of God, even the sight of the righteous themselves burdens the unjust. As they themselves say: He is grievous unto us even to behold (Wisdom II).

Revelation 11:11

And after three and a half days, the Spirit of life from God, etc. Until now, the angel has narrated what will happen, and now he introduces the event that is heard as future, that with the kingdom of the Antichrist destroyed, the saints will have risen in glory. [Revelation 11:11] -- And great fear fell upon those who saw them. He spoke of all the living, for even the surviving righteous will be fearful at the resurrection of the sleeping. [Revelation 11:12] -- And they ascended to heaven in a cloud. This is what the Apostle said: We shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians IV). [Revelation 11:12] -- And their enemies saw them. Here he distinguished the unjust from those whom he had said in common to have been afraid.

[Revelation 11:13] -- And in that hour there was a great earthquake, etc. With the terror of the judgment impending, the entire city of the devil built upon the sand will collapse with all its builders. For both the number ten and the number seven are perfect. But if it were not, the whole would have to be understood from the part.

Revelation 11:13

And the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. Who among men will boast that he has a pure heart when the powers of heaven will be shaken? [Revelation 11:13] -- And they gave glory to the God of heaven. These are the ones built upon the rock, who, while others fall from the earthquake, glorify the Lord with a righteous confession from their stability. For the righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance of the wicked. Some interpret the two prophets as Enoch and Elijah, who, preaching for three and a half years, will strengthen the hearts of the faithful against the soon-following perfidy of the Antichrist. After they are killed, the same period of persecution will ensue, and finally, with the conflict renewed, they will be overcome by the saints, who were believed to be dead in the protection of hiding places. These same prophets are said to rise for the unity of one body, and seeing them again, those who thought them dead will face a heightened persecution, causing many of those considered worthy of the septenary or denary number to fall, as Daniel says: He will confirm a covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and in the temple will be the abomination of desolation (Daniel IX). And later: And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days (Daniel XII). This number covers approximately three years and six months. Indeed, Elijah once destroyed his adversaries with fire and, hiding for three and a half years, withheld the rains, and finally, after the false prophets were killed, through the sacrifice that had been taken away, he turned Israel back to the Lord.

Revelation 11:14

The second woe is past, and behold, the third woe comes quickly. This second woe pertains not to recapitulation but to the battle of the horses stirred by the trumpet of the sixth angel. For the eagle had predicted three woes from the voices of the three trumpets yet to come. But there, he did not

say that the third would immediately follow, which pertains to the seventh angel and the end. [Revelation 11:15] -- And the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, etc. The first six trumpets, compared to the ages of this present world, announced various conflicts of wars for the Church. But the seventh, the herald of eternal Sabbath, proclaims only the victory and dominion of the true king. [Revelation 11:16] -- And the twenty-four elders worshiped God, etc. Behold, he says, the third woe will come in the voice of the seventh angel. And when it sounded, it spoke only of the Church praising God and giving thanks. From this, we understand that the reward of the good is nothing other than the woe of the wicked.

Revelation 11:17

Who are, and who were, etc. You indeed have reigned from eternity, even with the wicked rebelling, but now their fury, judged by you, will be crushed. For the Lord reigns; let the peoples be angry (Psalm XCVIII). [Revelation 11:18] -- And the time has come for the dead to be judged, and to reward, etc. It corresponds to the order of the gospel reading: first, all nations will be gathered before the Judge, then the righteous will be placed in the kingdom of the Father through many mansions, while the wicked, driven outside the boundaries of the kingdom, will be tormented by the flames of damnation. [Revelation 11:18] -- And to destroy those who corrupt the earth. This is the final woe. Thus far concerning the seven angels blowing their trumpets, now he recapitulates from the birth of the Lord, saying the same things differently and more broadly.

Revelation 11:19

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, etc. The temple of the Lord, once situated on earth, covered the ark of the covenant under a mystical veil; but now in the Church, which is the temple of the living God, whose citizenship is in heaven (Philippians III), with the veil of the old temple and the middle wall of partition torn apart by the Lord's blood, the ark of His Incarnation is now revealed to the whole world. For just as heavenly manna in pure gold, so is divinity in the holy body. [Revelation 11:19] -- And there were lightnings, voices, etc. All these are the virtues of the Church's illumination, proclamation, and wars. He mentioned these as having occurred in the description of the preaching of the seven angels from the advent of the Lord, when He stood upon the altar, but generally from the beginning to

the end. Then he described in parts how they were done: thus also now, saying that the temple of God in heaven was opened, and the battles followed, stating:

CHAPTER 12

Revelation 12:1

And a great sign appeared in heaven. What now also appears in the Church: God becoming man. [Revelation 12:1] -- The woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. The Church of Christ, clothed in light, tramples upon temporal glory: In his days shall righteousness flourish, and abundance of peace until the moon be no more (Psalm LXXII). That is, the abundance of peace will grow until it consumes all the changeableness of mortality, when the last enemy, death, is destroyed (1 Corinthians XV). Or, because the same Church, partly in heaven, enjoys Christ the sun, partly on earth, journeys away from the Lord. This can be understood by the phrase: His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me (Song of Songs VIII). [Revelation 12:1] -- And upon her head a crown of twelve stars. The Church is adorned with the number of the twelve apostles on its head, whether you understand Christ, or the very beginning of the nascent Church designated by the name of the head. You have set a crown of precious stones upon his head (Psalm XXI).

Revelation 12:2

And being with child, she cried out in travail. The Church, spiritually, both gives birth to those she brings forth and continues to labor for those already born. As she herself says: My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you (Galatians IV). [Revelation 12:2] -- And she was in pain to deliver. Thus the Lord in the Gospel: A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world (John XVI). Explaining this to His disciples, He added: Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice (John XVI). [Revelation 12:3] -- And behold, a great red dragon, etc. The devil, bloody in cruelty, is armed against the Church with the power of an earthly kingdom. In the seven heads, he speaks of all his kings, and in the ten horns, all his kingdoms.

Revelation 12: 4

And his tail drew a third part of the stars of heaven, etc. This indicates the strength and malice of the enemy, whom the Church, with the Lord's help, overcomes, who by deceit like a tail has cast down an innumerable part of the angels or men. For the tail is a blind part, an unclean part, covering its filth with its own veil so it does not appear. Tychonius, in his manner, interprets the third part of the stars that fell as false brethren, suggesting that one-third is the Church, one-third is external enemies, and one-third is the stars that fell. [Revelation 12:4] -- And the dragon stood before the woman, ready to devour her child as soon as it was born. The devil lies in wait for the Church, striving to extinguish the faith of Christ in the hearts of believers, so that whom she brings forth by teaching, he may kill by deceit. His plot was shown in Herod, who, like internal enemies, pretended to want to worship the Lord in order to kill Him.

Revelation 12: 5

And she brought forth a male child. The Church always bears Christ, despite the opposition of the dragon. He is called a male because he is the victor over the devil, who had conquered the woman. For who but a male child? Who will rule all nations with a rod of iron (Psalm II), governs the good with inflexible justice and breaks the wicked. This is also promised to the Church in the earlier parts: I will give him power over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron (Revelation II). For the Church daily gives birth to the Church, ruling the world in Christ. [Revelation 12:5] -- And her child was caught up to God, etc. Thus Christ, spiritually born in the minds of listeners, cannot be seized by wickedness because he reigns in heaven with the Father, who has also raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ.

Revelation 12: 6

And the woman fled into the wilderness. The Church, living under the hope of eternal things, rejoices in the pilgrimage of the present wilderness, having received the power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the red dragon, like the Israelite people, who, fed with heavenly bread in the wilderness, by the sight of the bronze serpent, conquered the fiery serpents. [Revelation 12:6] -- Where she has a place prepared by God. Be to me, he says, a God of protection, and a place of refuge to save me. [Revelation

12:6] -- That they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. This number of days, which makes three and a half years, encompasses all times of Christianity, because Christ, whose body this is, preached for that time in the flesh. [Revelation 12:7] -- And there was a great battle in heaven. Michael and his angels, etc. Heaven signifies the Church, in which he says Michael and his angels fight against the devil, because according to God's will, they struggle by praying for the pilgrim Church and providing help. Daniel also said that Michael would come to the Church's aid in the final and most severe tribulation, wherefore some believe the Antichrist will be killed by him. His angels are said to be his, as our angels are ours. The Lord says: Their angels always see the face of my Father (Matthew XVIII), meaning those whose citizens they are.

Revelation 12:7

And the dragon fought, and his angels. The angels of Satan are not only those who are like him in nature and will but also humans ensnared by their traps. [Revelation 12:8] -- And they did not prevail. That is, throughout all time. [Revelation 12:8] -- Nor was their place found anymore in heaven. That is, in holy men, who have now become heaven through his expulsion, and who, once believing, do not accept him again. [Revelation 12:9] -- And the great dragon was cast out to the earth. The ancient enemy, expelled from the spiritual realm, is confined more tightly to the earthly realm. This is to be cast out of heaven and sent to the earth. To whom it is said: You shall eat dust all the days of your life (Genesis III). On this earth, he is trampled under the feet of the saints, as it is written: You shall tread upon the asp and the basilisk (Psalm XCI).

Revelation 12:10

Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, etc. It is clearly shown in which heaven these things happen. We know that the victory of Christ's salvation has been accomplished in the Church. For which he says: All power is given to me in heaven and on earth (Matthew XXVIII). Not the power he always had, but the power he began to have in the Church from the time he willed, as the head in the members. [Revelation 12:10] -- For the accuser of our brethren is cast down. The angels rejoice over the salvation of their brethren, that is, future fellow citizens, who are now pilgrims. [Revelation 12:10] -- Who accused them before our God day and

night. He criticized them for using prosperity badly and for lacking patience in adversity. [Revelation 12:11] -- And they did not love their lives unto death. They rightly despise their lives for Christ, who by the blood of Christ have so greatly conquered the adversary.

Revelation 12:12

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Here, the inhabitants of heaven must be understood as both angels and holy men, and it is fitting for both to rejoice together in the Lord, as men are united with angels, and angels minister to the human nature in Christ. [Revelation 12:12] -- Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down, etc. Just as he taught joy to the redeemed, so he taught those perishing to expect lamentation. And a great woe awaits those whom the most wicked enemy possesses in his wrath. [Revelation 12:13] -- And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, etc. The devil, attacking the Church with inextricable cunning, persecutes all the more intensely the more he is cast down. [Revelation 12:14] -- And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, etc. The Church, supported by the two Testaments, avoiding the turbulent poisons of the world, daily seeks the solitude of a quiet and modest spirit with the affection of the mind, joyfully singing: Lo, I have fled far away and have dwelt in the wilderness (Psalm LIV). It is not inconsistent that there she seeks the dove, while here she receives the wings of an eagle. Just as the former represents the gift of the Holy Spirit, so the latter represents the high flight and keen sight with which the Church, with a pure heart, sees God. Her youth will be renewed like the eagle's.

Revelation 12:14

Where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. This represents the entire time of the Church, as previously encompassed in the number of days. For a time signifies a year, times signify two years, and half a time signifies six months. [Revelation 12:15] -- And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, etc. The flood signifies the onslaught of persecutors. Hence it is said: Perhaps they would have swallowed us up alive, like water (Psalm CXXIII). Therefore, the Church, not only lifted up by the word of God but also driven by the force of persecutions, hastens to fly out of the world. [Revelation 12:16] -- And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood. This earth is the holy flesh of the Lord, which,

swallowing the death that temporarily prevailed over it, taught us also to swallow it. It can also be understood as the Church, whose admonitions and prayers of the mouth ward off the enemy's snares.

Revelation 12:17

And the dragon was angry with the woman, etc. Seeing that the persecutions could not continue because they were averted by the mouth of the holy earth, he armed himself even more to persist in the mystery of iniquity, so that he could continually lie in wait. [Revelation 12:17] -- Who keep the commandments of God, etc. To keep the commandments of God in the faith of Jesus Christ is to fight with the dragon and provoke him to battle. And thanks be to God, who has nullified the attempts of the savage dragon. For behold, having tried to destroy the Lord born in the flesh, he is frustrated by His resurrection. Then, laboring to break the confidence of the apostles in teaching, he strove to remove the woman, that is, the whole Church, from human affairs. But having failed in this, he now attacks individual ages of the faithful everywhere. Hence it follows:

Revelation 12:17

And he stood on the sand of the sea. That is, over the multitude of the people, whom the wind drives away from the face of the earth. Without a doubt, it is the same enemy who is accustomed to devouring the enemy's schemes, now intending to stir up snares and wars.

CHAPTER 13

Revelation 13:1

And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea. The beast has various interpretations according to the locations. Here, it signifies the body of the devil arising from the people of the impious. This sea is understood to be the abyss mentioned above. Hence, the dragon is called the king of all that are in the waters, and whose heads are broken in the sea, according to David. [Revelation 13:1] -- Having seven heads and ten horns, etc. He shows that the seven heads are the same as the ten horns. For he had said that the dragon carried seven diadems on its seven heads; now he says the beast carries ten diadems on its ten horns. For seven and ten are the same as receiving a sevenfold in this age. And another evangelist says a hundredfold (Matthew XIX). [Revelation 13:1] -- And on its heads names of blasphemy. For they call their kings gods, both dead and supposedly translated to heaven among the gods, and

also on earth as Augusti, which is a name of divinity as they will it. Elsewhere, he says the whole beast is full of names of blasphemy.

Revelation 13:2

And the beast I saw was like a leopard, etc. It is compared to a leopard because of the diversity of nations; to a bear, because of its malice and ferocity; to a lion, because of its physical strength and the arrogance of its tongue. In Daniel, we read that the kingdom of the Chaldeans is compared to a lioness, that of the Persians to a bear, and that of the Macedonians to a leopard. [Revelation 13:2] -- And the dragon gave him his power. Thus the Apostle, speaking of the body of the devil, says: His coming is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish (2 Thessalonians II). [Revelation 13:3] -- And I saw one of its heads as if it had been mortally wounded, etc. The Antichrist, pertaining to the heads of the earthly kingdom, in imitation of our true head, dares to present himself as if he were mortally wounded and had resurrected, to be accepted in place of Christ, who truly accomplished this. It is said that the deception in Simon Magus prefigured this deceit.

Revelation 13:3

And the whole earth marveled and followed the beast. He uses the genus for the species, saying that the beast is worshiped, when it is the false head, under the name of the truly slain and living head, that earthly men are to worship. [Revelation 13:4] -- And they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast. They claim to worship God, who gave authority to Christ. [Revelation 13:4] -- And they worshiped the beast, saying: Who is like the beast? They say: Who is like Christ? Or who can defeat him? [Revelation 13:5] -- And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. He exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped (2 Thessalonians II). [Revelation 13:5] -- And he was given authority to act for forty-two months, etc. For the first three and a half years, he does not openly blaspheme but acts in the mystery of iniquity, which, after the dissension and the revelation of the man of sin, will be exposed. Then he will say: I am Christ (Matthew XXIV); now, however: Behold, here is Christ, and there (Ibid.). By against God, it signifies against God.

Revelation 13:6

To blaspheme His name and His tabernacle. The wicked one, usurping for himself the dignity of God's name, will also presume to call his own church by that name. [Revelation 13:7] -- And it was granted to him to make war with the saints, etc. By the part, he means the whole. Those who can be conquered, with the violence of the time, if possible, even the elect will be shaken. That the Jews may be condemned, who, not believing the truth, accepted the lie. [Revelation 13:8] -- And all who dwell on the earth will worship him. He said all, but he meant those who dwell on the earth. For those who depart from you, he says, will be written in the earth (Jeremiah XVII). [Revelation 13:8] -- Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb. It is just that those who serve the author of death should not be written in the book of life, and those who are deceived by the simulated death of the beast should lack the fellowship of the Lamb who took away the sins of the world. He says,

Revelation 13:8

The Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world. The Lamb, as Peter says, without blemish, foreordained indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifest in these last times (1 Peter I). Another edition translates it as the Lamb marked from the foundation of the world. It can also be understood through hyperbaton that the names of the saints have been written in the book of life from the beginning. [Revelation 13:9] -- If anyone has an ear, let him hear. Whenever Scripture interposes this saying, it seeks an attentive listener due to the obscurity of the matter. So that the momentary kingdom of the devil is not regarded highly, it meets human thoughts by saying: He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity, that is, the devil and the beast, who now seem to capture the nations with their snares, will themselves soon be captives.

Revelation 13:10

He who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. He who now persecutes the Church with either carnal or even spiritual death, the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming. [Revelation 13:10] -- Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. He had promised that the murderer would be killed, but because no one is crowned unless he competes lawfully, now he says there is a need for

strong spirits and firm hearts. Having first described the beast generally in hypocrisy, then with an open mouth blaspheming, he now describes it among the rulers alone, similarly in hypocrisy, then revealed. [Revelation 13:11] -- And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. He said another in office, yet it is one. What is the sea is also the earth, according to Daniel. To whom, seeing the four beasts rise from the sea, the angel says: These four great beasts are four kingdoms that will arise from the earth (Daniel VII).

Revelation 13:11

And he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. He presents the horns of a lamb to secretly insert the poison of the dragon. Because, through the hypocrisy of holiness, he falsely claims to have the unique wisdom and life that the Lord truly possessed. Concerning this beast, the Lord says: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves (Matthew VII). [Revelation 13:12] -- And he exercised all the authority of the first beast. Miserable disciples follow their master in all things. [Revelation 13:12] -- And he caused the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast. He shows the power of seduction, having claimed both the body and the soul which inhabits it. [Revelation 13:12] -- Whose deadly wound was healed. That is, it feigned to have overcome death by rising. For Scripture said he was as if slain, just as it was said of the Jews: They did not enter the praetorium, lest they should be defiled. The evangelist did not assert that the most impure could be defiled if they entered the praetorium; nor did the Jews, conscious of such great crimes, truly fear being defiled, but he reported what they pretended as if affirming it.

Revelation 13:13

And he performed great signs, so that he even made fire come down from heaven to earth. He presented the miracle of fire as the greatest among others, so that, just as the Lord Christ gave His disciples the grace of virtues with the coming of the Holy Spirit in fire, so he, with deceptive cunning, might also deceive his followers with a similar charisma. [Revelation 13:14] -- And he deceives those who dwell on the earth, etc. For his coming will be, as it is said, according to the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders (2 Thessalonians II). It is often debated whether these are called signs and lying wonders because he will deceive mortal senses through

phantasms so that what he does not actually do, he will appear to do; or because even if they are true wonders, they will lead those who believe them into falsehood, thinking they could not be done except by divine power, not knowing the power of the devil, who consumed such a great household of holy Job with such large herds by not phantasmal but real fire and whirlwind. Whether they are called signs of falsehood in this or that manner, it is without doubt in this that the temptation will appear greatest to all when the pious martyr both subjects his body to torments and yet performs so many miracles before his eyes.

Revelation 13:14

Saying to those who dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, etc. That is, to be like him and thus to make an image to him, as another version says: As it has the wound of the sword and lived. That is, they should say they have died and risen with the Antichrist by that falsehood, just as he claims to constitute himself as God and mediator between himself and his followers, unlike our Lord Jesus Christ, who has no other mediator between himself and his followers. [Revelation 13:15] -- And it was granted to him to give spirit to the image of the beast. That is, to the people who fulfill this falsehood by constituting themselves as the image of the beast, he pretends to give the spirit of truth. [Revelation 13:15] -- And that the image of the beast should speak. He will not only deceive the miserable populace with a simulated spirit through fire, but he will also make them capable of teaching others.

Revelation 13:15

And cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. Not that image which they say they are making, but that image to which they make the people similar. He thus makes the image of the beast worship the image of the beast, that is, makes the people worship the invention of the devil. [Revelation 13:16] -- And he causes all, small and great, etc. Not all without exception, such as the Gentiles, but those who pertain to this mystery. [Revelation 13:16] -- To receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads. The mark is the mystery of iniquity, which hypocrites receive in work and profession under the name of Christ. [Revelation 13:17] -- And that no one may buy or sell. By mentioning buying and selling, he taught that just as the Church, in a good way, has given a symbol for our sal-

vation, so they in an evil way confine themselves to such a definition, so that neither buying nor selling is allowed, just like merchants who travel on one ship are held by a uniform sign.

Revelation 13:17

Except one who has the mark, etc. That is, who shares in that deceit. For the mark, that is, the sign, and the name of the beast, and the number of his name are one. For it is the number of a man, so that we do not think, according to some opinions, that it is either the devil or a demon, but one of the men in whom Satan will dwell bodily. For he is the man of sin, the son of perdition.

Revelation 13:18

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding, etc. This number is said to be found among the Greeks in the name Titan, that is, giant, as follows: T equals 300, E equals 5, I equals 10, T equals 300, A equals 1, N equals 50. It is thought that the Antichrist will assume this name as if he surpasses all in power, boasting that he is the one of whom it is written: He rejoiced as a giant to run his course, from one end of the heaven is his going forth, etc. (Psalm XVIII). Primasius also mentions another name that completes the same number: A equals 1, N equals 50, T equals 300, E equals 5, M equals 40, O equals 70, Σ equals 200, which signifies "contrary to honor." Also, the word A equals 1, P equals 100, N equals 50, O equals 70, Y equals 400, M equals 40, E equals 5, meaning "I deny." Through these, the quality of the person and the harshness of the Antichrist's work are indicated. However, a complex exposition is needed to explain how such an aspirant to praise would want to be marked with such a character. Otherwise, who does not know that the number six, by which the world was made, signifies the perfection of the work? Whether simple, or multiplied by ten or a hundred, it demonstrates the perfection of the sixtieth and the hundredfold fruit. Moreover, the weight of gold that came to Solomon each year was six hundred sixty-six talents. Therefore, what is rightly owed and paid as tribute to the true king, that same tribute the deceiving tyrant will presume to demand.

CHAPTER 14

Revelation 14:1

And I looked, and behold, the Lamb stood on Mount Zion. That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, provided an example of virtue and protection to His

Church, which is laboring under the burden of its struggles. By showing His body, which was both powerful enough to confound the dragon and marked with the seal, He demonstrates that the Church, shining with its usual brightness and joy in its number, should not fear having succumbed to the fury of the beast. Note that the beast stands on the sand of the sea, while the Lamb stands on Mount Zion. [Revelation 14:1] -- And with him one hundred forty-four thousand. This finite number should be understood as representing an infinite number, apt for the mystery's secret meaning, and fitting for the examination of virgins, who love God with all their heart, soul, and mind (Matthew XXII), and who are also consecrated in integrity to Him with their bodies, which consist of four qualities. For three times three makes nine, and four times four makes sixteen. Sixteen times nine completes one hundred forty-four. Therefore, when such a perfect multitude is seen among those who are on Mount Zion with the Lamb, there should be no doubt about the rest of the members of the Church.

Revelation 14:1

Having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. He shows the contrast with the mark on the forehead of the beast's followers, saying that God and Christ are written on the foreheads of the Church. [Revelation 14:2] -- And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters. The great voice of the saints, the great devotion of charity, which he reports hearing from heaven, while he had predicted that those who issued the voice stood on Mount Zion. To show that Mount Zion signifies the Church, raised to the joy of sublime contemplation to overcome the burdens of pressures, celebrating the struggles of their King with praise and imitation. This is truly to sing to the Lamb standing. [Revelation 14:2] -- And the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. Since all the saints who crucify their flesh with its vices and desires (Galatians V) are God's harpists, praising Him with the psaltery and harp (Psalm CL), how much more so are those who, with the privilege of evangelical chastity, make themselves a whole burnt offering to the Lord, uniquely denying themselves, and taking up their cross (Luke IX), following the Lamb wherever he goes (Revelation XIV)?

Revelation 14: 3

And they sang as it were a new song before the throne. The old song was: Blessed is he who has his seat in Zion and his household in Jerusalem. The new song is: Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear (Galatians IV). And also, The Lord says, I will give to eunuchs a place and a name better than sons and daughters, in my house and within my walls (Isaiah LVI). [Revelation 14:3] -- And no one could learn that song except, etc. To sing the song of the Lamb uniquely is to rejoice with him forever, even in the incorruption of the flesh, above all the faithful. Although the other chosen can hear the song, they cannot sing it, for while they rejoice in the exaltation of the virgins through love, they do not rise to their rewards.

Revelation 14: 4

For they are virgins, etc. Blessed Augustine beautifully expounded on these matters by admonishing the virgins. "Proceed," he says, "holy sons and daughters of God, males and females, celibate and unmarried, proceed perseveringly to the end. Praise the Lord more sweetly, whom you think of more abundantly. Hope more happily in Him to whom you serve more fervently. Love more ardently Him to whom you attend more diligently. With girded loins and burning lamps, wait for the Lord when He comes from the wedding. You will bring to the wedding of the Lamb a new song, which you will sing on your harps, such as no one can sing except you. For thus did one who was beloved by the Lamb above others, who was accustomed to recline on His breast, see you in the Apocalypse, twelve times twelve thousand of the holy harpists of unblemished virginity in body, and inviolate truth in heart. Follow the Lamb, for indeed the flesh of the Lamb is also virgin. Follow Him in the virginity of heart and flesh wherever He goes. For what does it mean to follow if not to imitate? For Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you might follow in His footsteps" (1 Pet. 2).

Revelation 14: 4

These were purchased from among all as first fruits to God and the Lamb. From that holy and immaculate flock of the Church, as holier and purer sacrifices for the merits of their will, they are chosen by the Holy Spirit: what the Apostle says about them, not having a command from the Lord (1 Cor. 7), he beseeches them to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and pleasing to God (Rom. 12). [Revelation 14:5] -- And in their mouth was

found no lie. It is not by the merit of chastity alone that virgins are joined to the divine company, unless they have also led an immaculate life free from all contagion of sin. Tychonius interprets this vision not specifically of virgins, but generally of the whole Church, which the Apostle espoused to one husband to present as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor. 11), concluding thus: He did not say, "No lie was in their mouth," but "was not found." As the Apostle says: "And such were some of you, but you were washed" (1 Cor. 6). And the iniquity of the wicked shall not harm him on the day he turns from his iniquity (Ezek. 33), and he can be a virgin, and deceit not be found in his mouth. For he calls virgins those who are chaste and modest.

Revelation 14:6

And I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal gospel. Since he had described the uncertain and varied struggle of the church militant in the world with the dragon, it remains to show a worthy reward for each army, and to reveal what penalties follow the wicked and what rewards follow the good. The preacher, therefore, traversing through the midst of the church, bears the gospel of the eternal kingdom. [Revelation 14:6] -- To preach to those who dwell on the earth. It is fitting that those who are lifted by a heavenly flight should also elevate earthly minds from the seat of their lethargy through preaching. [Revelation 14:6] -- And over every nation, etc. He says, this gospel will be preached in the whole world, and then the end will come. [Revelation 14:7] -- Fear God and give Him glory, etc. The more you look out for your salvation, he says, the more imminent the reward awaits you, which cannot be changed eternally, fearing the Lord, the creator of the world, and not the temporal tyranny of the beast.

Revelation 14:8

And another angel followed, saying: Fallen, fallen is that great Babylon. He says that the ruined city of the devil has already fallen. Either in the manner of Scripture, which usually places the past for what it knows will inevitably be fulfilled. Or because the proud are then cast down by the Lord when they are puffed up by the devil, as the Psalmist says: You cast them down when they were lifted up (Ps. 73). [Revelation 14:8] -- She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. The city of the impious, gathered from all nations, inebriates the nations, that is, her members, with

the wine of error. But the city of the Lord, exercising the vineyard of Sorec, does not want to be inebriated with the wine in which is debauchery (Eph. 5), lest it be deprived of the promised denarius of life.

Revelation 14: 9

And the third angel: If anyone worships the beast and its image. That is, the devil, and the head of the slain calf. [Revelation 14:9] -- And receive a mark on his forehead, etc. By saying on the forehead or on the hand, he signifies that the devil marks some by a wicked profession, and others only by their deeds. [Revelation 14:10] -- And he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, etc. By saying, "And he also shall drink," he shows that there is another who drinks, so that he does not separate the one who, although visibly not mingling with the nations, yet under the name of Christ worships the same beast. Justly, however, those who offer the cup of the wrath of fornication are struck down by the cup of the Lord, not so that, according to Jeremiah, they may vomit out the malice of their hearts and be cleansed, but so that they perish condemned, falling into eternal death.

Revelation 14: 10

And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, etc. The saints reigning with the Lord can always see the punishment of the wicked, so that they may give greater thanks to their Redeemer, and sing the mercies of the Lord forever. For the torments of the wicked seen do not sadden those agreeing with the just Judge, just as the rest of Lazarus, seen buried in the flames, could not refresh the rich man. [Revelation 14:11] -- And they have no rest day nor night, etc. They say that a lion spares a prostrate man, but this beast is fiercer than a lion, the more it is worshipped, the greater punishments it inflicts. [Revelation 14:11] -- And if anyone receives the mark of his name. Saint Augustine interprets the beast as the impious city, its image as the simulation of piety, that is, the false appearance of Christians, and the mark as the sign of a crime, which he says is worshipped, submitted to, and consented to.

Revelation 14: 12

Here is the patience of the saints. Although the beast rages, yet the temporary suffering does not sadden the saints, which is to be rewarded with eternal happiness, while on the contrary, the persecutors, temporarily prideful, see themselves suffering eternal punishment with the beast. [Revelation 14:13] --

And I heard a voice from heaven saying: Write. How beautiful is the concord of the preachers. Behold, one declares the kingdom of the Lord is coming, another says the city of the devil has fallen; one preaches the flames of the impious, another the rest of the blessed, which emits its voice both from heaven and commands it to be recorded as worthy of eternal memory. For the just rejoice because their names are written in heaven; the impious, however, are blotted out from the book of the living. [Revelation 14:13] -- Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. I give thanks to you, Jesus, who bless those in heaven who die in you on earth. How much more those who happily give their lives for your faith and in your faith!

Revelation 14: 13

From now on, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, etc. Just as he had said that the wicked have no rest perpetually, so on the contrary, he teaches that the faithful, aided by their former works, from now on, that is, from the time of death, rest. For when He gives sleep to His beloved, this is the inheritance of the Lord (Ps. 127). But because of the cold, the sluggard will not plow; he will beg in summer, and it will not be given to him. [Revelation 14:14] -- And I saw, and behold, a white cloud, etc. Thus far the voice of the heralds having been sent forth, now it remains to show the person of the Judge Himself. He who comes to judgment covers the glory of His divinity with the cloud of flesh, so that the impious may see whom they pierced (John 19).

Revelation 14: 14

Having on His head a golden crown. What this crown is, he described earlier in the appearance of the woman: And on her head a crown of twelve stars (Rev. 12). Although it can also signify the victory of the one who reigns. [Revelation 14:14] -- And in His hand a sharp sickle. Namely, the judicial sentence of separating, which cannot be avoided. For we are within it, wherever we may try to flee. For in the sickle, whatever is enclosed falls within. [Revelation 14:15] -- And another angel came out of the temple, crying, etc. The angels, whom we read as reapers of the earth in the Gospel, and who are all sent into service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation (Heb. 1), daily report to the Lord the individual merits of the Church. [Revelation 14:15] -- Put in your sickle, and reap, etc. Behold, he says, with iniquity abounding, the love of many has grown cold (Matt. 24), and with the heat of

evil pressing, the harvest of the world has almost ceased to live. Therefore, lest the already ripe grains fall, for the sake of the elect, the days are shortened (Ibid.), and gather the tares and chaff for the flames, but store the heavenly fruit in the blessed barns (Matt. 13).

Revelation 14:17

And another angel, etc., having a sharp sickle himself. If Christ is seen as the reaper in the white cloud, who is the grape gatherer, if not the same, elegantly repeated for the dual fruit of the Church? For He who sowed the good seed in His field (Matt. XIII), also planted a vineyard in a fertile place, but both cultivations degenerated due to the negligence of the keepers. [Revelation 14:18] -- And another angel came out from the altar, who has power over fire, etc. There is a dual office of angels, as Jerome says. Some are to grant rewards to the just, others to preside over individual torments. As it is said: He makes His angels spirits, etc. The two angels who proclaim the ripe harvest and mature vineyard can be understood as the prayers of the Church, which daily with great desire prays for the Lord's kingdom to come, saying,

Revelation 14:18

Send forth your sharp sickle, etc. Just as the harvest, so too the vintage is partly earthly, partly heavenly. The ripeness of both indicates the end of the age. [Revelation 14:18] -- For the grapes are ripe. That is, sins are consummated. Although the perfection of the good can also be called ripeness. For, as the holy Pope Gregory says, "however much the end of the world hangs upon its own order, finding each more perverse, it is revealed that they are deservedly oppressed by its ruins." [Revelation 14:19] -- And the angel thrust his sickle into the earth, etc. He who has the harvesting sickle, also has the grape gathering sickle. For there is one judgment and it will occur at one time. But in the harvest and vintage, the beginning and the end of the same oppression are shown. [Revelation 14:19] -- And he cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God, etc. If this harvest and vintage pertains only to the wicked, the winepress signifies punishment. But if also to the good, the treading of the winepress and the threshing floor's tribulation crushes the useless, while proving the useful. As the Apostle says, precious metals are proven by fire, but wood, hay, and stubble are consumed (I Cor. III). Both of these are conducted outside the heavenly Jerusalem. The winepress of wrath

is so called in the manner of speaking by which it is said: The Lord delivered him in the evil day (Psalm XL).

Revelation 14: 20

And blood came out of the winepress, etc. Vengeance came out even to the rulers of the peoples. For vengeance for the blood of the saints poured out has reached even to the devil and his angels in the final struggle. As it is written: In blood you sinned, and blood will pursue you. It was said above concerning the horses: [Revelation 14:20] -- For a distance of sixteen hundred stadia. That is, through all four parts of the world. For fourfoldness is compounded four times, as in the four-faced quadriform and wheels. Four times four hundred is sixteen hundred. Tyconius interprets the reaper and the grape gatherer as the Church, shining forth after the flames of persecutions, holding the power to bind and to loose. The angel from the temple or altar giving the command of the Lord, not with a clear voice, but by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, who works in His body, teaching that it is now time for the wicked to be anathematized, having power over fire, namely that which comes from the mouth of the witnesses, and consumes their enemies. Thus far concerning the conflict of the Church and the ripe end of the struggle for both.

CHAPTER 15

Revelation 15: 1

And I saw another great and marvelous sign in heaven. With the order again restored, about to narrate the same plagues of the final persecution, he wanted the listener to be attentive by saying: A great and marvelous sign. [Revelation 15:1] -- The seven angels. That is, the Church full of sevenfold grace. [Revelation 15:1] -- Having the seven last plagues. Because in them the wrath of God is completed, he called them the last: for the wrath of God always strikes the rebellious people with seven plagues, that is, perfect ones, as frequently in Leviticus: And I will strike you with seven plagues (Lev. XXVI). These will be the last when the Church has departed from its midst. [Revelation 15:2] -- And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire. That is, the translucent fountain of baptism, consecrated with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Or also, in regard to the quality of fire, reddened by martyrdom.

Revelation 15:2

And those who have conquered the beast and its image, etc. Those who conquer the beast's deceits appear to stand by the fiery baptism, striving, according to the Apostle, to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). [Revelation 15:2] -- Having the harps of God, and singing, etc. That is, bearing hearts dedicated to praising God, and singing with the truth of both Testaments. Or, the flesh extended on the wood of the passion. Where not only the sound of the voice, but also the effect of good work is signified. [Revelation 15:3] -- Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty, etc. This song is found in both Testaments, where the Lord, both true and merciful, is sung by all ages as the judge to be worshipped. He repeats what he had proposed, saying: [Revelation 15:5] -- And behold, the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened. The vision harmonizes with the song. For the Lord to be worshipped by all nations, that temple of God's secrets, once enclosed within the walls of a single city, has now begun to be spiritually opened to the whole world.

Revelation 15:6

And the seven angels came out, having the seven plagues from the temple. This is what Mark says: But they went out and preached everywhere. [Revelation 15:6] -- Clothed in pure bright linen. As many (the Apostle says) as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. III). For He is the supreme cornerstone chosen. Or if you understand the singular number for the plural, it signifies various ornaments of virtues. Another translation has white linen, indicating the mortification of the heart for teachers, according to that: I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (I Cor. IX). [Revelation 15:6] -- And girded around their chests with golden belts. Whoever wants to preach strong things should not only mortify the body but also gird the chest with the gold of wisdom. Or certainly to gird the chest with golden belts is to restrain all the movements of mutable thoughts with the bonds of God's love alone.

Revelation 15:7

And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels, etc. These are the bowls which the living creatures and elders, who are the Church, bear with odors, who are also the seven angels. For the same bowls are said to con-

tain both the sweetness of supplications and the wrath of punishments, when they are poured out by the saints for the coming of God's kingdom, when God's judgments, no longer hidden like an abyss, but open as bowls, bring salvation to the righteous, but are proclaimed to bring ruin to the wicked, as the Apostle says: For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing (II Cor. II). [Revelation 15:8] -- And the temple was filled with smoke, etc. The Church, about to preach to the nations, first warms itself with the fire of charity, emitting the smoke of pious confession, giving thanks to God for His indescribable gift.

Revelation 15:8

And no one was able to enter the temple, etc. No one can be incorporated into the members of the Church unless he hears the mysteries of faith from the preachers and learns that Jesus is appointed by God as the judge of the living and the dead. But if you interpret the smoke as the hidden secrets of God's judgments, these remain impenetrable and closed to mortals until, with the plagues of the present age finished, the Lord comes, who will both illuminate what is hidden in darkness (I Cor. IV), and reveal how much benefit or justice the advent of the Antichrist brings either for proving the faith of the Church or for blinding the Jews who did not accept the love of the truth, so that they might be saved.

CHAPTER 16

Revelation 16:1

And I heard a great voice: Go and pour out the seven bowls, etc. The Church is given the power to impose judgment on the damned and to mercifully grant absolution to the converted. And indeed, all angels are commanded to pour out on the earth; but these earthly men receive different names due to the variety of their sins, so that just as the fullness of preaching and vengeance, so also the fullness of guilt is reckoned by the number seven. [Revelation 16:2] -- And the first went and poured out his bowl on the earth. Preachers pour out the bowls of God's wrath in two ways: either by spiritually judging and imposing punishments on the impious, as Peter did to Simon, saying: Your money perish with you (Acts VIII); or by manifesting it through preaching to the holy Church, as he also said: For their judgment is not idle, and their destruction does not slumber (II Pet. II). A third way can also be understood, in which any sinner, upon hearing the preaching of the truth, is

corrupted by a more severe wound of contradiction. Of which the Lord said: If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin (John XV).

Revelation 16:2

And it became a severe wound, etc. Those who, having forsaken the Lord, worship the devil, will perish spiritually by the grievous wound of the same impiety. [Revelation 16:3] -- And the second poured out his bowl on the sea, etc. Those who are not only marked with the character of the Antichrist but also attack the stability of Christ's servants with the waves of bitter persecution will be punished with a spiritual vengeance, which he calls blood; and those who boasted of living will be proven to have served the author of death. [Revelation 16:4] -- And the third poured out his bowl on the rivers, etc. And those who, to pour their poison into the unsuspecting, pretend to offer sweet things, will be punished with a worthy, eternal plague of vengeance. [Revelation 16:5] -- And I heard the angel of the waters saying, You are just, etc. By the angel of the waters, he means all the angels of the peoples, harmonizing with divine praises from their inner affection, because in avenging the blood of His servants, He has given the murderers to drink death.

Revelation 16:7

And I heard another from the altar saying: Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are Your judgments. What the angels are, the altar, giving thanks to God, also signifies, that is, the inner affection of the saints, whether angels or humans, who preside over the people by teaching. [Revelation 16:8] -- And the fourth poured out his bowl on the sun, etc. The persecutors of the Church, who, like a burning sun, try to dry up the seed of God's word, are destined to be burned with the future fire of hell. Or if you interpret the sun as the splendor of the wise, it is not the angel pouring out on the sun, but the sun itself given the power to affect men with heat and fire, because when wise men, overcome by tortures, are touched by the error of evil deeds, persuaded by their example, the weak burn with temporal desires. However, the heat, as we have said, can also be understood as the body of the devil being irremediably tormented by the stability of the saints and being incited to blasphemy. Of which the prophet says: Zeal, he says, has taken hold of an uneducated people; and now fire consumes the adversaries. And now, indeed, except for the final fire of judgment.

Revelation 16:9

And men were scorched with great heat. At present, indeed, as much as is permitted, the devil glorifies his own. But that clarity and joy the Holy Spirit has defined as plagues and sorrows. For we read above that the army of the devil killed men by fire, smoke, and brimstone. Not that he clearly killed them, but that he destined those who consented to these punishments. [Revelation 16:10] -- And the fifth poured out his bowl, etc. The seat of the beast, that is, his kingdom, like judicial power, is darkened by such plagues, that is, the false joy of earthly happiness, and it becomes devoid of light, as the Psalm says: You cast them down as they were lifted up (Psalm LXXIII). For he did not say, after they were elevated. [Revelation 16:10] -- And they gnawed their tongues because of pain. Just as the righteous will eat the labors of their fruits, so the wicked, exposed to the worthy punishments of their blasphemy, are as if satiated with their own tongues. They harmed themselves by blaspheming out of God's wrath, in which they thought they found joy.

Revelation 16:11

And they blasphemed the God of heaven, etc. He did not attribute it to their hardness but to the just indignation of God, who gave such a kind of plague, in which they do not remember. For who, being afflicted bodily, does not feel the hand of God as Antiochus did? For he said they blasphemed, not openly, but indulging in their sins. [Revelation 16:12] -- And the sixth angel poured out his bowl on that great river Euphrates, etc. With the people perishing, the abundance of Babylon, in which nothing living, nothing green, that is not fit for fire, will remain. This is what was said above: The harvest of the earth is dried up (Rev. XIV), the holy king hastens to meet the Sun of righteousness. Alternatively, just as when the wicked boast, the poor are inflamed, so when the pestilent is scourged, the wise become more prudent. As usual, the seventh angel recapitulates briefly from the beginning.

Revelation 16:13

And I saw from the mouth of the dragon and from the mouth of the beast, etc. The spirit of the devil, and the Antichrist, and the leaders of his body, who are called threefold according to the number of parts of one body, are likened to frogs, which are horrible in place, appearance, and troublesome noise. Though they seem to be inhabitants of the waters, they wallow in filth and mud. Hypocrites, promising the water of life, hide dead in the filth

which believers lay down in the water. Thus Pharaoh, who, in order to destroy the people in baptism, dared to enter after them, was killed there. [Revelation 16:14] -- For they are the spirits of demons performing signs. Just as through Pharaoh's magicians, they are believed to perform signs. It is not without reason that the mention of frogs is made, unless to proclaim that the ministers of Satan will then also perform similar signs. For up to the sign of frogs, the magicians were permitted to prevail with their enchantments.

Revelation 16:14

And they go forth to the kings of the whole earth, to gather them for battle, etc. Just as there are holy kings, for whom, with the Euphrates dried up, the way is prepared for the East, so also the wicked are called kings of the earth, who, not gathered from the whole world to one place, but each nation in its own place, attack the saints. The great day of the Lord is the whole time from the Lord's passion. The day can also be understood as the day of judgment; when the army of the devil, gathered throughout the whole time of this present life, will come to be cast down by the Lord, the king. [Revelation 16:15] -- Behold, I come like a thief. Another edition more fittingly has: To the great day of Almighty God. Behold, he comes like a thief. [Revelation 16:15] -- Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, etc. Blessed are those whose sins are covered (Psalm 31), who cover the shame of a blameworthy life before the eyes of the just with the cloak of subsequent good works. And in the Gospel, the Lord, using the example of avoiding a thief, commands the servants to be watchful.

Revelation 16:16

And he gathered them together in a place called in Hebrew Armageddon. He explains this place elsewhere, saying: He gathered them for battle, and they surrounded the camp of the saints, and the beloved city (Rev. 20), that is, the Church. Conversely, the place of the wicked can be understood as the devil, who in a lost man, inflated with the pride of usurped divinity, will rejoice in recovering former deceptions, that is, those once forbidden by the Lord. For Armageddon means a return to the former, or a swollen mount. [Revelation 16:17] -- And the seventh poured out his vial into the air, etc. Just as above the blood of vengeance up to the horse bridles, namely the unclean spirits went out, so also here when the same aerial powers are drenched with the final vengeance, it is said to have happened, that is, the end is at hand,

when (as the Apostle says) the last enemy, death, will be destroyed (1 Cor. 15). Thus far under the name of plagues is described the final persecution, which Tyconius wants to be understood all oppositely. A plague, he says, is incurable, and a great wrath to receive the power of sinning especially against the saints, and not yet to be chastised by a greater wrath of God. For the outcome of the blessedness of the wicked is death, just as conversely the torments and humiliation of the Church is its glory. For at that time all the impious people will be unharmed by any bodily plague, as if they had received the full power of raging. Nor will there be a need then for the fulfillment of sins and the completion of wrath for any of the wicked to be scourged, and to be restrained from fury. He summarizes from the same persecution, describing the ruin of the impious city.

Revelation 16:18

And there were lightnings and voices, etc. When at the end of the world there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning (Matt. 24), very great signs will also clearly appear. But whether from the side of the good, or from the side of the wicked, or from both sides converging towards each other, it is not made sufficiently clear here. As it was done with Moses and Pharaoh's magicians. [Revelation 16:19] -- And the great city was divided into three parts. The impious city inflicts a threefold war upon the Church of Christ. Which the Gentiles and Jews openly with combat, heretics with deceitful defection, false brethren with corrupt examples assail. Which was also figured above in the three bad horses, the red, black, and pale. [Revelation 16:19] -- And the cities of the nations fell. That is, all the strength and confidence of the nations. For the joy of the wicked is a great ruin, and the joy of the unrighteous is destruction.

Revelation 16:19

And great Babylon came into remembrance before God, etc. Then Babylon falls, or drinks the wrath of God, when it receives power against Jerusalem, especially in the final days. Therefore he said that it fell by the earthquake that affects the Church. But if you refer this to the day of judgment, then the impious will come into remembrance before God, who now says in his heart: God has forgotten. [Revelation 16:20] -- And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. The Church, which, because of its eminence of stability, is compared to islands and mountains, cautiously hides itself from

the waves of persecutors. [Revelation 16:21] -- And great hail like a talent descended from heaven upon men. The hail of God's wrath is likened to a talent, which is both heavy in weight and just in judgment, inflicted on each according to the diversity of their faults. And all the plagues of Egypt were figures of spiritual plagues.

Revelation 16:21

And men blasphemed God, etc. Because some sins are the cause of sin, some the punishment of sin, and some both. As Isaiah says: Behold, you were angry, and we sinned (Isa. 64). Here, to blaspheme God because of the hail, both the sin and the punishment of sin are recognized.

CHAPTER 17

Revelation 17:1

Come, I will show you the condemnation of the great harlot, etc. The multitude of the lost, who, forsaking the Creator, surrendered themselves to demons to be defiled, is remembered as sitting on the waters, that is, in the discord of the peoples. Conversely, the multitude of believers was of one heart and one soul. Whom the Apostle betrothed to one man to present a chaste virgin to Christ. [Revelation 17:2] -- With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, etc. The universality prevails over the parts. For the kings and inhabitants of the earth are each individually those arrogantly seeking earthly things, whom the allurements of the world, with the lust of vices, defile and intoxicate with the madness of mind. [Revelation 17:3] -- And he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. The wilderness represents the absence of divinity, whose presence is paradise.

Revelation 17:3

And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, etc. The devil, bloody with impiety, blasphemous, inflated, exalts the corruption of the wicked with the pride of presumption. [Revelation 17:3] -- Having seven heads and ten horns. That is, having the kings of the world and kingdoms, whose glory he also showed to the Lord on the mountain. And as we have said above, the number seven and ten often indicate universality. [Revelation 17:4] -- And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet. In purple is shown the pretense of feigned rule, in scarlet the bloody habit of impiety is demonstrated. [Revelation 17:4] -- And adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls. That is, with all the allurements of simulated truth. What is, in fact, within this

beauty, he explains, saying: [Revelation 17:4] -- Having a golden cup, etc. A golden cup full of impurities is hypocrisy, because hypocrites outwardly appear to people as just, but inside they are full of all filth. For what poison is in gold, this is the beast hidden under the guise of the harlot.

Revelation 17:5

And on her forehead was a name written, Mystery, etc. This corruption is immediately shown on the very face to be the nurse of vices, but because it is discerned only by prudent reasoning, being most ornately adorned, it is indicated to be a mystical name. [Revelation 17:6] -- And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, etc. It is one body, opposing within and without: although it seems separated by place, it nevertheless operates in common by the unity of the spirit. Thus, the descendants of the wicked are accused of stoning Zechariah by the same spirit, although they themselves did not do it. [Revelation 17:6-7] -- And I wondered when I saw her, with great admiration. And the angel said to me: Why do you marvel? etc. That is, the devil once ruled in the world, who, after the Lord was crucified, was cast out; but at the end of the world, he is released from the prison of his confinement and will perish forever by the spirit of the Lord's mouth (2 Thess. 2). Tyconius refers the beast to the entire body of the devil, which is replenished by the succession of departing and following generations. Especially, because he promised to show the woman sitting upon many waters, that is, peoples, he shows her sitting upon the beast.

Revelation 17:9

The seven heads are seven mountains, etc. The heads of the beast, he says, are the kings of the world, equated to lofty mountains because of their pride. In these impiety wantonly rests, to oppress with force and to deceive with fraud. [Revelation 17:10] -- Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. When he described the fullness of worldly power in the number seven, whose final part, that is, the kingdom of the Antichrist, had not yet come, he consequently testifies that five kings have passed, the sixth is present, and the seventh is to come. [Revelation 17:10] -- And when he comes, he must remain for a short time. Because the Lord looks upon both the proud and the weak, he mercifully says that the days which are particularly evil are shortened. Surely to both terrify the proud with the adversity of time, and to comfort the weak with its brevity.

Revelation 17:11

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, etc. The Antichrist, who is to rule at the end of the world, because of the unity of the same body of the wicked, of which he is the head, belongs to the number of the kingdoms of the world; but because of the singular power of his wickedness, he is also contained in the order of his own proper place. [Revelation 17:12] -- And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, etc. The kingdoms of the world have not yet fully demonstrated their power in persecuting the Church; although they now dominate many, the power of insane glory was fiercer when they deceived many with signs. Some interpret that, with the final persecution approaching, there will be ten kings who will divide the world among themselves, according to the prophecy of Daniel, who said of the fourth beast: And it had ten horns; and behold, another little horn came up among them; and three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots before it (Dan. 7); and that the Antichrist, born from Babylon, will overcome the king of Egypt and of Africa and Ethiopia, and after killing them, the other seven kings will also submit to the victor. Others, however, say that the Antichrist is placed in the number eleven to signify transgression. For eleven denotes the transgression of the denary perfection.

Revelation 17:12

But they will receive power as kings for one hour with the beast. He said, as kings, because they reign as in dreams, who oppose the kingdom of Christ. [Revelation 17:13] -- These have one mind, etc. That is, with equal consent, they fully intend to fight for the devil, which is what it means to receive the kingdom after the beast, by imitating the devil and opposing Christ. [Revelation 17:14] -- These will make war with the Lamb, etc. So that human weakness would not fear the cruelty of the ancient enemy, he describes the beast with seven heads armed with the horns of secular power, defeated by Christ's triumph, and added, indicating that he triumphs in his own: [Revelation 17:14] -- And those who are with him are called, chosen, and faithful. He rightly prefixed chosen, for many are called, but few are chosen. [Revelation 17:16] -- And the ten horns which you saw, etc. The glory of the world, which they now embrace with wanton love, they will begin to detest with great hatred when they see themselves condemned at the end by the Lamb's victory. It can also be understood in another way, whether it is that there are

always quarrels among the proud, or that everyone who loves iniquity hates his own soul (Psalm 10).

Revelation 17:16

And they will make her desolate and naked. For they themselves make the world desolate through the wrath of God, while they are devoted to it and use it unjustly. [Revelation 17:16] -- And they will eat her flesh, etc. They will burn her, deprived of her usual luxuries, with the fires of hell. [Revelation 17:17] -- For God has put it into their hearts, etc. God, he says, the just and mighty judge, who is always pleased with righteousness, has permitted the impious to act in such a manner as a punishment for their previous sins, for which he deservedly imposes the end of the entire world, as the Gospels testify happened with Sodom and the flood. [Revelation 17:17] -- That they may give their kingdom to the beast, etc. That is, they obey the devil until the Scriptures are fulfilled, in which God said that the fourth kingdom would consume the earth, as we read in Daniel: The fourth kingdom shall be on the earth, which shall surpass all these kingdoms. And it shall devour the whole earth, and shall trample it down, and break it to pieces (Dan. 7).

Revelation 17:18

And the woman whom you saw is the great city, etc. Likewise, later he is commanded to behold the bride of the Lamb, and he saw the holy city descending from heaven. As he describes it: And the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it (Rev. 21). For there are two cities in the world: one arising from the abyss, the other from the heavens. Hence, the same impiety, which he had described under the guise of the harlot, now compared to the ruins of a deserted city.

CHAPTER 18

Revelation 18:1

After these things, I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, etc. This strong angel illuminating the earth can also be understood as the Lord incarnate and the doctors of the Church; who, endowed with heavenly light, proclaim the fall of the world, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. 3, 4). [Revelation 18:2] -- Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, etc. Fear not, O Jerusalem, the power of the earthly city, which falls spiritually as it prevails over you with the infestation of wicked citizens. Isaiah also describes Babylon as inhabited by unclean monsters. For

there is no city except that of the devil, which captures every unclean soul, in which all uncleanness resides throughout the world. [Revelation 18:3] -- And the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her luxury. Those who are called rich in sins exchange their souls in an unhappy trade for temporal abundance. For the excess of luxury makes them poor rather than rich.

Revelation 18:4

Come out of her, my people, etc. Likewise Isaiah: Depart from the midst of them, and touch no unclean thing. Be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord (Isa. 52). After predicting the fall of Babylon, he introduces the departure, which is the ruin of Babylon. For when Lot departed from Sodom, it was utterly destroyed. [Revelation 18:6] -- Repay her as she has repaid you. For visible and invisible plagues come forth from the Church into the world. [Revelation 18:6] -- And repay her double according to her works. So that she who enjoyed temporal pleasures may be tormented with eternal pains. [Revelation 18:7] -- Because she says in her heart: I sit as queen, and I am no widow, etc. Because, delighted with present luxuries, she did not wish to avoid future retribution, she will be punished in a short time with both spiritual and bodily ruin. Conversely, the citizens of the heavenly homeland, who set Jerusalem at the height of their joy, do not wish to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land (Psalm 137), that is, to receive in the present the joy owed to the future age.

Revelation 18:9

And the kings of the earth will weep and lament for her, etc. The weeping of the kings, merchants, and sailors of Babylon can be understood in two ways: either in the day of judgment, when all the glory of the world perishes, and the wicked are left only with the memories of their past life, saying: What has our pride profited us? Or what advantage has the boast of riches brought us? All those things have passed away like a shadow (Wis. 5). Or in the present, when the abundance of things ceases, and the destruction of various nations ensues, the opportunity for the wicked to indulge in carnal delights is taken away. [Revelation 18:9] -- When they see the smoke of her burning. That is, the sign of destruction, because smoke precedes fire. For what is this rampage and destruction of the world other than the smoke of impending hell?

Revelation 18:10

Standing afar off for fear of her torment. Standing afar off not in body but in mind, while each one fears for himself what he sees another suffer through calumny and power. [Revelation 18:10] -- Saying: Woe, woe, that great city Babylon, etc. The spirit names the city, but they mourn the world, intercepted by punishment in a very short time, and all their efforts stained with ruin. [Revelation 18:11] -- And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, etc. They mourn the fall of all the world's pomp, and those things which are either pleasant to the bodily senses or suitable for external uses. For precious metals pertain to sight, perfumes to smell, ointments to touch, wine, wheat, and oil to taste. Under the term of beasts and slaves, other human aids are also understood to perish. This is understood in two ways, as I said: either because these things fail with the dying world, or because the wretched survivors mourn the destruction of those who left the world's joys through death as if they were mourning the ruins of their own city, and hence they are said to stand afar off, fearing similar punishment.

Revelation 18:15

Those who became rich by her will stand afar off. Wherever the Spirit speaks of those made rich by her, it signifies the riches of sins. For lower down, where it is the voice of the unjust saying: Woe, woe, that great city, in which all who had ships at sea were made rich, the riches of things are understood. For they believe they have been made rich by the cleverness of their faction. [Revelation 18:16] -- Which was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet. Is a city clothed in fine linen or purple, and not people? Thus, they mourn themselves, as they are stripped of the above-mentioned things. [Revelation 18:17] -- And every shipmaster, and all the sailors stood afar off, etc. Can all who sail the sea be present to see the burning of the city? But he means all the worshipers and workers of the world fear for themselves, seeing the ruin of their hope.

Revelation 18:18

Saying: Who is like this great city? That is, the world cannot be restored to its entirety. [Revelation 18:19] -- And they threw dust on their heads. That is, reproaching the face of their leaders; by whom they were seduced and perished; or accusing the madness of their heart, which is the principal part of a man, with late repentance. [Revelation 18:19] -- For in one hour she is made

desolate. Note that each of the mourning persons not only bewails the loss of riches but also the sudden and unforeseen ruin of the deceitful world. [Revelation 18:20] -- Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets. Thus also the Lord in the Gospel, predicting the ruin of the world, added: When you see these things happening, look up and lift up your heads (Luke 21), that is, cheer your hearts. [Revelation 18:20] -- For God has judged your judgment on her. This is what the souls of the saints were seeking with a great cry: How long, O Lord, holy and true, will you not judge and avenge our blood (Rev. 6)?

Revelation 18:21

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying: With this violence shall Babylon be thrown down. Or (as another edition says): Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be cast down. The city of the world, due to the weight of sins and error, is compared to an unstable millstone. For the wicked walk in a circle. It is rightly absorbed by the waves of vengeance because it oppressed the citizens of Jerusalem with the waves of infidelity, while they, sitting by the rivers of Babylon, wept for the absence of heavenly Zion. For the Lord said that the authors of scandal should be punished with such a penalty. And indeed the Church is compared to a stone, but stable and firm, which scorns the assaults of storms. The millstone can also be understood as the crushing of punishments. For blessed Ignatius is said to have said when about to suffer: "I am the grain of God, ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may become pure bread."

Revelation 18:22

The sound of harpists and musicians, etc. He had deferred the sound of those five senses, which he now says will be taken away from the world among other things. As if to say: What is beautiful to see, melodious to hear, smooth to touch, pleasant to smell, and delightful to taste will pass away from the world. [Revelation 18:22] -- And no craftsman of any craft shall be found in you any more, etc. He says, all things that pertain to the use or pleasure of human life are taken away from the wicked. And he added the reason, saying: [Revelation 18:23] -- For your merchants were the great men of the earth. That is, because in your life you received your good things (Luke 16). [Revelation 18:24] -- And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, etc. Did the same city kill the apostles, which also killed the prophets, or all

the saints? But this is the city that Cain founded with the blood of his brother, and he named it after his son Enoch, that is, all his posterity. For the seven generations of Cain are described. In the building of this city, all the righteous blood is poured out from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah (Matt. 23), that is, of the people and the priest.

CHAPTER 19

Revelation 19:1

After this, I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying: Alleluia, etc. Now the Church says this in part; but then it will be said perfectly when the separation has been made, and when it has been more openly avenged. [Revelation 19:2] -- Who corrupted the earth with her prostitution, etc. He recalls two acts of the harlot: that she corrupted herself with evil and persecuted the good, in which I think all the crimes of the wicked are comprehended. [Revelation 19:3] -- And again they said: Alleluia. The Church praises the Lord with an unceasing affection over His judgments. For Alleluia means Praise the Lord. Indeed, the psalms that begin with Praise the Lord start with Alleluia among the Hebrews. [Revelation 19:3] -- And her smoke rises forever and ever. He said ascends, not will ascend. Babylon always goes into perdition and is already burning in part, just as Jerusalem passes into paradise, with the Lord manifesting it in the poor man and the rich man.

Revelation 19:4

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God. The Church venerates God not only with the office of the lips but with the utmost sweetness of devotion. [Revelation 19:4] -- Saying: Amen, Alleluia. Although these words can be interpreted (for they translate to faith or truth and the praise of the Lord, as I have said), out of reverence for the sanctity of the original language, the first authority of that tongue is preserved. For the Church continually sings Alleluia on the Lord's days and throughout the entire Easter season because of the hope of the resurrection, which is to be in the praise of the Lord. [Revelation 19:5] -- And a voice came from the throne, saying: Praise our God, etc. When He commands this to be done and recalls it being done, He indicates the approved praise of the servants of the elect. He says, small and great, because the smallness of the mind does not harm, whose heart and tongue are filled with the praise of the Lord.

Revelation 19:6

And I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great trumpet and the voice of many waters, etc. The great voice of the singers is the great devotion of the heart; which, with the repeated multitude of praises, celebrates both the ruin of the wicked and the eternal glory of the Lord and His own. [Revelation 19:7] -- And let us give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come. The marriage of the Lamb is when the Church will be united with the Lord in the bridal chamber of the heavenly kingdom. [Revelation 19:7] -- And his wife has made herself ready. By constantly engaging in works of righteousness, she has shown herself worthy of the spiritual feast and eternal kingdom. This can also be understood according to the parable of the Gospel, which narrates the virgins rising at the arrival of the bridegroom, adorning their lamps, that is, accounting for their works, for which they expect to receive eternal beatitude.

Revelation 19:8

And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and pure. It was given to her to be clothed with her own deeds. In contrast, the wicked, who, according to Isaiah, weave the spider's web, will not be covered by their works. For their works are useless works. [Revelation 19:9] -- And he said to me: Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. He says they are called not to lunch, but to supper, because indeed the feast at the end of the day is supper. Therefore, those who, at the end of the present life, come to the refreshment of heavenly contemplation are surely called to the supper of the Lamb. [Revelation 19:9] -- These are the true words of God. That is, what I have foretold will truly happen. [Revelation 19:10] -- See that you do not do that. I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren. He had said earlier: I am the first and the last (Rev. 1). Therefore, he shows that the angel was sent in the figure of the Lord and the Church. For at the end, he also says: I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches (Rev. 22).

Revelation 19:10

Who hold the testimony of Jesus. After the Lord Jesus elevated the assumed man above the heavens, the angel feared being worshipped by a man, evidently worshipping the man-God above himself, which we read was done by men before the Lord's Incarnation and was not forbidden by angels. [Revela-

tion 19:10] -- The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. For whatever the spirit of prophecy said is the testimony of Jesus, who has the testimony from the Law and the Prophets. Therefore, he says, do not worship me as God, since I have come to bear witness to His virtues. Thus far concerning the fall of Babylon, henceforth concerning the future glory of Jerusalem. [Revelation 19:11] -- And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, etc. The Lord, who is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14), and to whom it is said through the prophet: For you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure (Isaiah 25), ascends a white horse, that is, the seat of an immaculate body, to defeat the aerial powers.

Revelation 19:11

And in righteousness he judges and makes war. He judges as the King of the ages. He makes war because he always fights, sharing the struggles of his members. [Revelation 19:12] -- His eyes are like a flame of fire. Sometimes the eyes of God are called his commandments, sometimes the spirit. Your word is a lamp to my feet, O Lord (Psalm 119). And of the Spirit: I came to cast fire on the earth (Luke 12). [Revelation 19:12] -- And on his head are many diadems. In him we find our strength; in him, the multitude of saints is said to be adorned with a crown. [Revelation 19:12] -- He has a name written that no one knows but himself. He says, no one knows but himself, because all the Church is in him. The perfect knowledge of the Word of God is revealed to those who have deserved to be the body and members of Christ. In the same way, the Lord says: No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man (John 3).

Revelation 19:13

He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood. The robe of Christ should be understood according to the context. Here, it seems to indicate the very work of the passion, so that on the white horse signifies the incorruptible birth, and in the blood-stained robe, the innocent death. [Revelation 19:13] -- And his name is called the Word of God. Because he who appeared as a man to suffer for a time was in the beginning with God (John 1). He is called the Word because there is nothing visible or corporeal in the substance of his nature, or because the Father created all things through him. The complete knowledge of whose nature, as he said above, is known only to himself and the Father. For the peace of God surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4), that is, the peace

by which God himself is at peace transcends all the understanding of creatures, whether human or even angelic. For his wisdom is without number. What is said: And no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him (Matt. 11), refers to the manner of the creature.

Revelation 19:14

And the armies of heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following him on white horses. That is, the Church in pure bodies imitates him, which, because of the struggle of its contest, rightly receives the name of army. [Revelation 19:14] -- Clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Which he previously explained to be the righteous acts of the saints, as the Psalmist says: Let your priests be clothed with righteousness (Psalm 132). [Revelation 19:15] -- And from his mouth proceeds a sharp sword. Thus Isaiah says: And he made my mouth like a sharp sword (Isa. 49). And the Apostle: And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6). [Revelation 19:15] -- And he treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. He treads now also, until he treads it outside the city.

Revelation 19:16

And he has on his robe and on his thigh a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the name that none of the proud know. But it is inscribed on the Church not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, on the tablets of the heart (2 Cor. 3). For the thigh signifies the progeny of the seed. Hence, Abraham used his thigh as a third witness between himself and his servant to ensure his progeny would not intermix with foreigners. About this, the Apostle, like raising seed to a deceased brother, says: For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the Gospel (1 Cor. 4). It can also be understood that the Church reigns in Christ through service, and dominates the rulers. The same name is written on the garment because the majesty and kingdom are revealed to us through the mystery of his birth and the work of his passion. He explains in the following what this garment and the king's army signify, namely the labor of the last battle and the glory of the ensuing kingdom.

Revelation 19:17

And I saw an angel standing in the sun, etc. That is, the proclamation in the Church, which the more it is oppressed, the more it shines clearly and re-

sounds more freely. [Revelation 19:17] -- Saying to all the birds, etc. He calls the saints birds, living in the life of heaven: Wherever the corpse is, there the eagles will gather (Matt. 24). Bringing them together into one body, he referred to them as an eagle flying in mid-heaven. [Revelation 19:17] -- Come, gather for the great supper of God, etc. Come, he says, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5), to the feast of the coming kingdom, where, with the fury of the proud subdued, you may be satisfied with the light of divine justice. [Revelation 19:18] -- And the flesh of horses and those who sit on them. I think these are the riders he described as coming against the white horse of the Lord during the opening of the seals.

Revelation 19:19

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth ... to make war, etc. He explains how that supper of God is prepared, namely by the devil attacking the Church but being defeated. [Revelation 19:20] -- The two were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur, etc. This seems to indicate that the devil and the Antichrist will be punished with a greater penalty than other humans or demons, as it is much more severe to be burned alive in sulfurous flames than to be quickly killed by the blow of a sword. Unless it signifies the divine retribution already being preempted against them. For he who does not believe is already judged (John 3). Whether you understand the Antichrist as the false prophet or heretics, no mortal sins more grievously than heretics, who, after knowing Christ, deny Him. [Revelation 19:21] -- And all the birds were filled with their flesh. If now the righteous will rejoice when they see the vengeance of the wicked, how much more will they then, when present with the judge himself, become one spirit with Him. However, the birds can also be understood as unclean spirits, who will be satiated with the destruction of their own. Tyconius explains this supper as follows: "At all times, the Church eats the flesh of its enemies, while it is being eaten by them; it will be satiated in the resurrection, being vindicated from their carnal work."

CHAPTER 20

Revelation 20:1

And I saw an angel ... having the key to the abyss, etc. Recapitulating from the beginning, he more fully explains how he previously said: The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend from the abyss and go into destruc-

tion (Rev. 17). Therefore, the Lord, endowed with paternal power, descended in the flesh to wage war against the prince of the world, and, having bound him, to snatch away his vessels. [Revelation 20:2] -- And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, etc. The devil is interpreted as flowing downward. In Greek, he is called the accuser. Satan means adversary or transgressor. He is called a dragon because of the malice of harming; a serpent because of the cunning of deceiving; the devil because of his fall from his status; and Satan because of his obstinacy in opposing the Lord. [Revelation 20:2] -- And he bound him for a thousand years. That is, restraining and curbing his power from seducing those who were to be freed. If he were allowed to exercise his full power with force or deceit, he would deceive many of the weak in such a long time. He said a thousand years, meaning a part, that is, the remainder of the thousand years of the sixth day in which the Lord was born and suffered.

Revelation 20: 3

And he threw him into the abyss. Into the hearts of the persecuting people. Not because the devil was not there before, but because, excluded from the believers, he began to possess the wicked more abundantly, who are not only alienated from God but also more bitterly hate those who serve God. The Lord also visibly showed this when He expelled him from humans into pigs. [Revelation 20:3] -- And he shut him up and sealed it over him so that he might not deceive the nations any longer. He forbade and, as if with a royal seal, closed him off, so that he might not deceive the nations, but those destined for life, whom he previously seduced, might not be reconciled to God. [Revelation 20:3] -- After that, he must be released for a little while. Then he will be released, as Saint Augustine says, when there will also be a short time (for it is read that he will rage with all his might for three and a half years), and there will be those with whom he will wage war, who cannot be overcome by his great force and tricks. If he were never released, his malignant power would appear less, the faithful patience of the holy city would be less tested, and it would be less evident how God, the Almighty, has used his great evil so well.

Revelation 20: 4

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, etc. He indicates what will be done during these thousand years in which the devil is bound. The Church, which

will sit in Christ on the twelve thrones to judge, already sits, judging, as it has merited to hear from its King: Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven (Matt. 16). [Revelation 20:4] -- And the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, etc. It is understood what he will say later: They reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The Church, therefore, reigns with Christ among the living and the dead. For this reason, as the Apostle says, Christ died so that he might be Lord of both the living and the dead (Rom. 14). But he mentions only the souls of the martyrs because they particularly reign after death, having fought for the truth to the point of death. What follows:

Revelation 20:4

And those who did not worship the beast, etc. We must understand this as referring to both the living and the dead, who, whether still living in this mortal flesh or having passed away, reign with Christ already now in a way appropriate to this time, throughout this entire interval signified by the number of a thousand years. [Revelation 20:5] -- The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. Whoever, during this whole time when the first resurrection, that is, of souls, is happening, has not heard the voice of the Son of God and has passed from death to life, will surely pass, in the second resurrection, which is of the flesh, into the second death, that is, eternal torments, with that very flesh. [Revelation 20:5] -- This is the first resurrection. Indeed, by which we rise again through baptism, as the Apostle says: If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above (Col. 3). For just as the first death in this life is through sins, when the soul that sins shall die, so also the first resurrection in this life is through the forgiveness of sins.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is the one who preserves what he has been reborn into. [Revelation 20:6] -- But they shall be priests of God and of Christ. Another version reads, Priests of God and of Christ. However, this is not said only of bishops and priests, who are properly called priests in the Church, but just as we are all called Christians because of the mystical chrism, so we are all called priests because we are members of the one Priest. As the apostle Peter says: You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pet. 2). [Revelation 20:6] -- And they shall reign with Christ for a thousand years. The

Spirit reported, when he wrote these things, that the Church would reign for a thousand years, that is, until the end of the world, from which there could be doubt. For it is clear about the perpetual kingdom.

Revelation 20:7

And when the thousand years are completed, etc. He said completed as part of a whole, for he will be released such that three years and six months of the last struggle will remain. But besides this trope, it is rightly said that the time is finished. For such small remnants are not to be counted, since seven hundred and as many years as God wills are called an hour by the apostle. [Revelation 20:8] -- And he will go out and deceive the nations, etc. Then he will deceive them to gather them for this battle. For even before, in the ways he could, he was deceiving through many and various evils. For it is said that he will go out: he will burst forth from the hidden places of his hatred into open persecution. Furthermore, Gog and Magog either signify the whole from a part or, according to the interpretation of their names, which are said to mean roof and from the roof, indicate hidden and open enemies. And they are the roof, because the enemy is now enclosed and ruled in them: and they will be from the roof when they erupt into open hatred.

Revelation 20:9

And they ascended over the breadth of the earth, etc. It is not meant that they came or will come to one place, as if the beloved city, that is, the Church, would be confined to one place. Rather, by the term breadth of the earth, it is intended to indicate that it will be persecuted among all nations and will not abandon its struggle, preferring to use the term camp. [Revelation 20:9] -- And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. This should not be considered the final punishment, but rather the fire of envy by which they will be tormented, the adversity stemming from the firmness of the saints. For heaven is the firmament. This is the fire that came out of the mouth of God's witnesses and devours their enemies. For on the last day, fire will not rain upon them, but the gathered and judged will be cast into the eternal fire, of which it is also said here:

Revelation 20:10

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, etc. That is, the devil will be cast into the eternal fire at the final judgment, where all whom he has led will also go, that is, the majority of the impious

city. For the beast should be understood according to the context: sometimes it means the devil, sometimes the Antichrist, sometimes the very impious city. The name of the fire descending from heaven can also signify the sudden destruction of the wicked when the Lord comes and will slay the Antichrist with the breath of His mouth (2 Thess. 2). He explains more fully how, when Christ judges, the devil with his followers is cast into the fire. [Revelation 20:11] -- And I saw a great white throne, etc. He said he saw someone sitting on the throne from whose presence earth and heaven fled away. This signifies that, after the judgment, there will be no more heaven and earth as they are, because there will be a new heaven and a new earth, meaning a transformation of things, not their complete destruction. For the figure of this world is passing away (1 Cor. 7); it does not say the substance. It is believed that the same substance will be changed for the better.

Revelation 20:12

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. For when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His majesty, then all nations will be gathered before Him. [Revelation 20:12] -- And the books were opened, etc. Another version says: Which is the book of the life of each one. Therefore, the opened books are called the Testaments of God. For the world will be judged according to both Testaments. The book of life is the memory of each one's deeds, not that He has a book of remembrance, but as the knower of all secrets. [Revelation 20:12] -- And the dead were judged from what was written in the books, etc. That is, they were judged according to the Testaments, based on what they did or did not do from them. The books can also be understood as the deeds of the righteous, by the comparison of which the wicked are condemned, as if in the opening of the books, they read the good that they themselves did not want to do.

Revelation 20:13

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, etc. This undoubtedly happened before the dead were judged. Therefore, he recapitulates what he had omitted and follows the order, saying: [Revelation 20:13] -- And they were judged, each one according to their deeds. This signifies that bodies will be gathered from the earth and souls from their places. The good are designated by the name of death, which has only suffered the dissolution of the flesh, but not punishment. The wicked are designated by the name of hell. It can also be

taken literally, that all bodies, even those that the waves have swallowed or beasts have devoured, will be resurrected. Tyconius explains it thus: "The nations that he will find alive here are the dead of the sea. And death and hell gave up their dead, these are the buried nations." When he had said: And they were judged, each one according to their works, he briefly added how death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. He refers to the devil and his followers, whom he had previously described as being followed by hell on the pale horse. He repeats what he had already said more clearly by anticipation: And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur. What he had added there more obscurely, he explains here more clearly, that both the beast and the false prophet were thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:15

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life. That is, who was not judged by God to be alive. Hence, it seems more correct to say, as those who interpret the open books as the consciences of individuals and their revealed works. The book of life, however, is the foreknowledge of God (which cannot be mistaken) concerning those to whom eternal life will be given, in which they are written, that is, foreknown. Having finished the judgment by which he saw the wicked condemned, it remains for him to also speak of the good.

CHAPTER 21

Revelation 21:1

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, etc. This will be done in the order that he has already mentioned above, saying that he saw one seated on the throne from whose presence heaven and earth fled away, implying the judgment of the wicked. Then the figure of this world will pass away with the conflagration of the heavenly fires, so that, with heaven and earth transformed for the better, the quality of the transformation will correspond to the incorruption and immortality of the bodies of the saints. As for what he said: [Revelation 21:1] -- And the sea is no more. Whether it will be dried up by that great heat, or whether it will also be transformed for the better, I cannot easily say. We read that there will be a new heaven and a new earth, but not a new sea. Unless perhaps, as prophetic language often mixes literal

and figurative speech, the turbulent life of this age, which will then cease, is symbolized by the sea.

Revelation 21:2

And the holy city, new Jerusalem, etc. This city is said to descend from heaven because it is made by the grace of God, which is heavenly. It is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; for there is another Jerusalem that is not adorned for her husband, but for an adulterer. [Revelation 21:3] -- Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men, etc. God himself will be the reward of eternal beatitude for the elect, which they will possess forever as they are possessed by Him. [Revelation 21:4] -- And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Such great and exalted clarity from the gift of God will appear in that city that no traces of the old world will remain. Since the heavenly incorruption will exalt the bodies, and the vision of the eternal King will nourish the minds. [Revelation 21:4] -- And death shall be no more, etc. For he had already foretold that death was cast into the lake of fire. This same sentence can also be understood in this way: that with the holy city glorified by the final judgment, pain, mourning, and mortality will remain only in hell.

Revelation 21:6

And he said to me: Write, etc. And he said to me: It is done. These things must be believed, not explained, especially since he says it is done in the past tense, so that no one may doubt about the future. [Revelation 21:6] -- I am Alpha, etc. As he testified at the beginning of the book that he is Alpha and Omega, so it was fitting to repeat it here for the third time, that neither before him is there any God, as Isaiah says, nor after him is there believed to be another (Isaiah 43). And because the discourse is about the end of the world, the one who is called the consummator of the age can be understood as the Creator. [Revelation 21:6] -- I will give to the thirsty, etc. From this fountain, he now sprinkles believers on the way, and to those who overcome, he offers it abundantly to be drawn from in the homeland. Both, however, are given freely. For the grace of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. And from his fullness, we have all received, grace upon grace (John 1).

Revelation 21:8

But for the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, etc. He always mixes harsh warnings with soothing words to instill caution. Thus, Psalm 145,

while abundantly declaring the grace of the Lord's mercy, suddenly introduces His strict judgment, saying: The Lord preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy (Psalm 145). He joins the cowardly with the unbelieving because the one who fears to face the peril of struggle doubts the reward of victory. [Revelation 21:8] -- And for all liars, their part will be in the lake burning with fire. He shows that there are many kinds of lies, but the most dangerous and detestable are those that sin against religion, as mentioned above. They say, he says, that they are Jews and are not, but lie, being a synagogue of Satan. [Revelation 21:9] -- Then one of the seven angels came, etc. The same preachers who inflict the universal plague upon the wicked also reveal the future joys of the Church.

Revelation 21:9

Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. He calls the Church both the bride and the wife, which, remaining immaculate, always generates spiritual children for God. Or because now betrothed to God, she will then be led to immortal nuptials. [Revelation 21:10] -- And he took me in the spirit to a great and high mountain, etc. After the fall of Babylon, the holy city, which is the bride of the Lamb, is seen placed upon a mountain. For the stone cut out of the mountain without hands crushed the image of worldly glory, and grew into a great mountain, filling the entire world (Dan. 2). [Revelation 21:10] -- Descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. For then she will appear more beautiful, when by the Spirit through whom her spouse is believed to have been conceived and born, she has fully merited to bear the heavenly image.

Revelation 21:11

Her light was like a precious stone. The precious stone is Christ, who says: The glory which you have given me I have given to them (John 17). [Revelation 21:11] -- Like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Jasper, for the brightness of virtues; crystal, for the inner purity of the mind and unfeigned faith (1 Tim. 1). [Revelation 21:12] -- And had a great and high wall. That is, the impregnable strength of faith, hope, and charity. The Lord Himself, protecting the Church on all sides, can be understood as the great wall, of whom Isaiah also says: You shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise (Isa. 26), that is, the Lord's protection and the intercession of the saints who make a path for her by teaching into the hearts of believers. [Revelation 21:12] -- Having

twelve gates. These gates are the apostles, who, by their writings or deeds, originally opened the entrance to the Church to all nations.

Revelation 21:12

And at the gates twelve angels. That is, the teachers following the footsteps of the apostles in the mystery of faith and the word. [Revelation 21:12] -- And names written, etc. This signifies the memory of the ancient fathers implanted in the hearts of the preachers. Hence, the high priest entering the tabernacle is commanded to carry the memorial of the fathers on the breastplate of judgment. [Revelation 21:13] -- To the east three gates, etc. I believe that this detailed description of the gates was meant to indicate the mystery of the number twelve, by which either the sum of the apostles or the perfection of the Church is represented, because through it, the faith of the Holy Trinity was to be proclaimed to the whole world. [Revelation 21:14] -- And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, etc. What the gates are, the foundations are; what the city is, the wall is. The patriarchs can also be designated by the term foundations, who held the names, that is, the figures, of the apostles in themselves. For through them, this city has foundations, even though it was opened to the nations through the apostles as through gates. It should be noted that when foundations are mentioned in the plural, they signify the teachers or virtues of the Church, but when singularly, they signify the Lord himself, who is the foundation of foundations.

Revelation 21:15

And the one who spoke with me, etc. Christ, who is the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1), reaching from end to end mightily and ordering all things sweetly (Wis. 8), measures the holy city. For, establishing all things in number, measure, and weight, he distributes the gifts of graces to each of the faithful. The teachers of the Church can also be understood as being fragile in body but heavenly in mind, who carefully examine the merits of each person. [Revelation 21:16] -- And the city lies four-square. Therefore, the city is said to lie four-square and to be placed with equal dimensions on every side, because it is not allowed to be marked by any inequality. To be perfect according to the apostle, that is, to be wise and to have peace, is truly to subsist in the solidity of the four-square. [Revelation 21:16] -- And he measured the city with twelve thousand stadia. That is, he saw the Church to be perfect in faith and deeds, or he endowed it to be so. The perfection of the four prin-

cipal virtues, elevated by the faith of the Holy Trinity, composes the dignity of the Church as if by the number ten.

Revelation 21:16

Its length and breadth and height are equal. This is the solidity of invincible truth, by which the Church, supported by the length of faith, the breadth of charity, and the height of hope, is not allowed to be carried about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4). If it lacks any one of these, the perfect stability of the Church will not be. [Revelation 21:17] -- And he measured its wall, one hundred forty-four cubits. This total contains the four-square number of twelve (for twelve times twelve equals one hundred forty-four), signifying the stable perfection of the holy city. [Revelation 21:17] -- The measure of a man, which is an angel's. The Church, which is gathered from men and elevated by the promises of Christ, hopes to attain the equality of angels. As for the literal sense, it signifies that the angel appeared to him in the form of a man.

Revelation 21:18

And the wall was built of jasper. This is what the Apostle Peter exhorts: You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house (1 Peter 2). [Revelation 21:18] -- The city itself was pure gold, like clear glass. The Church is figured as gold, often adorned with golden candlesticks and bowls for the sake of wisdom's cultivation. Glass, however, refers to true faith, because what is seen on the outside is also inside, and there is nothing simulated or opaque in the saints of the Church. It can also refer to that time when thoughts are clearly revealed to each other. [Revelation 21:19] -- The foundations of the city's wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The names of various stones indicate the species of virtues, their order, or their diversity, by which the entire heavenly Jerusalem is constructed. For it is difficult for each individual to flourish in all virtues. Indeed, Isaiah, when describing the adornment of the same city, says: Behold, I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires (Isaiah 54), and so on, immediately adding, as if explaining: All your children shall be taught by the Lord (Isaiah 54).

Revelation 21:19

The first foundation was jasper. There are many kinds of jasper. One is green in color and appears sprinkled with flowers. Another resembles an emerald

but is of a thicker color, which is said to drive away all illusions. Another has a mixed color of snow and the foam of the sea waves, with a slightly reddish hue. Thus, through jasper, the unfading green of faith is indicated, which is imbued with the sacrament of the Lord's passion through the waters of baptism and adorned with all the spiritual graces for those who grow in merit. Whoever has this faith drives away vain fears, as the blessed Apostle Peter advises: Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith (1 Peter 5). And one can say with the bride: My beloved is radiant and ruddy (Song of Songs 5). Hence, it is fitting that the wall is built of this stone here, and in Isaiah, the fortifications of the same city are strengthened and adorned with it.

Revelation 21:19

The second foundation was sapphire. The color and sacrament of this stone were explained by Moses when he described the appearance of God: Under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire stone, as clear as the sky itself (Exodus 24). Ezekiel also says that the place where God's throne is has the appearance of sapphire, and the glory of the Lord resides in this color, which bears the image of the heavenly. Thus, one who possesses such qualities can say with the Apostle: Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3). When struck by the rays of the sun, it emits a burning brilliance. For the soul of the saints, always intent on heavenly things, renewed daily by the rays of divine light, becomes more ardent and fervent in seeking the eternal and urging others to do the same. Since it is said to be found in the Red Sea, it signifies that through the Lord's passion and the sacred washing of baptism, the minds of mortals are elevated to hope for heavenly things.

Revelation 21:19

The third foundation was chalcedony. Chalcedony shines with a pale light like that of a lamp and glows brightly outdoors but not indoors. This represents those who, supported by heavenly desire, remain hidden from men and perform their fasting, almsgiving, and prayers in secret. However, when commanded to come forward for public duties, whether in teaching or other services of the saints, they immediately reveal the inner brightness they possess. Because it is said to resist carvings but glow when struck by the rays of the sun or the touch of fingers, attracting straw to itself when it becomes heated, this stone aptly represents those who do not allow their strength to

be overcome by anyone but rather draw the weaker to themselves into the light and ardor of their own virtue. Of one such individual, it is said: He was a burning and shining lamp (John 5). Burning with love and shining with speech. They always replenish the light of their virtues with the oil of internal charity, so it does not go out. The fact that chalcedony is found among the Nasamones, a region of Ethiopia, indicates that they shine with a fervent love while their reputation remains obscure, as if tainted by a dark complexion.

Revelation 21:19

The fourth foundation was emerald. The emerald is of such intense greenness that it surpasses all other green things, such as grasses, leaves, and gems, even tinging the surrounding air with its green reflection, which enhances its verdant appearance. It is noteworthy that it thrives in green oil, despite its natural properties. There are many types of emeralds, but the most renowned come from Scythia, followed by those from Bactria, and then Egypt. The emerald signifies souls that are ever flourishing in faith. The more they are tested by the adversities of the world—symbolized by the coldness of Scythia—the more they strive to preserve the imperishable and eternal inheritance kept in heaven by hope, and to spread this hope to others through preaching. They also grow in their contempt for the world through the chalice of the Lord's passion and the internal richness of charity, which is given by the Holy Spirit. The homeland of this gemstone, a very beautiful land but uninhabitable, fittingly corresponds to these souls. Although it abounds in gold and gems, it is guarded by gryphons, ferocious flying creatures, or rather, winged beasts. They are quadrupeds, with bodies like lions and heads and wings like eagles. The Arimaspians, who are noted for having a single eye in the middle of their foreheads, fight with these gryphons to obtain the gems, driven by a remarkable desire. The Psalmist had entered this land abundant with treasures of virtues when he said:

Behold, I fled far away and remained in the wilderness (Psalm 55), meaning he had withdrawn his soul from the allurements of the world. In this land, he encountered opposing beasts, praying: May lying lips be silenced, which speak arrogantly against the righteous in pride and contempt (Psalm 31). He also reveals that he found desirable treasures here, exclaiming with delightful admiration: How great is your goodness, Lord, which you have stored up for those who fear you (Psalm 31), and continues in this vein until

the end of the psalm. Against such creatures striving to snatch away the seed of the divine word from us, the saints, who vigilantly guard it with single-minded heavenly desire, are like the Arimaspians with their singular focus, enabling them to seek out and uncover the gem of faith and other virtues. The higher the virtue, the fewer its cultivators and the greater the persecution it endures from unclean spirits, who, like horrific gryphons, are terrestrial in the degradation of their merits but aerial in the pride of their minds. They strive relentlessly not to possess spiritual riches for themselves but to take them away from men. And because such a lofty height of faith has been made known to the world through the Gospel, it is fitting that the emerald, representing this faith, is placed fourth, corresponding to the four books of the Gospel.

Revelation 21:20

The fifth is sardonyx. This draws whiteness from onyx and redness from sardius, and it gets its name from both, being called sardonyx. However, there are many types of it. One kind has the appearance of red earth. Another appears two-colored, as if blood shines through a human nail. Another consists of three colors: black underneath, white in the middle, and vermilion on top. Men are compared to this: red in the suffering of the body, white in the purity of spirit, but despicable in the humility of mind, proclaiming with the apostle: "Though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day" (II Cor. IV). And again: "I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted" (I Cor. IV). Also the Psalmist: "Although man walks in the image of God" (Ps. XXXVIII), that is, in the virtue of the mind, "nevertheless he is vainly disturbed" (Ibid.), that is, by the weakness of the flesh. And since this suffering is indeed involved in the weakness of the body: "For they who kill the body cannot kill the soul" (Luke XII); and humility comes from the frailty of the same body, when it is said: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. VII). Rightly is sardonyx inserted in the fifth foundation, for it is certain that our body subsists through the five senses.

Revelation 21:20

The sixth is sardius. Sardius, which is entirely of a blood-red color, signifies the glory of the martyrs, of which it is said: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. CXV). Rightly placed in the sixth position,

since our Lord was incarnate in the sixth age of the world, and was crucified on the sixth day for the salvation of the whole world. [Revelation 21:20] -- The seventh is chrysolite. Chrysolite shines like gold, having burning sparks. Its appearance represents those who, shining with the understanding of supreme and true wisdom, pour out words of exhortation to their neighbors, or even signs of virtues, like sparks of fire. As Arator says: "Love stands firm in their minds, ardor burns in their words," which, since it is carried out by the gift of spiritual grace alone, very fittingly chrysolite is found in the seventh foundation. For the grace of the Holy Spirit is often represented by the number seven, of which it is said above: "And from the seven spirits who are before his throne" (Rev. I). This meaning also agrees with the fact that a kind of this stone is found in a blue and green color. Therefore, among the Hebrews, it is called tharsis, from its similarity to the color of the sea. Green indeed refers to the integrity of faith, which is called the beginning of wisdom, while water metaphorically pertains to the Holy Spirit, as the Lord attests when he says: "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Now, he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive (John VII).

Revelation 21: 20

The eighth is beryl. Beryl, when you consider water struck by the brilliance of the sun, acquires a reddish and beautiful color. But it does not shine unless it is polished into a hexagonal shape. For the reflected brilliance of the angles sharpens its brightness. It signifies men who are indeed keen in intellect, but shine even more with the light of heavenly grace. For that water designates the depth of understanding, Solomon is a witness, who says: "Deep waters are the words from a man's mouth" (Proverbs XVIII). But neither human nor divine wisdom is of perfect brilliance unless the completion of works is also joined. For the number six frequently signifies the perfection of action, especially since the work of this world was completed in this number. And that it is said to burn the hand of the holder, it is undoubtedly clear that whoever is joined to a holy man is indeed revived by the fire of his good conversation.

Revelation 21: 20

The ninth is topaz. Topaz, as rare in finding as it is precious in value, is said to have two colors: one of the purest gold and the other shining with ethereal clarity. Its rosy fatness and modest purity, close to the chrysoprase in size

or color, surpasses the brilliance of all gems when struck by the sunlight, singularly attracting the eager pleasure of the eyes. If you wish to polish it, you darken it; if you leave it to its natural state, it radiates. It is said to be marvelous even to kings, so that among their riches they recognize they possess nothing similar. The most beautiful quality of its nature is most worthily compared to the splendor of contemplative life. For holy kings, whose hearts are in the hand of God, rightly prefer this to all riches of good works and all the gems of virtues, directing the gaze and sharpness of their pure minds to it, embracing the sweetness of heavenly life all the more ardently, as they are more frequently struck by the splendor of heavenly grace. Therefore, holy men have a golden color from the inner flame of charity, and an ethereal one from the sweetness of heavenly contemplation. Which often grows dim from the turbulence of the present age, like the attrition of a file.

For the mind cannot easily at one and the same moment be distressed by earthly labors, troubles, cares, and pains, and be delighted by the joys of that heavenly life in the state of a tranquil mind; rather, it proclaims with a sigh: "My eye is troubled with anger, I have grown old among all my enemies" (Ps. VI). The fact that it is said to be found on the island of Topazion, from which it also takes its name, is to be understood in two ways: both because that region, especially that of Egypt, abounds with flocks of monks, and because whoever dwells near the Sun of Righteousness is undoubtedly colored by the splendor of ethereal light. And beautifully, just as in the eighth order the gem of the perfection of active life is placed, so in the ninth the gem of the sweetness of contemplative life is placed. Either because nine orders of angels are found in Holy Scripture, whose life it imitates, or because it is only one, so to speak, step away from the tenfold number of perfect beatitude. To which the prophet, sighing with utmost desire, said: "Therefore I have loved your commandments above gold and topaz" (Ps. CXVIII), that is, above all the brightness of proven action, and above all the sublimity of contemplative joy that can occur in this world, delighting in the sweetest love of your commandments. The first and greatest of which is:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength" (Matt. XXII), which can be fully perfected only in the summit of that heavenly kingdom.

Revelation 21:20

The tenth is chrysoprase. Chrysoprase is a mixture of green and gold, also drawing a certain purple glow with golden specks interspersed. It originates in India. It signifies those who, by the brightness of perfect charity, earn the greenness of the eternal homeland, and reveal it to others with the purple light of their martyrdom. When they despise the present life and prefer eternal glory, they follow the examples of the Lord appearing in the flesh, showing the brightness of their merits as if in India, that is, near the rising of the sun. And because they expect to shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father and to reign with their King, with whom they now suffer, they are rightly placed in the tenth position. For through the denarius with which the workers of the Lord's vineyard are rewarded, the image of the eternal King to be received is symbolized, where what was not possible in the ninth rank is fulfilled through perfect love of God and neighbor in all things by the Decalogue.

Revelation 21:20

The eleventh is hyacinth. Hyacinth is found in Ethiopia, having a blue color; the best is neither rare nor dulled by density, but shines with a balanced temperament, drawing out a sweetly purified bloom. However, it does not shine uniformly but changes with the face of the sky. For it is clear and pleasing when the sky is clear, but fades and withers when it is cloudy. It signifies souls always dedicated to heavenly contemplation and approaching angelic conversation as much as is possible for mortals. They are commanded to keep their hearts with all vigilance and discretion, lest by the excessive subtlety of the mind they dare to seek higher things and scrutinize things beyond their strength (Eccl. III). For the glory of the Lord is to conceal a word, that is, to philosophize cautiously about God or Christ as man; or, conversely, they might relapse into the weak beginnings of faith and the elementary principles of the oracles of God due to sluggishness. Rather, walking the royal road, they proceed protected by the arms of righteousness on the right and on the left (II Cor. VI), and, adapting their behavior to the occasion, they change their appearance with the sky, saying to their observers: "For whether we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or whether we are of sound mind, it is for you" (II Cor. V). Like the hyacinth surrounded by clouds, it speaks: "You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections" (II Cor.

VI). And again: "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (I Cor. II). And as if seen in serene light, it says: "However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature" (Ibid.).

Revelation 21:20

The twelfth is amethyst. Amethyst is purple with a mixed violet color, and a certain shine like that of a rose, gently emitting small flames. Yet there is something in its purple that is not entirely fiery, but rather like red wine. Therefore, the purple decoration signifies the habit of the heavenly kingdom, while the rosy and violet colors signify the humble modesty of the saints and their precious death. The minds of these saints are principally elevated to the highest things, even when they are seen outwardly suffering in lowly circumstances, always mindful of the Lord's promise amidst adversities: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke XII). They spread the flame of charity not only towards one another but also towards their persecutors, kneeling and imploring: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And while drinking the cup of suffering, they are intoxicated by the constant memory of that wine which gladdens the heart of man (Ps. CIII), which the Lord promised to drink new with his disciples in the kingdom of the Father (Matt. XXVI). Thus, in jasper, the greenness of faith; in sapphire, the height of heavenly hope; in chalcedony, the flame of internal charity is represented. In emerald, the steadfast confession of the same faith amidst adversities. In sardonyx, the humility of the saints among virtues. In sardius, the revered blood of martyrs is expressed. In chrysolite, the spiritual preaching amid miracles. In beryl, the perfect operation of the preachers.

In topaz, their burning contemplation is shown. Moreover, in chryso-prase, the work and reward of the blessed martyrs. In hyacinth, the heavenly elevation of the doctors and their humble descent to human matters for the sake of the weak. In amethyst, the constant memory of the heavenly kingdom in the minds of the humble is signified. Each precious stone is assigned to its respective foundation. For although all the perfect ones, with whom the city of our God on his holy mountain is adorned and founded, shine with the light of spiritual grace, to some through the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another the grace of healing, to another kinds of tongues, to another faith in the same Spirit, etc. (I Cor. XII). The designer and builder of which is God, who is the foundation

of foundations, and also deigned to become our high priest, so that by the sacrifice of his own blood he might wash and consecrate the walls of the same city, possessing as his own all that the Father has. Hence, the same stones were ordered to be placed on the breastplate of the high priest inscribed with the names of the patriarchs, so that the most beautiful mystery might be revealed, that all the spiritual anointings which each of the saints individually and in part received, were fully and perfectly completed in the mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.

I seem to have expounded these things about the precious stones perhaps more copiously than the concise mode of interpretation warranted. For it was necessary to carefully explain their natures and origin, then to investigate the sacrament more diligently, and to follow the order and numbers. As far as the depth of the matter itself is concerned, I seem to have said very little, and that briefly and cursorily. And I humbly beseech the reader, if he sees that I have proceeded on the right path, to give thanks to God. But if he finds that things have turned out differently than I wished, let him ask the Lord for pardon for my error. But so much for this, let us also look at the rest.

Revelation 21:21

And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each one of the gates was of one pearl. All the glory of the head is referred to the body. And just as the true light which enlightens every man (John I) gave to the saints to be the light of the world, so also he himself, being the unique pearl which the wise merchant, having sold all, buys (Matt. XIII), nevertheless compares his own to the radiance of pearls. [Revelation 21:21] -- And the street of the city was pure gold, etc. He constructs the streets with the same metals with which he had said the city was adorned; for there are many also of a broader and lower way of life, surrounded with the highest virtues in the Church, and they shine with purity of mind and the radiance of work. [Revelation 21:22] -- And I saw no temple in it, etc. Although, he says, I described the city as constructed with stones, yet I did not signify the rest of the saints to be in a material building, of which God himself is the only house, light, and rest.

Revelation 21:23

And the city had no need of the sun nor the moon to shine in it. Because the Church is not governed by the light or elements of the world, but is led by

Christ, the eternal sun, through the darkness of the world. [Revelation 21:23] -- For the glory of God will illuminate it. For we will enjoy the same light in the homeland by which we are now guided while walking on the way. By this same light, being shaped, we discern between good and evil, by which then, being made blessed, we will see only what is good. [Revelation 21:24] -- And the nations will walk by its light. It signifies that the same Lamb who is now the way for those on pilgrimage, will then be life for the citizens. [Revelation 21:24] -- And the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into it. Here he speaks of spiritual kings, who bring all the riches of their virtues to the Church with praise.

Revelation 21:25

And its gates will not be closed by day, for there will be no night there. He recalls that the perpetual light of the Lamb, or rather the Lamb himself as the eternal light, will be in that city, with the time of night removed. But the fact that the gates will not be closed is a sign of complete security. For there it is no longer said: "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Matt. XXVI), but rather: "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. XLV). [Revelation 21:26] -- And they will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. Because it will be gathered from all nations. [Revelation 21:27] -- And nothing unclean will enter it, etc. He describes the Church of that time, when, with the wicked already separated from the midst, only the good will reign with Christ. But even now, every impure and false person is not in the Church, nor does he see the light of the city of God who hates it, because darkness has blinded his eyes.

CHAPTER 22

Revelation 22:1

And he showed me a river of the water of life, etc. In the river of life flowing in the middle of the city, baptism is no longer celebrated, but the fruit of that sacrament is already revealed. For now, the Church sows in the Spirit, so that then it may reap eternal life from the Spirit (Gal. VI). [Revelation 22:2] -- And on either side of the river was the tree of life. The tree of life is seen around the fountain of life. Whether you interpret it as the glory of the holy cross or the Lord Christ, it is revealed both before baptism in the Old Testament and now, with the mystery of baptism shining, it nourishes the saints with heavenly fruit. For there is no other name under heaven given among

men by which we must be saved (Acts IV). The same tree, which John described as flowering in the golden Jerusalem, Moses described in paradise, and Solomon said it is a tree of life to those who embrace it. I believe that this river prefigured the Jordan, beyond which Moses gave the people instructions of salvation, and within which Jesus opened the promised land.

Revelation 22:2

Bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month. In the twelve months, it insinuates all the time of life, namely, that where it is said: And your years will not fail (Ps. CI). And again: From month to month and from Sabbath to Sabbath (Isa. LXVI). Where the face of the Lord is present, eternal health, eternal food of life. It can also be simply understood that through the doctrine of the twelve apostles, the cross of Christ bears fruit. [Revelation 22:2] -- And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. If the fruit is taken as the reward of blessed immortality, rightly the leaves are understood as the perpetual song, which falls for the healing of those already singing in happy lot. For there, the true healing of the nations, complete redemption, and eternal happiness. [Revelation 22:4] -- And they will see his face. The vision of God is kept as the reward of faith for us, which Philip, understanding to be the highest good, said: Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us (John XIV). For it was carefully to be commended that the saints will see and possess in appearance what they believe living by faith.

Revelation 22:4

And his name will be on their foreheads. The confession of the holy name, now preserved among enemies, will then glorify the victors in their homeland. [Revelation 22:5] -- And there will be no night anymore, etc. There, the frailty of bodies will not require the light of either night or fire for rest, when God will be all in all (I Cor. XV), who is the true light (John I) and the eternal rest of the saints. If you refer these words to allegory, neither the exhortation of prophets nor the preaching of the law, which is now called a lamp in a dark place, will be necessary, since in the contemplation of God, with matters fulfilled, the perfect promise will be held. [Revelation 22:6] -- And he said to me: These words are faithful and true. He did not doubt the faith of John, but commended the true vision to the whole Church, in which he knew there would be even the little ones.

Revelation 22:6

And the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel. Do not doubt, he says, about the person giving the warning. For God himself, who usually imbues the spirits of the prophets with a heavenly vision, has sent me to show you these future things. [Revelation 22:6] -- To show his servants what must soon take place. As I said, he showed that he foresaw things generally useful for everyone. [Revelation 22:7] -- Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book, etc. It is understood, blessed am I. Thus, the blessed Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, connects these verses, while refuting some heresies that arose on the occasion of this little book and refuting their error, and transferring the meaning of the same prophecy, purified from all clouds of carnal understanding, to the eternal and heavenly promises. [Revelation 22:8] -- I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel, etc. Either he repeated what he had once done, not daring to attempt it again after being restrained, or, struck by the great amazement of the visions, he confesses he wanted to worship again.

Revelation 22:9

I am a fellow servant, etc. Note how often he names both John the prophet and this book as prophecy; for there is much agreement with the prophets, not only in the senses but also in the words. For how many verses from Isaiah, how many from Zechariah, and other prophets do you find here! [Revelation 22:10] -- Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, etc. As the future judgment approaches, it was necessary for the divine precepts, judgments, and promises to be revealed, by the observance of which the meek may acquire reward, and the disobedient, having neglected them, may incur punishment. [Revelation 22:11] -- He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still. Here he shows the hidden, yet just, judgments of God, by which wicked men are allowed to progress to worse, that is, to reach the height of iniquity, so that a just judgment may be found. This is similar to: Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad (Matt. XII).

Revelation 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, etc. In Alpha, he designates the divinity of the Word, and in Omega, the assumed humanity. The beginning without end, which is confirmed by frequent repetition in this book, either to often

imply the divinity and humanity of the one Christ, or to signify the entire Trinity of one nature, which says through the prophet: Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me (Isa. XLIII). [Revelation 22:14] -- That they may have the right to the tree of life. He promises a worthy reward to those clothed in white robes, that is, to those of an immaculate life, namely that they may enjoy the vision of the Lord, which is eternal life. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. V). [Revelation 22:14] -- And may enter through the gates into the city. Those who keep the Lord's commandments, saying: I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture (John X); undoubtedly enter through the gates into the Church. The gates of righteousness, which the Psalmist asks to be opened to him (Ps. CXVII). But whoever tries to climb up another way, that person is a thief and a robber (John X); concerning whom it is also said here:

Revelation 22:15

But outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and sexually immoral, etc. For all the rage of the wicked now also attempts to intrude upon the Church, but when the master of the house has entered, and, with the saints entering with him into the wedding, has shut the door, then they will begin to stand outside and knock at the door (Luke XIII). [Revelation 22:16] -- I am the root and the offspring of David. Here he expresses the dual nature of his person, that he is both the maker of David according to divinity, and made from the seed of David according to the flesh. This is the question the Lord proposes to the Jews in the Gospel, how Christ is David's son, when David calls him his Lord in the Spirit? (Matt. XXII). [Revelation 22:16] -- The bright and morning star. Who, after the night of his passion, by appearing shows the light of the resurrection and life to the ages by his words and example. Concerning whom it is said to blessed Job: Can you bring forth the morning star in its season? (Job XXXVIII).

Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." The head and the body of the Church, each individual member, exhort to faith. [Revelation 22:17] -- And let him who hears say, "Come." Whoever has received the inner light of faith or charity in his mind, let him call others to the same. [Revelation 22:17] -- Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life

freely. Thus free will is addressed by saying, "Whoever desires, let him take," so that grace is immediately proclaimed in what follows: "the water of life freely." Certainly without any preceding merits. For even the desire itself is a gift of God. [Revelation 22:18] -- If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. He said this concerning falsifiers, not concerning those who simply say what they feel, without mutilating the prophecy in any way.

Revelation 22: 20

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely, I am coming quickly." The same Christ testifies, who announces to the Church that he will come. To which, in the manner of the Song of Songs, the Church devoutly responds: [Revelation 22:21] -- Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. She who daily cries out in prayer: "Your kingdom come" (Matt. VI). And in the psalm: "I will sing and give praise in the way of integrity. When will you come to me?" (Ps. CI). [Revelation 22:21] -- The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Let the Pelagians go and, trusting in their own strength, deprive themselves of the grace of the Lord. But to the Apostle Paul, seeking help and saying: "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. VII), let John, mindful of his own name, respond and say: "The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. VII). And lest the Donatists boast of the singular gift of God, let them hear that when he commended the grace of God, as if saying a final farewell, he added, "with you all." Amen.

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