

The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 92

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WRITINGS

Volume 92

Bede: Commentary on Genesis, the Tabernacle, the
Temple and the Book of Kings

c. AD 700 – 735

S E R M O N I N D E X

The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 92: Bede: Commentary on Genesis, the Tabernacle, the Temple and the Book of Kings

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME

How this book is arranged

This is the ninety-second 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, Commentary on Genesis, the Tabernacle, the Temple and the Book of Kings, 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.

Bede follows the Scripture text closely. In the Commentary on Genesis each section is headed by the verse on which he is writing. In the books on the Tabernacle and the Temple the chapters are numbered as in the Latin, and the title of each chapter stands at the head of its first paragraph.

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 Genesis

*The first twenty-one chapters of Genesis, explained for Bishop
Acca.*

Commentary on Genesis

THE VENERABLE BEDE

AD 673–735

Bede wrote this commentary for his friend Acca, bishop of Hexham, and it takes the story of Genesis from the creation of the world to the twenty-first chapter. He explains each passage in its literal sense and then as a picture of Christ and the Church, and he draws freely on Augustine, Jerome and Ambrose.

PREFACE

To the most beloved and reverend bishop Acca, the humblest of Christ's servants, Bede, greetings. Many have spoken much about the beginning of the book of Genesis, in which the creation of this world is described, leaving many monuments of their intellect to posterity; but chiefly, as much as our smallness could learn, Basil of Caesarea, whom Eustathius translated from Greek into Latin; Ambrose of Milan, Augustine, bishop of Hippo; the first of whom in nine books, the second following his footsteps in six books, the third in twelve books, and again in two others specifically written against the Manichaeans, have poured forth broad streams of saving doctrine to their readers, fulfilling in them the promise of Truth, which said, "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Among these, Augustine also, in his books of Confessions, and in the books he excellently composed against the adversary of the law and the prophets; but also in other scattered works, has made a significant remembrance of the same primordial creation with appropriate exposition. But because these are so extensive, so deep, that they can hardly be acquired even by the wealthier, and so profound that they can scarcely be scrutinized except by the more learned, it pleased your holiness to charge us with the task of gathering from all these, as from the most delightful fields of a widely blooming paradise, what might seem sufficient to meet the needs of

the weak. Nor have I shown sloth in executing what you have deigned to command;

but rather, having immediately perused the volumes of the Fathers, I have collected from them and distinguished in two small books what might instruct a still unlearned reader, with which the learned might learn to ascend to a higher and stronger reading of the elders. In this work, I aimed to convey throughout the sense of the aforementioned others and equally Catholic Fathers, sometimes with their own words, sometimes, for the sake of brevity, with mine, sometimes with their names mentioned, sometimes not, as the suitability of the places dictated, and I carried on the work until Adam, expelled from the paradise of pleasure, entered the exile of temporal life; I will also write some things from the subsequent sacred history, if God wills, with the help of your intercession accompanying, while I first examine the book of the holy prophet and priest Ezra, in which, as prophet and historian, he described the sacraments of Christ and the Church under the figure of the long captivity being ended, the temple restored, the holy city rebuilt, the vessels which had been taken away returned, the law of God which had been burnt rewritten, the people chastised from alien wives, and turned with one heart and soul to the service of God. I will render some of these sacraments clearer to the studious, God willing. Farewell always, most loving bishop, remember us in the Lord.

CHAPTER 1

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. By introducing the creation of the world, the divine Scripture aptly and immediately demonstrates the eternity and omnipotence of God the Creator. Indeed, by stating that He created the world at the beginning of time, it designates that He existed eternally before time. And by narrating that He created heaven and earth at the very beginning of creation, it declares that He is omnipotent in such a swift act of operation, to whom wanting is doing. For human frailty, when it operates; for example, when we build a house, we first prepare the material at the beginning of the work, and after this beginning, we dig deep, then lay stones in the foundation, then build walls by adding rows of stones, and thus gradually progressing, we reach the perfection of the intended work. But God, whose hand is omnipotent to execute His work, did not need the delay of time, because it is written: "He has made all that He desired" (Psalm 113:3).

Hence, it was well-pleasing, because in the beginning, God created heaven and earth, to be clearly understood that both were made by God simultaneously, although both cannot be said by man at the same time. Finally, the prophet says: "In the beginning, you have laid the foundation of the earth, Lord" (Psalm 102:26). However, here it is narrated that the Lord created heaven and earth in the beginning;

from which it is clearly inferred that the creation of both elements was accomplished together, and this with such speed of divine power that not even the first moment of the nascent world was surpassed. However, it may not improbably be understood that in the beginning, God made heaven and earth in His Only Begotten Son, who, when asked by the Jews what they should believe about Him, replied: "The beginning, who is speaking to you" (John 8:25). Because in Him, as the Apostle says (Colossians 1:16), all things were created in heaven and on earth. But it must be carefully considered, so that whoever devotes attention to allegorical senses may not, by allegorizing, forsake the evident truth of history. But what and of what nature the heaven was, which was made in the beginning along with the earth, is hinted at in the following words when it is said:

Genesis 1:2

But the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the face of the deep. For why were these things about the earth mentioned, leaving heaven aside, unless because he did not want anything like that to be understood about heaven? For the higher heaven is that which remains always quiet, secluded from all the variable state of this world, in the divine glory of foreknowledge. For about our heaven, in which the lights necessary for this age are placed, scripture subsequently declares both how and when it was made. Therefore, the higher heaven, which is inaccessible to all mortal sights, was not created formless and empty on the earth, which in its first creation produced neither budding plants nor living creatures, because undoubtedly it was immediately created with its inhabitants, that is, filled with the most blessed hosts of angels; who, created in the beginning along with heaven and earth, immediately attributed their condition and that of the entirety of primeval creation to the praise of the Creator, as the very Creator testifies who, speaking to his holy servant Job, says: Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4)? And shortly after: When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7);

clearly calling the morning stars those same angels, whom he also names the sons of God, to distinguish them from holy men, who were to be created afterward, and who, like evening stars, were to die in the flesh after confessing divine praise; among these morning stars, one due to the contempt of the praise of God, deserved to hear: How you have fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! You are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God (Isaiah 14:12). In the exposition of this statement, Saint Jerome also recalls the higher heaven, writing thus: "Either before he fell from heaven, he was saying these things; or after he fell from heaven: if he was still in heaven, how does he say: I will ascend into heaven? But because we read, The heaven of heaven is the Lord's, while he was in heaven, that is, the firmament, he desired to ascend into heaven, where the Lord's throne is, not out of humility, but out of pride. But if he speaks these things after he fell from heaven, we should understand the words of arrogance, since neither does he settle being cast down, but still promises himself grandeur, not to be among the stars, but above the stars of God (book VI, on Isaiah).

Justly, therefore, it is memorable that the heaven of heaven was not made formless or empty, nor is there said to remain any place in it for darkness or the abyss, for the Lord God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb. And justly the earth was formless and empty, as it was still covered entirely by the abyss, that is, the immense depth of waters. Rightly, darkness was over the face of the abyss, since light, which could expel it, had not yet been created. However, those who criticize God by saying that He created darkness before light should not be heeded, because God did not create any darkness in the water or air, but by the distinct order of His providence, He first created the waters along with the heavens and the earth, and then, when He wished, adorned them with the grace of light. This is what we still see happening both in the water and in the air through the daily approach and departure of the sun. For it is not appropriate to believe that the waters were made by anyone other than God, which Scripture, although not saying it openly, clearly implies by indicating that they were illuminated and ordered by His command. Furthermore, the psalm openly states: "And the waters above the heavens praise the name of the Lord, because He commanded and they were created" (Psalm 148:4).

It is noteworthy that in the beginning, when heaven was made, two elements of this world—water and earth—are specifically mentioned, and it is understood that the two remaining elements, fire and air, were also included. Fire was concealed in the iron and stones, which were hidden within the earth's interior at that time, and air in the very earth itself, known to be mixed with it because when it becomes moist and receives the warmth of the sun, it immediately exhales abundant vapors. The hot springs that erupt from the earth's interior serve as evidence of the burning fire within, which, when certain metals are encountered deep in the earth, not only produce warm but even scalding waters that reach the surface. These elements were not, as some argue, mixed formlessly together, but the earth, bounded entirely by its current borders, was then just as it is now, except that part of it still remains hidden under the deep sea. The waters covered its entire surface to such a depth that they reached those places where waters now dwell above the firmament of heaven, praising the name of the Creator God along with the heavens of the heavens without ceasing. Thus, the formless matter from which the world was made, as attested by Scripture in its praise of God, saying: "Who made the world from formless matter," had no beauty until it came into the light. Everything that we see in the world, whether starting from the waters and the earth or from nothing, began their natural course.

The earth and the waters themselves are called formless matter because, before coming into the light, they had no form. What is so out of order about the material beginnings of the world being dark, so that when light came, what was made would become better, and like a progressing person, what was to follow would be signified by this initial state? This is explained by the Apostle when he says: "For God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts" (2 Cor. 4:6). Elsewhere he says: "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8)—that very light which, when there was darkness over the face of the abyss, God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Genesis 1:2

And the Spirit of God was moving over the waters. It should not be childishly thought that the creative Spirit, of whom it is written, 'the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world' (Wis. I, 7), was hovering over the things to be created in terms of physical location; rather, it must be understood that the divine power was excelling over the creatures, having in its own power when he

would enlighten the abyss of waters, when he would separate them into one place so that the dry land would appear, when and how he would arrange the other creatures according to his will, in the likeness of a craftsman, whose will is accustomed to being superior to the things to be made. This also pertains to the distinction of the higher heaven, in which presently everything arranged by the presence of the Holy Spirit was perfectly illuminating: But these things, as in the lower, that is, the creatures of this world, he intended to lead well the beginnings of condition from time to perfection. For Moses also briefly mentioned the higher world for this reason, because he intended to speak about this world in which man was made, for the instruction of the human race, believing it sufficient if he comprehended the entire state and ornament of the spiritual and invisible creature under the single name of heaven, which he said was made in the beginning; he described the bodily, visible, and corruptible creature more extensively in order;

that is, he silently passed over those things which men have sought out as higher and stronger, proposing rather those things which were commanded or promised by God to men. Hence, he also deliberately kept silent about the fall of the rebellious angel and his companions, because this clearly pertained to the state of that invisible and spiritual creature, of which the holy Basil in his second book of Hexameron thus mentions: 'For we think that if there was anything before the establishment of this sensible and corruptible world, it surely was in light. For neither the dignity of angels, nor all the celestial hosts, or if there is anything named or unnameable or any rational power, or ministering spirit, could dwell in darkness, but in light and joy, possessing a fitting abode.' When he well proclaimed that in the beginning God, that is, the Father through the Son, made heaven and earth, he also added a mention of the Holy Spirit by adding: And the Spirit of God was moving over the waters, to signify that the power of the whole Trinity was working together in the creation of the world.

Genesis 1:3

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. It is fitting for the works of God that the adornment of the world should begin with light: for since He Himself is the true light and dwells in inaccessible light, whose most blessed vision the angels in the heavens of heavens began to enjoy immediately after they were created, He also suitably granted to this world the first grace of material light to be its adornment, so that the other things He

created might appear from the source of that light. However, that God is said to have spoken, whether for light to come into being or for other things, we must not believe to be by a bodily voice as we do, but rather that it is understood higher that God spoke for creation to be made, because through His Word He made all, that is, through His only-begotten Son: about whom the Evangelist John speaks more plainly: "In the beginning," he says, "was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. It was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him" (John 1:1). Therefore, what John says, all things were made through the Word of God, is what Moses says, that God said: "Let there be light"; said: "Let there be a firmament"; said: "Let there be," and other creatures. This the psalm also says with the addition of the Holy Spirit's person:

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens established and all their host by the spirit of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6). But if it is asked in what places light was made on God's command, while the abyss still covered the entire breadth of the earth, it is undoubtedly clear that it shone in the higher parts of that same earth, which the daylight of the sun now usually illuminates. Nor should it be surprising to us that light can shine in the waters by divine operation, since it is established that waters are often illuminated even by human operation, particularly by sailors, who, submerged in the depths of the sea, make them transparent and clear by emitting oil from their mouths. For if man can do such things with the oil from his mouth, how much more must we believe God can create through the Spirit of His mouth, especially as we must believe much rarer waters existed in the beginning than we now usually see on earth, before they were gathered together into one place so that dry land might appear.

Genesis 1: 4

And God saw the light, that it was good. Not as if suddenly seeing the light previously unknown did He praise it, because He says it is good; but He declared that it, which He knew would be praiseworthy once created, was already worthy of praise and admiration by men. Indeed, because He did not completely dispel the darkness of the world by infusing light (for it is the privilege of the heavenly realm to enjoy fixed and perpetual light), but by illuminating one part, He left the other dark, it is rightly added: [Genesis 1:4] -- And He divided the light from the darkness. For He divided them not only by their quality but also by the distance of places, namely by spreading

light in the upper part of the world where human activity was to take place, while allowing the lower parts to remain in their ancient darkness.

Genesis 1: 5

And He called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. This was said for our understanding; for in what language did God call the light Day and the darkness Night; whether in Hebrew, or Greek, or some other language! And so for everything else that He named, it can be asked in what language He named them; but with God, there is pure understanding without noise and diversity of tongues. However, it is said He "called" because He made them to be called, as He distinguished and ordered everything so that Days could be seen and names given. For we say: That householder built this house, meaning he had it built, and many such examples are found throughout the books of divine Scriptures.

Genesis 1: 5

And there was evening and there was morning, one day. And there was evening as the light gradually waned following the completion of the period of daytime length, and as the lower parts of the world emerged, which now habitually happens by the circuit of the sun throughout the night; and there was morning as the same light gradually returned over the earth and initiated another day; and thus one day was completed, namely of twenty-four hours, for the commendation of which the Scripture vigilantly admonishes us so that we might learn that the light which was made illuminated the lower parts of the earth by its setting. For if this did not happen, but rather as evening came, the whole light perished gradually, and gradually returned with the morning and rose again, it would not call it a perfect day in the morning of the next day but in the evening of the first day. Hence, it also preferred to say evening and morning, rather than night and day, to imply that the action of the original light was by circuit, which now indeed happens by the circuit of the sun night and day; beyond this only, that after the stars were created, night too is suffused with its own light, although lesser than that of the day. However, during those first three days, the night remained entirely gloomy and obscure. It was completely fitting that the day beginning from the light should be extended into the morning of the following day, so that it might be intimated that the works of Him who is the

true light, and in whom there are no shadows, begin from the light and are completed in the light.

Genesis 1:6

God also said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from those which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven, and the evening and the morning were the second day. Here the creation of our heaven, in which the stars are fixed, is described; that it is established firm in the midst of the waters. For we see that waters are underneath it, and above the air and the earth; but we are taught not only by the authority of this Scripture but also by the words of the prophet, who says: Stretching out the heaven like a tent curtain, who covers its higher parts with waters (Psalm 104:2). Therefore, it is established that the starry heaven is firm in the midst of the waters, and nothing prevents believing that it was made out of the waters; for we know how strong, transparent, and pure the crystal stone is, which is certainly generated from the condensation of water, what hinders us from believing that the same disposer of natures solidified the substance of the waters in the firmament of heaven? If someone is moved by how waters, which naturally always flow and fall to the lowest place, can stand above the round heaven, let him remember the Scripture saying about God:

Who binds the waters in his clouds, that they do not burst out together downward (Job 26:8); and understand that He who binds the waters below the heaven temporarily as He wills, so that they do not fall all together, not supported by a stronger material foundation, but only retained by the vapors of the clouds, He could also suspend the waters above the round sphere of the heaven, so that they never fall down, not by a vaporous thinness, but by an icy solidity. But even if He wanted to hold liquid waters there, is this greater a miracle than what Scripture says that He hangs the earth itself on nothing? For when the waves of the Red Sea or the river Jordan were set up like walls for the passing of the Israelite people, do they not give evident evidence that waters could stand fixed even above the revolving round heaven? Certainly, what kind of waters they are there, or for what purpose they are reserved, the Creator Himself knows; only it should not be doubted that there are waters there because the holy Scripture says so. But what it is to say of God "let this or that creature be made" has been said above. For He said that it should be

made, since He arranged everything to be created in His co-eternal Word, that is, His only-begotten Son. Therefore, when we hear:

God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters, let us understand that it was in the Word of God to be made, in which whatever God did out of time He foresaw would be made within the Word before all time. But when we hear: And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from those which were above the firmament, and it was so, let us understand that the creation and disposition of the heaven and waters did not exceed the limits prescribed in the Word of God, according to that of the Psalmist: He gave a commandment, and it shall not pass away (Psalm 148:6). This is to be understood equally about the creatures that are said to be made in the following four days. And when we hear added: And God saw that it was good, let us understand that in the goodness of His Spirit, it pleased Him not as if it was known after it was made but rather in that goodness it pleased Him that it should remain, where it pleased Him it should be made. For it is to be noted that the addition of this word in this place is not found in the Hebrew truth.

And it is surprising why among all the things that are read to have been created by God, only in the works of the second day, the approbation of the divine vision is not added, which, however, itself along with the others that God made are shown to have been good when it is said afterward: And God saw all things that He had made, and they were very good, unless perhaps, as some of the Fathers expound, the Scripture wanted to make us understand that the double number, which divides from unity and prefigures the covenants of marriage, is not good; whence also all the animals entering two by two into Noah's ark turn out to be unclean, and an odd number is shown to be clean. Concerning what has been so far expounded, that is, about the creation of the first and second day, the holy Clement thus reports to have spoken by the apostle Peter: "In the beginning, when God made the heaven and the earth, like one house, and the very bodies of the world cast a shadow of those that were enclosed within, they issued darkness from themselves. But when the will of God introduced light, those shadows of the bodies were immediately devoured by light; then the light is assigned to the day, the darkness to the night.

Now, the water which was inside the world in the middle of that first heaven and earth, as if congealed by cold, and solidified like crystal, is stretched out, and by such a firmament, the spaces between heaven and earth are as if shut in, and the Creator called that firmament heaven, named by the word of the ancient heaven, and thus divided the whole fabric of the world, when it was one house, into two regions. The cause of this division was that the upper region might serve as a habitation for angels and the lower for men. (Recognition of St. Clement, book I, chapter 27). I have chosen to insert these few things into our work so that the reader may see how much this agrees with the sense of the Fathers.

Genesis 1:9

God said: Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. The waters that filled everything between the sky and the earth were drawn off, and they gathered into one place, so that the light which shone clearly on the waters for the previous two days might shine more brightly in the pure air; and the earth which had been hidden appeared, and that which had remained muddy and weak under the waters, by their withdrawal, became dry, and was made suitable for receiving seeds. If anyone should ask where the waters that had covered all parts of the earth up to the sky were gathered, let him know that it could have happened that the earth itself, by the command of the Creator, subsided far and wide, providing some parts concave, into which the waters, flowing together, might be received, so that the dry land might appear from those parts where the moisture had receded. It can also not unreasonably be believed that the primary waters, as we mentioned above, were rarer, which covered the land like a mist; but by gathering were made denser, which could be contained in their assigned places, with the dry land appearing in the remaining parts. Although it is clear that there are many seas, he says that the waters were gathered into one place, because evidently all these are connected by a continuous wave and are joined to the great ocean and sea; but even if some lakes appear to be enclosed by themselves, they are said to discharge their streams into the sea through some hidden perforated caverns. For the diggers of wells also prove this, since the entire earth is filled with flowing waters through invisible veins, which draw their origin from the sea.

Genesis 1:10

And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of the waters He called Seas. Previously, indeed, He called this entire more solid part of the world Earth for distinction, when He said: In the beginning, God created the heaven and the Earth; and the Earth was without form and void. But now, after the world began to be formed, and when the waters retreated to their place, the surface of the Earth appeared. For distinction of the part still covered by waters, the other portion, which was dry, received the name Earth; hence it was called in Latin, because it is trodden by the feet of living creatures. The gatherings of the waters are called Seas, namely for the most part. For also among the Hebrews, all gatherings of waters, whether salty or fresh, are said to be called Seas. Aptly, He who first, because of the continuation of all waters on Earth, stated they were gathered into one place, now also names their gatherings of waters in the plural, and says these are called Seas in the plural, because of their manifold inlets, which themselves acquire names according to the regions.

Genesis 1:10

And God saw that it was good. The Earth was not yet producing herbs, nor had it yet, whether by itself or the waters, brought forth living creatures, and yet God is said to have seen that it was good, with the waters receding and the dry land appearing. Because the Creator of waters and the Estimator of the universe, foreseeing what was to be, praises as perfect that which was still in the beginning of the first work. And it is no wonder for Him, for whom the perfection of things lies not in the completion of the work but in His predestined will.

Genesis 1:11

And He said: Let the earth bring forth green plants producing seed, and fruit trees making fruit according to their kinds, whose seed is in itself upon the earth. And it was so. And the earth brought forth green plants, and bearing seed according to their kinds, and trees making fruit, each having seed according to its kind. And God saw that it was good, and the evening and the morning were the third day. It is clear from these words of God that the world's adornment was perfected in springtime. For it is in this season that green plants usually appear on the earth and trees are laden with fruit; and it is also noteworthy that the first sprouts of plants and trees did not come

from seed, but emerged from the earth; for at one command of the Creator, the earth, which appeared dry, was suddenly adorned with plants and dressed with flowering groves, and these immediately produced from themselves fruit and seeds of their respective kinds. For it was necessary that each form of things should first proceed perfectly at the command of the Lord, just as man himself, for whom all things on earth were made, is believed to have been created perfectly, that is, in the age of youth.

Genesis 1:14

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven." The world proceeds in fitting order from formless matter to suitable form. For after God created heaven and earth and water before any day of this age, that is, the higher and spiritual world with its inhabitants, and the formless matter of this whole world, according to what is written: "He who lives forever created all things at once" (Ecclesiasticus 18:1); on the first day of this age, He made light, which would make the other creatures capable of form. On the second day, He solidified the firmament of heaven, that is, the upper part of this world, in the midst of the waters. On the third day, He separated the sea and the lands within their boundaries and spread the air in its places, with the water receding. It was fitting, therefore, that the elements should advance in the same order in which they were created to a more ample ornamentation, that is, on the fourth day the sky would be adorned with lights. On the fifth day, the air and sea, and on the sixth day, the land, would be filled with their animals. For the fact that on the third day the earth was covered with herbs and trees pertains not to its ornamentation but to the very surface of its form, if I may say so.

Genesis 1:14

Therefore God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night." That is, by the division which is explained more clearly in what follows, that the sun indeed should illuminate the day, but the moon and the stars the night. For this addition of lights to the sky, which occurred after the primary light was made, was so that the night would also advance luminously, either by the splendor of the moon, or by the stars, or irradiated by both, which until then had known nothing but ancient darkness. For even if the night often appears dark and blind to us, obviously obscured by nebulous whirlwinds in the air that is closest to the

earth, those higher spaces, which are designated by the name aether, which extend from this turbulent air up to the starry heaven, always shine brightly due to the circling stars. But also, by the divine gift, the stars arising in the sky offered their light with added brilliance to the world, so that the distinction of passing times could also be recognized by them; whence it follows.

Genesis 1:14

And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. Because, of course, before the stars were made, there were none by which the order of times could be marked by indications; there was nothing from where the meridian hour could be recognized, before the fiery orb climbed the middle of the sky; nothing from where the other hours of day and night could be marked, until the stars divided the sky by equal allotment in day and night. Therefore, the luminaries are for signs and seasons and days and years, not because from their creation times began, which evidently started from the beginning when God made heaven and earth; nor days and years, which are known to have originated from when God said: Let there be light, and there was light; but because through their risings or crossings the order of times and days and years is marked. For that entire earlier period of three days passed with an indistinct course of its progress, having entirely no dimension of hours, since the primary light was still generally filling everything, having no head, which is now received from the sun, no rays shone brighter anywhere, no shadow cooled under any rock or tree. But besides the marking of times, the luminaries are for signs necessary for the uses of this life, which either sailors in steering or those traveling in the sandy deserts of Ethiopia observe, where even a very slight wind quickly flattens all tracks found of travelers. And therefore those going in those regions need no less, than those navigating the sea, signs of the stars by night and day. There are also signs by which we sometimes foresee the quality of the weather to come through their contemplation.

Genesis 1:15

So that they may shine in the firmament of the heaven, and give light upon the earth; and it was so. Indeed, the luminaries always shine in the firmament of the heaven, as we have said, and they flood the nearby regions with bright light, but at appropriate times they give light to the earth. For sometimes the cloudy atmosphere obstructs, so that neither the light of the

moon, when it is small, nor the light of the stars appears to the earth; and the rising of the sun, with its greater light, prevents the moon and the stars from illuminating the earth; hence it is named in Latin, because it alone, with the stars and the moon obscured, shines on the earth during the day. [Genesis 1:16] -- God also made two great luminaries. We can understand the great luminaries not so much by comparison with others but by their role, as the heaven is great and the sea is great. For there is also the great sun which fills the world with its heat, or the moon with its light, which, wherever they are in the sky, illuminate all the earth and are equally observed by everyone. An evident example of their greatness is that they appear the same to all people. For if they appeared smaller to those far away and larger to those nearer, it would indicate a limitation of their size.

Genesis 1:16

The greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars; and He set them in the firmament of the heaven. The greater light is the sun, not only in its form whatever it may be, but also in the magnitude of its light, by which it is believed to illuminate both the lesser light and the stars. It is also greater in the power of its heat, which warms the world when it rises, whereas the previous days before its creation had no heat at all: but the fact that the moon is seen as of equal size to the sun is said to be because the sun is much farther from the earth and higher than the moon; therefore, its true size cannot be discerned by us who dwell on the earth. For all things set farther away generally appear smaller.

Genesis 1:16

And he said, "And the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars; and he set them in the firmament of the heaven"; because although it happens sometimes that the moon and the major stars are seen in the day every month, it is certain that they bring some aid of light not to the day but only to the night.

Genesis 1:18

To shine upon the earth, and to rule over the day and the night, and to divide the light and the darkness. These things can be understood both about the great lights and about the stars with this distinction only, that what is said "to rule over the day" refers especially to the sun; what is added "and the night" pertains to the moon and the stars; but what is further stated "and to

separate the light from the darkness" applies equally to all the stars, which carry light wherever they move and leave all things dark where they are absent. But if anyone inquires what kind of light could have existed by day before the creation of the stars, it might reasonably be said that it was such as we see every morning, namely, when the rising of the sun is approaching, but it does not yet appear on the lands, when the day indeed shines with the dim rays of the stars but does not yet glow fully until the sun rises. Hence, there could be no distinction of times then except only of day and night, and rightly it was said when the stars were made: "And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.

For the changes of times began to be distinguished from when, on the fourth day of the nascent world, the sun, proceeding from the middle of the east, consecrated the vernal equinox with its rising, and by daily advances climbing to the heights of the sky, and again gradually descending from the solstitial peak to the lower parts, without delay reusing the equinoctial circles from the lower winter places, it completed the space of the year with the four well-known times and definite days. Also, the moon appearing full in the evening, set apart the times to be observed for the celebration of Easter on its first ascent. For that is the hour when not only the ancient people of God but also we today observe the first celebration of Easter, when, after the day of the equinox has passed, the full moon in the evening, that is, the fourteenth day, has appeared in the sky. For just after these things, when the Lord's day has come, the proper time for celebrating the Lord's resurrection will arrive, fulfilling to the letter also the word of the prophet who said: "He made the moon for seasons, the sun knows its setting" (Psalm 104:19). The stars also, apart from what we have mentioned above, because they either by their appearance indicate what the quality of the air will be or by their course show what watch of the night it is; they are for signs and seasons, because those coming into the sky designate summer times, those designate winter.

They are also for days, because some accompany the sun in vernal days, others in autumnal. They are also for years, because those that for example now rise in the morning during the vernal equinox, come into the sky at the same equinox in the face of the sky every year; those that now rise in the evening or morning at the solstice, always rise at those times in the same hours. But there are also some stars which the astrologers call planets, that is, wandering stars, which make longer years by their orbit, returning to the

same place in the sky. For the star called Saturn is said to return to the same places of the stars in which it was thirty years before, Jupiter in twelve years, Mars in two solar years completing its circuit in the sky, the moon, too, makes a year with twelve of its cycles, that is, of three hundred fifty-four days, and to make its cycle concord with the solar year, every second or third year it adds a thirteenth month, which calculators call the embolismic year, and it becomes a year of three hundred eighty-four days.

Genesis 1: 18

And God saw that it was good. Necessarily, the holy Scripture often finds that God saw that the things He made were good, so that the piety of the faithful might be informed by this; however, it is not for human understanding, which often is offended even by good things whose causes and order it does not know, to judge visible and invisible creation, but rather to believe and yield to the praising God. For the more religiously one has believed in God before knowing, the more easily they will understand something in progressing. Therefore, God saw that the things He made were good, because what pleased Him to be made so that they would be made, pleased Him when made to last, to the extent that the measure of existing or persisting was established for each thing by such a great Creator.

Genesis 1: 19

It was evening, and it was morning, the fourth day. This is that memorable evening in which the people of God in Egypt offered a lamb in celebration of Passover; this morning, which first saw the yoke of long servitude being cast off and the journey of freedom beginning. It is written, the Lord said to Moses: This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. On the tenth day of this month, each man shall take a lamb for the families and households, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight (Exodus 12:2), etc. On that same evening, to complete the legal sacraments of Passover, our Lord initiated the celebration of the mysteries of His body and blood after eating the lamb typologically; at that dawning morning, as an unblemished lamb, redeeming us by His blood, He freed us from the servitude of demonic domination. The day of that full moon, which proceeded on the fourth day in the creation of the world, in the time of the Lord's passion, by the grace of a higher sacra-

ment, fell on the fifth day of Sabbath, so that the Lord was crucified on the sixth day of Sabbath, rested in the tomb on the Sabbath itself, and by His resurrection consecrated the first day of Sabbath, granting us also in it the faith and hope of rising from the dead and entering into eternal light.

Genesis 1:20

God also said: Let the waters bring forth swarming living creatures, and flying creatures above the earth under the firmament of heaven. After adorning the face of the sky with lights on the fourth day, He then adorned on the fifth day the parts of the lower world, namely the waters and the air, with those which are moved by the breath of life, because these elements are also connected to each other and to heaven by a certain kind of kinship. To each other, indeed, because the nature of the waters is close to the quality of the air; hence it is proven that their exhalations thicken, so that they contract clouds, and can support the flight of birds, as Scripture attests: For suddenly the air will gather into clouds, and the wind passing by will dispel them (Job 37:21). Moreover, even on serene nights it dew, the drops of which are found on the grass in the morning; they are also connected to the sky in this way, because the air is so close to it that it sometimes takes its name, as Scripture names the birds of the sky, which are known to fly in the air; and the Lord Himself speaks to the crowds, who had not known the time of His coming from the manifestation of the powers, saying: When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say: A shower is coming, and so it happens; and when the south wind blows, you say there will be heat, and it happens. Hypocrites, you know how to judge the face of the earth and sky, but how do you not judge this time (Luke 12:54)? Where it is certain that he calls the face of the sky nothing other than this changing state of the air.

Genesis 1:20

Therefore God said, let the waters bring forth swarming living creatures, and flying creatures above the earth under the firmament of heaven. And lest by chance, because there are water creatures, which move not by crawling, but by swimming or walking with feet, and there are among the flying creatures those which have wings, yet lack the full use of flying, anyone might think that some kind of flying or aquatic animals were left out in this word of the Lord, it is carefully added:

Genesis 1: 21

And God created great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, which the waters brought forth in their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. Therefore, no kind was excluded, where all living creatures were created with the great sea creatures, which the waters brought forth in various kinds, that is, reptiles, swimming creatures, and flying creatures; but also those that are fixed to rocks and cling with no suitable movement, as are the many kinds of shells. But the mention of the flying creature above the earth under the firmament of the heavens is not contrary to reason and truth, because indeed, even if there is an immense intervening space, birds fly under the stellar sky that fly above the earth, just as we humans set on earth are rightly and truly said to be under the sky and sun, as Scripture attests, which says: "Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven, were living in Jerusalem" (Acts 2:5); and: "What does man gain from all the toil with which he toils under the sun? (Eccl. 1:3). Of course, according to another translation, some are troubled by the phrase: "And winged birds flying near the firmament of the heavens," that is, near the firmament of the heavens.

But it must be understood that it is said that birds fly under the firmament of the heavens because that name also indicates the ether, that is, the higher region of the air which reaches from this turbulent and gloomy place where birds fly up to the stars and is believed, not without reason, to be entirely calm and full of light. For even the seven wandering stars, which are said to travel in this etheric space, Scripture has said to be placed in the firmament of the heavens. Therefore, birds are rightly said to fly near the firmament of the heavens because, as we have said, the turbulent spaces of the air which sustain the flights of birds are close to the ether. Nor is it surprising if the ether is called the firmament of the heavens, since air is called heaven, as we have taught above. Nor should it be overlooked that when God is said to have created every living soul, it is added, "and mortal," to the distinction of man whom He was going to make in His image and likeness, so that if he kept His commandments, he would live blessedly in perpetual unchangeableness. For other living creatures were made in such a first condition that some would yield in sustenance to others while themselves perishing due to their own decline through age.

Genesis 1: 22

And God saw that it was good, and He blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. When He said, be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, it pertains to both kinds of creatures made from the waters, that is, both to fish and to birds, because just as all fish can live only in the waters, so too there are many birds which, although they sometimes rest on the lands and propagate their offspring, not only feed from the land but also from the sea, and prefer to inhabit marine dwellings rather than terrestrial ones. But when He adds, and let birds multiply on the earth, it pertains to both kinds of birds, that is, both those that come from the waters and those that feed from the earth, because indeed even those birds which do not know how to live without waters often hide much of the time under the depths of the waters like fish, occasionally tend to come out onto the lands, especially when they are breeding and nurturing their young.

Genesis 1: 24

God also said: Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creeping things, and wild animals according to their species. And it was so. After the heavens were adorned with stars, after the air, which due to its proximity deserved the name of heaven, was filled with flying creatures, and after the waters, which are closely connected by nature to the air, were enriched with their animals, from which also rains, snows, hail, and the like derive, it was fitting that the earth too should be filled with its own animals, that is, those born from itself. For it also has a chief connection with the waters, for without their moisture and irrigation, it can neither bear fruit nor even sustain itself, as Peter attests, who says: For the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by God's word (II Peter 3:5). Therefore, God commands the earth to produce livestock, and creeping things, and wild animals; because under the true name of wild animals, everything that rages with mouth or claws, except for serpents, is understood to be comprehended, but the name of creeping things on the earth also includes serpents, and by the name of livestock are designated the animals that are in the use of humans.

Where therefore the condition of the other four-footed animals is described, for example, deer, roe deer, antelopes, and goats, and similar creatures, unless perhaps we should say that these also, due to the wildness of their untamed nature, are numbered among the wild animals, according to the old translation, in which it is written: Let the earth bring forth a living soul according to its kind: four-footed creatures, and creeping things, and wild animals, there is no question at all, because under the name of four-footed creatures, all are comprehended which, except for wild animals and creeping things, the earth produced, whether those under human care or those that are wild and in the field.

Genesis 1: 25

And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds, and the cattle, and every creeping thing of the earth according to its kind. The change in words is to be noted, because above it is said that God commanded the earth to produce the beasts, and the cattle, and the creeping things, and the beasts of the earth; but now, in a changed order, God is said to have made the beasts of the earth and the cattle and every creeping thing of the earth; and it is to be understood that everything which was willed happened faster than said; and it matters not that human speech first names in the order of creatures what divine power created all at once. [Genesis 1:25] -- But when it follows: And God saw that it was good, it is rightly asked why it is not added here what was said of the creatures brought forth from the waters: And He blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. Is it perhaps because what was said by God about the first creation of the living soul commended, He left us to understand the same about the second? Especially since in the works of this day He would later add many other things; moreover, concerning man, He took care to necessarily iterate this, saying: And God blessed them, and said: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, lest anyone think that the honorable union was to be compared to sinful and disgraceful fornication. But when the worldly dwelling place was made and adorned, it remained that the inhabitant himself, for whom all things were being prepared, the man and master of things, should be created, it follows:

Genesis 1: 26

And He said: Let us make man in our image and likeness. Now it appears more clearly why it is said of the created herbs and trees, fishes and birds, also

terrestrial animals, that each was made according to its kind and species. For it was foreseen that his creation was coming, who would not only correspond by similarity and species to his own kind but would also be made in the image and likeness of his Creator. The nobility of this creation is also testified by the fact that, unlike the other creatures, God did not say: Let man be made, and man was made; or: Let the earth bring forth man, and the earth brought forth man; but, before he was made, it is said: Let us make man, so that, because a rational creature was being created, it might seem as if he were made with counsel. As if he were formed with effort out of the earth and raised by the inspiration of the Creator with the power of the vital spirit, so that he might exist not by the command of voice but by the dignity of operation, because he was being made in the image of the Creator. When it is said, Let us make man in our image and likeness, the unity of the Holy Trinity is openly commended. Indeed, the same indivisible Trinity was mystically hinted at in the preceding formation of things, when it was said: And God said: Let it be done, and God made it;

and God saw that it was good. But now this same is more manifestly suggested, when it is said: Let us make man in our image and likeness, and rightly so, because until he who was to be taught was, the proclamation of Deity was hidden in profundity; but when the creation of man began to be expected, faith was revealed, and the dogma of truth clearly shone forth. For in that it is said, Let us make, the operation of the three persons is shown; and in what follows, in our image and likeness, the one and equal substance of the same Holy Trinity is indicated. For how would it be one image and likeness if the Son were lesser than the Father, if the Holy Spirit were lesser than the Son, if the glory of the whole Trinity were not consubstantial of the same power? Or how would it be said, Let us make, if there were not cooperative power of the three persons in one deity? Nor could it be said by God to the angels, Let us make man in our image and likeness, because no reason at all allows that we believe the image or likeness of God and the angels to be one and the same. And concerning how man was made in the image and likeness of God, the Apostle testifies, as he diligently admonishes us to recover within ourselves, through the grace of the same Creator, this which we lost in the first parent.

Renew yourselves, he says, in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who is created according to God in justice, holiness, and truth (Eph-

esians IV, 23). Therefore, Adam was created a new man from the earth according to God, so that he would be just, holy, and true, subject and humbly adhering to the grace of his Creator, who exists eternally and perfectly just, holy, and true: who because he corrupted through sin this very beautiful novelty of the divine image in himself, and procreated a corrupted offspring of the human race from himself, from where came the second Adam, that is, the Lord Himself and our Creator, born of the Virgin, created incorruptibly and unchangeably in God's image, immune from all fault, and full of all grace and truth, so that He might restore in us His image and likeness by His examples and gifts. For He is truly the new man created according to God, because He took from Adam the true substance of flesh so that He would draw nothing of the filthy vice from him: whose examples we follow according to our capacity, whose gifts we adhere to, whose commandments we obey; this is to recover the image of God which we lost in the old man, in the new. Therefore, man is created in the image of God not according to the body, but according to the intellect of the mind.

Although even in the body he has a certain property which indicates this, for he is made with an upright stature, so that he might be admonished by this very thing that earthly things, such as those of the beasts whose entire pleasure is from the earth, are not to be pursued; from which all things prone and prostrate towards the ground are, according to what one of the poets has most beautifully and truly said: Other animals look downward toward the earth, but He gave man an uplifted face to look toward the heavens and the stars.

Genesis 1: 26

It is therefore fitting that his body matches his rational soul, not according to the outlines and shapes of the limbs, but rather according to that which is raised up to heaven to observe the things in the upper parts of the world, just as the rational soul ought to be raised in those things which excel most in spiritual nature, so that it may set its mind on things above, not on things on the earth. But it is well added. [Genesis 1:26] -- And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the beasts, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; because doubtless in this primarily man was made in the image of God, in that he surpasses the irrational beings: being made capable of reason, through which he can rightly govern all created things in the world, and en-

joy the knowledge of Him who created all things. If set in this honor he does not understand to do good, he will be compared to the very same senseless animals over which he has been placed in authority, as the Psalmist testifies (Psalm 49:13).

Genesis 1: 27

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him. What was said before, in His image, He doubled for the sake of confirmation, by adding, in the image of God He created him, so that He might more diligently impress upon us what kind of beings we were made by God, and more closely fix in our minds the hope of receiving the image of God, lest, walking in the image of God, we be vainly troubled, hoarding uncertain riches, but instead look for the Lord with longing, when we shall come and appear before His face, certain that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. But now it is said, in the image of God He created him, when it was said earlier, let us make in our image, it signifies not that this plurality of persons makes us believe in multiple gods, but that we accept one God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, on account of which it was said, in our image, and on account of which it is said, in the image of God.

Genesis 1: 27

Male and female He created them. It will be explained more fully in the following, from where and how God made the first humans. But now, for the sake of brevity, it is only mentioned that they were created, so that the work of the sixth day and the dedication of the seventh day along with the rest may be explained, and thus freely from time both this and other omitted matters that were worthy of mention may be said. However, God first created one male and one female alone, not like the other animals, which He created not single but multiple in each kind, so that by this He might bind the human race more closely together with the bond of charity, because it would remember that it was all born of one parent; for the sake of which union the sacred Scripture, when it said: "And God created man, in the image of God He created him," immediately added: "Male and female He created them," it did not wish to add: "in the image of God He created them," for the female too was created in the image of God, according to that which she also possessed a rational mind; but Scripture did not think it necessary to

add this about her, considering that in the unity of conjunction it left it to be understood in her as well, and indeed it signified that it should be understood in the entire human race that originates from them.

For every man even now, to the extent that he uses reason, has in himself the image of God; whence John says: "He was the true light which illuminates every man coming into this world" (John 1:9). For it is the light about which the Psalmist glories in the Lord, saying: "The light of Your countenance has been signed upon us, O Lord" (Psalm 4:7). And indeed rightly in this place it is mentioned that male and female were created, although the manner of the same creation is not yet referred to, so that the discourse of divine blessing may have a fitting place, about which it follows:

Genesis 1: 28

And He blessed them and said: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it. For indeed, this multiplication of humans and filling of the earth could only be accomplished through the union of man and woman. Yet, if the human race grows and multiplies by the blessing of God, how much more worthy of a curse are those who forbid marriage and condemn the arrangement of the heavenly decree as if it were devised by the devil? Therefore, marriages should not be condemned, which were established by the grace of the heavenly blessing for the propagation of the human race and the filling of the earth; but rather, virginity is more to be honored and is worthy of greater blessing, which, after the earth has been filled with people, desires in chastity of mind and body to follow the Lamb wherever He goes—that is, the Lord Jesus in heaven—and to sing a new song, which no one else can sing. For God and our Lord, who in the beginning of the nascent world formed the woman from the side of the man to teach that the earth was to be filled by their mutual union, Himself in the end of the age took a man from the flesh of a Virgin, free from all contamination, filled with the fullness of all divinity, to prove that He valued the glory of virginity more than marriage.

Genesis 1: 28

And rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that move upon the earth. It is rightly asked for what use man received dominion over the fish, birds, and all the animals of the earth, or to what uses and comforts these were created for man, if he had never sinned: to

whom, as the following scripture declares, these were not given for food but only the herbs and fruits of trees were granted in the first condition, unless it is to be said that God foresaw that man would sin and become mortal by sinning, whom He created immortal, and therefore originally provided those comforts for him by which mortal fragility could be sustained, namely either food from them, or clothing, or aids for work or travel. And it is not worth asking why man also does not now rule over all animals; for after man did not want to be subject to his Creator, he lost dominion over those which his Creator had subjected to his authority. Finally, we read as a testimony of the first creation that the birds provided service to the holy and humbly serving men of God, the jaws of beasts withdrew and the venom of serpents was not able to harm.

Genesis 1: 29–30

And God said: Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed upon the earth, and all the trees which have in themselves the seed of their own kind, to be your food, and to all the beasts of the earth and every bird, and to all that move upon the earth, and in which there is a living soul, that you may have them to eat: It is now clear that before man's guilt the earth produced nothing harmful, no poisonous herb, no sterile tree, since it was clearly said that every herb and all trees were given to men and the birds, and to all the beasts of the earth for food, it is evident that even the birds did not live by snatching weak wings, nor did the wolf plot ambushes around the folds, nor was dust the snake's bread, but all ate in concord the green herbs and the fruits of the trees. Certainly among these must arise the question of how man was made immortal above other creatures, and nevertheless received common earthly nourishment with them. In which we must see that there is one kind of immortality of the flesh which we received in Adam's first state, and another which we hope to receive in the resurrection through Christ. Thus, he was made immortal in such a way that he could not die if he did not sin; but if he did sin, he would die.

Thus the children of the resurrection will be immortal, when they will be equal to the angels of God, so that they will neither die anymore, nor be able to sin. Therefore our flesh after the resurrection will need no nourishment of food, as it will not be subject to deficiency from hunger, or weariness, or any other kind of weakness. But Adam's flesh before sin was created immortal in such a way that, helped by the supports of temporal nourishment, it existed

free from death and pain, until, having been brought to that age which pleased the Creator through bodily growths; then having created much progeny of this kind, by the command of God, it would also partake of the tree of life, from which becoming perfectly immortal, it would no longer need the sustenance of bodily food. Thus, therefore, the flesh of the first humans is created immortal and incorruptible, so that they might retain the same immortality and incorruptibility through obedience to God's commandments; among which commandments was also this, that they should eat of the allowed trees of paradise, but refrain from the consumption of the forbidden one, preserving the gifts of immortality granted to them by the consumption of these, and in the touch of that find the ruin of death. Thus indeed our flesh will be incorruptible and immortal at the end; so that, like angelic splendour, it may remain always in the same state, unable to need bodily foods, since in the spiritual life there will be no need of them.

For the fact that angels are read to have eaten with the patriarchs was done not out of need but out of kindness, so that by doing these things they might more sweetly adapt to the men to whom they appeared. The Lord also after the resurrection ate with the disciples, not because he needed nourishment but to show that he had indeed received true flesh after death.

Genesis 1: 30

And it came to be so, that is, that man might rule over all that were created on land or in the waters, and that he might receive the faculty and power to eat from the fruits of the earth along with the birds of the sky and the creatures of the land. [Genesis 1:31] -- And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good. Because it was said of each of God's works individually that he saw that they were good, rightly in conclusion, with all things completed, it was stated with an added emphasis that he saw all that he had made, and it was very good. But the question rightly arises, why of man, when he was made, was it not additionally stated individually: And God saw that it was good, but rather that his creation was more generally praised among the others? Or did God, foreseeing that man would sin and not remain in the perfection of his image, wish to state that he was good not individually but along with the others, as if indicating what was to come? Therefore, man before sin and undoubtedly in his own kind was good, but Scripture omitted saying this, rather to state more what would announce something to come. For God is the best creator of natures, but indeed the

most just regulator of sinners, so that even if certain things become deformed through individual sins, yet the entirety always remains beautiful with them.

Genesis 1:31

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. The number six is considered to be perfect because it is completed by its parts: namely the sixth which is one, the third which is two, and the half which is three. Indeed, one and two and three make up six, which in the units of numbers you will nowhere else find except here, nor in the tens except for the number twenty-eight. Therefore, in six days God completed all the array of the heaven and the earth, so that He who established all things in measure and number and weight, might also teach that His works are perfect in this very number in which He worked. And God completed on the seventh day His work which He had made. In another translation, it is said that God completed His works which He had made on the sixth day. This brings up no question at all because it is declared plainly in the description of what was done in it. But it is rightly questioned how our version, which descends from the Hebrew truth, says that God completed His work which He had made on the seventh day, in which nothing new is mentioned as having been created, unless perhaps we say that He made the seventh day itself then, and in its making completed His work, by which creation of it He finished the measure and number of the days by whose cycle all ages henceforth would proceed to their end. For in the revolution of times, the eighth day is counted the same as the first day.

CHAPTER 2

Genesis 2:2

So God completed His work on the seventh day, which He had made. Because He ended the sum of the days He had made in it, adding the seventh itself, which He wanted to be called and to be the Sabbath, because he endows it with mystical blessing and sanctification above the others, as the following teaches. Hence also the day of judgment and consummation of the world, because it is to come after the seventh Sabbath, is called the eighth in the Scriptures, namely because only seven precede it. For it is said in the title of the psalms: To the end, in hymns, for the eighth, a psalm of David, which

the entire text of the following psalm teaches is written about the day of judgment, in which the prophet, fearing the wrath of the coming judge, exclaims: Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your wrath (Psalm VI, 1), etc. But also the day of the Lord's Resurrection, although it was to come after so many thousands of days, is also called the eighth in the title of another psalm, because naturally it follows the seventh, so that it exists as the first of the following week, that is, the same one in which God said in the beginning: Let there be light and there was light. The psalm written about the Lord's Resurrection indeed proves it by the one speaking in it, saying:

For the misery of the needy and the groaning of the poor, now I will arise, says the Lord (Psalm XI, 6). Moreover, it can rightly be accepted that God completed His work on the seventh day, which He had made, even in that He blessed and sanctified that day itself. For blessing and sanctification are not no work. Neither could Solomon be said to have done no work when he dedicated the temple he had made; rather, it is an eminent work of God, when He glorified with eternal blessing and sanctification those things He had made. Finally, about this work which He does in the eternal day of the Sabbath, He says Himself in the parable of the faithful servants: Amen, I say to you that He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to eat, and passing, will serve them (Luke XII, 37). For he who girds himself, who prepares a meal, who passes by, who serves, surely works. But by all these words, nothing else is intimated than that the Lord blesses and sanctifies His saints forever, that is, He rewards them with the vision of His glory after their good works which He gave.

Genesis 2:2

And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. Not as if God rested like a weary man from excessive labor through human frailty after completing the world's creation; but He is said to have rested from all His work, because He ceased to create any new creature thereafter. For Scripture often uses the term "rest" to indicate the cessation of work or speech, as in the Apocalypse about the holy animals: And they have no rest day and night saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty (Apoc. IV, 8). Instead of saying they did not cease to always chant this. For the greatest and only rest for the saints in heaven is to declare the praise of the highest Trinity, which is God, with an unfailing voice. It can indeed be understood more pro-

foundly that the Lord rested from all His works, not having any need for those works in which He might rest, since His rest in Himself is always true without beginning and end, but He made His works solely for the sake of His goodness, so that they might rest in Him: which, conversely, is easier to understand when we remember that human necessity particularly insists on daily labors for the purpose of finding rest in its works, as the Lord tells him: By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread (Gen. III, 19). But God, who before the creation of the world had perfect rest in Himself eternally, even after creating the world, did not rest in the works He made, but from all the works He made, as He had no necessity to rest in His creatures, but rather, offering rest to rational creatures, while perfectly always resting in Himself, and being blessed in that good which He alone is to Himself.

Genesis 2:3

And He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. That is to say, with the blessing and sanctification which He more fully intimates to His people in the law, saying: Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any work (Exod. XX, 8). And a little further on: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day (Exod. XX, 11). Therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Indeed, the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day were made as a type of greater blessing and sanctification. For just as by the frequent, or rather daily, sacrifices in the law the blood of the Lord's passion, which was to be poured out once for the salvation of the world, was signified; so also by the rest of the seventh day, which was always celebrated after the works of six days, that great day of the Sabbath, in which the Lord was once to rest in the tomb, was prefigured, having completed and perfected on the sixth day all His works, by which He was restoring the world, which He had perfect in the sixth day, now lost. On which also, as if recalling His original work, with an open word He declared that He had now completed the salvation of the world.

For when He had taken the vinegar, He said: It is finished, and He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit (John XIX, 30). But this sanctification and blessing of the seventh day, and God's rest in it after His very good works, signified that we individually tend to the rest of heavenly life after the good works He works in us both to will and to do, in which we may enjoy His

eternal sanctification and blessing. Hence, it is well written that the seventh day did not have an evening, because evidently it signifies our perpetual rest in it.

Genesis 2:3

And He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He had rested from all His work which God had created and made. That is, having completed the adornment of the world, He had ceased from instituting new kinds of things. Nor should this be considered contrary to the saying in the Gospel: My Father works until now, and I work (John 5:17). Clearly responding to those who complained that the Sabbath was not observed by Him, invoking the authority of this ancient Scriptural rest of God. For He had ceased on the seventh day from creating kinds of creatures, because He no longer created any new kinds; thereafter, however, He works the administration of these same kinds which He had instituted even to this very day, so that not even on that seventh day would His power cease to govern heaven and earth, and all things which He had made, otherwise they would immediately fall apart.

Thus far it is sufficient to have described the beginnings of the nascent world according to the literal sense; however, it is pleasing to briefly intimate that the order of those six, or seven, days in which it was made should correspond to its ages. For the first day on which God said: "Let there be light," and there was light, corresponds to the first age, at the beginning of which the world was made, and man was placed in the delights of the paradise of pleasure, where, in the presence of the grace of his Creator, he would enjoy being free and unknowing of all evils; but this day began to decline toward evening when the first man, by sinning, lost the happiness of the heavenly homeland, and was sent into this valley of tears, which was also signified by the hour of that time, when Adam, after the fault of his transgression, heard the Lord walking in paradise, around the afternoon hour: indeed, the Lord walked to signify that He had withdrawn from man, in whose heart He had quietly resided; and this at the afternoon hour, so that man would recognize that the light of divine knowledge and the fervor of divine love had diminished in him. The full evening of this day arrived when, with the proliferation of human race's vices, the whole earth was corrupted before God and filled with iniquity, to the extent that all flesh deserved to be destroyed by the flood, except for those enclosed in the ark.

On the second day, the firmament was made in the midst of the waters; and in the second age of the world, the ark, in which the remnants of the human race and the seed, so to speak, of the following ages were preserved, was placed in the midst of the waters, which on one side all the fountains of the deep were broken up, on the other, the windows of heaven were opened and poured out. But even here the day inclined toward evening, when the nations, having forgotten either the recent wrath or mercy of God, gathered to build the tower of pride; full evening was reached when, with the confusion of languages, the society of the human race was scattered. On the third day, when the waters had flowed into their places, the dry land appeared, and it was immediately clothed with green herbs and trees; and at the beginning of the third age, when the idolatrous nations had been separated into their places, whose unstable error and vain doctrines of idols were as movable as all winds, rightly signified by the name of the sea, the seed of the patriarchs was separated from their society and was made fruitful with spiritual produce, as the Lord said to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee" (Genesis XII, 1), etc., until he says: "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In which nation, indeed, orders of the faithful, distinct as green herbs and fruit-bearing trees, were springing from the one and the same land, receiving the heavenly rain of divine words. But here too, the day began to decline towards evening, when the Israelite nation, rejecting both the faith of the patriarchs and the ceremonies of the law given to them, was oppressed by the nations of others, polluted with crimes and burdened by slavery. The evening had already come, when that nation, along with the king whom they had chosen for themselves, neglecting God, was for the most part destroyed by the sword of foreigners.

On the fourth day, the sky received lights, and in the fourth age, the aforementioned people of God became conspicuous with new brightness through the rule of David and Solomon and other kings reigning by God's authority, through that most noble temple which Solomon built for God, through the signs of prophets, which did not cease to flourish in the times of those same kings, and especially through that which the Lord swore to the first and most preeminent of the kings pleasing to him, saying: "Of the fruit of your womb I will set upon my throne" (Ps. 131, 11). Truly, even here the

day began to incline toward the evening when afterward both the kings and the people, scorning the temple and the laws of God, were devastated and torn apart by enemies. The gravest of evenings, indeed the night, followed when the entire kingdom was overthrown, the temple burned, and all the people were led captive into Babylon.

On the fifth day, the waters brought forth reptiles with living souls, and flying creatures flying above the earth under the firmament of the sky; and in the fifth age, the children of the migration grew and were multiplied in Babylon, often designated by the name of waters. Many of them remained there as if fishes in the waters, from whom, however, there were some who, like great whales, sought to dominate the great waves of the age rather than serve, because they could not be corrupted by any terror into idolatry. Others, with captivity loosened, returned to the land of Israel as if with wings of freedom received, seeking heavenly things with their entire intention, so much so that they strove to rebuild the temple and the city of God and restore his law with the highest urgency. But the evening was approaching when afterward, among other darknesses of their crimes, even domestic conflicts arose against each other, and they themselves were traitors to their homeland to the Romans; which also happened when not only were they made tributaries, but it also fell to them to be subjected to the rule of a foreign king.

On the sixth day, the earth produced cattle, wild beasts, and creeping things, on which day God also created the first man, Adam, in His image, and from his side while he slept created the woman Eve. In the sixth age of the world among many wicked ones, who could rightly be compared to serpents and beasts due to their savagery and because they are born to cling wholeheartedly to earthly cares and pleasures, there are also many saints in the people of God who, like clean animals, know how to chew over the word of God, to keep the cloven hoof of discernment on the path, to bear the yoke of good work with divine law, and to warm themselves with the wool of their labor, among whom, as is aptly mentioned in the Gospel, is the second Adam, the mediator of God and men, in whom the whole fullness of the image of God appeared in the world. From His side, while sleeping on the cross, came forth blood and water, from which sacraments the Church is born and nourished, which is the mother of all living in the true life throughout the world, as the name of Eve signifies. Hence the Lord Himself

says of these sacraments: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6:54). We now see the evening of this day approaching, when, with iniquity abounding everywhere, the love of many grows cold. But a much darker one than the others will come, when, with the appearance of the man of sin, the son of iniquity, who exalts and magnifies himself above all that is called God or is worshiped, there will be such tribulation that, if possible, even the elect will be led into error. Then will immediately follow the hour of universal judgment of which it is written: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, do you think He will find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8).

On the seventh day, God rested from all His works, and sanctified and blessed it; and the seventh is the age of eternal rest in the other life, in which God rests with His saints forever after the good works He performs in them through the six ages of this world. This age, indeed, is of the highest peace and rest in God, and it will be everlasting; but for humans, it began when the proto-martyr Abel entered the seat of the grave with his body, but the joy of eternal life with his soul, where that rich man saw the poor man resting while he himself was tormented in Hades. This Sabbath of holy souls will continue until the end of the world, and when the last age of the world, after its evening, which we have spoken of before, reaches its end, with the Anti-christ destroyed by the Lord Jesus, then this Sabbath itself will also be endowed with greater blessing and sanctification through the resurrection to eternal life for bodies. And thus it is rightly not read that evening succeeded the seventh day, for this seventh age will have no sorrow with which it ends; rather, it will be completed, as we have said, with the greater joy of the eighth age, namely that age which, beginning with the glory of the resurrection, when this whole life has passed away, will never be changed by any end or any vicissitude of things from the contemplation of God's face.

Genesis 2:4

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. With this conclusion, Scripture addresses those who assert that the world always existed without a beginning, or those who believe that the world was indeed made by God, but from material not made by God, but which was coeternal with the Creator and without beginning. For it says the generations of the heavens and the earth are the very order of divine institution, by which their adornment through the works of six days reached that level of perfection which has been described above, according to what the

Creator himself said in the Decalogue of His law: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them (Exodus 20:11); what follows, however: On the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth and every herb of the field before it grew, should by no means appear contradictory to the statement of God that has been mentioned, but should be clearly understood because here Scripture put the day for all that time in which the primordial creation was formed. For neither in one of those six days was heaven made, or illuminated by the stars, and the earth separated from the waters and clothed with trees and grasses; but Scripture, according to its custom, put the day for time, in the same way the Apostle, when he says:

Behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2), signifies not one specific day, but the whole time in which we labor in the present life for eternal salvation. And the prophet speaks not of one specific day, but of the multiplied time of divine grace: In that day the deaf shall hear the words of this book (Isaiah 29:18). Otherwise, it is difficult to understand how on this day God made the heaven, and the earth, and all the plants of the field, and every herb of the region, unless perhaps we would say that all creation was made simultaneously in formless matter, as it is written: He who lives forever created all things together (Ecclesiasticus 18:1), but this he surely did before any day of this age, when he created the heaven and the earth in the beginning, when even if the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the abyss, nevertheless in the very nature of earth and of the abyss, that is, of waters, these things lay hidden as it was by seminal substance, which were not to be produced all at once by the work of the Creator from them afterwards; therefore, if we say this, the noted question reverts to the same conclusion, that we understand the appellation of the day as the signification of time, that is, when God created all these things simultaneously in the beginning:

On the day, he says, that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. But if on the day he speaks of, we understand that time is designated, when before any day of this age all things were made simultaneously, the sense appears straightforward that both the grass and all the trees were made in the very substance of the earth causally before they visibly arose or sprouted from the earth. Otherwise, if we take the appellation of the day,

as we more consistently judge, for the signification of the time in which this world was made and adorned through six days, we can understand because now Scripture wanted to explain more openly how it previously said that the earth brought forth green grass and bearing seed according to its kind, and the tree yielding fruit. For these things were not produced by the earth at the beginning of things as they are now, where with the presence of irrigation the earth spontaneously brings forth fruit arranged by God;

but by an entirely more wondrous work of the Creator, before any fruits arose from the earth by growing, or germinated, the fields, mountains, and hills were suddenly covered with grasses and trees, having the suitable height, spreading branches, the shade of leaves, and the abundance of fruits, which they received not gradually by arising from the earth or sprouting, and advancing by the growth of increment, but suddenly by existing from it. For the following words also seem to support this meaning, where it is said:

Genesis 2: 5-6

For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground, but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. For who does not see that these things could not have been said about the first creation of the earth when it was still void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the abyss? Was it necessary to narrate about the rain not descending upon the earth at that time, when neither it could yet receive the rain nor the air could give it, because the places of both were still completely filled with water? Nor could a mist go up from the earth to water it, so long as the whole was covered by the abyss; whence, if I am not mistaken, it remains to be understood that by the name of the day above, when it is said: On the day when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, etc., the time of those first six days is intimated, in which all the creation of the world was formed, where it rightly remembers that God had not rained upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground, that we may understand how much the first sprouting of the earth differed from the modern.

For now the earth spontaneously germinates by the irrigation of rains, and by the industry and cultivation of men many things grow in gardens and orchards and woods; but the first creation of herbs and trees was completed very differently, in which by the new command of the supreme maker, the earth, which appeared dry, was suddenly filled far and wide with

various kinds of fruits without rain and without human labor; but a mist, it says, went up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. From this source and its ascent to the earth we will speak, let us first see that the initial sprouting of the earth, which the aforementioned sentence recalls, was made without any watering of the waters, by God's command. The irrigation of this source, however it was, came after the earth was clothed with herbs and trees, which is proved by the very syllables of the Scripture itself, which after it said in the past tense that the Lord God created heaven and earth and every shrub of the field and every herb of the region, it immediately appended with the pluperfect tense: for the Lord God had not rained upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground, showing that before the creation of shrubs and herbs, God had not sent rain; but what was done afterward, it immediately appended with the imperfect tense saying:

for a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground, signifying by the declension of the verb that this was not done once but often, since it did not say "rose" but "would rise"; while it is said that a stream would rise from the earth that would water its entire surface, it is rightfully inquired in what order it would rise; nor is there anything to prevent it from being believed that it thus ascended and returned by turns to water it, as even today the Nile annually ascends to water the plains of Egypt, just as once the Jordan watered the land of Pentapolis, about which Scripture says: "it was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord" (Genesis 13:10), and like Egypt before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah; as, according to Saint Augustine, it is said of some wonderful alternation of certain springs that they flood at fixed intervals of years so as to irrigate the entire region, which at other times provides sufficient drinking water from high wells. Why then should it be incredible, as he also says, if the whole earth was then watered from a single head of the abyss, alternating flowing and ebbing?

For if, he says, the vastness of the abyss itself, excluding the part called the sea, surrounds the land with evident height and bitter waves in that only part which the land contains in concealed recesses, from where all fountains and waters distribute themselves in various tracts and veins, and burst forth in their respective places, Scripture wished to call it a fountain rather than fountains, due to the unity of nature, and through innumerable paths of caverns and crevices ascending from the earth, and everywhere watering the

whole face of the earth with distributed locks, not in a continuous form like the sea or a lake, but as we see waters running through the channels of rivers and the bends of streams, and overflowing to cover nearby areas, who would not accept this unless he is troubled by a contentious spirit? Indeed, it can also be understood that the whole face of the earth was thus watered, just as it is said that a whole garment is colored with a face, even if not continuously but spotted; especially since then at the dawn of the earth many plains were likely to exist where widely bursting streams could be scattered and spread.

Therefore, concerning the magnitude or multitude of this fountain, whether it had a single eruption from somewhere, or because of some unity in the hidden depths of the earth from which all waters upon the earth spring forth, it is called one fountain for all great and small fountains, rising from the earth through all its dispersions, and watering the whole face of the earth; or more likely, since it does not say a single fountain but says a fountain was rising from the earth, placing singular for the plural, that we thus understand many fountains throughout the entire earth, watering their own places or regions: just as a soldier is mentioned, and many are understood, just as the locust and the frog are mentioned in the plagues by which the Egyptians were struck, although there was an innumerable number of locusts and frogs, let us not labor further on this. When it was said that God created herbs and shrubs, without yet descending rain, nor man existing to till the ground, consequently, the creation of man is introduced and it is said: The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Here, therefore, the creation of man is described more broadly, who was indeed made on the sixth day;

but there his creation was briefly mentioned, which is more fully expounded here, namely that he was made in the substance of body and soul, of which the body was formed from the dust of the ground, while the soul was created from nothing by God's inspiration; and also the woman was formed from his side while he was sleeping. In which statement, the poverty of the carnal sense is to be avoided, lest we perhaps think that God formed the body of man from the dust with corporeal hands, or breathed into the face of the formed with a mouth and lips so that he might live and have the breath of life. For even the Prophet when he says: Your hands have made me and fashioned me (Psalm 119:73), spoke this in a figurative rather than a literal sense,

that is, according to the custom by which men are accustomed to work. For God is Spirit, nor is it believed by the uninstructed that His simple substance is composed of the lineaments of corporal members. Therefore, God formed man from the dust. Whom he commanded to be made from the dust by His word. He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living being, creating in him the substance of soul and spirit in which he might live. For it is rightly understood that God breathed into the face of man the breath by which he would live, just as it is understood above:

God called the light day, meaning that He made it to be called day by men. Well, indeed, it is said that God breathed into man's face to make him a living being, because surely the spirit infused into him contemplates external things, as it is located in the frontal part of the brain where all the senses are distributed. For even the sense of touch, which is spread throughout the whole body, is also shown to have its way from the same frontal part of the brain, which is led backwards through the top and neck to the spinal cord. Moreover, this agrees with what was said above about man.

Genesis 2:7

In the image of God He created him. Male and female He created them. For what is said to be in the image of God is understood correctly only in the soul; what is added as male and female is understood correctly only in the body. Therefore, those who think that the soul is a part of God should not be listened to, as if the soul of man were a part of God, and could neither be taken away by itself nor by anyone, nor be compelled by any necessity to do or suffer anything evil, nor be changed at all for better or worse. But that breath of God, which animated man, was made by Him, not from Him, just as neither is man's breath a part of man, nor does man make it from himself, but it is taken and emitted from the aerial vapor. But God was able to make from nothing, and He could make it living and rational, which man cannot do; although some think that the first man was not animated when God breathed into his face, and he became a living soul, but that he received the Holy Spirit at that time. However credible any of these hypotheses may be shown to be, we should not doubt that the soul is not a part of God, nor that it was created or issued from His substance, but that it was made from nothing.

Genesis 2:8

Now the Lord God had planted a garden of pleasure from the beginning, in which He placed the man whom He had formed. Surely, it is to be believed that God planted the garden from that very beginning, from which He commanded all the earth, after removing the waters that covered it, to produce herbs and fruit-bearing trees, in which He placed man on the sixth day, on which He had also formed him. Nor should there be any doubt that the garden in which the first man was placed, although it holds the type either of the present Church or of the future homeland, nevertheless must be understood according to the literal meaning, to be sure, a most pleasant place, shaded by fruitful groves, and also large, and fruitful with a great spring. However, because our edition, which is translated from the Hebrew truth, has "from the beginning," while in the ancient translation it is put "towards the East," some wish that the location of the garden is in the eastern part of the world, although separated by a great distance, either by the Ocean or by lands, from all the regions now inhabited by the human race. Therefore, not even the waters of the flood, which most deeply covered the entire surface of our world, could reach it. But whether it is there or elsewhere, God knows, we are only permitted to doubt that this place was and is earthly. Finally, with the following words, Scripture more fully explains how God planted it, saying:

Genesis 2:9

And the Lord God brought forth from the soil every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This is understood to have been done on the same day on which, at God's command, the earth also brought forth the other fruit-bearing trees. But it is necessarily repeated here so that we could understand the nature of the place of paradise, especially because there needed to be a special reference to the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; in one of which was a sign to man of the obedience he owed, in the other the sacrament of eternal life, which he would merit through this very obedience. And indeed the tree of life was so called because it had this power, as we said, divinely received, that whoever ate from it would have their body strengthened with stable health, never changing for the worse through any infirmity or age, nor even falling into decline; but

this was done physically in such a way that it was also a figure of a spiritual sacrament, that is, of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said in the praise of wisdom: "She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her" (Proverbs 3:18). And in the Apocalypse of Saint John:

"To him that overcomes, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God" (Revelation 2:7). Which is openly to say: To him who overcomes the temptation of the ancient serpent, by which Adam was overcome, I will give what I would have given to Adam if he had overcome, so that he may be eternally refreshed by the present vision of the glory of Christ, and thus be touched by no onset of death, because evidently the Lord Christ, the power and wisdom of God the Father, is in the paradise of the heavenly kingdom, whom He also deigned to promise to the thief confessing Him on the cross along with the other saints. And the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Saint Augustine says of this tree: "To me, considering again and again, it cannot be said how much that sentiment pleases, that the tree itself was not harmful for food. For He who had made all things very good had not established anything bad in paradise, but the transgression of the command was evil for man. Nevertheless, it was fitting that man, put under the Lord God, should be prohibited from something, so that his virtue for deserving his Lord was obedience itself, which I can most truly say is the only virtue for every rational creature acting under the power of God; and the first and greatest vice for destruction is the will to use one's own power, which has the supreme name of vice in disobedience.

Therefore man could not think or feel that he had a Lord unless something was commanded to him. That tree, therefore, was not evil, but it was called the tree of the knowledge of discerning good and evil; because if after prohibition man should eat from it, in the transgression of the command the man would learn by the experience of punishment what the difference was between the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. Therefore this should indeed be taken not in a figurative sense, but as a certain real tree, to which the name was not given from the fruit or apple that grew from there, but from the actual matter, which, when touched contrary to the prohibition, was to follow."

Genesis 2:10

And a river went out of the place of delight to water the paradise. That is, those beautiful and fruitful trees that shaded the whole land of that region,

where it is believed to have been made as in this land we inhabit, the Nile waters the plains of Egypt, wherefore, as we also mentioned above, it was said of the land of Sodom, which was wholly watered like the paradise of the Lord, and like Egypt (Genesis XIII, 10). And surely with provident arrangement, the Lord and Creator of things wished to have some likeness in our world to that homeland which we were created to possess in the first parent, so that he might warn us by a nearby example to merit a return thereto, and especially by that river which is known to emanate from paradise. For the Nile, which waters Egypt, is itself the Gihon, which is remembered to proceed from paradise in what follows. Just as also, when the same cities of Sodom were overturned, which were once watered like the paradise of the Lord, he provided an example of those who act impiously, so that we might flee the most certain paths of the perdition of the wicked, by shunning their eternal torments through vigilance.

Genesis 2:11

Which then is divided into four heads: the name of the first is Pishon. It is established, according to the most certain authorities, that the sources of all these rivers, which are said to go out from paradise, are known in our land. The source of the Pishon, which is now called the Ganges, is indeed in the places of the Caucasus mountains; but the Nile, which the Scripture, as we have said, names Gihon, now far from Mount Atlas, which is the furthest end of Africa to the west. Furthermore, the Tigris and Euphrates from Armenia, from where it is believed that the place of paradise itself is most distant from human knowledge, and from there the four parts of the waters are divided; but those rivers, whose sources are said to be known, are somewhere beneath the earth and after passing through extended regions erupt in other places, where they are reputed to be known in their sources. For who is unaware that some waters are accustomed to do this? But it is known there where they do not run under the earth for long. Finally, historians report that the same rivers Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile are taken up in many places of the earth, and after some interval reemerging, continue their usual course; which is also believed to be done by the Lord as a sign of that course by which they come to us from paradise through the more hidden channels and longer veins of the earth. Now Phison is interpreted as change of mouth, and rightly, because indeed it shows another appearance for our benefit, that is, much more humble than it has in paradise.

Genesis 2:11

This is the one which encircles the whole land of Havilah. This is the region of India, deriving its name from being settled after the flood by Havilah, son of Joktan, who was the son of Eber the patriarch of the Hebrews, whom Josephus also reports with his brothers possessed the land from the river Cephén and the region of India to the place called Hieria. [Genesis 2:12] -- There is found gold, and the gold of that land is good. Pliny the Elder reports that the regions of India abound in gold veins more than other lands, whence even their islands took the names Chryse and Argyre from the abundance of gold or silver.

Genesis 2:12

In that place are found bdellium and onyx stone. Bdellium is, as Pliny the Elder writes, an aromatic tree, black in color, of the size of an olive, with oak-like leaves, fruit like the fig, and its nature is such that it exudes gum. Its tear is bright, somewhat white, light, sticky, uniformly waxy, and easily softened, with a bitter taste, a pleasant smell, and more fragrant when soaked in wine. The book of Numbers also mentions it, saying, "Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color was like bdellium" (Num. XI, 7), that is, bright and somewhat white. Onyx, on the other hand, is a precious stone, so called because it has a whiteness mixed within it like a human fingernail. The Greeks call a fingernail "onyx." Arabia produces it, but Indian onyx has sparks with white bands surrounding them; Arabian onyx, however, is black with white bands. The ancient translation has for these a carbuncle and a prasinus stone. The carbuncle, as its name suggests, is a stone of fiery color, which is said to illuminate the darkness of night. The prasinus stone has a greenish appearance and derives its name from the Greek word for leek, which they call "prason."

Genesis 2:13

And the name of the second river is Geon. It is the one which goes around all the land of Ethiopia. The name of the third river is Tigris. It goes towards the Assyrians. The fourth river is Euphrates. Therefore, concerning the Euphrates, where it goes or what lands it circles, it does not say, because, flowing nearby the land of promise, it was very easily known to the people of Israel, who were placed there and were to read this. But since a return to heavenly places is open to us through the waters of regeneration, it is sufficiently

fitting to the dispensation of divine piety that this very element, through which we are led back to the upper homeland, is common to us with paradise, where the first man was placed, and just as grace invisibly recreates us in preparation for the entrance to the heavenly kingdom: so also invisibly from paradise through the veins of the earth the very water through which we are recreated flows forth to the Lord's world. Just as the Spirit breathes where He wills, and you hear His voice, but do not know where it comes from or where it goes (John 3:8); thus it was fitting that the water which the Holy Spirit sanctifies those whom He wills, should come to us by unknown ways from paradise, and return to unknown places to us, because it is known to have its origin from the paradise of pleasure.

Genesis 2:15

The Lord God took the man whom He had formed and placed him in the paradise of pleasure, to work and keep it. What He said, to work and keep it, seems to refer to the place where it was said, And there was no man to till the ground. Truly we also, in exposing this word, let us place the words of the holy Father Augustine. "What was he to work or keep? he said. "Did the Lord perhaps want the first man to do agriculture? Or is it not believable that He condemned him to labor before sinning? Indeed, we would think so, unless we saw some people work the land with so much delight of mind, that it would be a great punishment for them to be called away from it. Whatever delights agriculture had, then of course it was far greater, when nothing adverse happened to the land or the sky. For it was not the affliction of labor, but the exhilaration of the will, when those things which God created would thrive more joyfully and fruitfully with the help of human work, from which the Creator Himself would be more abundantly praised, who had given the reasoning and skill of working to the soul set in an animal body, as much as would suffice for a willing soul, not as much as the necessity of the body would force the unwilling.

To work and keep it, he said, to keep the same paradise for himself, lest he permit anything for which he would deserve to be expelled from there. Finally, he also receives the command, so that he keeps the paradise for himself, that is, by observing it, he would not be thrown out from there. For rightly is anyone said not to have kept his property, who acted in such a way that he lost it, even if it is safe for another who either found it or deserved to receive it. There is another sense in these words, which I think should not

undeservedly be put first, that God was working and keeping the man himself; just as a man works the ground, not to make it the ground, but to make it cultivated and fruitful, so God works the man whom He created as a man, so that he may be just, if the man does not depart from Him through pride. Therefore God placed the man in the paradise of pleasure, to work and keep it. He was to work, that is, to be good and blessed: and to keep it, that is, to be whole, by humbly submitting himself to His domination and protection.

Genesis 2:16–17

And He commanded him, saying: Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. It is not to be believed that there was anything naturally evil in that tree, as we have also taught above, but man was forbidden from that which was not evil, so that the very observance of the command itself would be good for him and its transgression evil. Indeed, the sinner desired nothing but to not be under the dominion of God when that was committed concerning which only the command of the ruler should have been regarded, which, if it alone were regarded, what else but the will of God would have been loved? What else but the will of God would have been preferred to the human will? Nor can it happen that one's own will does not fall upon man with the weight of a great ruin, if he exalts it by preferring it to the superior will. This man experienced, who scorned the precept of God; and by this experience he learned what difference there is between good and evil, namely, the good of obedience, but the evil of disobedience, that is, of pride, defiance, perverse imitation of God, and harmful freedom. However, the name was given to this in which it could happen from the very matter, as said above.

Genesis 2:17

On whichever day you eat from it, you shall surely die. He did not say, if you eat, you shall be mortal, but on whichever day, he said, you eat from it, you shall surely die. For man died in the soul when he sinned, because God, who is the life of the soul, departed from him, through whose desert the death of the body followed, with the soul departing from it, which is its life, and which death first happened to the same man when he reached the end of the present life not long after he ate the forbidden. It can also be understood that that day in which they sinned brought death upon them, as the Apostle laments saying: For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man;

but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death (Romans 7:22)? For it is not enough for him to say: Who will deliver me from this mortal body, but from this body of death, he says. As indeed also this: The body is dead because of sin (Romans 8:10); nor did he say there, mortal, but dead, although indeed it is mortal because it is to die, it is not to be believed that those bodies were such, but though they were animal, not yet spiritual, yet not dead, that is, which it must needs be that they should die, which happened on that day when they touched the forbidden tree.

Genesis 2:18

The Lord God also said: It is not good for man to be alone, let us make a helper suitable for him. And this speech of God is to be believed to have been made not by a corporeal voice emitted externally into the air, but on earth by the intention of the divine will, through which all things were created, ineffably, according to what we also taught above, where it is written: Let us make man in our image and likeness. But if someone asks for what purpose this helper needed to be made, let him hear the response of Saint Augustine, whose words we have very often included above, with his name silent. He said that nothing else likely occurs except for the sake of begetting children, just as help is for the seed in the earth, so that offspring may arise from both. For it was also said in the first condition of things: He made them male and female, and blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. This rationale for the condition and union of male and female and the blessing did not fail even after man's sin and punishment. For it is the same according to which the earth is now filled with men who dominate it. Although it is mentioned that they came together and begot after being expelled from paradise;

nonetheless, I do not see what could have prevented them from having honorable marriages and an undefiled bed even in paradise, with God providing this to those living faithfully and justly and serving Him obediently and zealously, so that offspring would be begotten from their seed without any disturbing ardor of lust, without any labor and pain of giving birth, not that sons succeeded to dying parents, but so that, with those who begot remaining in some form of condition, and taking bodily vigor from the tree of life which was planted there, those who were begotten would be

brought to the same condition, until the definite number was completed, if all lived justly and obediently, then that transformation would take place, so that without any death, the animal bodies converted to another quality, because they would serve the spirit ruling them at every nod, and living only by the spirit giving life without any sustenance of bodily food, they would be called spiritual.

For if Enoch and Elijah, in Adam, did not die, carrying the progeny of death in the flesh, and are believed to return to this life to pay their due and to die, and now only live in another life where, before the resurrection of the flesh, before the animal body is transformed into a spiritual one, they do not decline by disease or old age, how much more justly and likely it would be granted to those first humans living without any sin of theirs or their parents, that having begotten children, they would yield to a better state from which, at the end of the age, with all the descendants of the saints, they would be transformed much more happily into the angelic form, not through the death of the flesh, but by the power of God.

Genesis 2:19

Therefore the Lord God formed out of the ground all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the sky and brought them to Adam. If anyone is concerned because it does not say "formed out of the ground all the animals of the earth and out of the waters all the birds of the sky," but as if He formed both kinds from the ground, then it is said, "The Lord God formed out of the ground all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the sky"; it should be understood in two ways: either that it is now silent about where He formed the birds of the sky from, because it could also be implied that it is possible He did not form both from the ground; but let us understand that He only formed the animals of the earth and the birds of the sky, even if Scripture is silent about where He formed them from; or that He calls the ground universally, along with the waters, just as it is called in that Psalm where, after the praises of the heavens were finished, the speech turns to the earth and says, "Praise the Lord from the earth, sea monsters, and all deeps" (Ps. 148:7), etc. It is not said afterward: "Praise the Lord from the waters." For where all depths which praise the Lord from the earth are, there also are reptiles and winged birds which likewise praise God from the earth according to this universal appellation of the earth, according to which it is said of the whole world: "God who made heaven and earth," whether from

dry land or from the waters, whatever is created is truly understood to be created from the earth.

Genesis 2:19

And he brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. It should not be thought carnally that God brought the animals of the earth or the birds to Adam in the same way a shepherd drives his flock from place to place; but it should rather be understood that just as by divine power He created these from the waters when He willed, in the same mysterious will of His power He brought them to man to be seen whenever He willed, just as all kinds of birds or quadrupeds are read to have come to Noah's ark, not gathered by the hand of man, but driven by divine command, and entered it, not knowing themselves for what purpose they were coming, but known by the man who, as they came into the ark, received them, God bringing and commanding.

Genesis 2:19

For whatever Adam called every living soul, that was its name; and Adam gave names to all the animals of the earth, to all the birds of the sky, and to all the beasts of the earth. It is evident that Adam in that language, in which all of mankind spoke until the construction of the tower when languages were divided, named the animals of the earth and the birds of the sky. However, at the destruction of the tower, when God assigned to each nation its own distinct language, it is then to be believed that He also distinguished the names of the animals and other things according to each one's language: although it is also known that later men gave various names to many new-found things per their individual nations as they pleased, and still continue to do so. Finally, about the fish brought to Adam to name, Scripture says nothing, but it is credible that as they were gradually known, they were given different names by men according to the diversity of nations. However, it seems that the first language for the human race was Hebrew, since all the names we read about in Genesis up to the division of languages belong to that language. The reason for bringing all the animals of the earth and the birds of the sky to Adam, for him to see and name them, was to thus show God how much better man was than all irrational animals. For it appears that man, by his very reasoning, is better than beasts, as only reason can distinguish and name them individually, and reason itself is superior.

Genesis 2:20

But for Adam there was not found a helper like him. Therefore, the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam; and while he was sleeping, he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he had taken from Adam into a woman. Since the woman was made from the man's side, it is to be believed that this happened to commend the power of that conjunction. But that it was done to him while he was sleeping, with the bone removed and flesh filling its place, was done for the sake of a higher mystery. For it signified that from Christ's side, asleep in death on the cross, the sacraments of salvation would issue forth, namely, blood and water, from which the Church, his bride, would be built. For if such a great sacrament were not prefigured in the creation of the woman, what need was there for Adam to sleep for God to take a rib from him to make the woman, when He could have done the same thing while he was awake and without pain? Why was it necessary that when the bone, taken from the man's side from which the woman was built, was removed, not bone but flesh was supplied in its place, unless it was to signify that Christ would be weak for the Church, but the Church would be made strong through Him?

Therefore, for the sake of the same mystery, Scripture also used a typical word, not saying: made, or formed, or created, as in all the works above; but it says, the Lord God built the rib which he had taken from Adam into a woman, not as a human body, but as a house, which house we are, if we hold firm the confidence and the pride of hope till the end. For it was fitting that the origin of the human race, with God working, should proceed in such a way that it would bear witness with corresponding figures to its redemption, which was to come through the same creator at the end of the age.

Genesis 2:22

And He brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. Because when the living creatures of the earth and all the birds were brought to Adam, he found none like himself among them. Thus it was fitting that now, when he saw a helper like himself made and brought to him, he acknowledged and exclaimed, saying: This now is bone of my bones. Now indeed, because having seen other living creatures before, he did not see one like himself: Bone indeed of my bones and flesh of my flesh, because other creatures, which having bones and flesh he had seen

and distinguished by name, he knew were made not from his substance, but from earth or waters. Just as he had given names to those brought to him, so it remained for him to name her whom he recognized as being like himself and created from his body.

Genesis 2:23

"This, he said, will be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. And as the Latin etymology agrees in these names, since Woman is named from Man, so it also agrees in Hebrew, in which language man is called 'ish', and from this name the derived term for woman is 'ishah'. Hence, that man is called 'ish' in Hebrew is also testified by the name Israel, which is interpreted as 'man seeing God'. But also in the sacraments of Christ and the Church it most fittingly agrees that Adam wanted the woman created from his flesh to share in his own name, because our Lord Jesus Christ equally gave to the Church, which He redeemed with the price of His body and blood and adopted as His bride, the participation of His name, so that from Christ she would be called Christian, and from Jesus, that is, Saviour, she would seek eternal salvation. Nor should it be overlooked that the sleep, or ecstasy, that is, the mental departure, as the ancient Translation has it, which God imposed on Adam, is rightly understood, as St. Augustine says, 'to be induced so that the mind would first participate in an ecstasy like that of the angelic court, and entering into the sanctuary of God would understand the end. Finally, waking up as if full of prophecy, when he saw the woman brought to him, he immediately uttered what the Apostle commended as a great sacrament: This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She will be called Woman because she was taken out of Man; and what follows.'"

Genesis 2:24

Wherefore a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. Though the Scripture itself testifies that these words were first said by man, yet the Lord in the Gospel declared that God said them. For He said: Have you not read that He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh (Matt. XIX, 4), that we might understand from this that, on account of the ecstasy which preceded in Adam, he could have said this divinely as a prophet. Therefore, if Christ adhered to the Church so they

would be two in one flesh, how did He leave the Father, how the mother? He left the Father because, being in the form of God, He did not consider it robbery to be equal with God but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant (Phil. II, 6). This means He left the Father, not because He deserted and departed from the Father, but because He did not appear to men in that form in which He is equal to the Father; just as He left the mother by leaving the Synagogue of the Jews, from whom He was born according to the flesh, and adhering to the Church, which He gathered from all nations, so that in the peace of the New Testament they might be two in one flesh: because, being God with the Father through whom we were made, He became a partaker with us through the flesh, so that we could be the body of that head.

Genesis 2:25

And they were both naked. Adam and his wife, and were not ashamed. "And rightly so, for why would they feel shame when they perceived no law in their members opposing the law of their mind? This consequence followed the sin after the transgression, with disobedience usurping what was forbidden and justice punishing what was committed: for before this happened, they were naked as said, and were not ashamed. There was no movement in the body to which shame was owing; they thought nothing needed covering, for they felt nothing needed restraint."

CHAPTER 3

Genesis 3:1

But the serpent was more cunning than all the animals of the earth that the Lord God had made. This serpent can be said to be more cunning than all the animals, not by its own irrational soul, but by an external spirit, that is, a diabolic one. For although the transgressing angels were cast down from the heavenly seats due to their perversions and pride, they are still in nature superior to all the animals of the earth due to their excellence of reason. Therefore, it is not surprising that the devil, filling the serpent by his own impulse and mixing his spirit with it, as the soothsayers of demons are often filled, made it the most cunning of all the animals of the earth. Or, as another version has it, the wisest of the beasts according to the irrational living soul. "Therefore, if it is asked why God allowed man to be tempted, knowing that he would consent to the tempter; the true reason occurs, that man would not have been of great praise, if he could live well because no one would persuade

him to live badly, since in nature he had the power to do, and in his power to will not to consent to the one persuading, with the help, however, of Him who resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

Nor is it to be thought that this tempter would have overthrown man unless there had been some pride in the soul of man to be suppressed, so that through the humiliation of sin, which he had falsely presumed about himself, he might learn truly: for it is said: Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. XVI, 18). Thus, however, some are moved by the temptation of the first man, as if God allowed it to happen, now they do not see the entire human race being continually vexed by the devil's snares; why did God allow this as well? Is it because virtue is tested and proven, and it is more glorious to have been tempted and not consented than not to have been able to be tempted? If it is asked why the devil was permitted to tempt especially through the serpent, this was already done for the sake of signifying, not that the devil wished to signify anything for our instruction, but because he could not approach to tempt unless permitted, nor could he do so except through what was permitted. Therefore, whatever that serpent may have signified, it must be attributed to that providence under which even the devil has his desire to harm but his ability is only what is given, whether for subverting and destroying vessels of wrath or for humbling or testing vessels of mercy. The serpent did not understand the sounds of words which were made to the woman from him:

for it is not to be believed that his soul was transformed into a rational nature, since not even the men, whose nature is rational, when a demon speaks in them with that passion which is required by the exorcist, know what they say: how much less would that serpent understand the sounds of words which the devil made through him and from him in that manner, as would not a man free from diabolic passion understand if he heard him speaking?"

Genesis 3:1-3

He then said to the woman: "Did God really command you not to eat from any tree in the Garden?" To which the woman replied: "We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden, but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God commanded us not to eat, nor to touch it, lest perhaps we die." "Therefore, first the serpent asked and the woman answered

this so that the transgression would be inexcusable, and it could not in any way be said that the woman had forgotten what God had commanded."

Genesis 3: 4

But the serpent said to the woman: "By no means shall you die. For God knows that on whichever day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil. What is understood here except that she was persuaded to not want to be under God, but rather in her own power without God, so as not to follow His law as if He envied them, so that they themselves might govern, not needing His eternal light, but relying on their own providence as if with their own eyes to discern good and evil which He had prohibited. In these words, it is notable with what great craftiness the devil's wickedness tempted man from the beginning, who not only taught him disobedience and contempt for his Creator as if envious, but also proposed a belief in the multiplicity of gods, saying: "And you will be like gods," so that if he could not perhaps drag him into disobedience, he would nonetheless corrupt the purity of the faith with which they worshipped the one God; but if he succeeded, he would be victorious in both respects. "But when would the woman believe with these words that she had been divinely forbidden from a good and useful thing, unless the love of her own power and a certain proud presumption about herself was already in her mind, which was to be convinced and humbled through that temptation?

Finally, not content with the serpent's words, she considered the tree and saw, as Scripture says, that it was good to eat, and pleasing to the eyes, and delightful to look at; and not believing that she could die from it, I think she believed that God had said for some reason of significance; if you eat of it, you shall die; and therefore SHE TOOK FROM ITS FRUIT AND ATE, AND GAVE IT TO HER HUSBAND, perhaps even with persuasive words, which Scripture leaves silent but intelligible. Or perhaps there was no need to persuade the man when he saw that she had not died from that food?"

Genesis 3: 6-7

WHO EATS. AND THE EYES OF BOTH WERE OPENED. "To what? If not to lusting after each other, to the penalty of sin conceived in the flesh's own death, so that now the body would not only be an animal one, which, if they kept obedience, could be changed into a better spiritual state without death, but now the body of death, in which the law in the members would oppose

the law of the mind." For they were not created with closed eyes, and they were not groping and wandering blind in the paradise of delights. This is like the passage in the Gospel when it spoke of those two, one of whom was Cleopas, that when the Lord broke bread for them, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him whom they had not recognized by the way: certainly not walking with closed eyes, but unable to recognize him. To this end, therefore, the eyes of the first humans were opened, to what they were not previously open, although they were open to other things.

Genesis 3:7

When they realized that they were naked, they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. "The rational soul felt shame about the bestial movement in the members of its body, and it instilled this shame, not only because it felt this sensation where it had never felt anything like it before; but also because that shameful movement came from the transgression of the commandment. For there it sensed the grace with which it was previously clothed, when in its nakedness it did not suffer anything improper. Finally, in that disturbance, they rushed to the fig leaves, which they perhaps found first in their confusion: they sewed loincloths, that is, girdles; and since they lost what was to be glorified, they covered what was shameful. Nor do I think they considered anything in those leaves suitable to cover their now prurient members, but by a hidden instinct they were compelled in that disturbance so that even the signification of such a punishment might be made clear to those unaware, which would convict the doer and teach the reader from what was written." The mystery of this tree under which the Lord saw Nathanael still placed, S. Ambrose briefly but clearly explained by saying: "Blessed are those who tie their horses under the vine and the olive, dedicating the course of their labors to the face of joy. As for me, the fig still, that is, the prurient lust of world delights, shades the lowly, fragile to work, soft to use, barren of fruit." And elsewhere he says: "What is more serious," he says, "is that Adam girded himself with this interpretation where he should have girded himself more with the fruit of chastity, for in the loins where we are girded it is said there are some seeds of generation, and therefore Adam was wrongly girded there with useless leaves, where he marked not the fruit of future generations, but certain sins."

Genesis 3:8

And when he heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, Adam and his wife hid themselves. After noon, those who had failed from the light of truth were accustomed to be visited. Hence, the Lord fittingly ascended the cross at noon, and having promised the thief the abode of paradise, after noon, that is, at the ninth hour, he gave up his spirit; so that indeed at the same hour at which the first man had touched the tree of transgression, the second man ascended the tree of redemption, and at the hour of the day at which he had expelled the transgressors from paradise, he might at that hour bring a confessor into paradise. [Genesis 3:8] -- Adam and his wife hid themselves, he says, from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the trees of the garden. "When God inwardly turns away his face, let us not wonder that these things happen which are similar to madness, through excessive shame and fear, with that secret impulse also not being at rest, so that they did things unknowingly which signify something, for the sake of those who would know in the future for whom these things were written. For they who sin hide themselves from the face of God, because they render themselves unworthy of being seen by divine mercy. They hide themselves from the face of God, not so that the inward judge does not see their conscience, but so that they may never see the glory of his face except by repenting."

Genesis 3:9

And the Lord God called Adam and said to him: Where are you? Certainly, he did not ask out of ignorance but admonished by rebuking, so that he might consider where he was wherein God was not. For now that he had eaten from the forbidden tree, he was dead in the death of the soul, when it is said that his life had deserted her. "And this indeed pertains to a certain meaning, that just as the command was given to the man through whom it would reach the woman; so the man is first questioned. For the command from the Lord comes through the man to the woman: but the sin from the devil comes through the woman to the man. These things are full of mystical meanings, not by those in whom they were done, but by the most powerful wisdom of God doing this through them; however, let us not now express the meanings, but defend the deeds."

Genesis 3:10

He said: I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself. It is quite probable that God used to appear to those first humans in a human form suitable for such an action through his creation, which he never allowed them to notice their nakedness, lifting their intention to heavenly things, except after the sin when they felt the shameful movement in their members under the penal law of their limbs. Thus, they were affected as humans are accustomed to be under the eyes of others: and such an affection was from the penalty of sin, wanting to hide from him who nothing can hide from. For indeed, what now made them ashamed towards themselves, from which they made coverings for themselves, they feared much more vehemently to be seen by him even so covered, who brought, as it were, human eyes by a familiar temperament through the visible creation to see them.

Genesis 3:11

Therefore, the Lord willing now to punish sinners asked according to the manner of justice more than that penalty, from which they were already compelled to be ashamed, For he says, Who told you that you were naked, unless you have eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat? For from here indeed death was conceived because of God's sentence, who had thus threatened, made the members be noticed with concupiscence: where their eyes are said to be opened, and followed what would cause shame. [Genesis 3:12] -- And Adam said: The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. "Was it pride that he did not say, I have sinned? It has the deformity of confusion, and it does not have the humility of confession. These things were written for this reason, because these very questions were certainly made for this reason, so that they might be usefully written, that we might notice how men labor with pride today, trying not to refer anything evil they have done except to the Creator, while they wish any good they have done to be attributed to themselves. The woman, he said, whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate, as if she were given to this end, so that she rather should not obey the man, and both should obey God."

Genesis 3:13

And the Lord God said to the woman: Why have you done this? She answered: The serpent deceived me, and I ate. She also does not confess her sin, but refers it to another, of an unequal sex, with equal pride, saying: The serpent deceived me, and I ate; as if anyone's persuasion ought to have been preferred to God's command. And she also refers the cause of her fault to the Creator, who created the serpent in paradise through which she was deceived. [Genesis 3:14] -- And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed above all cattle and beasts of the earth. Because the serpent was not asked why he did this, it can be seen that he did not do it by his own nature and will, but the devil had worked through and from him, who was already destined for the fire because of his sin of impiety and pride. Therefore, what is said to the serpent is also without a doubt figurative and refers to him who worked through the serpent. For in these words, the tempter is described as he would be to the human race.

Genesis 3:14

You shall go upon your breast, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. For indeed, the serpent goes on its breast because all the steps of the devil are wickedness and deceit: for in its breast is indicated the craftiness and deceptions of its thoughts, with which it creeps to those it wishes to deceive, for which the old translation has: You shall creep on your breast and belly. He creeps with his breast when he suggests earthly thoughts to men, whom he desires to make his members. He also creeps with his belly when he excites them, overcome by gluttony, into the heat of lust. For all that creep drag their body over the earth. The body of the devil, moreover, are all the reprobrates; and he creeps with his breast and belly when he lowers them by wicked thoughts or the allurements of gluttony and luxury. He devours the earth when he is nourished and delighted by the error of sinners, and by deceiving them, he snatches them into destruction. For just as the saints are often signified by the name of heaven, so by the name of the earth those who savor earthly things are indicated, as it is said to Adam in the following: You are earth, and to earth you shall go, which our translation has: For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. As a sign of this spiritual devouring, the irrational serpent itself, with which the devil used as his instrument to deceive man, is now commanded to eat material earth, to which it previously, along

with other animals of the earth, was granted to eat the herbs and fruits of the trees.

Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. The seed of the woman is the entire human race, the seed of the devil are the betrayers, who are depraved with his example of pride and rebellion. His seed is a perverse suggestion; the seed of the woman is the fruit of good work, by which the perverse suggestion is resisted. The enmity mentioned between this serpent and his seed, and how much the human race endures this enmity, and how much enmity all the elect exercise against him by living rightly, is clearer than the sun to all the faithful. A sign of this enmity appears even in the nature of the irrational serpent, which, because of the innate pestilence of its venom, exists always as an enemy to all living creatures and beasts of the earth: it is to be believed that from the time of this curse, and not before, this was implanted in it.

Genesis 3:15

She will crush your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel. The woman crushes the head of the serpent, when the holy Church detects and scatters the devil's wiles and toxic suggestions from the very start, and as if trampling on him, reduces him to nothing. She crushes the serpent's head when she resists the pride through which Eve was deceived, often humbling under God's mighty hand: for the beginning of all sin is pride. The serpent lies in wait for her heel, because the devil, circling around the Church like a roaring lion, seeks whom he may devour, how he may overthrow the steps of our good actions. He lies in wait for the heel, when he tries to snatch us at the end of this present life. For the heel, which is the end of the body, not unjustly designates the end of our life, which both are also figuratively announced by the condition of the serpent, who is accustomed to be crushed by all who have the power, and he himself does not cease lying in wait to strike the heels of men.

Genesis 3:16

He also said to the woman: "I will greatly multiply your sorrows and your conceptions. In pain you will bring forth your children. These words, spoken figuratively and prophetically, are much more properly understood as referring to the woman of God. Nevertheless, since the woman had not yet given

birth, and the pain and groaning of childbirth is only from the body of death, which was conceived by the transgression of the commandment, this punishment is also referred to in the proper sense of the literal word: for it is in what follows: "And you will be under the power of the man, and he will rule over you. It is right to believe that the woman was made otherwise even before sin, except that the man should rule her, and she should live under his power; this servitude, therefore, can be interpreted correctly as one of condition rather than affection, so that even this kind of servitude, by which humans began to be servants to other humans, is found to have arisen from the punishment of sin. Indeed, the Apostle said: "By love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13); but he by no means said: "Dominate one another. Therefore, spouses can serve one another through love, but the Apostle does not allow the woman to dominate the man. This sentence rather pertains to the man, and the husband has merited dominion over the woman, not by nature, but by fault: but if this is not observed, the fault would be further corrupted and increased.

These words are figuratively applicable to the Church, the spouse of Christ, whose sorrows are multiplied in this life after the guilt of the first transgression, so that she may reach eternal life purified; and her conceptions are multiplied when she strives to beget spiritual offspring for God by preaching and living rightly; hence it is said to the same offspring through an excellent preacher: "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). She brings forth children in pain, when, being solicitous, she fears, lest, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, their minds be corrupted, and they fall from the simplicity which is in Christ. She acts under the power of the man, because she serves the Lord in fear and exults before him not in security, but with trembling: to whom, if she had never sinned, she would be united in the embrace of secure love. And he will rule over her, restraining her carnal impulses, and continually advancing her to the perception of heavenly life by the exercise of higher instruction, from which if she had never departed, she would always reign with him in shared freedom.

Genesis 3:17

But to Adam he said: Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree concerning which I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of

your life, thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field, etc. Who is ignorant that these are the labors upon the earth of the human race, and that they would not be if the happiness that was in paradise had been maintained? For by the sin of man the earth was cursed, so that it would bring forth thorns, not that it itself would feel punishment because it is without sensation, but in order that the crime of human sin might always be placed before men's eyes, so that they might be reminded to turn away from sins at some point, and turn towards God's commandments. Indeed, poisonous herbs were created for the punishment or the discipline of mortals. And this must be noted because of sin, for we became mortal after sin. We are also mocked through unfruitful trees, so that we may understand how shameful it is to be without the fruit of good works in the field of God, that is, in the Church, and so that we may fear lest God abandon us, because they themselves abandon unfruitful trees in their fields, nor do they apply any cultivation to them.

Therefore, before the sin of man it is not written that the earth brought forth anything except herb for feeding and fruitful trees; but after sin we see many horrible and unfruitful things grow, for the reason we have mentioned. Mystically indeed, the earth which is said to have been cursed in the work of Adam's transgression is better understood as the flesh. For now it brings forth thorns and thistles for us, because propagated by the lust of the flesh, we suffer the stings and incitements of sins from the flesh itself.

Genesis 3:19

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Here, understand that bread to be the one who says: I am the bread of life, who came down from heaven (John 6:51); which we eat by the sweat of our face, because we ascend to the sight of divine exaltation only through the labor of necessary affliction. [Genesis 3:20] -- And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And it is established that Adam gave his wife this name by divine instinct, which very fittingly corresponds to the Holy Church, in whose unity alone, which is called Catholic, the door to life is open to all.

Genesis 3: 21

And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife tunics of skins, and clothed them. And this was done for the sake of significance, yet it was indeed done. For by this kind of garment, the Lord indicates that they had already been made mortal; for skins, which are not stripped from animals unless they are dead, contain the figure of death. Thus, when man sought to be God against the commandment, not by legitimate imitation, but by illicit pride, he was cast down to the mortality of beasts. And indeed, they had made for themselves girdles of fig leaves, to cover their shame: but God made for them tunics of skins, to cover their whole body: because they, having lost the glory of innocence through transgression, provided for themselves the covering of excuse, by which they transferred their guilt to the Creator: and the Creator himself, by the sentence of a just judgment, punished them with the penalty of mortality in both soul and flesh, having taken away the state of immutable life. Moreover, the Gospel parable narrates that the merciful father, among other gifts, ordered the first robe to be brought and put on his prodigal son returning to him through repentance, mystically signifying that the elect are to receive the habit of immortality, which they lost in Adam at the beginning of the world, at the end of the world in Christ, and indeed with greater grace.

For Adam was made immortal in such a way that he could not die, if he kept the commandment: but the children of the resurrection will be so immortal that they can neither die ever, nor be affected by the fear of death. Regarding the reception of this robe, the Apostle says: For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (I Cor. XV, 53): where "put on" signifies the removal of the nakedness, which Adam and Eve recognized and blushed for after sin.

Genesis 3: 22

And He said: Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. On this St. Augustine comments: "Since, he says, it is said in any manner and in any way, God nevertheless declared, it should not be understood otherwise, that He said 'one of us,' except that the plural number is taken on account of the Trinity, just as it was said 'Let us make man,' just as also the Lord about Himself and the Father said: 'We will come to him and make our abode with him' (John 14). Therefore it was repeated upon the head of the

proud one by which outcome he desired what was suggested by the serpent 'You will be like gods.' Behold, he says, Adam has become like one of us. For these words are of God, not so much insulting him, as deterring others from being proud in that way; for the sake of those for whom these words were written: He has become, he says, like one of us, knowing good and evil. What else should be understood except that an example of instilling fear was proposed? because not only did he not become as he wanted to become, but he did not even maintain what he had become. On this point elsewhere: 'Nor are they the words of God confessing,' he says, 'but rather reproaching.' Behold, Adam has become like one of us, just as the Apostle says: 'Grant me this wrong' (II Cor. 12:13), surely he wants it to be understood from the contrary."

Genesis 3:22

"Now, therefore, lest he stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever, the Lord sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the ground from which he was taken. The above words are God's; but this action followed because of those words. For alienated from the life he would have received with the angels if he had kept the commandment, but also from the life he was leading in the paradise, in a certain happy state of the body, he necessarily had to be separated from the tree of life, whether because that happy state of the body would continue through it with visible matter by invisible virtue, or because in it there was also the visible sacrament of invisible wisdom. He had indeed to be alienated from there, either as already dying or even as excommunicated, just as also in this paradise, that is, in the Church, men are accustomed to be removed from the visible sacraments of the altar by ecclesiastical discipline."

Genesis 3:24

And he drove Adam out and placed before the paradise of delight the cherubim and the flaming sword, which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. The ancient translation has it thus: "And he drove Adam out and placed him opposite the paradise of delight, and appointed the cherubim and the flaming sword, etc. If we follow this, we must believe that this was done for the sake of signification, but still done, so that the sinner, indeed, would dwell in misery against the paradise, where blessed life was also spiritually signified. But what is said that God placed cherubim and the flaming sword

before the paradise of delight, this must surely be believed to have been done by heavenly powers in the visible paradise, so that there would be a fiery guard there through angelic ministry, not done in vain, unless it also signifies something of the spiritual paradise, which is surely not to be doubted: and that this guard is well testified to be versatile for the reason that a time would come when it could also be removed. Indeed, it was removed for Enoch, who was translated not to die; it was removed for Elijah, who was taken up in a fiery chariot; it was removed for all the elect, when, after the Lord was baptized, the heavens were opened to him; it is likewise removed for each of the elect when they are washed in the font of baptism;

it is more perfectly removed for the same, when loosed from their chains, they ascend to the glory of the heavenly paradise at their own time. Likewise, because cherubim is interpreted as a multitude of knowledge, or multiplied knowledge, it is well testified that the cherubim and the flaming sword were appointed to guard the way to the tree of life: because obviously, through the discipline of heavenly knowledge and the labor of temporal afflictions, the return to the high homeland from which we departed through the folly of transgression and the desire for carnal pleasures is open to us. And it is well said not simply a flame, but a flaming sword was placed before the paradise, to hint that the allurements of temporal desire should be struck in us by the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God if we desire to penetrate to the tree of life, who is Christ the Lord. And it is well reported that this sword is versatile, to indicate mystically that this sword is not always necessary to us, but, as it is written, there is a time for war, a time for peace: war, evidently when in the course of this life we struggle against aerial powers or even against the vices of our mind or body; but peace, when with perfect victory we are crowned, and are perpetually satisfied with the fruit of the tree of life without weariness. The adversary of the law and prophets, however, seeking, says this:

"What use was the tree in paradise that bore the fruit of life? To which Saint Augustine, answering, says: "For whom," he says, "except for those first humans who were placed in paradise? Then, after they were cast out of paradise for the merit of their iniquity, it remained to signify the memory of the spiritual tree of life, which is the wisdom of the blessed and the immortal food of the souls. However, whether anyone now partakes of that food, except perhaps Enoch and Elijah, I do not think it is to be rashly asserted. If,

however, the souls of the blessed were not nourished by that tree of life, which is in the spiritual paradise, we would not read that the paradise was granted to the soul of the thief, believing in Christ, on the same day for the merit of piety and the most faithful confession. Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43). But to be there with Christ, this is to be with the tree of life, for he himself is indeed the Wisdom, of which it is written: "She is a tree of life to those who embrace her" (Proverbs 3:18) Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Genesis 4:1

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying: I have acquired a man through God. Henceforth, after the delights of paradise and the guilt of the first transgression, the events of this world and mortal life are narrated, when the first-created, who had been made immortal, after receiving the condition of dying, began to generate mortal offspring from themselves, all conceived in iniquity and brought forth from the womb in sins. Cain is interpreted as possession, the reason for which name the mother herself explained when she said: I have acquired a man through God. And with this statement, our mother now teaches us with catholic discernment that although she bore a son subject to the sin of her transgression, nonetheless this which was born a man, that is, which possessed a soul and body, was a gift of divine creation and the first blessing.

Genesis 4:2

Again, she bore his brother Abel. Abel is interpreted as grief or miserable, by which name from the earliest age was foreshadowed the condition of his lamentable untimely death. For, although precious is the death of his saints in the sight of the Lord, having tasted the cup of saving suffering, yet, as far as human view is concerned, it is sufficiently mournful, since we have so far departed from the innocence of the first condition that not even those who were first born on earth as brothers could have peace and concord between themselves, but one envied the other and killed him, while they still existed alone with their parents as masters of the whole world; already clearly foreshadowing that saints in this life would be oppressed by the reprobate and suffer deaths: in this also to be noted that Cain was born first in this life, but Abel was taken away first from this life, because indeed this life is properly

the life of the wicked, from which they are precipitated into eternal death; but truly the life of the elect is properly the future life, to which that they may come more happily, they are daily put to death in this life and are considered as sheep for the slaughter.

Genesis 4:3

It came to pass after many days that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground: Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. It is clearly shown that both brothers had faith in God, both either naturally admonished or taught by their parents, knew that gifts should be offered to God, and that the guilt of their father's transgression should be washed away by sacrifices offered to Him: but because they did not offer with an equal mind, their offerings were not equally accepted. For I do not think that Cain sinned in that he either worked the work of a farmer or offered gifts to God from the fruits of the ground, but that he worked with less perfect piety in the care of the flesh, and approached the offering of gifts to God with less perfect devotion. Finally, Noah, a farmer, also worked the land and planted a vineyard: and Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, offered bread and wine from the fruits of the land. Therefore, Cain was not rejected because of the kind of offering. He indeed offered to God from what he himself was accustomed to live by; but he was rejected along with his gifts by Him who looks into the hearts, because of the impious mind of the offerer, as the following words show when it is said:

Genesis 4:4

And the Lord looked with favor upon Abel and his offering, but upon Cain and his offering He did not look with favor. For it does not say: And the Lord looked with favor upon the offerings of Abel and then upon him; but upon the offerings of Cain and then upon him He did not look with favor. It first testifies that the person of the offerer was accepted or not accepted by God, then the gifts were regarded or not regarded. For men are often appeased by the gifts of those with whom they were offended; but God, who is the discernor of thoughts and intentions of the heart, is pleased by no gift more than the pious devotion of the offerer: when He has approved the purity of our mind, then He will also accept the vows of our prayers or works.

Genesis 4:5

And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. How did Cain know that the Lord had looked favorably upon Abel and his offerings, but had turned away his face from himself and his offerings, unless, as some have interpreted, the Lord had set fire to Abel and his sacrifice, but had not set fire to Cain and his sacrifice, that is, by sending fire from the heavens, He accepted Abel's offering, as we often read that this happened to holy men who offered. Cain, on the other hand, had to consume his own sacrifice by fire. For this is what the Apostle seems to mean when he says: By faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain to God, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, with God bearing witness to his gifts (Hebrews 11:4). Therefore, God testified to Abel's offerings by fire, by accepting them from the heavens, through which we are also taught by the Apostle's testimony that Abel's offering was made acceptable to God by his faith's devotion, and on the contrary, we must understand that Cain was rejected because he did not serve his Creator with complete faith.

Genesis 4:6

And the Lord said to him: Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door? Why, he says, are you angry, and why are you tortured with envy of your brother, and you cast your eyes down to the ground? If you do well, if you offer your sacrifice with a pure heart, will you not be accepted, with the Lord looking favorably upon you and your sacrifice? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door, and by having such a doorkeeper, you will always enter and exit with him accompanying you, instead of the Lord guarding your going in and coming out, just as it is said of wisdom: Whoever rises early to seek her will not toil, for he will find her sitting at his doors (Wisdom 6:15). And again: Because she goes about seeking those worthy of her and graciously shows herself to them on their ways, and meets them with all providence (Wisdom 6:17).

Genesis 4:7

But his desire shall be for you, and you shall rule over him. In accordance with the idiom of the Hebrew language, he substituted the indicative mood for the imperative, such as you have innumerable times: You shall love the Lord your God, you shall love your neighbor, you shall not commit adultery,

you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness (Deut. VI, 5), instead of saying: Love, and do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness. Therefore, he says, his desire shall be for you, and you shall rule over him; you, because you are of free will, I advise you to combat and restrain the desire of sin, and not let it grow over you anymore, but you shall rather rule over it more righteously by living correctly. This passage in the ancient translation reads thus: If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at your door; and its desire shall be for you, but you should rule over it. It is rightly offered to God, who alone must be sacrificed to. But it is not rightly divided when neither places nor times of the offerings nor the things themselves which are offered, nor who offers, nor those to whom the offering is distributed for eating are rightly discerned, so that here division means discernment. In what of these was Cain displeasing to the Lord, it cannot easily be found.

But since the Apostle John, when speaking of these brothers, said, Not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil, but his brother's were righteous (John III, 13); it is understood therefore that God did not look favorably upon his offering because he wrongly divided it, giving something of his to God, but keeping himself for himself, as all do who follow their own will, not God's, that is, living with a perverse, not a righteous heart; yet they offer to God a gift, with which they think He can be appeased, not to aid them in curing their bad desires, but to fulfill them. Rest, he says, for his desire will be for you, and you shall rule over him. Cease to be consumed by the sin of envy toward your brother, for the conversion of that same sin shall be for you, and your iniquity will rebound upon your own head, and you shall rule over it, having the power through the grace of divine help to repel the evil conceived in your heart. God spoke these things to Cain, in the manner in which He spoke to the first men through a subjected creature as if He was their companion in suitable form. But because he was admonished not inwardly but outwardly, nevertheless he carried out the deliberate crime of killing his brother even after the word of divine admonition or correction; for it follows.

Genesis 4: 8

And Cain said to Abel his brother: Let us go out into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and killed him.

And here the treachery of Cain and the innocence of Abel are both demonstrated: the innocence of Abel indeed, in that he simply followed his elder brother as a brother, being commanded, though his brother was inflamed with hostile hatred towards him; the treachery of Cain, in that he leads his brother outside to kill him, as if he could avoid divine presence in a more secret place: not considering, nor understanding that He who knew the secret things of his heart which reproved him, could also see wherever he withdrew and whatever he did in secret. [Genesis 4:9] -- And the Lord said to Cain: Where is Abel your brother? Not as if ignorant, to learn from him, but as a judge questioning a defendant whom he will punish.

Genesis 4:9

He answered: I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? A foolish and equally arrogant answer; foolish, since he thought he could deceive Him who knew his sinful conscience and accused him of the crime of fratricide even before it was committed, as the knower of secrets; arrogant, since he denied being his brother's keeper in the manner of an obstinate servant, who by manifestation, if any danger threatened, should have taken care of his younger brother, and as the elder should have protected him from impending adversities.

Genesis 4:10

And He said to him: What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. The blood has a great voice, not only of Abel, but of all those slain for the Lord: for the voice of their blood is the very steadfastness of their faith, the very fervor of their charity, through which they merited to suffer for the Lord. It cries out to the Lord from the earth: for even if they have been slain by the impious in the hidden recesses of the earth as Abel was, nevertheless the very cause of their death is precious and clear in the sight of the internal Judge, justly demanding that those who were unjustly slain in their simplicity be crowned; and those who unjustly persecuted and slaughtered them be condemned. Therefore, the blood of the slain cries out to the Lord, and it is proven that their life before death cried out to Him as well, for they used to say: "I cried out with all my heart, hear me, O Lord; I will seek your justifications" (Psalm 118:145). For he indeed cries out to the Lord in his heart, who asks for great things, who prays for heavenly things, who hopes for the eternal, who seeks from Him not the

glory of this world, but the keeping of His justifications. The Apostle teaches where this cry is born in the hearts of the just, saying:

"God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father'" (Galatians 4:6); he says that the Spirit cries out in our hearts to the Father, because surely He Himself kindles this yearning to cry out. John reveals that the souls of martyrs possess this cry of pious devotion even after death when he says: "I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?'" (Revelation 6:9-10). The souls of the saints cry out not out of hatred for their enemies, but out of love for justice, which they always learned to hunger and thirst for, as well as the desire to reclaim their body, so that the flesh they gave to death for the Lord might merit to stand before Him immortal and incorruptible. Great indeed is the voice of their cry, great is their desire for justice. As the blood of the saints cries out to the Lord, seeking just retribution for their unjust death, what befalls their persecutors is subsequently revealed, with the Lord saying to Cain:

Genesis 4:11

Now therefore you are cursed from the earth which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand: when you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. According to the measure of sinners, the just judge also sets the measure of retribution: for Adam, who ate the forbidden fruit, is by no means himself cursed, but rather the earth is subjected to a curse in his work; not so much that it denies the fruits to the worker, but that it yields its fruits to the cultivator with labor and sweat; and so that the same labor could eventually be finished, and eternal rest entered. He is also subjected to the death of the flesh: which is done by a favor of benevolence, so that he would not always labor and suffer, as only those who cannot grasp how burdensome the life of this present age is would doubt. But Cain, though knowing the transgression of his parents and their condemnation, added to the same transgression a heavier guilt of perfidy, malice, murder, and lying, which he had inherited; hence he is also justly punished with a harsher penalty: first, that he himself should be cursed beyond the earth, which he had polluted with his brother's blood, previously clean; then, that he should sweat use-

lessly in working the earth, with no abundance of fruits responding to his labors: thirdly, that he should always be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth, not daring to have settled abodes anywhere, or, as another translation has it, live trembling and lamenting on the earth. But he, having heard the penalty of his great curse, did not wish to ask for forgiveness, but doubling sins upon sins, thought his crime so great that it could not be forgiven by God. Finally, he responded to the Lord:

Genesis 4:13-14

My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon. Behold, you cast me out today from your presence, and I shall be hidden from your face and from the face of the earth, and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth. I am cast out, he says, from your sight, and the consciousness of my crime not enduring the very light itself, I shall be hidden to lie in concealment. Or certainly you cast me out from the face of the earth, namely that in any region of the lands, among any inhabitants of this world, I may not be allowed to remain safe and free, and also hidden from your face, that I may no longer deserve to see it, which until today, by often beholding and hearing your voice, I lived more happily. [Genesis 4:14] -- Therefore, everyone who finds me will kill me. Since from the trembling of the body and the fury of the trembling one, or from the instability of the wanderer and fugitive, he understands him to be one who deserves to be killed. But God, not wanting to end his torments quickly with death, nor delivering him to the punishment to which he had condemned himself:

Genesis 4:15

By no means, he said, shall it be so, but whoever kills Cain shall be avenged sevenfold. You shall not die as you think, and you shall not receive death as a remedy, but you shall live for a long time as an example to others, so that they may not dare to sin in the same way; and it is so far from my wish that you be killed by anyone, that if anyone kills you, he shall be punished sevenfold, that is, with the gravest vengeance, for he will not have refrained from shedding blood despite being warned by the severity of your condemnation. For man should not have killed the man to whom God had given life despite his sin, either for the accumulation of his punishment or for the exemplar of caution and correction of others. For often Scripture signifies fullness by the number seven, as in Leviticus: If you walk contrary to me, and will not listen

to me, I will add seven times more plagues upon you (Lev. 26:21). And a little later: And I will strike you seven times for your sins (Lev. 26:24), meaning manifoldly. And in a favorable sense the Psalmist says: Seven times a day I praise you (Ps. 118:164), which is to say in other words: His praise shall constantly be in my mouth (Ps. 34:1). As the ancient interpreters have said: Whoever kills Cain shall pay sevenfold vengeance, this holds the meaning:

You shall live up to the seventh generation, and be tormented by the fire of your conscience; so that whoever kills you, according to double understanding, either in the seventh generation or to free you from great torment: not that he who kills Cain should be subjected to sevenfold vengeance, but that he should pay the sevenfold vengeance which have extended through the whole time of Cain, by killing him who was left alive for punishment. For the seventh from Adam was Lamech, who is said to have killed Cain: and this same Lamech fulfilled the sevenfold vengeance which Cain, having sinned sevenfold, deserved, by his death. For his first sin was that, offering to God, he did not divide rightly; the second, that he envied his brother; the third, that he acted deceitfully, saying: Let us go out to the field; the fourth, that he killed him; the fifth, that he brazenly denied: I do not know; the sixth, that he condemned himself, saying: My iniquity is greater than that I can deserve pardon; the seventh, that he did not repent even after being condemned.

Genesis 4:15

And God set a sign upon Cain, lest anyone who found him would kill him. The very sign by which it was evident that he would always live as a trembling, groaning, wandering, and fugitive; reminded by his own misery, because he could not be killed by just anyone; but whoever would kill him would either deliver Cain himself from great miseries or, by doing this, would subject himself to a sevenfold vengeance. [Genesis 4:16] -- And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, that is, from the inner parts of those dwellings in which he had been living with his parents until then, and was often accustomed to see Him in angelic form.

Genesis 4:16

He dwelled in the land as a fugitive to the east of Eden. Eden is interpreted as pleasure or delight, by which name paradise is designated, about which it is said above: "And the Lord God planted a garden of pleasure from the begin-

ning," which ancient interpreters have thus translated: "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden to the east," from which it is understood that paradise is established to the eastern region of the world. Therefore, Cain dwelled not to the eastern region of paradise, otherwise he would dwell beyond this world, but in the eastern parts of the world, where paradise is nearby, although inaccessible and unknown to mortals. All things that are said literally about the justice or martyrdom of Abel, and about the depravity and condemnation of Cain, mystically testify to the passion of the Lord, the incarnation and persecution, and the destruction of the Jews. For the Lord says to those same Jews: "If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me as well; for he wrote about me" (John 5:46). Thus Cain was the firstborn, Abel the second. The people of the Jews were God's first possession, as He Himself said to Moses, "Israel is my son, my firstborn" (Exodus 4:22); the second is the people of the gentiles, for whom especially the Son of God deemed it worthy to be born in the flesh and to die. Abel was a shepherd of sheep, and the Lord said: "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14). But Cain was a farmer, because the people of the Jews were involved in earthly and temporal affairs, either pursuing these alone or serving the Lord with these in mind, as they carnally understood those things which the prophets spoke mystically about the heavenly promise, saying: "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19).

Genesis 4:3

For Cain offered gifts to the Lord from the fruits of the earth. For that people believed they pleased the Lord through good works, which they pursued for the sake of earthly reward. Or certainly, they offered gifts from the fruits of the earth when that people believed themselves to be justified through earthly circumcision, earthly Sabbath, earthly unleavened bread, and earthly Passover, despising the righteousness of faith which is in Christ.

Genesis 4:4

Abel also offered from the firstborn of his flock and their fat. For the Lord, interceding with the Father on behalf of the saints, offers their vows to Him according to the form of the assumed humanity, that is, good works and the fat of inner love. For these are indeed the firstborn of his flock and their fat. The Lord looks upon Abel, saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased (Matt. XVII, 5). He looks also upon his gifts, because the life of

the elect which he offers to Him gratefully, God the Father accepts, and as if by fire from heaven He ignites his sacrifice, because He inflames with the power of His spirit those who have taken care to mortify themselves for the Lord, so that they may more abundantly burn in the heavenly regions, indeed so that they may become wholly heavenly. But to Cain and his gifts, He does not look, because rebuking the carnal works of the Jews, He says through the prophet: To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? says the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of goats (Isa. I, 11). And a little later: Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, be clean, that is, through faith in the grace of Christ.

Cain is enraged against his brother's piety, nor does he, rebuked by the Lord, repent from his fury conceived out of envy. How much the Jews raged against the Lord and the grace of the New Testament out of jealousy, how many times they persisted malignantly in their undertakings when corrected or admonished by Him, is sufficiently revealed by the Gospel history. They fittingly correspond to what is said of Cain, for their countenance fell: for they could not gaze upon the glory of the Lord with unveiled face. For they had lost that joy of divine grace, of which the righteous, glorying, say: The light of your countenance has been signed upon us, O Lord; You have put gladness in my heart (Ps. IV, 7).

Genesis 4: 8

Cain led his brother out into the field and killed him. The Jewish people led the Lord out of their city Jerusalem and crucified Him at Calvary; from both instances of this ordeal we are reminded typically to go out to the Lord outside the camp, bearing His reproach, that is, leaving behind the fellowship of the world and the company of the wicked, we should willingly endure all worldly contempt for the love of our heavenly homeland. When the Lord asked Cain where his brother Abel was, he replied that he did not know, and that it was not his duty to be his brother's keeper. Even to this day, when the faithful, the members of Christ, inquire of the Jews about Christ, they say they do not know. They would themselves have been keepers of Christ if they had been willing to receive and uphold the Christian faith. For whoever keeps Christ in their heart does not say, like Cain, that they do not know their brother, or that they are not their brother's keeper.

Genesis 4:10

God said to Cain: What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries to me from the ground. In the same way, the divine voice in the holy Scriptures reproaches the Jews. For Christ's blood speaks with a great voice on the earth, when all the nations respond Amen upon receiving it. This is the clear voice of the blood which the blood itself expresses from the mouths of the faithful redeemed by the same blood of which the Apostle rightly says to the faithful: You have come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks better than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:24). For the blood of Christ certainly speaks better than that of Abel, since the latter cried to the Lord in condemnation of the fratricide, but the former raises its voice to heaven for the salvation of Christ's faithful brethren.

Genesis 4:11

Now therefore you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. He refers to the earth as the Church, for no other earth but she opens her mouth to taste in the mystery the blood of Christ that was shed by the hands of the Jewish people. Over this Church, the same people are accursed: for as much as she more closely adheres to the love of her Creator, so much more gravely does she understand the nation opposed to Him to be cursed, even if they, still in their pride, boast themselves as specially blessed.

Genesis 4:12

When you have worked it, it will not give you its fruits. The same people worked that land which the head of the Church Christ bore, that is, in his flesh our salvation, by crucifying him who died for our sins, and that land did not give him its fruits, because he was not justified by faith in his resurrection who rose for our justification: hence, neither did the resurrected one appear to those by whom he was crucified, like Cain working the land, to sow that grain, not showing the same land the fruit of its virtue. But the Jews worked the land which is the Church, acting through their persecutions so that it might more greatly progress in God: often also raging against many unto death, but they themselves did not merit to see the fruit of the faith and precious death of those. But what Cain answered to the Lord was, "My iniquity is greater than to deserve forgiveness. Behold you cast me today

from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from your face, and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth: it is evident more clearly than light about the Jewish people, because the iniquity by which they killed the Son of God is greater than to deserve forgiveness; and hence whoever of them receive forgiveness repenting, these truly beyond their merit are saved by the divine grace of piety.

It is evident that he was cast out from the face of the earth, that is, from the lot of the holy Church, and hidden from the face of divine contemplation; what he himself extended, when he veiled the face of Christ in the passion, which also the heavenly signs extended to them, when, he being crucified, the sun hid its rays of light, and with the kingdom lost, a fugitive and wanderer he was dispersed through the world, fearing lest he be deprived of even temporal life, and as if saying with Cain: "Everyone who finds me will kill me. But what did God answer to him? "It shall not be so," but "whoever kills Cain will pay sevenfold vengeance," that is, the impious race of carnal Jews will not perish by bodily death. For whoever will thus destroy them will pay sevenfold vengeance, that is, will remove from them the sevenfold vengeance with which they were bound for the guilt of the slain Christ, so that in this whole time, which is turned by the sevenfold number of days, the more because the Jewish nation did not perish, it may appear clearly enough to faithful Christians what subjection they deserved, who with proud rule killed the Lord. We placed the exposition of this sentence here according to the old translation because we have excerpted from the works of St. Augustine who followed this, as also many other things.

Genesis 4:15

And God set a mark upon Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him. The Jewish people, whether under pagan or Christian rulers, have the mark of their law, by which they are distinguished from other nations and peoples, and every emperor or king who finds them in his kingdom finds them with that mark, nor does he kill them, that is, he does not make them cease to be Jews, being distinguished by a certain definite mark of their own observance from the communion of other nations, unless any of them have turned to Christ.

Genesis 4:16

And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod to the east of Eden. By the presence of the Lord is usually understood the recognition by which He manifests and is known. Therefore, deservedly, the people who have withdrawn from the grace of divine recognition are said to dwell on earth. For they cannot say with the elect, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). The Septuagint interpreters translated this passage thus: "Now Cain went out from the presence of the Lord God and dwelt in the land of Naid opposite Eden." Naid, however, is translated as "fugitive," or as we find in the book of Hebrew names, "unstable motion and fluctuation," which some, including Josephus, agree to be the place where Cain dwelt. Furthermore, our interpreter understood not the name of a place, but the significance of the thing itself; because Cain would be always unstable and fluctuating and of uncertain abodes. How much this matches the present state of the Jews, the whole world is a witness. They are also rightly said to dwell opposite Eden. For Eden signifies pleasure or delight: because indeed that faithless people, as much as they turn away from the knowledge of truth and entangle themselves in earthly affairs, so much they live a life contrary to heavenly delights; and because they only thirst for temporal joys, they are adversaries with the dry throats of their hearts to the torrent of divine pleasure by which the righteous are refreshed.

Genesis 4:17

Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. He built a city, and he called its name after his son's name, Enoch. Just as from the beginning of the world, starting with the murder of Abel, the passions of the saints were present; so too in the malice and persecution of Cain, the betrayals of the reprobate are suggested, which will continue in the world until the end of the age; thus in the city that Cain built, it was symbolically intimated that the entire hope of the wicked is to be fixed on the kingdom and happiness of this world, as they have no faith or desire for future goods. The Lord speaks of this city through the prophet Hosea: "I am God, not human, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not enter into the city" (Hosea 11:9). For neither Abel nor Seth, who was born in his place, are read to have built a city or houses: for they clearly designated, or rather they were the first fruits of

those who rejoice to sing to their Creator: "For I am a sojourner with you, a wanderer, as were all my fathers" (Psalm 39:12). This fits well with the promise of the Lord we mentioned earlier: "I am God and not human, the Holy One in your midst": because to the extent that they render themselves foreigners from the association of the worldly city, they are therefore more worthy of the dwelling of their Creator.

Cain aptly called the city by the name of his son Enoch, to designate that he would have successors who, being excluded from the heavenly fatherland, would fix their hearts on the delight of this life. And well indeed is Enoch interpreted as Dedication, because the reprobates, while they desire to rejoice for what they work in the present, as if dedicating the city which they build for themselves in the first generation. Conversely, in the lineage of the human race which descended through Seth to Noah, the seventh from Adam is born as Enoch, who is read to have walked before God and was not found because God took him: for indeed the rest and joy and the entire hope of the elect is in the future Sabbath, who, after walking with the Lord in this life, humbly following His commandments, are taken by Him into the life of eternal rest and no longer appear among mortals, because they live with Him immortally. They are indeed His city and temple, now daily striving towards perfection through good works, and then, their labors completed, reigning with Him, and in their own dedication, which will perpetually be celebrated through the presence of the Holy Spirit, each rejoices as if in the name of Enoch.

Genesis 4:18

Moreover, Enoch begot Irad, and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech, who took two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah, and Adah bore Jabal. The progeny of Cain is counted up to the seventh generation, and in this generation, he himself was killed by Lamech, being freed from the sevenfold punishments which he had long borne. In this entire offspring that was born from him, having been also polluted by the adultery of Lamech adding to the curse, perished with the coming flood. Defiled indeed by adultery in the sixth generation, but destroyed by the flood in the seventh generation, in which it is spiritually conveyed that the city of the impious, that is, the entire society of the reprobate, will corrupt itself with crimes in the six ages of this world, but in the seventh, which is in the future, it will perish eternally. For

just as Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was taken up into paradise and man did not see him, because he lives in peace with God, so the seventh from Cain, Jabal, is interpreted as “Change,” and he was destroyed by the flood with his brothers and all his progeny, and man did not see him, because he was punished with eternal death, and from the glory of the world which he loved, he was changed into the punishment which he did not foresee. In these, it is clearly indicated, as we have said, that the holy tend towards rest in another life after the six ages of this world, and the reprobate towards punishment, as also the history narrated by the Lord about the poor Lazarus and the proud rich man clearly proves.

Genesis 4:20

He begot, he says, Ada Jabal, who was the father of those who dwell in tents and shepherds, and the name of his brother was Jubal. He was the father of those who play the harp and organ. Sella also begot Tubal-Cain, who was a forger in every kind of bronze and iron work. All these things which are said to have been found or made by the sons of Lamech relate to the cultivation, adornment, or enticements of this life: but none such are read of Abel, nor of Seth who was born in his place, nor of his grandchildren, but they are proved to have led a simple life on earth like strangers. For even if Abel was a shepherd of sheep, he did not so devote himself to this service as to build himself tents in which he could engage more comfortably in it. As for the harp and organ, it is far from likely that so great a man would have given any time to them. Indeed, anyone who diligently observes all the works made of bronze and iron will clearly recognize that if the human race had kept the natural law rightly, even after being expelled from the joys of paradise by the fault of transgression, it would by no means need all these things:

whence it is evident that all these were invented by the sons of the curse, although later, as the human race degenerated from the purity of its first way of life, even good servants of God sometimes engaged in such things for the sake of social living. But with a great distinction, of course, because the wicked delighted in such things as their highest good: whereas the chosen either utterly renounce them or use them for some convenience of this life, until they reach the eternal, as a traveler uses a lodging or provisions while passing through. In short, the patriarchs lived in tents, but like strangers on earth, to distinguish them from those who lived in cities and houses as citizens of the earth. The psalmists used the harp and organ, but to praise the

Lord with them: and on the contrary, the prophet reproves those who resounded with the harp, tambourine, and lyre in banquets. There were learned men among the people of God in all works of bronze and iron, as well as silver and gold: but God himself commanded them to transfer this art to the distinction of his tabernacle. The prophet also, proclaiming the joys of the Lord's incarnation, predicted that harmful works of iron would be removed and changed for the better, saying, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isa. II, 4).

Nor should it be passed over negligently that when men began to be defiled by adultery, to devote more than right to the tending of flocks, to be dissolved by musical modes, to engage in forging arts, then they were destroyed by the overhanging flood. But we must guard more diligently lest the last day find us ensnared by such things beyond measure, for the Lord, speaking of the day of judgment, mentioned this time to incite us to the study of caution, saying: For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and took them all away; so will be the coming of the Son of Man (Matt. XXIV, 38).

Genesis 4: 22

The sister of Tubalcain is Noema. Noema is interpreted as Pleasure. Well, the lineage of Cain fittingly ends with the birth of a woman; and the same woman is named Pleasure: because the entire intention of the wicked in the world serves allurements, and they desire to end their life in the fulfillment of carnal pleasures. Indeed, after this woman was born, not long after, the entire cursed progeny was finished by the flood: because when they submit the neck of their mind to the delights of the world, when they say peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them. It should be noted, however, that delight or pleasure can be understood in two ways, that is, in both good and evil: in good, namely, when it is said, "But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:11). And again: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Psalm 36:8). From which pleasure paradise is also named, because surely man was placed in it to enjoy perpetually the most blessed and holy de-

lights of the flesh and soul in the presence of his Maker. But pleasure is understood in an evil sense when certain lovers of pleasures more than of God are noted by the Apostle. The name Noema is fittingly applied to them, in whose generation at first the world's age, except for a few, was destroyed.

Therefore, the human race had departed from Eden, that is, from the delights of internal goods; and, having abandoned heavenly things, was cultivating the earth, and had come to the birth of a woman, who would be named Noema, that is, Pleasure: and not long after, everything perished in the cataclysm: so that indeed it might be indicated, both by the birth of such offspring and by the outcome of the ensuing disaster, that those who neglect spiritual things and subjugate themselves to the pleasures of the flesh rightly hasten toward destruction. And indeed Noema was born in the seventh generation from Cain. But if you wish to count the generations from Adam and also number all the sons of Lamech, you will find Noema in the eleventh place. For Lamech is the seventh from Adam, and when you add his four children, you indeed fulfill the number eleven. The number eleven, which exceeds ten, is often used to designate sin, which is committed by the transgression of the decalogue. And therefore, rightly, the reprobate generation is terminated and perishes in the eleventh number, and that in a woman: because while despising the precepts of the divine law, striving to be satiated by depraved pleasures, they build sudden destruction for themselves.

Genesis 4: 23–24

And Lamech said to his wives Ada and Zillah: "Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech; give ear to my speech, for I have slain a man for wounding me, and a young man for bruising me." The man or young man that he mentions signifies Cain, whom the same Lamech unintentionally killed, as Jerome testifies to be written in a certain Hebrew volume. He killed him both in his wound and in his bruise, because he brought death and damnation upon himself for killing him whom God had granted life.

Genesis 4: 24

Sevenfold vengeance shall be taken for Cain, but for Lamech seventy-sevenfold. Sevenfold vengeance was taken for Cain, as he bore the penalties of fratricide and envy as a wandering fugitive up to the seventh generation. But for Lamech seventy-sevenfold, because, as Jerome testifies, reported to him by the Hebrews, and Josephus confirms the same, seventy-seven souls were

generated from the lineage of Cain, which perished in the flood. They say that in this number the vengeance upon Lamech was accomplished, as his lineage persisted until the flood. Lamech is interpreted as "Smiting" or "Smitten," both interpretations fitting the same man who struck Cain and for this same parricide he was struck by divine vengeance. Mystically, however, Lamech signifies mankind, both smitten by the deceit of the ancient enemy in the first parent, and smiting itself by the accumulation of daily sins, for which vengeance was given seventy-sevenfold; because until the advent of Christ, who appeared in the world in the seventy-seventh generation, the guilt of the first transgression pressed upon mankind, until He came to take away the sins of the world, and by the door of the kingdom of heaven, opened by his baptism or passion, lead us into eternal life which we lost in Adam. Then, therefore, vengeance upon Lamech ceased because, with the sting of death and sin broken by the Lord's passion and resurrection, mankind returned to the heavenly kingdom.

Genesis 4: 25

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and he called his name Seth, saying: God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel. After he mentioned the fratricide Cain being extinguished, and repeated that his progeny was cursed in the seventh generation, he returns to explain the restoration of the holy seed, and that this remained perpetually despite the perishing of the impious. Now Seth is interpreted as "appointed" or "resurrection," the reason for the name being revealed by the parent saying: [Genesis 4:25] -- The Lord has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, whom Cain killed. He was appointed in place of Abel, not only in the order of birth but also in the merit of virtue, filling the place of his brother, whose devotion of mind is shown to have also passed to his offspring, as it is added:

Genesis 4: 26

But to Seth also was born a son, whom he called Enos. He began to invoke the name of the Lord. Enos is interpreted as Man or Vir: whence it is proper that he who has such a name begins to invoke the name of the Lord, imploring the help of the Creator all the more earnestly in his daily prayers, the more he remembers that he is made of frail nature. Mystically, however, just as Abel slain by Cain denotes the suffering Lord; so Seth born for him desig-

nates him risen from the dead: hence, aptly among the Septuagint Translators, it is reported that his father or mother said at his birth: For God has raised up for me another seed for Abel, whom Cain killed. For this reason it is rightly called another seed according to the mystical senses, since the same Lord who was slain has risen again, because indeed he was slain mortal, he rose immortal: he died so that we might not fear death: he rose to give us hope and faith in rising again from death: whose separation of seeds, speaking of our resurrection, the Apostle has plainly distinguished, saying, It is sown in corruption, it rises in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it rises in glory: it is sown in weakness, it rises in power: it is sown a natural body, it rises a spiritual body (I Cor. XV, 42).

And concerning the Lord himself, Although he died, he says, of weakness, yet he lives by the power of God (II Cor. XIII, 4). Enos truly, the son of Seth, figuratively expresses the Christian people, who through faith and the sacrament of the Lord's passion and resurrection are daily born from water and the Holy Spirit throughout the whole world. For preferring the grace of his regeneration to his first generation, he is accustomed to invoke the help of the name of the Lord in all that he does, saying: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name (Matt. VI, 9), etc., in that same Lord's prayer, or in others with which we are accustomed to implore his grace, without which we are worth nothing; whence also we are rightly called by the name Enos, that is, Man, on account of the consciousness of our frailty: on account of the hope of our future immortality, we are the sons of Seth, that is, of the Resurrection.

CHAPTER 5

Genesis 5:1

This is the book of the generation of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God: He created them male and female, and He blessed them. This is the book of the first creation of man, which God made in His likeness, that he might be perpetually good, immortal, and happy by participation in His goodness. God created them male and female and blessed them with the grace of His blessing. Such was the generation of Adam with his wife on the day he was created. But alas! how grievous! He defiled the likeness of God by believing the enemy rather than the Creator; his firstborn contracted the heavier punishment of a curse by envying and killing his brother; the seventh from him, Lamech, corrupted the estab-

lished law of male and female, of which it was said, "They shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. II, 24), by taking two wives and uniting three in one flesh. As evils increased everywhere, humanity so departed from the likeness of its Creator and the first blessing that by the tenth generation, except for a few whom the ark held, it deserved to be entirely destroyed. However, the Creator Himself granted that we might return to that likeness and blessing, being born and dying in the likeness of our nature, so that redeemed through Him, we might merit to say of Him: "We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John III, 2), and to hear from Him: "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. XXV, 34).

Genesis 5:2

And he called their names Adam on the day when they were created. Adam, like Enos, is interpreted as Man, but Enos is said to sound like Man in a way that only suits males: whereas Adam is able to be applied to both sexes; hence it is rightly said that he called their names Adam, that is, Man. Just as man in Latin derives the etymology of the name from soil because he derives the origin of his flesh from soil, so among the Hebrews Adam is named from the earth because man was formed from the clay of the earth; hence also Adam can be interpreted as Earthly, or red earth. Furthermore, among the Greeks, man has a different etymology: for he is called antropos, from the fact that he ought to look above and lift the eyes of the mind to view the heavens. Moreover, in the name Adam, apart from the interpretation which designates man, there is another mystery which ought not to be passed over in silence. For it has four letters: A, and D, and A, and M, from which letters the four quarters of the globe, when named in Greek, take their beginning. For among them the east is called anatole, the west is called dysis, the north is called arctos, and the south is called mesembria; and it was very fitting that the name of the first man should mystically contain all the regions of the world, through whose progeny the whole world was to be filled. But when it says, And he called their names Adam, and added, On the day when they were created, it clearly insinuates that on one and the same day, that is, the sixth day of the nascent world, Adam and his wife were made, and not that the wife was separately created from his side after the sixth or seventh day.

Genesis 5: 3–32

Adam lived for one hundred and thirty years, and he begot a son in his own likeness and image, and he named him Seth. Adam indeed was created in the likeness and image of God, because he was made immortal in both soul and body. However, after he corrupted the image and likeness of God in himself by sinning, he begot a son in his own likeness and image, that is, mortal, corruptible, capable of reason, bound by the guilt of his transgression, and to be freed only by the grace of his Creator. It should be noted that where our Codices, translated from the Hebrew source, say Adam lived for one hundred and thirty years and begot Seth, the ancient translation has, instead of one hundred and thirty, two hundred and thirty; where our Codices continue, "And the days of Adam after he begot Seth were eight hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters," that one has seven hundred instead of eight hundred. And where it concludes, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died," it places the same total, and such a distinction of numbers is preserved in all generations up to the flood between the two editions, so that before the birth of a son each one in the Septuagint is said to have had one hundred years more, and after the birth one hundred years less than in the Hebrew truth. But in the conclusion, both editions place an equal number;

except only in the sixth generation; where in both Codices, Jared is found to have begotten Enoch at one hundred and sixty-two years, and after his birth to have lived eight hundred years: and in the ninth, where, according to the Hebrew truth, Lamech begot Noah when he was one hundred and eighty years old, and after he was born, he is found to have survived for five hundred and ninety-five years. However, in the Septuagint, the years before Noah was born are found to be one hundred and eighty-eight, and after he was born, five hundred sixty-five; thus it happens that Lamech is found to have lived twenty-four years longer in Hebrew than in the Septuagint Codices: by which difference of interpretations, it is made that the lifetime of Methuselah seems to extend fourteen years beyond the flood, and so the years before the flood according to the Hebrews are one thousand five hundred and fifty-six; according to the Septuagint, which the chronographers follow, two thousand two hundred and forty-two: although the most learned Augustine professes that even in the Septuagint translation, Methuselah is found in fewer but more accurate Codices to have died six years before the

flood: who, when he most diligently investigated the cause of the aforementioned discord in interpretations, and did not wish to derogate from the faith of the Septuagint translators, whom the apostles and evangelists are proven to have followed in many places; and he himself believed they used more a prophetic gift than the office of interpretation in translating the Scriptures;

he concluded in this way, saying: "Therefore it is more credible for someone to say that when these first began to be copied from the library of Ptolemy; at that time, something like this could have happened in one Codex, but first copied from there, from which it spread more widely, where indeed the error of the scribe could have happened. However, it is not absurd to suspect this in that question about the life of Methuselah. And after some: "I would not doubt at all that it is rightly done, he says, when something different is found in both Codices, since both cannot be according to the faith of the transactions, that the truth be believed rather to the language from which it is translated into another by interpreters. Therefore, according to Hebrew truth, Adam lived one hundred and thirty years and begot Seth. Seth lived one hundred and five years and begot Enos. Enos lived ninety years and begot Cainan. Cainan lived eighty years and begot Mahalalel. Mahalalel lived sixty-five years and begot Jared. Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years and begot Enoch.

Genesis 5: 21–22

Furthermore, Enoch lived sixty-five years and begot Methuselah, and walked with God. After he begot Methuselah, he lived for three hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters. It is said that he walked with God. He followed God's will and precepts in all things, with God dwelling in him, possessing, and ruling over his heart, he performed good works outwardly, according to that of the prophet: "I will show you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: certainly to do justice and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). And as Zachariah says: "I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk in His name, says the Lord" (Zachariah 10:12). However, it is not said that Enoch walked with God for three hundred years after Methuselah was born, as if he had not obeyed divine commands even before his birth; but rather by this sentence, it simply indicates that he did not serve God with good work for more than three

hundred years after Methuselah's birth in this life. But after these years were completed, he followed God to the further joys of life. For it continues:

Genesis 5: 23–24

And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years, and he walked with God, and he was not, because God took him. It is said most beautifully, that he who had walked with God in this life by obeying His commandments, walked afterwards with Him by passing from this life into another, where he would live in the greatest peace and happiness of flesh and spirit: whom however the faith of the universal Church holds to return before the day of judgment, that is, at the imminent advent of the Antichrist, with Elijah for the conversion of this age, so that by the authority and doctrine of such great men, the hearts of men might be instructed and strengthened to endure and overcome the persecution of that son of perdition; and then, having completed their martyrdom, to consent to the joys of immortal life, according to what the Lord says in the Apocalypse to John: And I will give to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth (Rev. 11:3), that is, for three and a half years living in great continence and struggle. And shortly after: And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the abyss will make war against them, and will conquer them, and kill them (Ibid., 7).

We have said previously, by anticipation, that just as Lamech in the seventh generation from Adam, who was cursed, signifies the destruction of the reprobate, which they find in the future age where they ought to have hoped for rest, so Enoch, who was translated in the seventh generation from the world, demonstrates the true rest of the elect, which they receive without end after the labors of this life, which pass through six ages. Hence it is rightly read that Lamech took two wives against the decree of Him who said: "The two shall be one flesh," and from them begot offspring dedicated to worldly deeds and allurements, and thus, by committing murder, was cursed by the sentence of his own mouth. Furthermore, it is stated that Enoch walked with God. What greater praise could there be for a man? None, since he is an inseparable companion, following in all deeds the footsteps of the divine command: if Adam had done this, he would not have turned his foot away from the company of the Creator to hear the serpent's speech, and would still be in paradise with his entire race. The fact that all the days of

Enoch are said to be three hundred and sixty-five years, the number of days in a solar year, mystically signifies that throughout the whole of this world's time, those who serve the Lord faithfully and strive towards eternal rest will never fall short.

Nor is it by chance that three hundred years are specially mentioned, in which Enoch is particularly reported to have walked with God. For this number among the Greeks is usually marked by the letter T. The letter T indeed holds the figure of the cross; and if it had received the single point missing in the middle, it would no longer be merely the figure of the cross but would be depicted as the clear sign of the cross itself. Enoch therefore walked with God, who is called Dedication, for three hundred years; for he certainly expressed, rather he himself enacted, the life and behavior of those who, in faith of the Lord's passion, look forward to the joy of eternal salvation, denying themselves, taking up their cross daily, and following the Lord: which is to say in other words, walking with God, and aiming for the entrance of paradise. It is to be noted, however, that while Scripture extends the progeny of Seth up to Noah, and then to Abraham with such distinction, it describes the lineage of Cain up to Lamech and his children without any mention of ages, as if tacitly intimating to us the saying of the Psalmist: For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish (Psalm 1:6).

Genesis 5:25

Methuselah also lived one hundred eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. Lamech lived one hundred eighty-two years, and begot Noah, saying: "He will comfort us from our works and labors of our hands on the earth which the Lord has cursed. Lamech foresaw in prophetic spirit what kind of person his son would be, of what great virtue he would be, and that in his days the nation of the impious would be exterminated, and that through him, after the flood, the generation of the faithful would be restored. But the works and labors of the hands, which he said, I believe he wanted not to be understood as anything other than those by which the progeny of the elect were oppressed at that time by the wickedness of the evil; he declared that his and their consolation, when the world, which was then lost by the flood, all things of the world and its inhabitants being removed from the midst, would foresee a new race of the just to be born. For even at this time, the consolation of the good is when they see the approaching day of judgment

with the ruins of the world increasing, in which, the entirety of the wicked being consumed, they themselves will possess with the Lord the new kingdoms of the future age. But for what our edition has as "he will comfort," the ancient interpreters said: "He will make us rest from our works," which seems to fit the name Noah better. For Noah indeed means Rest.

In which, according to the letter, it can be understood that in his times all past works of men rested through the flood. According to the spiritual sense, however, the same rest is which is also the consolation of the saints, namely to behold, with the end of the world approaching, both the destruction of the impious, and their own time of rewards at hand. But Noah, in whose merits a rest and consolation was to be given to the world by the Lord devoutly, is born in the tenth generation from Adam: because clearly, through the fulfillment of the Decalogue of the law, eternal rest and life are granted to us. When Scripture says he begot him well, it by no means wished to name his one son, lest in a perfect man the number eleven, as if a transgression of ten, should appear to have any place, but speaking mystically about a man of virtue, it reports that three sons were born to him together.

Genesis 5:32

Noah indeed, when he was five hundred years old, begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Therefore, Noah was born in the tenth generation, because he both represented and led the lives of those who are perfect in the observance of the Decalogue. He begot three sons, so that his service to the Lord in the faith of the Holy Trinity and the produce of spiritual virtues would also be signified by the fruit of his physical offspring; although, according to history, it was appropriate for him to have begotten three sons, in whom the seed of the world perishing was to be left to a future generation, so that through the offspring of the three sons, indeed, the three parts of the world would be filled. For the sons of Shem especially possessed Asia, the offspring of Ham Africa, and the descendants of Japheth Europe.

CHAPTER 6

Genesis 6:1-2

And when men began to multiply on the earth and had daughters, the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. "Men" means the offspring of Cain, who, turned away from the view of divine will, subjected their mind solely to hu-

man affairs: "sons of God", however, refers to those who were born from the lineage of Seth, who, following the example of their father's devotion, preserved with an inviolate mind the service they owed to God. By this distinction, the Lord in the Gospel also separated His disciples from the rest, saying, "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is? (Matthew 16:13). And having received their answer, He said, "But who do you say that I am? evidently wanting them to be understood as superior to men and to be counted among those of whom He Himself said: "I have said, You are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High" (Psalm 82:6). Some manuscripts have "angels of God" instead of "sons of God," which is obviously taken in the same sense. For the angels of God are rightly called righteous men, who according to the measure of their capacity strive to live an angelic life on earth: to such the Apostle says, "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (Romans 8:9). And again: "For our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

Therefore, it seems that the generation of the lineage of Seth, as long as it was not mingled with the offspring of Cain, preserved the norm of its chastity untainted; but after it fell into concupiscence and joined the cursed offspring of wicked women, it also began to share in the curse with the corrupted decency of its sober mind. Hence, in the law it is diligently and carefully commanded to the sons of Israel, not to intermarry with foreigners, because, it says, "his daughter will seduce your son to follow their gods" (Deuteronomy 7:4).

Genesis 6:3

And God said, "My Spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh; and his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." Saint Jerome, explaining these verses, says, "It is written in Hebrew: My Spirit shall not judge these men forever, because they are flesh; that is, because human nature is fragile, I will not condemn them to eternal torment; but here I will render to them what they deserve. Therefore, it denotes not the severity, as it is read in our texts, but the clemency of God, while a sinner is punished here for his crime: hence also an angry God speaks to some: I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot, nor your brides when they commit adultery (Hos. IV). And in another place: I will punish their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with stripes; nevertheless, I will not take my mercy away from them (Ps. LXXXIX)." Moreover, lest He seem to be cruel in not giving sinners a place for repentance, He added: "And his days shall be one hundred

and twenty years" (Gen. VI), that is, they will have one hundred and twenty years to repent; but because they despised repentance, God did not want to wait for the appointed time, but cutting short the span of twenty years, He brought the flood in the hundredth year appointed for repentance.

Genesis 6:4

There were giants on the earth in those days. Giants are called men with immense bodies and excessive power, of which there were also many after the flood, that is, in the times of Moses or David, who have the name in Greek because, according to the poets' fables, the earth bore them. They seem, however, to have been begotten when the descendants of Seth chose wives from the lineage of Cain because of their beauty against the law of their dignity. For it follows: [Genesis 6:4] -- After the sons of God entered the daughters of men, and they bore children, these were the mighty men of old, men of renown. It should be noted that in this place, for giants, the Hebrew reads 'fallen ones', that is, 'annasilim'; and the sense is easy and clear because they were 'fallen' men on the earth in those days, that is, adhering to earthly desires, having lost the state of uprightness devoted to God. The giants, however, are properly named 'Rafaim' in their language. But sometimes a giant is taken in a good sense, as it is said of the Lord: 'He rejoiced as a giant to run his course' (Psalm 19:5); but this is for the unique power by which He transcends the rest of humanity, and accomplished the mystery of the Incarnation with wondrous power, just as a lion sometimes signifies the Lord, sometimes the devil; but the devil for pride and ferocity, the Lord for power: although in the Hebrew truth, the aforementioned verse of the psalm is written thus: 'He rejoiced as a strong man to run his course.'

Genesis 6:5

But God, seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that every thought of their hearts was only evil continually, regretted that He had made man on the earth. He is said to have regretted, not because God, like man, truly regrets any of His actions, whose judgment on all things is as fixed as His foreknowledge is certain; but Scripture uses such words in order to insinuate itself to us more familiarly, we who are accustomed to change anything we undertake and transfer it into something else only by repenting: even though divine providence, for those perceiving with a serene mind, appears to administer all things with the most certain order. Nevertheless,

Scripture fits and adapts itself to the humble understanding of the slower minds, of whom the far greater number is, so that it says as if by the repentance of God, those things taken away which begin to exist, and do not continue as long as they were hoped to last: similar to which is what follows.

Genesis 6:7

And touched by inner sorrow of the heart, He said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the earth, from man to animals, from creeping things to the birds of the sky; for I regret that I have made them." For God is said to grieve in a human manner when He considers that the men whom He created cling to a malicious enemy through sin rather than to Him by living piously, according to Solomon's statement: "A foolish son is a grief to his father" (Prov. 19:13). And again: "A foolish son is the anger of his father, and the grief of the mother who bore him" (Prov. 17:25). But that He also announces the destruction of all earthly and flying creatures expresses the magnitude of the coming disaster: for He threatens destruction to the irrational creatures as if they, too, had sinned.

Genesis 6:9

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just and perfect man in his generations; he walked with God. Noah is praised with the same commendation as Enoch, namely that he followed the footsteps of the divine command with upright steps of good works, and thus, while the world perished, he was saved in the ark. Noah was just and perfect, not as the saints are to be perfected in that immortality in which they will be equal to the angels of God, but as perfect as one can be in this pilgrimage; and therefore it is added, in his generations, to signify that he was just according to the righteousness of his generations, namely, those generations in which Seth, Enos, Enoch, and the other holy and perfect men of that time lived. To these generations, the following text of Holy Scripture indicates, also belonged his sons Shem and Japheth.

Genesis 6:12

And when God saw that the earth was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted its way. All flesh means all humans, according to the prophet's statement: "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6). For neither birds nor quadrupeds had corrupted their way by sinning, just as they will not see the Salvation of our God, that is Christ, but all humans will see.

Genesis 6:13

He said to Noah: The end of all flesh has come before me; the earth is filled with iniquity because of them, and I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of smoothed wood, etc. The diverse form in the construction of the ark and the imminent flood contains a mystery. First, as the Lord himself showed by the sudden inundation of the flood, the unexpected hour of the last judgment is signified: "And as it was, he says, in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all" (Matthew 24:38). For the construction of the ark, which took a hundred years, signifies the entire period of this age, during which the holy church is also built and brought to its perfect end. There is no doubt that the hundred-year number signifies perfection, either because it is filled by ten decades, or because it moves from the left to the right, expressing an action which takes place in this life as though on the left, but will be consummated in the future life as on the right. But as the ark was made, and with everything that was to be saved brought into it, the flood came and took away all that was outside it;

so, when all those who are predestined to eternal life have entered the church, the end of the world will come and all those found outside the church will perish; and according to this understanding, the ark clearly signifies the church, Noah signifies the Lord who builds the church with his saints, and the flood signifies the end of the age or the final judgment. However, aside from the construction of the ark, even in Noah, because his name means rest, and he was to give rest or comfort to men, it was prefigured that men would rest from the works and labors of their hands on the earth, which the Lord cursed, holding the image of the Lord Savior. For he consoles us through the illumination of his Spirit, who is therefore called the Paraclete, that is, the comforter. He has rescued us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for us. He calls the weary to rest: "Come to me, he says, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28). He truly was the just and perfect man through all generations, that is, in every congregation of saints, as he committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth.

According to another equally pious and catholic interpretation, the ark signifies the church, the flood signifies the water of baptism, by which the church itself is washed and sanctified in all its members, as the apostle Peter explains, saying: "When the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water, which also saves you now, a baptism of similar fashion, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:20). That he says we are saved in baptism through the resurrection of Jesus Christ briefly explains what the number of eight souls saved through water mystically signifies. For the day of the Lord's resurrection is indeed the third day from his passion, but the eighth from the day of the first creation. Some Fathers often interpret the waves of the flood as the trials of this age, by which the holy church is daily struck but not overcome; rather, by being tested through these trials, it is more elevated from earthly desires to seek heavenly things. Whatever is outside it is killed by the same temptations of the world, just as it is said that multiplying and mightily flooding waters on the surface of the earth lifted the ark above the land; whatever was outside the ark perished.

This exposition aligns with the parable of the two houses from the Lord, one built on rock, the other on sand; when equally struck by rain, winds, and floods, the one founded on the rock of faith was tested by temptations; the one that placed its hope in the fleeting pleasures of this life, like on sands, was shaken. For what the builder Noah is to the ark, the foundation rock is to the house of faith; and what the corrupt mind of giants bent to earth is outside the ark, this is expressed by the sand gathered in the house of unbelief. Therefore, let the ark signify the church, the flood the font of baptism by which it is washed, the waves the temptations of the world by which it is tested, the end in which it is crowned. Moreover, the builder of the ark Noah typically denotes either the Lord and Savior himself or any devoted ruler of the same holy church.

Genesis 6:14

Make for yourself, he says, an ark of smoothed wood. Not only the humans who were saved in the ark, but also the animals that entered it together; even the wood of which it was made mystically announces the faithful of the holy Church. Therefore, the wood of which it was made is commanded to be smoothed, because whoever is placed in the structure of the Church by com-

ing to faith must first, being cut off from the root of his former lifestyle through the instruction or chastisement of those who have preceded in Christ, remove everything of harmful crookedness and deformity which he finds in himself, and direct his whole mind and action to the rule of the Catholic faith and truth, so that, in the order of the heavenly building, he may be fitly and opportunely placed for the creation of a new man in his proper place and time.

Genesis 6:14

However, for the smoothed wood, the ancient translation used the term squared wood, which equally refers to the same perfection of the elect. For wherever you turn a square, it will stand, nor can it be prone to falling in any way. Thus indeed, thus the mind of the elect remembers to maintain the inviolate state of holy intention, whatever temptations it may encounter. [Genesis 6:14] -- You shall make little rooms in the ark. All the mansions in the ark were arranged as receptacles for various animals that were to enter it, and in the Church there are many orders of institutions according to the diversity of those who come to the faith. For the same life or manner of living ought not to be that of the married and the continent, the sinners, and the rulers; and to this one it is said: If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments, you shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness (Matthew 19:17), and other such things. But to another: If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all that you have, and give to the poor (Ibid., 21). Hence also, concerning the reward itself of eternal retribution, the Lord says: In my Father's house there are many mansions (John 14:2). Therefore, there are little rooms in the ark because not all have the same merit in the Church, nor the same progress in faith, although all are contained within one faith and washed in the same baptism.

Genesis 6:14

And you shall cover it inside and outside with bitumen, and you shall make it thus. Bitumen is the hottest and most violent adhesive, whose power is such that the woods which have been coated with it can neither be eaten by worms, nor can they be dissolved by the heat of the sun, or the blows of the winds, or the flooding of the waters; whence what else is mystically understood by bitumen than the constancy of faith? Moreover, the ark is covered inside and outside with bitumen, and thus it is completely perfected, while

both the thoughts of the elect and their works, so that they may not be overcome or deceived by the incursions of vices, are fortified by the power of faith in all things.

Genesis 6:15

The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. The length of the ark signifies the long-suffering patience by which adversities are bravely endured; the width signifies the breadth of charity, which embraces even those who inflict adversities; the height signifies the sublimity of hope, by which the eternal reward in heaven is insinuated. Hence the length of the ark is commanded to be three hundred cubits, as this number, as we have previously noted, is represented by the letter T in Greek. This letter is written in the shape of a cross, because the holy Church, while remaining invincible and steadfast amid adversities, follows the footsteps of the Lord's passion, remembering His word where He said: And he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me (Matthew 10:38). The width extends to fifty cubits, in which number the Holy Spirit is sent, and under the law universal rest and remission are bestowed upon God's people because the love of God is poured into our hearts, not by the merit of our actions but by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. And this is rest and remission of our debts, when we love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, and our neighbor in God as ourselves, and our adversary for the sake of God. The height is thirty cubits, because this is the only and unique hope of the elect, that through the observation of the Decalogue, which is perfected in the love of God and neighbor, they ascend to the contemplation of the Holy Trinity. For three times ten makes thirty.

Genesis 6:15

There is, however, another memorable mystery in the shape of the ark, which is found to be formed according to the measure of the human body. For the length of the human body from the top of the head to the feet is six times the height from one side to the other, and ten times the height measured from the back to the abdomen, as if you measure a lying man supine or prone; the length from head to feet is six times as long as the width from right to left or left to right, and ten times as high from the ground. Therefore, the ark was made three hundred cubits in length, fifty in width, and

thirty in height; and because the Apostle says of the Church that it is one body and one spirit in Christ, rightly the ark, which bore the figure of this, was formed in the likeness of the human body, because Christ Himself, God, and our Lord willed to be incarnated for us and to wash us from sins and consecrate us through the sacraments of His humanity.

Rightly, He commanded that the ark, in which He decreed to save the remnants of the human race while the wicked perished, be made in the manner of the human body, just as the temple which Solomon made for the Lord not only prefigured His Church, but also His flesh itself, which He took from the Virgin, as He Himself testified when He said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The evangelist said this, meaning the temple of His body (John 2:19). Thus also, the ark, which Noah made in the form of the human body, held our type, of whom the Apostle said, "Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood" (Ephesians 4:13); and of the Lord Himself, who deigned to gather us into the unity of faith through the mystery of His Incarnation and to cleanse us from sins by the grace of the Holy Spirit, which the dove bringing the olive branch to the ark symbolized, and to save us from the destruction of the perishing world.

Genesis 6:16

You shall make a window in the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above. A window is commanded to be made in the ark so that, after the rains ceased and the ark rested, Noah might release a bird through it to ascertain whether the waters had ceased, or whether the earth had dried or sprouted, so that he also, having opened it, might see the light of the sky; hence in Hebrew it is aptly translated as having the noon, because windows are usually illuminated more clearly by the midday sun; which also aptly accords with spiritual sacraments. For the window, which illuminated the inhabitants of the ark with the splendor of the midday sun only after the flood had passed, suggests that knowledge of heavenly mysteries which is more fully revealed to the baptized faithful. Moreover, the fact that the top of the ark is said to be finished in a cubit indicates that it had three hundred cubits of length and fifty cubits of width at the bottom; gradually narrowed at the corners, it was collected into the space of one cubit at the top, thus becoming shorter and narrower as it rose higher.

And indeed, as far as the necessity of rains and the flood is concerned, no form could have been given to the ark more appropriate than that the down-pour of rains should be dispersed from the narrow summit of the roof when, the floodgates of heaven having been opened, the rain fell for such a long time; but this form of the ark also mystically suits the state of the holy Church. For just as the ark was broader in the lower parts, where it is believed to have contained animals; it was narrower in the upper parts, where it contained men and birds until it reached the measure of one cubit at the top; thus the Church has more carnal than spiritual members, more who are inclined like quadrupeds by the whole gaze of their mind to desire earthly things than those who, like birds, seek heavenly things with the wings of virtues; and as the holier each person in it is, the fewer they are found to be, until they reach the Mediator between God and men, who appeared as a man among men, yet is above all, God blessed forever.

Genesis 6: 16

You shall place the door of the ark on the lower side. This door, through which men and all the animals to be saved in the ark entered, signifies the unity of faith, without which no one can enter the Church; for there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God, which is aptly commanded to be placed on the side of the ark, because it clearly designates that door, which was opened in the side of the Crucified Lord Savior by the soldier's lance, from which immediately flowed blood and water: through these sacraments, each of the faithful is received into the communion of the holy Church as into the insides of the ark. Moreover, the door of the ark is commanded to be made not only on the side but also below, so that the humility of either the Lord himself by which he died for us or ours, without which we cannot be saved, is signified. Also, the door of the ark was made below and near the ground, so that men or animals to be saved could enter it, and having entered, immediately ascended to the higher places to their respective seats, because the Lord, appearing in the depths of this mortality, was wounded for our iniquities, so that through the sacraments of his wounds, we being redeemed might be led to the heavenly mansions of virtues in the present and to the heavenly rewards with an invisible ascension.

This is also well expressed in Solomon's temple, the door by which it was ascended to the upper parts, concerning which it is thus written: "The entrance of the middle side was on the right side of the house; which some in-

terpret as stating that the temple had an entrance from the southern part, which is far from the truth. For if it wanted to be understood this way, Scripture could briefly say: "And it had an entrance to the South or to the South. But the temple itself actually had an entrance from the rising of the sun. What is said: "The entrance of the middle side was on the right part of the house," the right part of the house is called the southern part, in whose middle side was the door by which it was ascended to the upper parts, with the entrance beginning from the eastern part of the same side, that is, from the very corner, and gradually proceeding to the upper rooms through the interior of the middle wall; hence it is subsequently added: "And they ascended by winding stairs to the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third.

Therefore, because the Lord, when he said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19), was speaking of the temple of his body, the door in the right side of this temple, is it not evident that it is the very door which was opened in his right side after the passion, as we said above, through the opening of which we transition from the present life of the holy Church to the eternal rest of souls in the future life, in the example of those who entered the right side of the temple and ascended to the middle chamber by winding stairs. But even after the most blessed rest of souls, we may ascend to the reception of spiritual bodies, as if from the middle chamber to the third, from which we may rejoice with God in the perpetual immortality of both, that is, the soul and the body.

Genesis 6:16

You shall make upper rooms and lower rooms in it. Lower rooms denote a triple roof. For "stege" in Greek means "roof"; hence ancient interpreters for this word used "tricamerata. Finally, in the Acts of the Apostles, where a young man, whom Paul the Apostle revived from death, is said to have fallen from the third roof or upper room, in Greek it is written that he fell from the "tristego. But upper rooms and lower rooms, as early translators said, were made two-chambered and three-chambered in the ark, such that in distinct seats they would house animals of various kinds. Beasts, indeed, as it is believable, in the lowest parts; clean animals in the higher parts; humans and birds in the highest. For it is certain that where man sat, there too were the raven and dove, and consequently other birds too, located near the window, which is believed to have been made in the highest parts of the ark. For

through this window he sent out the aforementioned birds, to see how the land's face fared; in these roofs as well, various little chambers were made, as stated above, for the distinction of the same animals or birds, so that some might not harm others, the more violent not harming the gentler.

It is not in vain that Scripture states upper rooms and lower rooms were made in the ark, or that it was made two-chambered and three-chambered, when it could have said in one word that it was arranged in five upper rooms or roofs; but it said it was two-chambered, to signify that in the Church the circumcised and the uncircumcised, Jews and Greeks, will be saved. And three-chambered to signify the triple yield of the evangelical seed, thirty-fold, sixtyfold, hundredfold; so that in the lowest resides marital chastity, above it widowhood, and above that virginity. Moreover, Origen says that in the lower parts the ark was made two-chambered, so that the lowest region would receive dung, the second would be assigned to storing feed; but in the higher parts three-chambered, so that in the first of these parts would be quarters for beasts, in the second stalls for gentler animals, in the highest the seat for humans.

Genesis 6:17

Behold, I will bring the waters of a flood upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which there is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall perish, and I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark, you and your sons, and the rest. The waters of the flood brought upon the earth killed all flesh that was found outside the ark, but Noah and all that were in the ark were saved. Washing the world with the water of baptism saves whomever it finds faithfully abiding in the unity of the holy Church; but those who receive baptism outside the Church from heretics or schismatics die unless they repent by returning to catholic unity. Likewise, when the time of the final judgment comes, whoever is found persevering in faith and action in the holy Church shall be saved eternally; those separated from the Church by faith, action, or both, perish.

Genesis 6:21

Therefore, you shall take with you of all food that can be eaten, and gather it to yourself, and it shall be food both for you and for them. And the Lord has abundantly filled His Church with the nourishment of spiritual life in many ways, so that He might invite the multitudes of the faithful to the reception

of heavenly rewards by the general precepts of His commandments, and call whomever is more perfect to the higher gifts of the same everlasting kingdom through the disciplines of stricter observance. But it is usually asked whether the ark, with the capacity described, could have carried all the animals said to have entered it along with their food? Origen tries to solve this question with the geometric cubit, asserting that it was not for nothing that Scripture mentioned that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, who loved geometry. He states that the geometric cubit is equivalent to the value of six of our cubits. If, therefore, we understand such large cubits, there is no question that the ark had such a capacity as to contain all these things. But it should be noted that although Moses had learned geometric cubits, the people for whom he wrote the book were ignorant of such arts, nor did he wish to deceive them by writing things that they would not understand in truth but that he alone, with the most skilled Egyptians, could comprehend.

It must also be considered that Moses, when writing about the construction of the tabernacle, noted cubits of the same kind as those he used for the ark, not of a different mode. For neither could he place something different in the same work for the same readers or listeners. If, however, he was also following geometric cubits there, then the tabernacle was not made thirty cubits long, ten cubits high, and wide, as read, but by multiplying this number by one and a half, it had one hundred and eighty cubits in length and sixty in both height and width, thus being much longer and wider than Solomon's temple, which was only forty cubits in length and twenty cubits in width. And the boards of the tabernacle itself, which are said to be ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide, would have been sixty cubits long and nine cubits wide, larger than would generally be produced by wood or suited for such a building or easily carried by human hands. The coverings, which are said to have been thirty cubits long each and four cubits wide, would have been one hundred and eighty cubits long and twenty-four wide. But Josephus, writing about the construction of the same tabernacle, also prohibits understanding it in this way.

He says, "The ark was made, five palms in length, three in width," while Moses in Exodus wrote that the length of the ark was two and a half cubits and the width a cubit and a half, which, according to Josephus's testimony, are understood not as geometric but as ordinary cubits. Thus, regarding

Noah's ark, it should be observed that all that happened within it or in relation to it was full of divine miracles. For if everything were done in the usual manner of men, how could eight people daily provide food and drink and other necessities to such a multitude of birds, beasts, and reptiles? Especially when Scripture does not recount any command from God regarding bringing drink into the ark? How could the waste and urine of so many creatures not render the place intolerable with stench for the animals themselves or corrode the floor of the ark, no matter how well it was pitch-sealed? How could they, remaining in one place for a whole year, neither the birds lose their ability to fly, nor the quadrupeds their ability to walk? The Lord Himself, who preserved the ark with all it contained, keeping it incorrupt, and who guided it so that it did not sink into the sea, but placed it in a location in the mountains where there was an easy and prompt exit to the land for all the animals within it from the door it had, also provided how they might be fed and kept safe within the ark.

Nor is it unreasonable to believe, as some assert, that Noah prepared for the animals about to enter the ark food that would suffice for their daily use, and, having refreshed each one, they, to signify a mystery—that in the Church all are fed with the food of life according to the capacity of their nature—remained quiet or even in slumber by divine command until the day of their exit.

CHAPTER 7

Genesis 7:1

Noah did therefore all that God commanded him, and the Lord said to him: Enter you and all your household into the ark, etc. Noah did all that God commanded, that is, he built the ark, and, with chambers arranged, he brought provisions into it for all living creatures.

Genesis 7:2

Of all clean animals, take seven and seven, male and female; but of animals that are not clean, two and two, male and female; of the birds of the heaven also, seven and seven, male and female, so that seed might be saved upon the face of all the earth. When he said seven and seven, he does not mean twice seven in each species, but he wants seven only to be taken, of which one, which exceeded the pairs, could be offered to God after the flood. He says seven and seven, because of the many kinds of animals which were to be in-

cluded in this number. Similarly, when he said two and two, he does not mean two pairs in any species of unclean animals, but only two, indicating the male and female. He says two and two, because in many kinds of animals the same pairs were to be taken; it is easily clear to everyone that if the matter were only for saving the kind and not for some higher mystery, a smaller number of animals would suffice to preserve the progeny; now, however, because not all who undergo the baptismal cleansing in the Church also maintain the purity of good works, unclean animals enter the ark along with the clean ones. And rightly are the clean animals contained by the number seven, because the grace of the Spirit is sevenfold, by which the hearts of the faithful are cleansed and sanctified. The unclean are contained by the number two, because false Catholics receive the sacraments of the faith with a double heart, wishing to rejoice here with the world, and to reign in the future with Christ; of whom James says: That man should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord, a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:7).

Genesis 7:6

Noah did everything the Lord had commanded him, and he was six hundred years old when the waters of the flood overflowed the earth. And Noah entered the ark, and his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him, and so on. The age of Noah signifies the perfection of those who enter the Church and, through faith and actions worthy of faith, reach eternal joys. For six times a hundred makes six hundred; and the number six, in which the world was made or formed, not undeservingly signifies the perfection of good action. The number one hundred, moreover, as we mentioned above, is transferred in digital computation from the left to the right, and is especially appropriate for those who in the final judgment will stand on the Judge's right hand and will hear: Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom (Matthew 25:34). Therefore, the number one hundred multiplied by six signifies that perfection of spiritual virtues which is not shown externally for the favor of men, but fulfilled for the glory of the Creator in the hope of heavenly reward; and justly, the leader of the ark, in which the state of the Church is expressed, in the time of his age also signifies the devotion of those who enter thus, that through the merits of good action they may also deserve to pass to eternal salvation. Although it can also be properly understood that since the waters of the flood designate the wave of baptism, the age of Noah

then insinuates the perfection to which those who are baptized ought to strive. When it prefigures the time of the final judgment, the same number of his years figuratively announces what kind of people will enter everlasting rest with the Lord, which the name Noah means, that is, those worthy of heavenly entry by the effect of good work and purity of heart intention.

Genesis 7:10

And when seven days had passed, the waters of the flood inundated the earth. The seventh day signifies the Sabbath, that is, the rest of future life. Therefore, since the flood signifies the water of baptism, aptly after seven days from when the ark was made it came, because we are baptized in the hope of perpetual rest. However, since the waves of temptations are represented by the waters of the flood, it is also fitting that they come after seven days, because for the sake of faith in the hope of future goods, the just suffer persecution from those who prefer earthly goods to heavenly ones, and the temporal to the everlasting. But indeed, since the flood is compared to the coming of the final judgment, it also fittingly inundates the earth after seven days, because then all the elect who have borne the gentle yoke of Christ and the light burden find rest for their souls.

Genesis 7:11

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. The months among the Hebrews are computed only according to the course of the moon from the first to the first, and their first month, in which the Passover is commanded to be kept, and in which the world was made, is called Nisan, which we call April. The second is Iair, which we call May, on whose seventeenth day, that is, when the moon of the same month was the seventeenth, the flood came, when on that same day Noah entered the ark with all the men, animals, and birds that were to be saved through it, for this is what follows.

Genesis 7:13

On that day, Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, his sons, and his wife, and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark. They and every animal according to its kind, and so on until it says: and all the birds entered the ark with Noah. Therefore, all the living creatures entered the ark on one

and the same day, because Noah did not labor greatly and for a long time to collect and bring them in or drive them into the ark; but by divine guidance, they all came willingly in their respective numbers, following him with his children and wives in order, and each took their own quarters, as if by their own will, under the guidance of the Lord. This is supported by what is said of the birds: they entered the ark with Noah, and above generally, and of all that moved on the earth, two by two they entered the ark with Noah. On that same day, that is, the seventeenth day of the second month, the following happened.

Genesis 7:16

And the Lord shut him in from outside, and the flood was upon the earth forty days. Now this is the eighth day since the whole structure of the ark was completed. From which it is evident that the ark in the great mystery was completed on the tenth day of the same second month. For the first month, indeed, that ancient one which was collected from the Hebrews, can aptly represent the people of God. The second month, however, signifies the people of the New Testament. Hence it is commanded in the law, that whoever either were defiled by a dead body, or on a long journey, or preoccupied by any other necessity, could not celebrate Passover in the first month, should do so in this second month, in the blood of a lamb and with unleavened bread, on the fourteenth day in the evening. By the addition of this month we are marked, who could not previously celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's passion with the former people of God, as we were far distant from the communion of the saints, and defiled, indeed dead in sins; but who, after the sacrament of the Lord's incarnation being accomplished, came to faith, as it were, in the light of the second month we celebrate the Lord's Passover.

On the tenth day of this month the ark was completed, for the Lord appearing in the flesh promised us the tenfold reward of the heavenly kingdom, granting us the ability to fulfill the Decalogue of the law, through the grace of the Holy Spirit given to us. This grace can indeed be symbolized by the number of seven days during which, after the ark was made, its entry and the advent of the flood were awaited, because surely, having received the promise of the kingdom, which is expressed by the tenfold reward, grace is given to the faithful by the Spirit, through which they can be united to the members of the holy Church. We can also correctly understand that the ark was flooded on the seventeenth day of the month and not before, because

each of the faithful first ought to be marked in the faith with the sealing of true rest and the heavenly tenfold reward, that is, the image of the eternal king, and thus be admitted into the society of the Church through the washing of regeneration. Now because of the flood all the fountains of the great abyss were broken up and the floodgates, that is, the windows of heaven were opened, by the name of the great abyss the Scripture of the Old Testament is designated, which, long closed by the veil of the letter, could not open the veins of spiritual understanding to the world, but now revealed by the Lord, it provides the Church with abundant fountains of saving knowledge.

The opening of the floodgates of heaven, however, signifies the outpouring of the evangelical and apostolic preaching, which clearly waters earthly hearts from above. Therefore, because we are confirmed in the faith of regeneration by the revealed words of prophecy, and by the open proclamation of the heralds of the New Testament, it is rightly said that for the making of the flood all the fountains of the great abyss were broken up and the floodgates of heaven were opened.

Genesis 7:16

But the Lord sealed the ark from the outside, because He always protects His Church, which rejoices in the washing of sacred baptism, with heavenly defense, so that none of those whom He has predestined to life may perish in any way, and He protects it, struggling amid the waves of the world, so that it may not be overwhelmed or submerged by the pressures or delights of the world. For the Lord sends an angel encamping around those who fear Him, and He will rescue them. But on the day of judgment, the Lord encloses Noah with the inhabitants of the ark from the outside, when, with His elect gathered with Him in the house of His Father, He shuts the door of the kingdom against the entry of the lost, although late repentant, perpetually, according to that parable in the Gospel of the ten virgins, where it is said that those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut, and so forth. Moreover, it is well said that it rained upon the earth for forty days and forty nights; for ten taken four times makes forty, because all guilt of sins, which is committed against the ten precepts of the law, throughout the whole world, which is contained in four parts, is washed away by the sacrament of heavenly baptism, whether that guilt pertains to

days from the prosperity of things, or to nights from the adversity of things contracted.

Genesis 7:17

And the waters increased and lifted the ark high above the earth, the waters increased greatly and filled everything on the surface of the earth. And the waters of baptism and faith, multiplied throughout the whole world, raise the Church from the desire for earthly things to the hope and desire for heavenly life; but also from where the tribulations frequently striking the Church, the more intensely they filled everything, the higher they compelled her to seek the joys of another life: which is well indicated in sacred history, when it is said that the Amorite confined the children of Dan, in the mountain, and did not give them the place to descend to the plains. For the Amorite indeed is interpreted as Bitter, Dan as Judging or Judgment; and who are signified by the sons of Dan, if not those who diligently examine all they do, so that it may be right, in the balance of truth, who, walking by the light of the word of God, swear and decide to keep His judgments of justice; and who are expressed through the Amorite, if not those who attempt to disturb or even overthrow the sweetness of the life of the saints with the bitterness of tribulations? And the Amorite confines the sons of Dan in the mountain, and does not allow them to descend to the plains, as often such a violent storm of persecutions afflicts the elect, that they are not permitted to indulge in any time for weak thoughts; but living in the highest continence, they must devote themselves continually to prayers and fastings and the meditations of the divine Scriptures, so that by greater exercise of virtues they may be able to overcome greater struggles of temptations.

Genesis 7:19

Moreover, the ark was carried above the waters, and the waters prevailed exceedingly, and all the high mountains under the entire heaven were covered. They signify every proud mountain and those lifting themselves up in the glory of this world: the waters cover these mountains, but the ark is carried above them, because the torrent of temptations treads down and sinks the proud and the wicked, but it is overcome by the righteous, who, with a free course of good work and a keen mind, do not cease to strive toward the harbor of eternal salvation: which was well prefigured when Peter walked upon the water to the Lord, for evidently the Church, knocking down the waves

of the world, was destined to reach the tranquility of heavenly life. Likewise, the waters of the flood lift the ark on high, covering and hiding the mountains, because the sacrament of baptism, by which the Church is exalted, despises the proud height of the world and shows it to be worthless; and because we are baptized in the hope of the future rest of souls and the resurrection of bodies unto eternal life, which carnal wisdom ignores, it is appropriately added:

Genesis 7:20

The water was fifteen cubits higher than the mountains which it covered. Indeed, seven and eight make fifteen; seven pertains to the rest of souls which is to be after death, since the Lord certainly rested in the tomb on the seventh Sabbath; but since He rose from the dead after the Sabbath, that is, on the eighth day, the number eight very rightly indicates the time of our resurrection. Therefore, the water surpassed the high mountains by fifteen cubits, that is, seven and eight, because the faith of the Church, sanctified by the fountain of the saving washing, surpasses in the hope of future rest and immortality all the arrogance of carnal philosophy, which indeed knows how to subtly dispute about the creation of the world, but knows nothing to say about the Creator of the world and the life of the saints that is above the world.

Genesis 7:24

And the waters held sway over the earth for one hundred and fifty days. And this number pertains to the same mystery as the number fifteen because seventy is derived from seven, and eighty from eight; combining both numbers, the waters held sway over the earth for one hundred and fifty days, thus commending and confirming the sacrament of baptism in consecrating the new man towards upholding the faith in rest and resurrection.

CHAPTER 8

Genesis 8:1

But the Lord remembered Noah, and all the living creatures, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters were diminished. This can be understood in the name of the Vivifying Spirit of God, of which it is said at the beginning: "And the Spirit of God was moving over the waters" (Genesis 1:2), regarding which there is no doubt that just as then, when the waters were gathered to one

place, making the land dry, so also now, with the waters of the flood taken away, He once again revealed the face of the earth. This wind can also be called the Spirit, according to the following from the Psalmist: "He spoke and the stormy wind stood" (Psalm 107:25), by whose frequent blowing the waters are often caused to diminish or to be moved from their place; hence the passage from Exodus: "And when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, the Lord caused it to go back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided" (Exodus 14:21).

Genesis 8:2

And the fountains of the deep were closed, and the windows of heaven, and the rains from heaven were restrained, and the waters returned from the earth, going and coming, and they began to decrease after one hundred and fifty days. What is said, that the waters returned from the earth going and coming, clearly indicates according to the letter that all the courses of rivers and streams return through the hidden veins of the earth to the matrix of the abyss, according to Solomon: All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea does not overflow; to the place where the rivers go forth, they return so that they may flow again (Ecclesiastes I, 7). Mystically, however, after one hundred and fifty days, the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven are closed, the rains ceasing, the waters return, because the words of the sacred oracle, after having trained us in the faith and hope of eternal rest and immortality, will cease to teach us further, because they will have nothing greater to promise, after having perfected us in the immortal glory of flesh and spirit and led us to the blessed vision of our Creator. Hence it is well that the book of Psalms, which is contained in the number of one hundred and fifty, is completed in divine praise. Indeed, the beginning of blessedness takes its rise from continence and meditation on the divine law, saying:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked (Psalm I, 1), and the rest. Near the end, however, it commends the new joys of the future age, saying, and at the very end consummates all in praise of God: Sing to the Lord a new song, praise in the assembly of the saints (Psalm CXLIX, 1); thus concluding; Let everything that has breath praise the Lord (Psalm CL, 6). This hundred and fiftieth psalm is rightfully sung entirely in praise of God, and completed, because evidently the sum of all our blessedness is in this, that dwelling in His house we may endlessly praise Him.

Genesis 8: 4

And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, upon the mountains of Armenia. That the ark rested in the seventh month refers symbolically to that seventh rest about which it has often been spoken, as those who are perfect and who have the stability of a mind fixed upon God, as if squared, tend toward rest. Well did the ark come to rest on the twenty-seventh day of the same month, which number according to arithmetic reasoning is a solid squared trinity. For the number three accords with our devotion of mind due to the memory by which we recall God, the understanding by which we know Him, and the will by which we love Him. But for this very trinity to reach a squaring from a simple and straight line, multiply three by three, and make nine; and for that squaring to also take height and become solid, again multiply nine by three, and there will be twenty-seven, that is, you will complete the solid squared trinity number, in which the ark rested, because the Church in the stability of its mind and action, as if squared, both expects rest in this life and receives eternal rest in the future. Now it rested upon the mountains of Armenia, because, renouncing the summit of the world's pomp, even in this pilgrimage, leading a life, it approaches heavenly joys with the mind.

Genesis 8: 5

But the waters went back and decreased until the tenth month. The time of the tenth month can signify that period during which the saints enter the joys of eternal light with the Lord. For He also in the Gospel by the name of the denarius, which was to be given to the laborers of the vineyard, intimates the perception of the same heavenly kingdom. For a denarius contains ten obols. So the waters go back, which had flooded the ark, and decrease until the tenth month, because the washing of baptism, where it has fulfilled its office in each of the faithful, ceases. For no one, if he has sinned, can be cleansed anew by the same font of sacred baptism; but it sends those already once washed and sanctified to the hope of heavenly life, when they come and appear before the face of God.

Genesis 8: 5

For on the first day of the tenth month, the mountain peaks appeared. The first day of the tenth month can be understood as the beginning of that eternal life, in which the saints, even while placed in this life, taste and see

that the Lord is good. On this day, the mountain peaks appear because the more perfectly this is held in their pure hearts, the more clearly the empty heights of the world, which are inflated in vain, become apparent.

Genesis 8:6

And when forty days had passed, Noah opened the window of the ark, which he had made, and sent out a raven, etc. We have spoken above about the window of the ark, which, after the flood has subsided, is opened, indicating the secret mysteries of the heavens, to which those baptized are especially initiated; but with these same sacraments some are led to the allurements of the world, others to works of piety; and these indeed are represented by the raven, those by the dove. The fact that forty days are completed by four tens indicates not unreasonably the fulfillment of the divine law, which is perfected by the grace of the gospel. For the law is contained in ten commandments: the doctrine of the gospel is described in four books, and rightly after the beginning of the tenth month, after the appearance of the peaks of the mountains, forty days pass, and so Noah, opening his window, revealed the entry of new light into the ark, because surely Christ revealed to the faithful the future life they are to receive, laid bare the pride of those who, placed outside the Church, boast of worldly glory, and also revealed to His faithful that the precepts of the law should be fulfilled, not by the power of human liberty, but by the gift of evangelical grace, which they deserve to know, as if the window, newly opened in the ark, reveals higher gifts of the heavenly homeland, but the same knowledge of heavenly gifts, as we have said, some use to their ruin, others to salvation; hence it is well said of the raven sent out from the ark.

Genesis 8:7

He went out and returned, until the waters were dried up from the earth. It does not say he went out and returned to the ark; but he went out and returned, it says, until the waters were dried up from the earth, because obviously he was turning here and there with uncertain flight, now beginning to go away, now returning as if about to enter the ark, but not really seeking the window he had left, but rather wandering outside until, the waters being removed, he would find rest and a place for himself outside the ark; his going out and journey are rightly compared to those who, although initiated and imbued with heavenly sacraments, do not lay aside the blackness of

earthly delight, but rather love the broad paths of the world more than the confines of ecclesiastical conversation.

Genesis 8:9

He also sent out a dove after him, to see if the waters had ceased upon the face of the earth; but when she did not find where her foot might rest, she returned to him in the ark. For the waters were over the whole earth; and he extended his hand, and having caught her, brought her into the ark. The dove, as we have said, signifies the spiritual and simple mind of the elect, who, with the window of heavenly contemplation opened to them, reject all things that revolve in the lower regions the more cautiously, the higher they see the joys that remain forever. For such persons, like this dove, so despise all worldly allurements as if flying above them, that they do not care even to touch them with the last vestiges of their mind, as it is impossible for them to find true rest in this world, both its adversities and its prosperities being carried away like flowing waters, wandering and uncertain. Moreover, they strive not only to remain themselves within the boundaries of the Church, but also, as much as they can, to bring others into it by their example or exhortation; hence it is rightly added.

Genesis 8:11

But after waiting another seven days, he again sent the dove out of the ark; and it came back to him in the evening, carrying a fresh olive branch in its mouth. For the olive branch found outside and brought into the ark by the dove signifies those who receive baptism outside the Church but are fruitful in the richness of charity and, with a pious intention, are upright like the greenness of leaves: many of whom, later on, as if at evening, are called back to the Church by the reconciliation of spiritual men, just as the dove did well after the seven days when it did not find rest outside itself. For the number seven of days is mystically adapted to the light of spiritual grace because, after spiritual men withdraw their minds from carnal desires, they strive to withdraw others as well, guided by the same spirit of grace. It may also be understood that in the dove, which brought the olive branch into the ark after the window was opened after the flood, this is prefigured: that, when the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him; that, upon each individual receiving baptism as a child of the Church, the hand of the bishop is laid upon

them through the anointing of the sacred chrism to open to them the gate of the heavenly kingdom, so that they receive the Holy Spirit.

To this figure aptly corresponds the raven that had gone out before the dove brought in the olive branch and did not return to the ark, lest prophecy should pass over in silence or Simon's unbelief, who was indeed baptized in the Church but, before receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, was cast out from the Church because, filled with the gall of bitterness, he bore not the innocence of dove-like simplicity but the raven's blackness in his wicked heart.

Genesis 8:12

Noah then understood that the waters had subsided from the earth, and he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove, which did not return to him again. The dove, which left the ark once the waters subsided and did not return, signifies the souls of the saints departing from this life into the free light of the heavenly homeland, and no longer returning to earthly way of life: in which very homeland prophecy will cease, knowledge will be destroyed, tongues will stop, and thus the water of baptism will dry up; but charity will never fail, through which truth and immutable life will be perpetually present and praised. And because the gift of heavenly favor is necessary not only to do good works, but also to attain eternal life after good works, it is fitting that the dove left not only after seven days to bring back the olive branch to the ark, but also after another seven days left again to enjoy the free sight of the sun and the new world as it were. For the grace of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, and from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace, namely the grace of reward for the grace of good actions.

Genesis 8:13

Therefore, in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried from the earth; and Noah, opening the covering of the ark, looked out and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. The covering of the ark refers to its uppermost plank, about which it was previously said: "And you shall finish the ark to within a cubit from the top." In this roof, namely a cubit in length and width, we have said that the Mediator between God and men is symbolically represented, who willed thus to be humanly joined to the members of His Church, so as to distinctly transcend it by the dignity of His dominion and protect it from above in its en-

tirety. However, Noah opened this roof after the flood had receded, because after the celebration of the sacrament of baptism, it is necessary for the mysteries from the time of the Lord's Incarnation to be diligently disclosed by the mouths of teachers to each of the faithful, so that knowing what He did or taught in the flesh, they might follow His footsteps by imitating them to the extent of their ability. And it is most fitting that this is said to have occurred on the first day of the first month after six hundred years, to show the beginning of the new spiritual life that was to be initiated by the faithful. Indeed, the same month in the law in which the Passover is commanded to be observed is called the month of new things, due to the great sacrament of renewing our old life in the passion of Christ.

Genesis 8:14

In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. It was stated above that the surface of the ground was dried up in the beginning of the first month; and now, in the second month, nearly completed, it is described as dry because then the ground was dried on the surface with growing grass, so that it could revive and produce anew the grass that the water had consumed. But now it is dried even inwardly to such an extent that it could bear the footsteps of those walking on it, and covered with so many flowering grasses that it was also suitable for the pasturing of animals and beasts of burden.

Genesis 8:16

God said to Noah, "Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, your sons and your sons' wives with you; bring out with you all the living creatures that are with you of all flesh, both birds and animals, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, be fruitful and multiply on the earth. So Noah went out, with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. In many ways and through many symbols, the mysteries of Christ's Church are often repeated. Thus, Noah's departure from the ark to a land purified by the flood, along with those humans and animals he had brought with him, symbolically corresponds to the time when the faithful, washed in the fountain of baptism, also go forth to perform good works in public, with Christ as their leader, just as spiritual Noah, and immediately grow and multiply through the increase of spiritual virtues. "Go, therefore, into the world," he says, "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19); which is figuratively to say: bring into the ark all kinds of living creatures to be washed by the waters; and straightaway, he added: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Ibid., 20), as if to say, in a figurative manner:

And let the creatures that go out of the ark after the flood enter into a renewed face of the earth, flourishing with new flowers, and there let them multiply and increase. Now, the fact that they leave the ark on the twenty-seventh day of the month, which is a perfect cubical number, as we have previously stated, signifies the perfection of faith consecrated in baptism, which can in no way waver, but remains always invincible and steadfast against all the snares of the devil. Notably, according to the literal sense, they were in the ark for a full solar year, entering it on the seventeenth day of the second month, and emerging after a year on the twenty-seventh day of the same month. For if today, for example, the moon were the seventeenth over the Calends of April, the next year on the day before the same Calends, the moon would be the twenty-seventh, having completed three hundred and sixty-five days, which completes a solar year. Therefore, they were in the ark for a whole year—that is, until the sun, having traversed the ecliptic circle, illuminated all regions of the world through its twelve months, just as the water covering the entire world washed it clean, so by cooperating over the same period of time, the sun, passing around the whole world, irradiates it with the light of its brightness. Now, just as the Fountain of Life is figuratively called the Lord, so also the Sun of Righteousness. He is called the Fountain because he regenerates;

the Sun, because he illuminates us, according to the Psalmist's words: "For with you is the fountain of life; in your light, we see light" (Psalm 35:10). And for a full solar year, Noah was in the ark with those living creatures and humans to be saved through the flood, because the Lord washes his Church throughout the duration of this age, and all regions of the world, with the waters of the saving laver, and enlightens it with the grace of his Spirit.

Genesis 8:20

Noah built an altar to the Lord, and taking from all the clean animals and birds, he offered burnt offerings on the altar. Because he was a just man and truly perfect in his generations, after surviving such a great calamity, he immediately, upon building the altar, gave thanks to the Creator, simultan-

eously petitioning that the world no longer deserve to be struck by such a plague. And because he prays devoutly and piously, he is soon deemed worthy of being heard. For it follows:

Genesis 8: 21

"And the Lord smelled a sweet savor, and He said to him: I will never again curse the ground because of humans. It was appropriate that, as a holy man and providing for future things, just as Abel consecrated the first age of the world by offering sacrifices to God, Noah would also consecrate the beginning of the second world age. This same act is remembered to have been done by Abraham and Melchizedek at the beginning of the third age, and by King David, a patriarch of the fourth age, on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Jesus, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, at the beginning of the fifth age, are also said to have done this upon restoring the altar which the Chaldeans had destroyed. All these prefigured the highest King and our true High Priest, who dedicated the entirety of the sixth age, indeed the beginning of the sixth age, to God with the sacrifice of His own body and blood on the altar of the holy cross. What is said, that the Lord smelled a sweet odor from Noah's offering, does not signify the fragrance that could delight human nostrils coming from burning sacrifices. It refers instead to the odor of virtues, which coming from the purest heart of the offerer, ascends to the sight of Divine Majesty. This is the kind of scent that Isaac, the patriarch, smelled in his son Jacob when he said:

"See, the scent of my son is like the scent of a field that the Lord has blessed" (Genesis 27:27), and of which the Apostle says: "We are the pleasing aroma of Christ to God" (2 Corinthians 2:15). In mystical interpretations, it is appropriate that Noah offers a sacrifice after the flood, because this is the order of our consecration in Christ: first, we are washed in the fountain of life, and then we are refreshed at the sacred altar with the offering of the Lord. Hence the Apostle says: "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified" (1 Corinthians 6:11). Washed in baptism, sanctified by the saving sacrifice, justified by good works. In the burnt offerings which were offered to the Lord from clean animals after the flood, holy martyrs can also be particularly prefigured. These, after the baptismal washing, maintained the purity of life and even shed their blood for the Lord. Burnt offerings, known as holocausts, were consumed entirely by fire and were the sacrifices of which nothing was consumed by the offerers. This name fittingly applies

to martyrs, who merit to glorify God not only in their lives but also in their deaths. The altar on which these holocausts are offered is the heart of the elect, built by our Noah, Christ, and infused with the fire of His Spirit, which He sent to earth and wished vehemently to be kindled. There are many holocausts but one altar, because the heart and soul of the multitude of believers were one, without any separation;

as the Apostle says: "Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Burnt offerings are offered from all the clean animals and birds, symbolizing believers from every nation, every kind of people, from every age, who have attained the palm of martyrdom. If there is believed to be any distinction between clean animals and clean birds, the animals offered in burnt offerings represent those who from the common life of the people of God became martyrs; the birds symbolize those who, accustomed to frequently seeking heavenly things through flights of contemplation, were additionally crowned by a precious death. Thus, clean and unclean animals and birds exit the ark cleansed by the flood, but only clean ones are offered in sacrifice to the Lord. Believers emerge from the baptismal laver with the forgiveness of sins, but many of them return to the filth of sins afterward. Some persevere firmly in the cleanliness of life received until the end. Some tend so meticulously to the cleanliness once obtained that they even lay down their lives for its preservation. Since clean animals and birds entered the ark by sevens, it is evident that holocausts offered to the Lord came from these paired survivors. It is fitting that birds and animals in the seventh number are deputed as offerings to the Lord, symbolizing the grace of the sevenfold Spirit, by whose gift, believers are given not only the faith in the Lord but also the endurance to suffer for Him.

Rightly, in animals and birds found in the seventh number and made holocausts, the glory of virgins can also be signified. Virginity, being an unequal number in that it prefers a celibate life free from marital union, offers itself as a holocaust to the Lord, consecrated perfectly to the Creator through the fire of supreme love. Of these, John says in Revelation: "These are those who did not defile themselves with women; they are virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, firstfruits to God and the Lamb" (Revelation 14:4). When Noah offers holocausts, the Lord smells a sweet savor, because God the Father graciously ac-

cepts both the passion of blessed martyrs and the virginal life of believers consecrated and offered through the grace of Christ.

Genesis 8: 21

And he said to him: "I will no longer curse the ground because of man; for the intent and thought of the human heart are prone to evil from their youth. Therefore, I will never again strike down every living being as I have done." The Lord promises not to curse the earth again, nor strike every living being, because humans are so prone to sin that even if they were punished again by a flood, nonetheless, after it has passed, they would again involve themselves in vices and crimes. It should be noted that although the intent of the human heart is said to be prone to evil from youth, from which time the incentives of carnal desires are naturally generated in us, it does not follow that we first begin to be subject to sins from the time of puberty, though from then the wantonness of age prompts us to commit greater deeds. For there is also that divine sentence which says: "A heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam from the day they come forth from their mother's womb" (Sirach 40:1), referring to the yoke of the first transgression, because of which we are all conceived in iniquities and born in sins, although from the onset of youth we willingly add many more to those burdens with which we involuntarily came into this light due to the guilt inherited from our father; from all of which we are only freed by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, He says, "I will never again strike down every living being as I have done; but the extent of this promise of mercy He manifests by adding:

Genesis 8: 22

All the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day, shall not cease. For when he had said all the days, he immediately added of the earth, so that you may understand that during all the days in which the earth will have its present state, men should be free from the threat of a universal flood; yet the time will not fail when, ceasing this succession of fleeting events which is carried out annually, the whole world with its living things will perish by fire, as Peter attests, who says: For the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and by means of water by the word of God, by means of which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the

present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment (2 Peter 3:5). It should be noted here that the heavens which he says were destroyed by water or will perish by fire are none other than this turbulent air which is nearest to the earth, from which the birds of the air are named because they fly in it. For the ethereal or starry heavens are not to be consumed by fire, just as they were not consumed by water.

CHAPTER 9

Genesis 9:1

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon all animals of the earth, and upon all the birds of the air, with everything that moves upon the ground. All the fish of the sea are handed over to you, and everything that moves and lives shall be food for you; just as I gave you green plants, I give you everything. It is clear from the text that the second age of the world, like the first and the beginnings of others, is blessed by the Lord. Noah is blessed with his sons, that is, with all those who are born of his flesh and endowed with faith and obedience, demonstrating truly that they are his sons; for his progeny is commanded to fill the earth, as is evident that it has come to pass; for men are said to be a terror to all the animals of the earth and the birds of the air; for these, together with the fishes, are permitted to be eaten, as they were given herbs to eat up to the time of the flood. Where it is noted that since their terror and dread is commanded to be over the animals, certainly it is prohibited from being over men. For to desire to be feared by an equal is manifestly to be proud contrary to nature;

and yet it is necessary that governors be feared by their subjects when they find that God is least feared by them. For in that they demand fear from those living perversely, they dominate not as men, but as animals, because evidently insofar as the subjects are beastly, insofar they ought also to lie under fear. According to the spiritual understanding, however, Noah is blessed with his sons, namely our Lord and Savior with the apostles, whom he also deemed to call sons, saying: Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them (Matt. 9:15). God the Father commanded them to grow and multiply over the whole world, when the Lord said to his disciples: Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:14), that is, to all nations. For all the commands of the Lord and Savior

are indeed those of the Father. He himself said: What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me (John 12:50). He subjected all animals that move on the earth, all the birds of the air, and all the fish of the sea to their dominion when he said: Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 18:18).

For animals, birds, and fish represent persons of different dispositions and characters, all of which after the flood are given as food to Noah's sons, because after the Lord brought the gift of the saving bath to the world, he wanted this to be administered to all nations as well, saying to the apostles: Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). For these are given as food to Noah's sons according to what was shown to Peter in a mystical sheet with all the quadrupeds and reptiles of the earth: Rise, Peter, kill and eat (Acts 10:13); that is, convert the pagans from their wicked way of life by preaching the truth; and bring them into the members of the Church by initiating them into sacred mysteries; whence it is rightly added here:

Genesis 9:4

Except that you shall not eat flesh with its blood. For blood rightly denotes carnal desires and carnal sense. Blood is poured out when one renounces carnal temptations and thoughts, in which one lived poorly, so that such people can say with the Apostle: Yet I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me (Gal. II, 29). And again: I conferred not immediately with flesh and blood (Gal. I, 16): otherwise, whoever begins to incorporate those persevering in former crimes into the unity of the holy Church by baptizing them, as if eating beasts given by the Lord with blood, because he receives into society those whose conscience is still held by their old way of life as if suffocated. They say that this was the greatest transgression of the giants because they ate flesh with blood; and therefore the Lord, having destroyed them by the flood, indeed allowed people to eat flesh, but prohibited them from doing so with blood.

Genesis 9:5

For I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it and from man, from his fellow man I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. For in a typological sense,

lifeblood refers to that vital essence by which humans are animated, sustained, and live in the flesh through the soul, just as the hand of beasts typologically refers to the act of devouring by which they kill a man. For who in sound mind would truly believe that the blood of man pertains to the substance of the soul? Although the same legislator seems to say more clearly elsewhere: For the life of every creature is its blood (Leviticus 17:14). Thus it is said in the same way as it is said And the rock was Christ, not that it was, but that it signified. The law was not without purpose in wanting to signify the soul through the blood, that is, an invisible thing through a visible thing, except that blood, diffused through all veins from the heart itself, predominates in our body more than other fluids, so that wherever a wound may be inflicted, no other fluid but itself emerges. Thus the soul, which invisibly prevails over all that we consist of, is better signified by that which visibly prevails over all that we consist of. It is clear to understand how God seeks the soul of man from the hand of man, demanding retribution from him who has sinned;

but it can indeed be reasonably asked how it is also required from beasts, which lack reason, unless perhaps we can understand here the mystery of the future resurrection intimated to us, when all the bodies of the human race, which have either been consumed by wild beasts or destroyed in any other way, or corrupted, are restored incorrupt, and all souls of humans, separated from their bodies by any manner of death, are restored to their bodies, so that they may obtain either eternal life for their good deeds, or eternal death for their bad deeds, in judgment with those same bodies. It is aptly added:

Genesis 9:6

Whoever sheds human blood, their blood shall be shed. Many have shed human blood, and their blood has not been shed. And others have killed a man with poison or by hanging, and yet when the man is dead, blood is not shed; how then will the Lord shed their blood in such a man when he who has killed has not shed blood, unless because the blood of man, as we have said, should be understood to be his vital substance by which he subsists? Whoever sheds it, that is, whoever kills a man by some kind of death, his blood will be shed because by sinning he loses eternal life. For the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:20). Which is similar to what is said to Peter: For all those who take up the sword will perish by the sword; as if it were openly said: All who

unjustly kill a man, and they themselves perish by killing in the soul. It is fittingly added:

Genesis 9:6

For man was made in the image of God. Therefore, it is a greater crime to kill an innocent man; because whoever does this not only destroys the work which God made but also corrupts His image. Therefore God requires the souls of men from beasts or men by whom they were driven from the body, because He made man in His image in that He intended him to remain for eternity, and not to perish with the death of the body like the animals; and for the sake of this sacrament, it is not permitted to eat flesh with blood, so that we may always be reminded by this command that we were created according to the substance of our soul in the image of our Creator, and that we should fear corrupting that same image in ourselves by sinning.

Genesis 9:8-11

God also said to Noah and to his sons with him: Behold, I will establish my covenant with you, and with your offspring after you, and continuing until he says: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; nor shall there ever again be a flood to destroy the earth. The meaning of the letter is clear, because the world need no longer fear the judgment of water, but of fire, and the frequent repetition rebukes and condemns the heresy of Origen, who presumed to dogmatize the cycles of infinite ages always running in the same order. Mystically, however, the water of the flood not returning to the earth signifies that the water of baptism, once received, cannot be repeated; for he who has been washed does not need to wash again, as the Lord himself testifies (John 13:10), and those who have been washed once in the waters of tribulations and reached eternal salvation are no longer to be cleansed in the same waters, but will joyfully sing to their Redeemer forever: We went through fire and water, and you brought us to a place of abundance (Psalm 66:12). Nor indeed should the meaning of the saving bath seem contrary to what is said about the waters of the flood above: Never again will I curse the ground because of man; or what is said here: Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth, since the water of baptism is not accustomed to bring a curse or destruction to our mind or body, but rather blessing and health; but it is to be understood that the Lord in baptism in a certain way curses our old conduct, and destroys it when he commands us to renounce

the devil and all his works and pomps; and thus, having been cleansed with a new confession, we may be worthy to attain the grace of eternal blessing.

Genesis 9:13–15

I will place my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth; and when I cover the sky with clouds, my bow will appear, and I will remember my covenant with you and with every living soul that is alive in the flesh, and the waters will no longer become a flood to destroy all flesh. The bow in the sky, whenever it is seen even today, reminds us of the divine covenant that the earth will no longer be lost in a flood; but if it is well considered, it also shows us a sign of future judgment that will come upon the world by fire. For indeed, it shines with both blue and red color not without reason, except because the blue color testifies about the waters that have passed, and the red color testifies about the flames that are to come. Fittingly, the celestial bow, which they call Iris, is placed as a sign of divine propitiation; for that bow tends to shine in the clouds, and responds in a somewhat grateful confession to the rays of the sun that illuminate the dewy darkness. Therefore, Christ is the Sun of righteousness, the clouds illuminated by Him are the saints, whose names are written in heaven, and the Psalmist speaks of them: Lord, your mercy is in heaven, and your truth reaches to the clouds (Psalm 35:6).

And when the bow appears in the clouds, the Lord remembers His promise not to destroy the earth with a flood, because through the intercessions of the saints, who know how to shine not by themselves, but through Him, He is propitiated towards the faithful when they lift up the eyes of their minds to desire heavenly things, and they recognize His glory in the deeds and words or even the rest of the preceding just ones, as if in His clouds, there will be a bow in the clouds, and I will see it and remember the eternal covenant that was made between God and every living soul of all flesh that is upon the earth. It is said in a human manner that God remembers His covenant when He sees the bow in the clouds, which by the merits of the saints, glorified and heavenly through His illumination, He spares and has mercy on our frailty; but He does not newly remember anything since He can never forget anything. He has been mindful of His covenant forever, but He seems to remember the covenant He made with us when He extends the help of His protection to those in tribulation; hence, it is well said in the psalm from the persona of some afflicted individuals, to whom divine aid seemed delayed:

Why do you turn your face away, do you forget our poverty and our tribulation (Psalm 43:24)?

Genesis 9:20

Noah, a man of the earth, began to cultivate the ground and planted a vineyard, etc. It is often pleasing to repeat the word of the Lord, which he said to the Jews: "If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me as well, for he wrote about me" (John 5:46). For even in this reading where Moses, weaving history, writes of Noah and his sons, he figuratively announces the passion of the Lord and the devotion of the peoples believing in him, as well as the infidelity of those contradicting the faith. Indeed, Noah cultivating the ground planted a vineyard, because the Lord, caring for the human race, established the Synagogue among the Jewish people; of which vineyard the Psalmist also remembers saying: "You transplanted a vine from Egypt" (Psalm 80:8); and the Lord, speaking in the Gospel to the Jews, says: "A man planted a vineyard and surrounded it with a fence" (Luke 20:9), and the rest to the end of the parable, where he says: "What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do to those tenants? They said: He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants."

Genesis 9:21

And drinking the wine, he became drunk, and he was naked in his tent. The Lord drank wine when he received the cup of his passion. He was made drunk by drinking when by suffering for us he reached the utmost extremity of death. He was naked in his tent, when among the Jewish people, whom he had made his own, and in which he had long been accustomed to dwell as in his tent, enduring reproaches and mockeries, he ultimately underwent the sentence of the cross, making manifest to all most openly the truth of the mortal substance which he had deigned to assume.

Genesis 9:22

When Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father's nakedness was uncovered, he told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a cloak, laid it upon their shoulders, and walking backward, covered their father's nakedness; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's private parts. Ham, who saw his father's nakedness and laughed, signifies the Jewish people, who, contradicting and incredulous, rather despised the passion of our Lord and Savior than honored it, rejoicing in their relief

at seeing it as contemptible rather than salvific. He also told his brothers outside what had happened to their father because through him the secret of the Lord's passion prophesied was made manifest and somewhat public, reaching the gift of the second generation; hence the Apostle says: "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:23). Furthermore, the two brothers, the eldest and the youngest, signify those to whom it was subsequently added: both Jews and Gentiles are called to Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Both the eldest and youngest carry the sacrament of the Lord's past and completed passion as if it were a single cloak from behind, not looking at their father's nudity because they do not consent to Christ's killing, but still honoring it with a veil, as if knowing from whom they were born, so that they could be sons of mercy who were previously sons of wrath. The middle son, that is, the Jewish people, is called the middle because he neither held the apostles' primacy nor was the last to believe among the Gentiles, saw his father's nakedness because he agreed to Christ's death. It is aptly said of the two brothers that they covered their father's modesty with their faces turned away, as if displeased with the deed of the wicked vine; that vine, namely the Jewish nation, is mystically signified as having degenerated from paternal nobility at the time of the Lord's passion and offered vinegar to the thirsting Lord on the cross instead of wine; for He thirsted for the faith and love of that people, but they, instead of the sweetness of faith and the fervor of love, gave Him the sharpness of hatred and unbelief.

Genesis 9:24-25

But Noah, awakening from his wine, when he had learned what his younger son had done to him, said: Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers. Awakening from wine, Noah curses his offspring by whom he was mocked; however, he rewards with due blessing those who honored him as their father; and the Lord, according to the voice of the psalm (Psalm 3:6), having slept in death and risen immortal, smote all who opposed him without cause, and shattered the teeth of sinners; but upon his own people he poured the blessing of eternal salvation. Not only is Canaan subjected to a curse, but also to the servitude of his brothers. For what else is that nation today, but a certain scribe of Christians, bearing the law and the

prophets as testimony to the affirmation of the Church, so that we might honor through the sacrament what it announces through the letter.

Genesis 9:26

And he said: Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; let Canaan be his servant. In Shem, the firstborn son of Noah, we have indicated the primitive Church, gathered from the Israelite people, and in Japheth, the youngest son, the election of the Gentiles which followed; whence it is rightly said: [Genesis 9:26] -- Blessed be the Lord God of Shem. For although He is the God of all nations, yet in a certain special way, even among the Gentiles, He is called the God of Israel; and how did this come to pass, if not from the blessing of Japheth? For in the people of the Gentiles, the Church has occupied the world. This is precisely foretold when it is subsequently said.

Genesis 9:27

May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem. Indeed, Japheth dwells in the tents of Shem because in the faith of the patriarchs and prophets, in the prophetic Scriptures, in the spiritually understood legal sacraments, the Church sojourns on earth. For we are accustomed to use tents in war or on a journey, and in the tents of the Israelite people we, who have come to Christ from the Gentiles, dwell, because certainly as long as we sigh for the heavenly homeland while placed on this path of life, as long as we fight against the snares of the ancient enemy with Christ as our leader and helper, it is necessary always to hold on to the sayings and deeds and works of the ancient fathers as examples of life and profession; so that, protected by their authority, we may more certainly and securely strive towards the palm of reward with a perfected struggle. However, it also aligns with the growth of the holy Church, which has filled the whole world, that the name Japheth, which means 'Enlargement' is used; whence Noah, alluding to this name itself, says: May God enlarge Japheth, that is, may He grant enlargement. It is fitting, however, that what was said of Shem is repeated of Japheth:

And let Canaan be his servant, because certainly the unbelieving Jews serve both peoples of believers, although with an impious mind, they provide service for salvation, not only in that they aid with the authority of the sacred volumes and strengthen in faith, but also in that they pursue them as far as they are able, because indeed by pursuing on account of righteousness,

they make them higher participants of eternal blessedness, and even in that their offense of hard-hearted blindness prompts them to give greater thanks to their Redeemer and illuminator. To this people indeed the name Canaan, which means ‘Commotion,’ most aptly applies. For he cannot say: He set my feet upon a rock, and directed my steps (Psalm 40:3); but uncertain and wavering, he is always in motion. It should also be noted according to the literal sense that not in vain is Canaan cursed when Ham sinned, not he himself but his son, especially when he was neither the firstborn of Ham but his youngest son. For it is written: The sons of Ham: Cush, Saba, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. Indeed, he foresaw equally in spirit that the progeny of Canaan would sin much more than the rest of the offspring of Ham, and therefore be worthy either to perish by curse or to groan under subjugation;

which was particularly proven and shown by the wickedness of the Sodomites, who came from the lineage of Canaan, and by their dreadful retribution, and the extermination or subjugation of the Canaanites, which they suffered when the Israelite people, descended from the lineage of Shem, came out of Egypt. For from Cush came the Ethiopians, from Mizraim the Egyptians, from Phut came the Libyans, which the very names of these same peoples among the Hebrews still testify today, among whom there is absolutely nothing of such wickedness or vengeance as Scripture relates about the Sodomites and Canaanites.

Genesis 9:27

God also expanded Japheth, so that he dwelt in the tents of Shem, and that Canaan was his servant, when the Greeks or Romans, certainly descended from the line of Japheth, possessed the kingdoms of Asia, in which the descendants of Shem lived, and among other things made the Canaanites tributary to themselves.

Genesis 9:28

But Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood, and all the days of his life were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died. As we have taught above, the six hundred years of Noah’s life, after which he entered the ark, signify the perfection of the faith and profession of those who undergo the sacraments of the Church of heavenly grace and everlasting reward. Thus also the three hundred and fifty years which he lived after the flood represent

the great perfection of those who, having received the sacraments of life, faithfully serve the Lord until death. We said that the number three hundred, because it is marked by the letter tau in Greek (and tau is written in the figure of a cross), most aptly bears the type of those who know to glory only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; whence Gideon, with the Lord commanding and helping, defeated the innumerable army of the Midianites with three hundred men, teaching figuratively that by the faith of the Lord's cross we would be victorious over the wars against us by this world and our vices. Moreover, the number fifty, because Scripture teaches that it designates the rest of the law by figure, which always in the fiftieth year decreed the greatest remission of all sufferings and the liberation from all services for God's entire people.

Therefore, Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood with a certain grace of mystery, to signify that we, having received the baptismal washing, should endure labors for the Lord in hope of the supreme rest and happiness. For he lived three hundred years to be patient in tribulation; he lived fifty years to be joyful in hope. But since seven times fifty make three hundred and fifty, and the number seven signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit, and fifty signifies true rest, which is given to the elect through the same Spirit, the type aptly corresponds. We can also interpret in this way the mystery of this number, that he who lives three hundred and fifty years after the flood, symbolizes the one who, throughout the whole time of received baptism, aided by the spiritual gift, does not cease to labor for eternal rest in heaven; and he will happily see the death of the flesh, or rather, he will pass from death to life, which alone is to be called true life, who completes the course of present life in such a great perfection. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

Genesis 10:1

These are the generations of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. The series of Noah's offspring begins with his youngest son and is completed in the eldest, which is a familiar expression in the holy scriptures, mystically signifying that the lesser people of the nations would be preferred in faith over the greater people of the Jews when Christ came in the flesh. The sons of the sons of Noah who are mentioned are believed to have been progenitors of various

nations who divided the world among them in such a way that Shem, the firstborn, inherited Asia, and Ham, the second, Africa, and Japheth, the last, Europe; yet because Asia is much larger in extent of land than Europe or Libya, the offspring of Ham and Japheth would also hold some portion in Asia. Thus, seven sons were born to Japheth who took possession of the land in Asia from the mountains of Amanus and Taurus in Syria, Cilicia's mountains, up to the river Tanais. In Europe, up to Gadira, they left names for places and nations, many of which later changed names, while others remained as they were. Therefore, Gomer are the Galatians, Magog the Scythians, Madai the Medes, Javan the Ionians, who are also Greeks, from whom the Ionian Sea is named, Tubal the Iberians, who are also the Spanish named from the river Ebro, from whom the Celtiberians come, although some suspect them to be Italians; Meshech are the Cappadocians, where a city among them is still called Mazaca today, also called Caesarea by Augustus Caesar. Meanwhile, the seventy interpreters believe Capturim to be the Cappadocians, Tiras the Thracians, whose name has not changed much.

Genesis 10:3

Furthermore, the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. Ashkenaz are the Sarmatians whom the Greeks call the Medes. Riphath the Paphlagonians, Togarmah the Phrygians. [Genesis 10:4] -- "The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. From the Ionians, that is, the Greeks, are born the Elishah, who are called Elishites, hence also the fifth language of Greece is called Aeolic, which they call 'pentem dialecton.' Josephus assumes Tharsis to be Cilicia, saying that the letter 'h' has been corruptly omitted in 'Thar' by later generations; hence also their metropolis city is called Tarsus, glorious in the apostle Paul's time. (Some think that Tharsis, from where gold was brought to Solomon, refers to the region of India.) Kittim is from Kittim, from whom to this day the city of Cyprus is named. Dodanim is identified as the Rhodians, for it is better read as Rodanim, or Rodim, as the Septuagint translators rendered it, and even our translator placed it in the book of Hebrew names. For the similarity of the letters Daleth and Resh often causes this error among the Hebrews, so that one is read for the other. But Rhodes is the largest of the Cyclades, and once the most powerful city in the Ionian Sea, glorious in naval combat, and a refuge for all merchants because of its very safe harbor.

Genesis 10: 5

From these have divided the islands of the nations into their regions, each according to his language and family in their nations. 'Let us read the histories of the ancients, and we shall see almost all islands, and the shores of the whole world, and lands near the sea, occupied by Greek settlers, who, as we said above, possessed all maritime places from the Amanus and Taurus mountains to the British Ocean.' And while it is said 'each according to his language and family in their nations,' it clearly shows that according to the common opinion, each of the sons of Noah mentioned here, or the grandsons of the sons of Noah, formed separate nations or families of different languages. For the same statement, after recounting the descendants of Cham or Shem, also infers concerning the variety of generations and languages." [Genesis 10:6] -- The sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut and Canaan. Cush is today called Ethiopia by the Hebrews, Mizraim is Egypt, Phut is Libya, from whom even to this day a river in Mauretania is called Phut, and the whole region around it is called Phutensis. Moreover, Canaan possessed the land which the Jews subsequently took over by expelling the Canaanites.

Genesis 10: 7

The sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah and Sabteca. Seba from whom came the Sabeans. As Virgil says: "The incense-bearing branch belongs to the Sabeans. The air is scented with Sabeian frankincense." Havilah from whom came the Getuli, living in the remote part of Africa adjacent to the desert. Sabta from whom came the Sabtaeni, now called the Astabori. Raamah and Sabteca gradually lost their ancient names; and what they are now called is unknown. However, from the vision of Tyre mentioned by Ezekiel, where he says the merchants of Sheba and Raamah, or as the LXX interpreters said, Regma, were your traders, it seems that these people also made their nation, and since Sheba is mentioned, it indicates that its region is neighboring to this province. [Genesis 10:7] -- The sons of Seba: Raamah and Dedan. This Seba is written with the letter Sin, but above it was written with Samech, from which we said the Sabeans were named. Therefore, Seba is now interpreted as Arabia. In the seventieth psalm, where we have "The kings of Arabia and Sheba will offer gifts" (Psalm 71:10), in Hebrew it is written "The kings of Seba and Sheba," the first name with Sin

and the second with Samech (which is similar to our letter S). Dedan is a nation of Ethiopia in the western region.

Genesis 10: 8

Moreover, Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be mighty on the earth, and he was a mighty hunter before the Lord. While the progeny of Shem and Japheth remained in the innocence of a simple life, a cursed offspring was born of the lineage of Ham, who would pervert the state of human interaction with a new way of living, being lifted up with unique power, living first by hunting; then, having gathered an army, he endeavored to exercise unusual tyranny over peoples; and finally, he is read to have had a kingdom and to have built great cities: which Scripture confirms because he was the first to do so, as it says: He began to be mighty. He began indeed because he was the first to do it. Moreover, he was mighty on the earth because, neglecting heavenly matters, in which the just are mighty, he learned to seek lowly things and place his hope in them.

Genesis 10: 9

From him came the proverb: Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. It turned into a proverb because his deeds were unprecedented in his time; and the phrase before the Lord was added to magnify the crime, since it was evidently quite reckless and arrogant for a man on earth to dare live in such a way before the Lord, who looks down from heaven upon the children of men; whence it is clear that many at that time avoided doing such things due to fear of divine oversight, although another version has it that Nimrod was a giant hunter against the Lord. From the ambiguous Greek term, enantion, both can be interpreted. In fact, in the psalm where we sing let us weep before the Lord who made us (Psalm 95:6), the word is enantion Kyrion. This also appears in the book of Job, where it is written, You burst forth into rage against the Lord. The understanding about the giant is thus evident, that he was a mighty hunter of brute animals, as a powerful man; but because he was an impious man, he led a proud life against the will of the Creator.

Genesis 10: 10

Now the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. In the following passages, it is more fully explained how Babylon was made; but here it is first stated that it is left unmentioned that Nimrod was the builder of that city and its most proud

tower. The beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, either because it was the first of his cities, founded, or because it was considered the metropolis of his kingdom due to its size and splendor. "Erech is what is now Edessa, Accad is what is now Nisibis, a city of Mesopotamia. Calneh is what is now Seleucia, named after King Seleucus, or certainly what is now also called Ctesiphon. But what is added in the land of Shinar seems to pertain to all the same four cities. Shinar, indeed, is said to be a plain of such width that it could easily contain Babylon itself and many other cities. Because Babylon, with the cities of which it is the capital, designates the proud glory of this world, which is subject to confusion; for Babel means confusion, aptly the builder of it figuratively indicates the devil, who is the head of all evils; to whom also the name Nimrod, which sounds like tyrant, or fugitive, or transgressor, suits well. For he is a tyrant because, rebelling against the Creator, he strives to obtain the height of divinity and the kingdom of the world.

He is a fugitive, because, having fallen from heaven and cast out from the society of the angels who remained in their state, he wretchedly exults too much. He is a transgressor, because he disdained to obey the will of the Creator, to whom the role of a hunter is not undeservedly attributed; for he sets traps of his ambushes in the forest of this world, and hunts men who are clean in nature and wit, like deer and goats, deceiving them for death: surely opposed to those hunters who seek to catch the souls of men by their teaching so that they may lead them to eternal life; to whom the Lord speaks, saying, "Come after me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19); whose homeland for that reason was called Bethsaida, that is, the House of Hunters, because they were to hunt men for life. Now Nimrod is the son of Cush, which is interpreted as Ethiopian, because indeed the ancient enemy always arises anew from the dark people of the unfaithful through the execution of nefarious teaching or operation.

Genesis 10: 9

From whom even today remains the proverb, so that it is said: Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. With those imitating the devil who are on his side, it can very truly be said, because such people, when they hunt the souls of men either by their word or example to destruction, follow the deeds of the ancient transgressor and deceiver. [Genesis 10:11] -- From that land came forth Asshur, and he built Nineveh and the streets of the city. From that land, from the land of Shinar it is said, from which the empire of the

Assyrians sprang up, who from the name of Ninus the son of Belus founded the great city, which the Hebrews call Nineveh. Certainly, because the Scripture seems to be silent about where Asshur was born, from whom the Assyrian race was born, but only from what land he came out to build Nineveh, or other cities that it mentions, some of the Fathers understood this Asshur to be the son of Shem, of whom it is read in the following. But whether it was the same or another Asshur, it is agreed that first in the land was the kingdom of the Babylonians, second of the Assyrians, whose metropolis was Nineveh, which came forth from the same land.

Genesis 10:13

But indeed Mizraim begot Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim. These seem to be the names of peoples rather than of individual men, since it was stated clearly even Casluhim from whom came the Philistines. For all of them end in -im, which is the proper ending of the plural number in Hebrew in the masculine gender, but also interpreted they signify a plural number rather than a singular. Now indeed Lehabim are Libyans, Philistines are Palestinians, Caphtorim are Cappadocians, as we find set according to the opinion of the Seventy interpreters in the book of the names of the Hebrews. The names of the other peoples which are now known to us, however, are unknown. But they possessed the land from Gaza up to the boundaries and limits of Egypt.

Genesis 10:15–18

Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, Heth, and the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. "From Sidon, the firstborn of Canaan, comes the city in Phoenicia called Sidon, formerly the northern boundary of the Canaanites. The Arkite founded Arca, a town situated against Tripoli at the foot of Mount Lebanon, near which was another city named Sim, which was later destroyed by various wars but retained its original name for the site. The Arvadites possessed Aradus Island, separated by a narrow strait from the Phoenician coast. This island, situated near Tyre, is today seen as a safe city and across from it lies the town of Antaradus. Samara is the noble city of Emesa in Syria. Emath, up to our time, is called by both the Assyrians and Hebrews as it was of old. The Macedonians, who ruled the East after Alexan-

der, named it Epiphania, and some think it was called Antioch. Indeed, there were two cities named Emath: one was Great Emath, now called Antioch, and it was called great to distinguish it from Lesser Emath, which is called Epiphania, where the eyes of Zedekiah were blinded by Nebuchadnezzar.

Genesis 10: 19

And the borders of Canaan extended from Sidon as one enters Gerar, reaching to Gaza, until one enters Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. The ancient translation has Lyce for Lasha. It is now called Callirhoe, where hot springs flow into the Dead Sea. Therefore, Sidon was the boundary of the Canaanites to the north, Gerar to the south, Gaza near Egypt."

Genesis 10: 21

From Shem were also born the fathers of all the sons of Heber, the brother of Japheth the elder. He calls him the brother of Japheth, but does not mention him being the brother of Ham, because he understands those who are united in the faith of piety to be rightly called brothers; but he shows that the faithless one, though born of the same parents, is estranged from the brotherly society of the righteous. However, it seems that by this sentence it is indicated that although many sons born of Shem begot many peoples, that progeny specifically followed his faith and piety, which through Heber descended to Abraham and the Hebrew people; hence they are properly called the fathers of all the sons of Heber. Finally, alone in the construction of the tower, as Scripture says, the language of the whole earth remained in the house of Heber, who was at that age, as will be read in subsequent texts, the original speech of the human race, which the names of the men of the following age clearly prove to be Hebrew, as is to be believed by merit, because following the faith of his ancestor Shem with his house, he kept himself immune from the conspiracy of the arrogant work. Nor was it in vain that Abraham chose to be called a Hebrew; but because he knew how to imitate the life of this Seth, he wished to have and leave his name as a nickname to himself and to his descendants for the future.

Genesis 10: 22

The sons of Shem: Elam, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. "These occupied part of Asia from the Euphrates river to the Indian Ocean. Now, Elam is

from whom the Elamites, the chiefs of Persia, come. Of Assur, it has already been said before, that he founded the city of Nineveh. Arphaxad, from whom the Chaldeans come. Lud, from whom Lydia. Aram, from whom the Syrians, whose metropolis is Damascus. For in Hebrew, Syria is called Aram. [Genesis 10:23] -- The sons of Aram: Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. Uz, the founder of Trachonitis and Damascus, held the chiefdom between Palestine and Coele-Syria. Hul, from whom the Armenians come. Gether, from whom the Arcanians, or Carians come. Moreover, Mash, for whom the Septuagint interpreters said Mosoch, who are called the Maonians." [Genesis 10:24] -- But indeed Arphaxad begat Salah, from whom Heber was born. From this Heber both Abraham and the people born from him, as we have mentioned before, are surnamed Hebrew.

Genesis 10: 25

And there were born to Heber two sons: the name of one was Peleg, because in his days the earth was divided, and the name of his brother was Joktan. He calls this the division of the earth, which occurred in the confusion of languages. He named his son Peleg, that is, Division, to leave a perpetual memory of his devotion to his descendants, because, indeed, when the languages of the faithless were divided due to their pride, he, by the merit of his faith, preserved the original language of the human race. [Genesis 10:26] -- Joktan begot Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, Jerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, and Obal, and Abimael, Sheba, and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab. All these are the sons of Joktan. Jerome testifies that he could not find the later names of these nations. "But until the present," he says, "because they are far from us, either they are called the same as at first, or those that have been changed are unknown." We read above that Pishon, one of the four rivers of paradise, which our people call the Ganges, and it is not doubted to be in India, surrounds all the land of Havilah; this land seems to have taken its name from this Havilah. Josephus narrates that he, with his brothers, possessed the whole region of India called Hiera, but the Chronicles also tell that Solomon's servants went to Ophir by the Red Sea, and brought from there gold, and almug wood, and precious stones, which are believed to be from the region of India, and to have taken their name from Ophir, the son of Joktan.

Genesis 10: 26

All these are the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. We previously said that Shem, the first-born of Noah, signifies those believing from the ancient people of God, Japheth signifies those believing from the gentiles; Ham, mocking the nakedness of his father and for this cursed, insinuates that part of the same people which, as remaining in the middle, neither firstly with their fellow tribesmen, nor afterwards wanted to be associated with the gentiles in faith. Therefore, the figures and places of habitation of these are most fittingly congruent; surely the sons of Eber, who is shown to be predominant among the descendants of Shem, are said to have extended their habitation from Mesha to the eastern mountain called Sephar. Now Mesha is a region of India which, when interpreted, is called Elevation, which signifies not a reprehensible pride, but rather that elevating of the mind to which the Apostle exhorts us saying: If you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; set your mind on things that are above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:1). But what is the eastern mountain, if not that of which Isaiah says: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob (Isaiah 2:3)?

which is rightly called a mountain because it raises all those climbing up it from the desire for lowly things to the longing for heavenly things. It is rightly called the Eastern Mountain, because it reveals the rising of the true light to all those flocking to it. It is also rightly named Sephar, that is, Book. For it is the book of life, in which all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden, in which the names of all the elect are written. Therefore, the dwelling of the sons of Joktan, who is interpreted as Little One, was from Mesha, that is, Elevation, going towards the eastern mountain which is called Book, because all the saints following the humility of the earlier just ones, of whom it is said: The Lord preserves the simple (Psalm 114:6), at the beginning of a religious conversation uplift their minds from earthly contagions, so that they may be deemed worthy to ascend to see the brightness of the eternal Sun, and to be instructed from the very book of life, which is the Lord Christ, with the pages of eternal wisdom revealed. Similarly, concerning the sons of Japheth, when it is said, from these the coastlands of the nations were divided in their lands, does it not most manifestly indicate by this very name the churches of the gentiles throughout the world, which, like is-

lands, are continually beaten by the waves of the sea, that is, the swollen and bitter storms of the world, yet are not overcome;

and now indeed, with the world flattering, they glide as if on gentle waves, now with it raging, they are struck by the upraised waves of adversities; but in the state of their faith, they nonetheless endure invincible? But on the other hand, the sons of Ham have the beginning of their kingdom in Babylon, that is, Confusion, which is in the land of Shinar, that is, their stench; and this on a plain, because neither do the reprobates ascend the mountain of contemplation to seek the higher things, nor do they reach the tranquility of the intellectual islands, by which they might transcend with higher freedom of spirit the cares of the passing world; but they rather delight in being carried around in unrestrained wantonness in earthly desires alone; where indeed a fitting end follows this beginning, when it is said that the borders of Canaan were from Sidon as you go towards Gerar as far as Gaza until you enter Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim as far as Lasha. For Sidon is called the Hunting of Sorrow, because nothing else ought to be understood here than that by which the ancient enemy hunts souls to destruction; hence it is rightly called the Hunting of Sorrow, because all those whom he captures, he subjects to eternal pains: such a one indeed is Nimrod the giant, who is called a mighty hunter against the Lord. Concerning Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities, there is no doubt that they portend the eternal torments of the impious.

Genesis 10: 32

These are the families of Noah according to their peoples and nations. From these were the nations divided on the earth after the flood. Let the diligent reader review in order the names of the men or peoples who are said to have been born from the three sons, and they will be found to number seventy-one: namely, thirteen from Japheth, thirty-one from Ham, twenty-six from Shem, from whom they are believed to have filled the world with as many languages and nations, or rather seventy-two, as clearer tradition holds, since there was one among them from whom afterward two nations and peoples were born; unless perhaps it is to be understood that there are two Asshurs, who created two peoples: one who, having gone out from the land of Shinar, built Nineveh, and the other a son of Shem; and thus the number of seventy-two nations is completed. Neither does it seem irrelevant that the Lord therefore sent seventy-two disciples to preach, because there were as

many nations and languages to whom the word of preaching was to be committed, just as he first chose twelve apostles for the same number of tribes of Israel to be called to faith; so afterward he designated seventy-two teachers to indicate the salvation of all nations, which were encompassed by the same number.

CHAPTER 11

Genesis 11:1

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. Because having anticipated saying that the sons of Noah had divided the earth according to clans, languages, territories, and nations, it returns to show how humans were separated from each other: where it is most clear that as long as the human race served its Creator with due humility, it also harmonized with itself in peaceful charity. But once it raised its neck against its Author in pride, it was soon justly punished and could not have peace even with itself. How great the human happiness could have been even after being cast out of paradise, if only they then wanted to serve their Creator humbly, is testified by the grace of our Lord, the Creator and Redeemer, who gave the knowledge of all languages to His disciples faithfully adhering to Him by sending the Spirit from above; thus by the wondrous transformation of the right hand of the Most High, just as here, through the division of languages due to pride, the nations were dispersed throughout the world, so there, due to the merit of humility, the diversity of languages brought together, people collected from every nation under heaven resonated with one unvarying confession and faith in the praises and greatness of God; and deservedly so, this city, in which languages were divided and nations dispersed, is called Babylon, that is, Confusion; the other is called Jerusalem, that is, Vision of Peace, in which, through the united languages of all nations in the praise of God, concord was made. But these things later. Meanwhile, let us see the text of the letter.

Genesis 11:2

And as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. It appears from these words that even the first humans held the region of the East; thus it should be considered the head of the world, not only because the light of the stars rises from there, but also because the human race first inhabited it. [Genesis 11:3] -- And one said to his neighbor:

Come, let us make bricks and bake them with fire, and they had bricks for stones and bitumen for mortar. Perhaps, therefore, they used bricks for stones and bitumen for mortar because in those regions the supply of stones, from which such a great work could be completed, was lacking; or because they knew that a wall of bricks could more strongly resist the danger of fires. Bitumen, however, is made from trees, and it is also made from the earth or waters; whence it is written later about the land of Sodom. The woodland valley had many bitumen pits; and the Dead Sea is called the Asphalt Lake in Greek, that is, the Bitumen Lake; because bitumen floating on it is usually collected, which more clearly suggests that the walls of Babylon were constructed from it.

Genesis 11: 4

And they said: Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower, whose top may reach heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves before we are scattered over the face of the whole earth. When it says whose top, it refers not to the city but to the tower, that is, the citadel, which they planned to make higher than the other walls in a more elevated place. Truly, it is amazing with what intention they planned to raise the top of their tower up to heaven, and yet at the same time claimed they would be divided over the entire earth; unless they foolishly and most arrogantly thought to divide themselves throughout the world in such a way that if they should be discontented with earthly habitation, or if a flood of water again threatened the earth, they might seek the upper regions of the air or the sky through this tower.

Genesis 11: 5

The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of Adam were building. The old translation has for the sons of Adam the sons of men, that is, not the sons of God, but those who, living according to man, deserved to hear from the Lord: "I said, you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High; but you will die like men" (Psalm 81:6). However, God does not move from a place, who is always wholly everywhere; but He is said to descend when He does something on earth which, done wonderfully beyond the usual course of nature, shows His presence in some way; nor does He learn by seeing in time, who can never be ignorant of anything; but He is said to see and know in time, that which He makes to be seen and known. Therefore, the city was not thus seen as God made it to be seen, when He showed

how much it displeased Him; although it can be understood that God descended to that city, because His angels had descended, in whom He dwells, so that what follows: "And He said: Behold, the people is one, and they all have one language," and the rest, and then added: "Come, let us go down, and there confound their language," might be a recapitulation, showing how what was said, "the Lord came down," was done; for if He had already descended, what does "come, let us descend" mean, which is understood to have been said to the angels, unless because He had descended through the angels, who were descending in the angels?

Genesis 11:6

Behold, he said, the people are one and they all have one language; and they have begun to do this, and they will not desist from their thoughts until they complete them in action. There is a great difference in sinning between those who so despise God's commandments that they still have among themselves just admirers and worshippers, and those who all with unanimous consent contradict heavenly commands. There is also a great difference between those who sin, for example, in their youth, intending to do penance for their committed sins later in old age, and those who carry no intention of correction for the evils they do. Therefore, to show here the unanimity of the sinners, the invisible Judge says: Behold, the people are one and they all have one language; and he adds their unrepentant intention: They have begun to do this, and they will not desist from their thoughts until they complete them in action; to whom aptly fits the beginning of the thirteenth psalm, in which it is said: The fool has said in his heart, There is no God (Psalm 13:1), that is, Nimrod the contriver of the infamous work; and hence about the workmen of the doomed city: They are corrupt and have become abominable (*ibid.*). These words which we discuss, the internal Judge speaks to the ministers of virtues in an incomprehensible order to us: His speaking to them is to show His own invisible secrets to their hearts, so that in the contemplation of truth they read whatever they ought to do; for what is said as if to those who hear is inspired to those who see; therefore, when God infused into their hearts the verdict of retribution against human pride, He says:

Genesis 11:7

Come, let us go down and there confuse their language. It is said to those who were present: Come, because indeed this itself never decreases from divine contemplation, and it is always to increase in divine contemplation; and never to withdraw from the heart is always to come by a certain stable motion. To whom he also says: Let us go down and confuse their language there. Angels ascend in that they see the Creator, angels descend in that they press the creature lifting itself illicitly with an examination of strictness. Therefore, to say: Let us go down and confuse their languages, is to show them in Himself that which is rightly read, and to inspire by the force of the inner vision the judgments to be displayed to their minds by hidden motions. And well He did not say: Come, and going down confuse; but let us confuse their language there, showing thus that He operates through His ministers, so that they are also co-workers of God, as the Apostle says: For we are God's fellow workers.

Genesis 11:7

He says, let us confuse their language there, so that everyone may not hear the voice of his neighbor. Justly is the evil intent punished, even to which the effect does not succeed; because indeed the dominion of command is in the language, pride is condemned there, so that he who did not wish to understand to obey the command of God was not understood by a man giving commands.

Genesis 11:9

And so the Lord scattered them from that place over all the earth, and they ceased to build the city; and therefore it was called Babel, because there the language of the whole earth was confused. Rightly was the language confused for dispersion, because it had wickedly conspired in nefarious speech: the power of language was taken from the proud leaders, so that they could not teach the evils they had begun to their subjects in contempt of God, and thus the judgment of divine severity was turned into an aid for human utility, so that by keeping silent they would stop the work which they had perversely gathered to insist upon: and so with the Lord descending and seeing the city of pride, Babylon, that is, confusion, it happened to be named: which contrarily, the city of truth has both the name and the state; for it is called Jerusalem, that is, Vision of Peace, in which the Lord, seeing the as-

sembly of the faithful and humble in spirit, sent the grace of the Holy Spirit, who would grant them the knowledge of all languages, with which, imbued, they would unanimously call all people who were in different languages to the construction of that same holy city, that is, the Church of Christ; and those who had humbly listened to the truth would sublimely open their mouths to proclaim the knowledge of the truth to the whole world.

However, it should be noted that although the Scripture says that having been scattered through the world, the builders ceased from building the city; it does not say that it was ceased from being inhabited: from which it should be gathered that, with others descending and ceasing from structure, Nimrod, the author of the work, remained there with his house and family, until, from his own offspring, he could rule more greatly and more powerfully add other cities to his kingdom. For indeed, if I am not mistaken, it cannot otherwise be understood what was said above about him: But the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar: although it is said that Ninus or Semiramis his wife later made the same city of Babylon greater and more august in time; hence that poet's saying that Semiramis once surrounded the city with baked brick walls; and especially Nebuchadnezzar accumulating its ornaments from the spoils of Jerusalem: whence he himself proudly said: Is this not great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, in the might of my power, and for the glory of my majesty? Of whose greatness and decoration Jerome thus narrates: "Babylon was very powerful, and situated in the plains, it extended sixteen thousand paces from corner to corner of the wall, that is, it encompasses sixty-three in circumference, as Herodotus relates (Book I), and many others who wrote Greek histories.

The citadel, that is, its capitol is the tower which was built after the flood, said to occupy four thousand paces. Orosius in his histories (Book I, chap. 6) similarly mentions it: This [city], visible from all sides in the plain expanse, most fertile by the nature of the place, arranged quadrangularly with equal walls in the appearance of a camp, the strength and magnitude of its walls is scarcely credible in report, that is, fifty cubits in width, four times as high: moreover, its circumference is four hundred eighty stades, the wall built with baked bricks and mixed with bitumen, surrounded outside by a wide ditch that flows like a river. In front of the walls, a hundred bronze gates: the width at the top of the walls on either side includes the dwellings of the de-

fenders, and spaced in the middle it accommodates chariots. The houses inside are four stories high, wonderful in threatening height. But since in the spiritual sense Babylon is the city of the devil, that is, the entire multitude of reprobate humans, who are the builders of Babylon except the masters of errors, who either introduce a cult contrary to the truth of divinity, or attack the known faith of the truth with evil deeds or words?

Genesis 11:1

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words, as long as men remained in the East: but when they moved from the East, soon because of the words or deeds of pride, they were separated from each other and were expelled further from their Creator. The region of the East from which the world is accustomed to receive the light of the stars rightly signifies Him who said: I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12): in whom as long as men remain, they are of one language and the same speech: for there is certainly one confession of faith, the same purity of action, common charity, and hope of eternal things: for all who persevere in Christ are enlightened. But those who withdraw from the contemplation of true light can have neither peace with the Lord nor among themselves: for just as there is one norm of faith, so there is not one and the same norm of infidelity; but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, in whom is the salvation of the elect: but there are many lords of the reprobate, various winding paths of perfidy, various filths of pollution, various gods of the nations, to whom all the wretched are led to one destruction of damnation: which the figure of those two cities well signified, when, with tongues divided in Babylon, no one could recognize the voice of his neighbor. Moreover, in Jerusalem, with tongues united by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the faithful, even of all foreigners who had come, were able to understand the voice and all together in one bond of charity and faith praise the same God and Lord.

Genesis 11:2

Departing from the East, they found a plain in which to dwell, because withdrawing from the light of righteousness, the reprobate found for themselves the broad ways of the world in which they might remain with a fickle mind; and this in the stench of carnal vices. For Shinar, as we have said, is interpreted as their stench: And what is meant by the land of Shinar, except the

rotten lust of carnal slothfulness, in which whoever does not avoid dwelling, that is, persisting with a secure and fixed intention, soon by the increasing wickedness, also provoke their neighbors to the injury of the Creator and nefarious acts. For it follows that one said to his neighbor: Come, let us make bricks, and bake them with fire. They then inflame one another to make bricks, with which they would build the city of Nimrod on the plain of Shinar; because indeed, the entire multitude of the impious serves the devil with filthy, sordid, and earthly works, and they build for him not any other city than themselves by living wickedly: but on the other hand, the city of Jerusalem, in which David and Solomon, that is, the strong in hand and peaceful reigns, is not built of bricks, but of stone: not on a plain, but on a mountain, as its king says to it: Behold, I will lay your stones in order, and lay your foundations with sapphires (Isa. LIV, 11). And of which the Prophet says:

Mount Zion, the sides of the north, the city of the great King (Psalm. LXVII, 3): because evidently the city of the devil consists of the transgressors and tyrants, which the name Nimrod signifies, that is, the entire multitude of the reprobate, who wander about through the flowing corruption of the present life. But the Church, indeed, the city of Christ, is built of living stones, that is, souls strong in faith and action, about which its wise architect, speaking of its king, said: Coming to him, a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and honored by God; you also, as living stones, are being built up (I Pet. II, 4): and not in the plain of Shinar, but on the holy mountain of the Lord: because the chosen ones strive not to relax in the weak pleasures of carnal things, but rather to bind and elevate themselves to higher desires: hence they say our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. III, 20).

Genesis 11:3

But as they mold clay into bricks, which are usually made with equal square sides, hence also taking their name, it shows the composition and ornamentation of secular eloquence, through which the proud city of the devil, either in deceptive philosophy or heretical craftiness, seems to be raised much for a time; but in the examination of the strict judge, it will be evident how condemnable and worthy of confusion it is.

Genesis 11:3

They baked the bricks they had made with fire. Indeed, that fire of which it is said: "all adulterers, their hearts are like an oven" (Hosea 7:4), and about which Isaiah says: "Behold, all you who kindle a fire, encircled with flames, walk in the light of your fire and in the flames you have kindled" (Isaiah 50:11). For this fire is indeed the love of vices and the desire for human favor, with which, once they have been found, the foolish teachers of the deceived strive to confirm and harden the doctrines of falsehood so much that they cannot be overcome by any struggle of truth and heavenly doctrine; but nevertheless, with the army of truth prevailing, as Scripture says, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great" (Revelation 18:2), with a twofold fall, having been cast down in the present through the manifestation of truth, and to be condemned in the future by the judgment of ultimate severity. Of such cities, the Israelite people once made from clay and brick in Egypt, because even they, not yet educated by the hearing of the law, served vices and errors, and expressed the form of those in their works, who, still in the obscure deceptions of unclean spirits, by whose harsh Egyptian commands they were oppressed, had learned neither faith nor hope of acquiring the heavenly homeland; and thus they knew only to cling to and be subject to the allurements of this world.

But the bitumen with which the builders of Babylon used in place of mortar, which was taken from the ground or pits, certainly shows the intention of earthly and base pleasure, with which the people of this age fortify all their works, as those who, having no hope or knowledge of heavenly goods, direct themselves to seeking the joys that are in the heavens, and thus everything they do is carried out for the sake of temporary gratification or favor: against which it is rightly read that the masons made the temple of the Lord: indeed, mortar is made from stones burned and turned into ashes, which are acted upon by fire, so that what were once singly firm and strong become softened with the addition of whiteness, and, infused with water, are better connected to each other, and the stones placed in the wall can connect others, themselves too quickly regaining better firmness, which they seemed to have lost for a short time. Who then are to be understood by the mortar but those who, being diligently baked in the furnace of temporal tribulations, have first in themselves changed all the darkness of vices into the whiteness of virtues, saying to their Creator: "You will wash me and I will be

whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7); then also strive to whiten their neighbors with their exhortations or examples and bind each other with the bond of love? Of whom it is rightly said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9);

who the more they are softened, humbled by the flame of tribulations, the stronger they become in strengthening and maintaining the hearts of their neighbors in tribulations. And indeed, the temple is built from white stone, as David said to Solomon when he gave him expenses and showed him the measurements for making the temple: "but also marble from Paros in abundance he provided" (1 Chronicles 29:2), because indeed the Church of Christ is gathered from souls chosen for their firmness in faith and brilliant action. Indeed, marble from the island of Paros is known to be of strong ability and a candid color; but the builders of Babylon, having no abundance or concern of this material, glue their bricks with bitumen from pits: because they try to fortify the whiteness of innocence, the strength of faith, the harmony of brotherhood with the arguments of disputations.

Genesis 11:4

Come, he said, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top may reach to heaven. The wicked teachers make a city for themselves when, having left the heavenly city, whose architect and builder is God—that is, the holy Church—they gather their own assemblies. All the reprobates make a city for themselves when, neglecting the protection of God's commandments, they follow the thoughts and desires of their own hearts in their actions or words. They build the city of Babylon when they perform works worthy of confusion. They also make a tower whose top may reach to heaven when, to the injury of their Creator, they exercise impious tongues; when, according to the voice of the Psalmist, they speak iniquity against the Most High, when they set their mouth against heaven, which the heathens do by worshipping many gods, the heretics by polluting the faith of the one God with errors, the Jews by denying Christ the Son of God, false Catholics by profaning the true faith with evil deeds or schisms. To all these, the Psalmist's cry to the Lord fits: Their pride rises always against you (Psalm 73:23), that is, it rises to you in the remembrance of your just judgment.

But since the pride of the wicked rises to heaven like the top of a cursed tower, it is right that the Creator of heaven, descending, should destroy the unanimous works of the wicked, and first offer them this benefit, that not

having the capacity to complete what they began, they may not be condemned more gravely for eternity; then that, having their harmful conspiracy torn apart and dissension among them, they may do less harm to the good. This He once did by descending from heaven Himself: this He does daily through His preachers in the Church: for He confounds the proud languages of the Jews, who, against the grace of the Gospel which He preached, unanimously rebel, as if all with one lip; and retarding them from impious conquests, He scattered them over the whole world. He also precipitates and divides, through Catholic doctors, the tongues of heretics, and, dissociating them from each other, prevents them from raising the gates of Hell against His Church. For there is no heresy which is not attacked by other heretics; no sect of secular philosophy which is not rebutted by other equally foolish philosophical sects; thus it happens that while the reprobates have confused tongues among themselves, such that none can understand the voice of his neighbor with the same understanding, they prove that the name of Babylon, that is, confusion, fits them, and they harm less the vision of peace in which the Church glories.

For it is evident that the more the wicked teachers or evil workers are separated from each other in dissenting spirit, the more space they provide for the Church to gather.

Genesis 11:10

These are the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old when he begot Arphaxad, two years after the flood. After the destruction of the Tower of Babel, Scripture hastens, by enumerating the generations of the second age of the world (for the first had run until Noah and the flood), to arrive at Abraham, the patriarch of the third age, indeed of all nations; through whose faith and obedience the new foundations of the holy city would once again be laid, and in whose seed the dispersion of nations would return to one confession and faith in divine worship. But the number one hundred, which is transferred from the left hand to the right, usually insinuates great perfection whether of good action or of hope or heavenly life; fittingly Sem, the son of blessing, in the hundredth year of his life begot a son, whose lineage would come from Heber and reach to Abraham; and Abraham himself, by the same grace of the sacrament, begot Isaac the son of promise in the hundredth year of his own age, in whose example we, the children of the promise, as if placed temporarily on the right side of our judge through

hope, expect the blessing of heavenly life through good works: for the two sons whom Sem begot before the hundredth year, Elam and Asshur, as read above, placed outside the holy seed and as if retained still in the left hand, created citizens of the earthly city rather, that is, of this world.

For one became the father of the Elamites, that is, the Persians, the other the progenitor of the Assyrians. But a great question according to the literal sense arises for us as to how Shem can be said to be one hundred years old two years after the flood, when he is asserted above to be born in the five hundredth year of Noah, and it is read that the flood came in the six hundredth year of that same Noah. For if he was born in the five hundredth year of his father, surely when Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came, he was one hundred years old, and thus two years after the flood, he had one hundred and two years of age. Therefore, that the number of times does not contradict itself, it must be understood either that Noah had a little more than five hundred years when Shem was born, or two less than six hundred when the flood came, or that Shem was one hundred and two years old when Arphaxad was born. For Scripture is accustomed to speak in such a way that even if a little remains or is lacking, it still sounds a complete and perfect number in the count. However, it seems most probable, as my suspicion leads me, that when Shem was born, Noah had a little more than five hundred years; for indeed Scripture did not lie in saying that he had five hundred years, even if he had five hundred and two:

for the smaller number is certainly contained within the greater. For Scripture itself signified that it spoke very freely in that place when it said Noah having five hundred years begot three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; when it is not in doubt to anyone that one man cannot beget three sons from one wife in one and the same year: which perhaps sacred history more diligently took care to explain in this place, by saying Shem was one hundred years old two years after the flood because it remembered that it noted his year of birth somewhat negligently.

Genesis 11:11

And Sem lived after he begot Arfaxat five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Nowhere in all this series of generations is it added, as in the age before the flood, "and he died"; because there was no one in the whole assemblage of those born, of whom it could be said that he walked with God, as was said of Enoch: "and he was not found, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24).

[Genesis 11:12] -- Moreover, Arfaxat lived thirty-five years and begot Sale. In this place, the Septuagint interpreters added one generation more than the Hebrew truth, stating that Arfaxat was one hundred and thirty-five years old when he begot Cainan, who, when he was one hundred and thirty years old, begot Sale. The evangelist Luke seems to have followed this translation at this point. However, the Greek chronographers, having noticed this discrepancy, corrected the series of generations to the Hebrew authority by removing Cainan; nevertheless, they did not care to amend the number of years in the generations that they had in common with the Hebrew codices according to their authority; but following their own authority, they assigned to this age, which extends from the deluge to Abraham, a total number of years less by one hundred and thirty than the edition of the seventy, but greater by six hundred and fifty years than the Hebrew truth.

Genesis 11:14

Sale also lived thirty years and begot Heber. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty. [Genesis 11:18] -- But Heber lived thirty-four years and begot Phaleg. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty-four. [Genesis 11:18] -- Indeed, Phaleg lived thirty years and begot Reu. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty. [Genesis 11:20] -- Now Reu lived thirty-two years and begot Sarug. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty-two. [Genesis 11:22] -- Indeed, Sarug lived thirty years and begot Nachor. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty. [Genesis 11:24] -- Now Nachor lived twenty-nine years and begot Thare. The seventy interpreters have it seventy-nine. [Genesis 11:26] -- And Terah lived seventy years, and he begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. The seventy interpreters in this generation alone do not differ at all from the Hebrew truth. And up to this point the second age of the world extends, having according to the Hebrew truth 192 years, according to the seventy interpreters 1072 years, and according to the chronographers' reckoning 942 years. Thus it is said that Terah, having lived seventy years, begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran, just as Noah is narrated to have begotten three sons, when he was five hundred years old before the flood; since one man from one wife in one year could not have begotten three sons. For it is understood that when he was seventy years old, he begot Abram, who is now Abraham, and then his brothers in subsequent time; but Scripture was less concerned to ex-

press the time of their births, since merely noting the time when Abraham was born would signify the age and could suffice.

Genesis 11: 27

These are the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. The house of Terah was one, from which Abraham was born, in which the worship of the one true God was kept; and, as is credible, in which the Hebrew language alone also remained, when, as told by Joshua, he himself, like the manifest people of God in Egypt, served foreign gods in Mesopotamia. The others from the progeny of Heber gradually flowed into other languages and into other nations, in the same manner as after the flood of waters, one house of Noah remained to restore the human race. Thus, in the flood of many superstitions throughout the world, one house of Terah remained, in which the planting of the city of God was preserved. Finally, just as there, after enumerating the generations up to Noah along with the number of years, and after expounding the cause of the flood, before God began to speak to Noah about the construction of the ark, it is said "These are the generations of Noah"; so also here, after enumerating the generations from Shem, the son of Noah, up to Abraham, then a notable phrase is similarly put, so that it is said "These are the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran." Indeed, there, the patriarch of the second age of the world was born, here, in the third age.

Genesis 11: 28

Moreover, Aran begot Lot, and Aran died before his father Thare in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. What is said before Thare may designate both presence and time; time, evidently, because he died before his father; presence, indeed, because he passed away before him, that is, in his presence. Finally, some Codices have that he died before the face of his father Thare. That what is said in Ur of the Chaldeans seems to be the name of the place where he was buried; whose tomb, as Josephus reports, is shown today, from which it seems that the same Aran had been of some great excellence or dignity. Moreover, because among the Hebrews Ur means Fire, they narrate that he was consumed by the fire of the Chaldeans; because clearly, recognizing the true God with Abraham, his elder brother, he refused to worship the fire which they worshipped; and thus, both being cast into the fire by the Chaldeans, he was consumed by the flames; but Abraham, by the merit of

his higher faith, was delivered by the Lord: hence it speaks to him subsequently: I am the Lord, who brought you out of the fire of the Chaldeans; and on account of this dissension of Abraham, although he escaped the fire, he could not dwell among the Chaldeans; but with his kindred, he was transferred by his parent to another land:

with which agree the words of Achior, the leader of all the Moabites and Ammonites, who, as a renowned man, could not ignore what had happened in the nearby and related people, indeed from whom he himself had sprung: for speaking of the people of Israel to Holofernes, the leader of the Assyrian army, he says: This people is from the lineage of the Chaldeans: they first dwelt in Mesopotamia because they refused to follow the Gods of their fathers, who were in the land of the Chaldeans. Forsaking therefore the ceremonies of their fathers, which were among the multitude of gods, they worshiped the one God of heaven, who also commanded them to leave there and dwell in Haran (Judith 5:6).

Genesis 11: 29

Abram and Nachor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nachor's wife was Melcha, the daughter of Aran, the father of Melcha and the father of Jescha. Our elders say that Jescha is the same as Sarai, the wife of Abraham, since evidently the brothers Abraham and Nachor had two sisters, the daughters of Aran, as wives. But if this is so, Aran, their father, cannot be the one who was the younger brother of Abraham and Nachor, but instead must be another person with the same name. For it is known that Abraham was only ten years older than his wife Sarai, as he himself said before the Lord: "Will a son be born to a hundred-year-old man, and will Sarah at ninety years old bear a child?" (Genesis XVII, 17). And how could his younger brother have a daughter who would be ten years younger than he, while he himself would be only seven or at most eight years older than her?

Genesis 11: 30

But Sarai was barren and had no children. By the counsel of Divine Providence, it happened that she was barren in her youth, so that in her old age, by bearing the son of promise, she might symbolize the holy Church, to whom it is said, "Rejoice, O barren woman who does not bear" (Galatians IV, 27), and so on. For it was fitting that she, who in the figure of unique faith and

our hope was to bear one son of promise, should give birth to him not in Chaldea, nor in Mesopotamia, but in the land of promise.

Genesis 11: 31

So Thare took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, the wife of Abram his son, and brought them out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to go into the land of Canaan. The old translation has, "he brought them out of the region of the Chaldeans," which poses no question at all. But as it is said according to the Hebrew truth, "he brought them out of Ur," that is, out of the fire or burning of the Chaldeans, it can be rightly understood that he brought them out of that region where fire was worshipped, instead of saying, "he brought them out of the idolatry of the Chaldeans. As for the statement "to go into the land of Canaan," and immediately thereafter is added "they came as far as Haran, and dwelt there, and the days of Thare were two hundred and five years, and Thare died in Haran," it shows Thare's intention, because he indeed thought, when he fled from the Chaldeans, to go into the land of Canaan: but when he reached Haran, and found in it a convenient and safe place for himself and his people from the pursuit of the Chaldeans, he refrained from further traveling to the land of Canaan, but remained in the city to which he had come until his death:

so much so that even when his son Abraham and his grandson Lot went out of it at the command of the Lord, he did not care to move his foot from it. For as it is said there, that he was two hundred and five years old when he died, it is clear that it happened long after their departure. Indeed, Abraham, who was born when his father was seventy, was seventy-five years old when he left Haran, which makes one hundred and forty-five years. Therefore, at this age of the father he left Haran, namely sixty years before his death. But the Scripture, by preoccupying Thare's death before Abraham's departure, joined his arrival and residence in Haran, so that thereafter it might have a free space for narrating about Abraham and Lot. Now Haran is a city of Mesopotamia beyond Edessa, which is still called Charrae today, noted among the Romans for the death of consul Crassus, among us notable for the residence of the patriarchs: which also in the book of the holy Father Tobit is renowned by the hospitality of the archangel Raphael.

CHAPTER 12

Genesis 12:1–3

And the Lord said to Abram, "Go out from your land, and from your kindred, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. For, speaking distinctly, the Lord mentions land, kindred, and father's house. The land of Abram must be understood as the region of the Chaldeans from which he had already departed: his kindred, the family of his brother Nahor, whom he had already left behind: the father's house, in which he was then dwelling in Haran. How then is it that he is now commanded to go out from his father's house as well as from the land and kindred from which he already seemed to have come forth? Unless perhaps it should be understood that he had left his land and his kindred with his parent with the intention, as we have previously mentioned, to return to it after reconciling with the Chaldeans in the following age: he is now commanded by the Lord to turn his mind away from the purpose of returning to Chaldea, and to take away his mind and body from the habitation of Mesopotamia as well.

Leaving behind the land in which the city of pride was made, and confused by the judgment of the Lord, he was to come into the land in which he would receive the grace of the heavenly blessing and would create a new and better progeny by merit of his faith and obedience. For what he says, "And I will make you into a great nation," properly pertains to the people of Israel. For concerning the generation of other nations that were likewise to arise from him—namely the Ishmaelites, Edomites, and the peoples from Keturah, his second wife after Sarah—he says in subsequent words to him, "I will make you grow exceedingly, and I will place you among nations, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. This is a promise of blessing greater and far superior to the former. That one indeed is earthly, this one is heavenly: because the former signifies the propagation of carnal Israel, this one of the spiritual. The former pertains to the people who were born from him according to the flesh; this one to those who are saved in Christ from all the families of the earth, among whom are indeed those who are born from him according to the flesh and also wish to imitate his faith's piety. To all these, the Apostle Paul says, "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed" (Gal. 3:19).

Therefore, what he says, "And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" is as if he were saying, "And in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. For, to speak in the words of the Apostle, Mary was already in the loins of Abraham at that time, from whom Christ was to be born, when these things were said to him. And the wondrous disposition of heavenly severity and piety: for men gathering for a proud work deserved to be divided from one another through different languages and kinships. But leaving that province alone and willingly going into exile at the command of the Lord, he heard that all the nations divided into various provinces and languages would be gathered in him by a common blessing. Note indeed that although the world's third age is usually computed from the birth of Abraham, yet by this special oracle of the Lord to Abraham, the beginnings of the third age are consecrated according to the sufficiency of the matters themselves. For at that time, the holy seed was separated from the nations, and the Savior of all nations, who was to be born from it, was foretold. Until this time, all the faithful and righteous used to make use of that knowledge of moral life which they either knew naturally by guidance or drew originally from the doctrine of their parents.

But now the knowledge also of the coming Savior in the flesh, in whom blessing and salvation were to come to all the holy ones, both those who would precede his incarnation by being born earlier and to us who believe we can be saved later by the name of the same Lord Jesus, as Peter says, in the same way as they.

Genesis 12: 4

So Abram departed as the Lord had directed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. It is clear from this number of Abraham's years that he left Haran while his father was still alive, as was explained above. There is no doubt that the number seventy-five is mystical, since in it he received the promise of divine blessing and left Isaac, the heir of the same blessing, when he was dying. To speak briefly, seventy, because it is seven times ten, represents the perfection of good actions, when we fulfill the commandments of the Decalogue through the grace of the Holy Spirit, which the prophet describes as sevenfold. To these are added five, so that in all the senses of our body, we may fulfill the same divine commandments with the help of the Spirit's grace. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran at the command or promise of the Lord and entered

the Promised Land; to show that he himself, through the help of the Spirit, having anathematized the errors of Babylonian conduct, would keep God's commandments; and this in all that he did with his body, whether living, hearing, tasting, or touching, so that there might be nothing in his body that was not enlightened and aided by the gift of the Spirit to obey the heavenly commands. And he marked that all his heirs of the promise should live in a similar manner.

It is also to be imitated by all the sons of the promise, among whom we are, that he was ordered to leave his land, his kindred, and his father's house. For we depart from our land when we renounce the pleasures of the flesh; from our kindred, when we strive to strip ourselves of all the vices with which we were born, as far as is possible for humans; from our father's house, when we contend to leave the world itself with its prince the devil out of love for heavenly life. For we are all born into the world as sons of the devil because of the guilt of original transgression; but through the grace of regeneration, we belong to the seed of Abraham and become the sons of God, as our Father in heaven says to us, that is, to His Church: "Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear, forget your people and your father's house" (Psalms 45:10). Thus it is well that Haran, from which Abraham departed, is interpreted as Wrath. Canaan, to whose land he was invited, is called the Changed or Merchant. Therefore, not only did Abraham and his brother Lot leave Haran to go to the land of Canaan, but all the elect who are born through the laver of regeneration certainly depart from Haran and come to the land of Canaan;

and all the chosen, with the wrath of original sin repudiated in the state of their life and having abandoned the habit of vices, apply themselves to virtues and labor in the most blessed commerce of temporal works to attain eternal rewards; they spurn earthly riches to receive heavenly ones; they disdain the joys of human reign to deserve a share in the kingdom of God. For this is the land that the Lord promised to show His followers: because it cannot be discovered by human wisdom how to walk the way of good deeds, but His guidance must be sought in all things, as the Psalmist says: "You held my right hand, you guided me according to your will, and took me with glory" (Psalms 73:23-24).

Genesis 12: 5

Therefore, Sarai took his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all the substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had made in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan. The phrase "the souls that they had made" is used to mean the children they had begotten. For in the Scriptures, a man is sometimes indicated by the name of the soul alone, sometimes by the name of the flesh alone. By "soul," as it is said: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20); by "flesh," as in the Psalm: "Unto thee shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:3), since neither flesh without the soul can come to God, nor can the soul sin without the flesh, but the whole man is signified by one part. Nor do those who believe that as the flesh is generated from flesh, so the soul is generated from the soul have any support from this sentiment: for by the term "soul," as we have said, the whole man is understood. However, that they made souls, that is, procreated souls in Haran, should be understood not of Abraham and Lot, but of their household and servants: for the sacred history following this testifies that the patriarchs themselves still remained without children.

Genesis 12: 6

And when they had come to it, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land. So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. It is read above that while Abram was still living in Haran, the Lord spoke to him, promising manifold blessings, commanding him to leave there and come into the land that He would show him. When he did this and willingly obeyed the divine commands, he was immediately deemed worthy of greater grace from God, so that not only would he enjoy His speech, as before, but also merit His vision. When, through the same divine vision and speech, he knew that this was the land promised to him for possession, he quickly, as a man devoted to God, built an altar there to dedicate and consecrate it for offering sacrifices to Him. But because sacred history is full of mystical types, it should be noted that the Lord's appearance and the erection of the altar are recorded as having taken place at Shechem and at the oak of Moreh. What illustrious valley, if not humility, is figuratively un-

derstood? When called by the Lord from the labors and burdens of this world, we must have humility as the first among virtues, as He Himself says:

"Learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:29). The place Shechem mystically fits this bearing of the burden because it translates into shoulders in Latin, for it is necessary that with the humility of mind we take up the burdens of good works to be carried. When we diligently strive to do this, we will immediately merit the grace of the Lord's visitation and consolation, so that we may gradually be able to ascend to higher degrees of virtues. Hence rightly, about the advancements of Abram's journeys, which signify the progression of good works, it is added:

Genesis 12: 8

And thence, crossing to the mountain that was east of Bethel, he pitched his tent there, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He also built an altar there to the Lord and called on His name. Indeed, after the valley, he ascended to the mountains, for through the humility of self-despair we must ascend to the loftiness of devout action dedicated to God. And there too, as in the valley, he built an altar to the Lord and called on His name, because both to be humbled in the sight of the Lord and to perform sublime works of virtue are gifts of divine favor; for both we must offer praises of thanks to Him. And because there should always be progress in virtues towards higher things, it is aptly added: [Genesis 12:9] -- And Abram journeyed, going and still progressing towards the south. The southern region, from where the sun is accustomed to shine more ardently upon the world, mystically demonstrates the fervor of love by which the hearts of the elect, lest they become sluggish in the appetite and desires for lowly things, are always inflamed by the Sun of righteousness shining from above, namely Christ. Thus Abraham, desiring to see and know the land he was to receive as a possession, indeed proceeded in human curiosity, going and still progressing towards the south: but in mystical significance, he showed that he, ascending from strength to strength, and like all the elect, always made progress in divine love until he is granted to see the God of gods in Zion.

Genesis 12:10

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there. After receiving the promises of blessing, after entering the land

of promise, after building an altar to the Lord there, after invoking His name, Abraham is tested by famine, and such a great famine that he left the land which he had received in promise as soon as he saw and visited it. But Isaac and Jacob, and his sons, also left the same land of promise, driven by similar necessity. As the Psalmist sings, they passed from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another people (Psalm 105:13). This was believed to have happened not by chance, but by divine providence, so that both they and all the heirs of the same promise would understand that they received the gifts of divine blessing in such a way that in this life they would endure labor and temporal affliction, but in the future, they would expect everlasting rest and happiness. This was also to illustrate that the land of Canaan was promised to Abraham and his seed in such a way that it signified more the inheritance of the heavenly fatherland, of which it is written: "The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever" (Psalm 37:29). This is clearly not said about the land of this world, which is common to both the righteous and the wicked, since it is narrated that it will be possessed forever by the righteous alone.

Therefore, the land of Canaan is promised to Abraham and his seed, and after the long toil of Egyptian servitude, it is restored by Joshua as a leader, to mystically suggest that the heavenly fatherland promised to us will be restored through Jesus Christ our Lord after the affliction of present exile. But even in that land of Canaan, the children of the promise never ceased laboring or fighting against enemies, so they would understand, as we have said, that they should seek another fatherland beyond this one, where they will truly enjoy heavenly blessing and eternal rest. This divine providence also aligns with the fact that Abraham, while sojourning in Egypt, was endangered because of his wife; but he was helped by divine protection so that he would not be harmed, thus making it clear that not only general worldly evils, such as famine, disease, and captivity, would just men endure along with the reprobates in this life, but they would also suffer specific tribulations from the reprobates themselves, from which they would receive rewards in the future unknown to the reprobates. It follows.

Genesis 12: 11–18

And when he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife: "I know that you are a beautiful woman, and that when the Egyptians see you, they will say that you are his wife, and they will kill me and keep you alive: therefore,

please say that you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you," and so on until it was said, "The Lord, however, struck Pharaoh with great plagues and his house because of Sarai, Abram's wife; and Pharaoh called Abram and said to him: What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say she was your sister, so that I took her as my wife? Abraham did not lie because he said his wife was his sister, for she was also that, being a close relative; likewise Lot was called his brother, though he was his brother's son. Thus, he concealed that she was his wife but did not deny that she was his sister, entrusting the defense of his wife's chastity to God and avoiding human deceit as a man, since if he did not avoid danger as much as he could, he would tempt God rather than hope in Him. Indeed, what Abraham trusted in the Lord came to pass, for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who had taken her as his wife, being gravely afflicted, returned her to her husband.

It is therefore far from us to believe that she was defiled by another's embrace, for it is much more credible that Pharaoh was not permitted to do this because of great afflictions. It can also be said that, according to the book of Esther, wherever any woman who pleased the king was prepared for him, she was anointed with myrrh oil for six months, and for another six months used various ointments and perfumes, and only then entered the king. It could be that after Sarai pleased the king, and while she was being prepared to enter him for a year, and Pharaoh had given many gifts to Abraham, and Pharaoh was afterwards struck by the Lord, she still remained untouched by his embrace.

CHAPTER 13

Genesis 13:1

Abram went up therefore from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the southern region. He does not mean the southern region of Egypt, but of the promised land: for indeed he did not travel southward from Egypt, which whoever does, goes farther from the promised land: but leaving all of Egypt, part of which he had visited, he first ascended to the southern region of the promised land, which was nearest. It should also be noted according to the letter that Abraham is remembered as having previously descended into Egypt, and now ascending from Egypt, because certainly the land of Egypt is considered inferior not only to the land of Canaan but also to other regions of the world, just as conversely the region

of the Scythians is said to be elevated higher than other parts of the earth: which can be easily inferred from the courses of the rivers flowing into it from elsewhere and flowing out from it. It fits however most aptly with the typical senses that the land of Canaan should be higher than Egypt, because this indeed represents the promise of the heavenly homeland, while that signifies the oppressions and labors of present life. For this the Lord both promised and gave as an inheritance to his people Israel:

but in that land both Abraham encountered peril, though protected immediately by the Lord, and his progeny were for a long time oppressed by a severe servitude, although they themselves were at last miraculously redeemed and led out from there. Therefore the land of promise is higher than the boundaries of Egypt, although situated nearby, because even if the just and the reprobate appear to live a common life outwardly in this age, yet with the great sublimity of a devoted mind, the citizens of heaven surpass all the lovers of this world. Therefore what is said about Abraham that he went up from Egypt, and came with all his own to the southern region, signifies typically that he himself while living in the flesh, and all the elect, that is the children of the same promise, thus for a time turn their thoughts to caring for bodily necessities in the lowest things, so that soon, having fulfilled the same care of the body, they may recall the whole intention of the mind to contemplate the things that are above, and seek to be renewed by the fervor of love and the light of heavenly grace from the Sun of righteousness: for this is mystically to go up from Egypt to the southern region, after fulfilling the necessities of the flesh, to ask diligently from the Lord for progress in the light of the heavenly and of charity. For with such a desire and purpose of mind it is no doubt that we make our journey to the heavenly homeland:

whence it is aptly added.

Genesis 13: 3

And he returned by the way he had come from Bethel in the south. For by the south, we indeed tend towards Bethel through the light of heavenly knowledge, and through the inspiration of intimate love, we hasten by frequent steps of good works to the entrance of the house of God, which Bethel signifies; namely, that house which, as the Apostle says, is not made with hands, but is eternal in the heavens (II Cor. V, 1), which the Prophet desired to see, when he said: Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house, and the place of the tabernacle of your glory (Psalm XXVI, 8).

Genesis 13: 3

To the place where he had previously pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai: at the place of the altar which he had made formerly, and he called upon the name of the Lord. It is noteworthy that blessed Abraham, progressing in his chosen journey, is said to have returned from Bethel either from the south or through the south, yet it is not added that he entered the same city; but he is said to have reached the area between this place and Ai, and there he invoked the Lord. This place of prayer is mentioned to be situated on a mountain, because obviously, the elect, still restrained by the bond of flesh and set in the progress of virtues, strive with the whole intention of their mind to reach the house of heavenly habitation, hasten to it with continuous steps of good works; but they cannot yet enter it, nor can they see its King and citizens in their beauty: however, between the acceptance of faith by which they are consecrated to the Lord, and the entrance to the kingdom in which they desire to see Him, they climb the height of good action as a peak of a lofty mountain. For Ai indeed, or Aggai, as the ancient translators rendered the name of that city, is interpreted as *Question* or *Festival*: which name, evidently, most fittingly suits the time when each of the faithful is consecrated to the Lord with the saving sacraments: about which the Apostle admonishes saying:

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). For what great festivity of mind it is to be redeemed from the power of darkness, and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit to be made a seal of the true King? Which city of invincible faith can also rightly be called *Question*: for by this the elect have learned either to seek the Lord from whom they have strayed farther away, or the Lord Himself, as a good shepherd, has shown Himself to have sought them as His sheep, according to what He says: The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Moreover, the saints build on the aforementioned mountain of good conversation an altar to the Lord, nothing else surely than their body and soul, in which they also invoke His name, knowing that without the help of His name they could neither begin the path of righteousness, nor complete the course of a good intention. We have thus carefully explicated these things about the place of Abraham's altar, lest anyone might think that blessed Moses, out of mere interest in the history rather

than with a view to spiritual understanding, wanted to describe so diligently the place of his tent and altar or his repeated prayer.

Where it is also noteworthy that Abraham is not described to have made an altar or invoked the Lord in Egypt, nor in Chaldea, nor in Haran, but solely in the land of Canaan, which he received in promise: because evidently, only within the unity of the Catholic faith, only in the hope of the heavenly promise, can we accomplish perfect works and offer vows worthy of God. Bethel itself, which was formerly called Luz, was named Bethel by Jacob, when, sleeping there, he saw heavenly miracles and hosts; the city, like Ai, is located approximately twelve miles from Jerusalem for those traveling to Neapolis.

Genesis 13: 5-9

But Lot also, who was with Abram, had flocks of sheep, and herds, and tents; nor could the land bear them so that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, and they could not dwell together: hence there was a quarrel between the herdsmen of Abram's flocks and Lot's, and it is detailed how Lot departed from Abraham with their love preserved, preferring to separate physically from his dearest and most holy brother rather than to remain with him amidst scandals and disputes, which were troubling the weak ones; yet he in no way let his bodily separation from him separate him from the deepest love of his mind, as the following sacred history most clearly proves: where having been captured by enemies, he saved him with all his might with his men, and rightly so because Lot himself did not at all alter the course of virtue and faith, which he had been accustomed to practice with his elder brother, even living apart.

Genesis 13: 10

Therefore, Lot, having lifted up his eyes, saw all the region around Jordan, which was all watered before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the paradise of the Lord and like Egypt as you go towards Zoar. And Lot chose for himself the region around Jordan and moved eastward; and the rest up to the point where it says: but the men of Sodom were wicked and great sinners before the Lord. He praises the fertility of the land and at the same time notes the impiety of the inhabitants, so that they may be understood to be deserving of greater damnation, for they turned the greatest gifts of God not to the fruit of piety but to the increase of luxury: where also it is

silently added to the praises of blessed Lot, because in that land, living among those natives, neither the wealth of the rich soil nor the example of the inhabitants could in any way corrupt the integrity of his purity. However, concerning which sins the Sodomites were subject to, except for that abominable one which Scripture mentions later, the prophet Ezekiel sufficiently explains, speaking to Jerusalem: Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and abundance, and idleness were in her and in her daughters; and they did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, and they were haughty and committed abomination before me (Ezekiel 16:49).

From all these, blessed Lot was free, as testified by the sacred history, which declares that he received the angels as guests and that through them he was rescued from the perishing impious ones; and the judgment of blessed Peter the apostle proves, where it is said: And righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked, was delivered (2 Peter 2:7). For he was righteous by sight and hearing, dwelling among them who day by day tortured his righteous soul with their lawless deeds. For what good merit could be lacking in him, whom the apostolic voice declares righteous? In him, those present could hear nothing but the fame of righteousness, for the deeds and sight of the wicked known to his pure eyes and ears were nothing but torture and affliction. That which is said about him moving from the east to Haran also signifies Mesopotamia, from where he had already long ago physically departed, led by Abraham; but because a reader might doubt whether his mind was still held by love for his kindred and homeland or whether, like Abraham, he had perfectly departed from his country and kindred and from his father's house, Scripture took care to specifically intimate even concerning him that he departed not only in body but in mind from those places and inhabitants, and because of his faith and hope in divine blessing, he consented to remain a perpetual guest and sojourner wherever Abraham chose.

For that Haran, a city located to the east of the promised land, is testified by Scripture, which later says: Then Jacob set out and came to the land of the east, when he had indeed journeyed from Bethel to Haran.

Genesis 13:14–15

And the Lord said to Abram after Lot had separated from him: Lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward and southward and

eastward and westward: all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. Some manuscripts have "unto the age," which both translate from the one Greek term *Aeonion*, αἰών. Therefore, if it is read as "unto eternity," it rightly raises the question of how Abraham's offspring can possess that land eternally, whereas human life in this world cannot be everlasting. But if it is read as "unto the age," and thus understood, as we faithfully hold, that the beginning of the future age will commence from the end of the present, no question will arise: because even if the Israelites were expelled from Jerusalem, they still remain in other cities of the land of Canaan, and will remain until the end, and that entire land is inhabited with Christians, and they themselves are the seed of Abraham. It can also be mystically understood to have been said to blessed Abraham, "all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever"; because the region of the heavenly homeland, which that land of promise prefigured, is thus possessed in full by all the elect, namely the seed of Abraham, so that they remain in it without end, according to what is said of the fire of the burnt offering in Exodus:

This is a perpetual fire that shall never go out on the altar. For neither could that material fire, by which sacrifices were burnt in the tabernacle, be perpetual, since even the tabernacle itself, the very altar, and the priesthood have long been taken away. But the fire of love, by which the elect are inflamed to offer sacrifices of prayers or good deeds to God, never fails on the altar, that is, from their hearts which were represented by that Mosaic altar: because in this life they fervently love with divine love, and in the future, seeing God more perfectly, they love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their strength. And you will find many such things in the ceremonies of the law, which although they were said to be done or to remain with perpetual right, are yet proven not to have been perpetual except when spiritually understood.

Genesis 13:18

Moving therefore Abram his tent, he came and dwelt by the valley of Mamre, which is in Hebron. Hebron is a city situated about twenty-two miles south of Jerusalem, which in the times of Moses was called Arbe or Kiriath-Arba, that is, the city of the Four, because there three patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—are buried, and Adam the first man, as it is written in the book of Joshua. Later, Hebron received its name from one of

the sons of Caleb, as the Words of the days recount. If anyone is moved by how it is now called by this name even before the times of the sons, let him understand that it could have been added in this place by Ezra the priest when he was renewing the sacred Scripture, which had been burned by the Chaldeans, as many such things added by him are found by those skilled in the sacred writings.

Genesis 13:18

And he built an altar to the Lord. And this is the third altar that Abraham built: for the first he built near the place of Shechem, the second between Bethel and Ai. In all of these, it should be noted that nowhere is a sacrifice offered by him, but only the invocation of the name of the Lord is recorded in Scripture; nor in the following Scriptures is it found that he offered any victim or sacrifice to God, except for one ram, which he offered as a burnt offering to the Lord in place of his son, in which the passion of the Mediator between God and men is most clearly figured. Nor is it read that Isaac, his son, offered any victim to God, but only built an altar to the Lord. Similarly, Jacob, though he made an altar at the Lord's command, is not found to have slain any victims, except when, leaving the land of promise, he was about to enter Egypt because of Joseph. Then indeed, arriving in Beersheba, having slain victims there, he is reported to have received a divine oracle; but there both the species and the number of the victims are omitted: nor is any sacrifice offered to God by the fathers found from then until the time of the Pasover which was sacrificed in Egypt with the blood of the lamb.

Why is it, then, that from the time the promise was made to Abraham until the time the law was given, no victims were offered, except for only one, which the father sacrificed in place of his son in the figure of God the Father, who did not spare his own Son but delivered him up for us all, and that afterward, in the law, such an abundance of victims did not cease to be offered daily, except because it was clearly foreshadowed that the grace and truth promised to Abraham and his seed were to be given to the world not through the offerings of victims, but through the passion of Christ? By whose faith and sacraments of the passion not only we but also those righteous ones who preceded the times of his passion were saved. And this figure is supported by the fact that Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High, who was in the times of the patriarchs, is read to have offered not the blood of victims but bread and wine to the Lord, and to have presented not the form

of the legal priesthood, but of the evangelical: who also blessed Abraham himself, to whom and in whom the blessing of all nations was promised, so that it was evident through all things that the promise given to the fathers was to be fulfilled not through the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, but through the grace of the Lord's passion.

CHAPTER 14

Genesis 14:1

Now it came to pass in those days that Amraphel, king of Shinar, Ariok, king of Pontus, Chodorlahomor, king of the Elamites, and Thadat, king of the nations, made war against Bera, king of Sodom, and against Birsha, king of Gomorrah, and the rest. It is recounted how Chodorlachomor, king of the Elamites, that is, the Persians, waging war against the Pentapolis with allied kings, won a victory, and how many nations were slain by him on his march to that contest. It is not to be supposed that the sacred author of Scripture recorded these only for the sake of historical study but rather to commend to us the grace of heaven. For it teaches us through the victory of Abraham, who overcame so many kings with a few men, what the power of faith is, with which he himself was armed, and how great the grace of divine blessing was, with which he was endowed. Because in the same way, the saints, later to be born, would, through this faith, overcome kingdoms, perform righteousness, and obtain promises. But there is also another very important and by no means negligible reason why the battle of the kings, the initial flight of the Sodomites, and their subsequent capture is written, for it is established that they, too, were subsequently utterly overthrown by heavenly wrath. Seeing their wickedness, God first chastised them with hostile slaughter and captivity.

But then, through his faithful servant, he delivered them from that captivity with all the things that were taken, and this was for the sake of the blessed Lot, who served God faithfully among them, so that aided by such a gift of divine protection and delivered from their miseries, they might learn, leaving their errors, to serve God and follow his example in good works, by whom and through whom they were saved by God's grace. But because they neither wished to be corrected by divine chastisements nor by gifts to abandon their iniquity, but rather daily added new crimes to their old wickedness, it remained that they be damned by heavenly wrath permanently. This kind of correction and punishment continues to this day, indeed until the

end of the age, against the impious and sinners, for those who care neither for heavenly benefits nor chastisements are subsequently condemned by heavenly vengeance. In this way, the world itself will finally meet its end, when men throughout the whole earth, ungrateful for heavenly gifts and insensitive to chastisements, will suddenly be swept to eternal destruction by the whirlwind of the last judgment. And indeed, it is mentioned that all these came together in the wooded valley which is now the Salt Sea, anticipating where the battle took place. For it is explained later what the cause of the duel was and by what route the hostile army, after causing massive destruction, came there:

so that the greater the power of the adversaries is shown, the mightier the faith of Abraham appears, by which he easily broke all their strength. The wooded valley is the region where at that time Pentapolis, that is, the province of Sodom and neighboring cities, was located. Now, however, after being overflowed following the fire with waters from the Jordan, it is called the Salt Sea or the Dead Sea in sacred Scripture, but by Greek historians it is called the Asphaltite Lake, that is, the lake of bitumen, and it is located between Jericho and Zoar.

Genesis 14:5

And they struck the Rephaim in Ashtaroth-karnaim, and the Zuzim with them, and the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, Rephaim in Hebrew, in Greek are called Giants: in the singular number, however, a Rephaim is called a Giant. Now their land, which was called Ashtaroth-karnaim, was at the edge of Sodom. Moreover, until today a village across the streams of the Jordan called Carnea is shown. Ashtaroth-karnaim is interpreted as "Flocks of Horns," because indeed they were the dwellings of strong men. But Shaveh is a city of the Emim situated above the region of Sodom, which is still called by that name today. What is added as Cariathaim is interpreted as "Their City"; and the meaning is, they also struck the Emim in Shaveh their city, just as the Seventy Translators have translated. Emim undoubtedly, as well as Zuzim, were proven to be a very strong people even by their name itself. For Zuzim are called "The Terrible Ones," Emim are called "The Horrifying Ones."

Genesis 14:6

And the Horites in the mountains of Seir. Indeed, these mountains, along with the neighboring regions, were possessed by the sons of Esau, who was also called Seir, because he was hairy, after the Horites were expelled. However, it seems likely that it was not he (i.e., Esau) himself, but another Seir from whom the mountains of Seir took their name: namely, the patriarch of the Horites, from whose lineage Esau took a wife. The Scripture says in the following: "Esau took wives from the daughters of Canaan, Ada the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah the son of Zibeon the Hivite" (Genesis 36:2). What this lineage was or from where it originated is revealed shortly after, when, enumerating the lineage of Esau, it concludes thus: "These are the chiefs of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, wife of Esau, these are the sons of Esau, and these are their chiefs. He is Edom"; and immediately a new title is attached, which says: "These are the sons of Seir the Horite, inhabitants of the land, Lotan, Shobal, and Zibeon." And soon after: "And these are the sons of Zibeon, Aiah and Anah. This is Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness while he was pasturing the donkeys of Zibeon, his father, and he had a son Dishan and a daughter Oholibamah." Therefore, when Esau had a wife from the lineage of the Horites, Oholibamah the daughter of Anah the son of Zibeon the son of Seir, it is established that the mountains of Seir, where the Horites were struck down, did not take their name from Esau who began to possess those places long after he was born, but from Seir the patriarch of those same Horites.

Genesis 14:7

And they returned and came to the fountain of Mesphat. This is Kadesh. Mesphat is interpreted as Judgment, hence the ancient translation more plainly says, "they came to the fountain of judgment." However, this is also said by anticipation, since the place received that name much later because the Lord judged the people who had come out of Egypt there. [Genesis 14:7] -- And they struck the whole region of the Amalekites. This must be linked with the previous verse, so it is understood that the people of Amalek were struck down near Kadesh Barnea, where Miriam died, and Moses, striking the rock, brought forth water from the rock for the thirsty people. [Genesis 14:7] -- But what follows: And the Amorite who lived in Hazezzon-tamar, belongs to another place, that is, the town which is now called Engedi, fer-

tile in balsam and palms: hence Hazezzon-tamar is interpreted as the City of Palms. For Thamar indeed is called Palm.

Genesis 14: 8

And they drew up in battle array against them in the wooded valley. Instead of the wooded valley, in Hebrew it has in the Valley of Siddim, which signifies pleasant and wooded places. For such indeed was the Pentapolis which, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, deserved not only to be consumed by fires, but also to be hidden in the abyss of waters from the sight of all living beings forever.

Genesis 14: 13

And behold, one who had escaped came and reported to Abraham the Hebrew. It is evident from this passage that they err greatly who think that the people called Hebrews are named so from Abraham as if Ebreia, since Abraham himself is called a Hebrew; evidently from Heber, son of Joktan, in whose times the division of languages happened. However, "Hebrew" is interpreted as "passer" or "one who crosses over," which clearly matches the faith and merits of Abraham. For he indeed transcended temporal desires and hastened to pass from the present world to future joys. The holy man, after all, is not a resident of the earth, but a traveler and stranger, saying to his Creator, "for I am a sojourner with you, a stranger like all my ancestors. It is not in vain that, although both brothers, Abraham and Lot, descended from the line of Heber, not both are called Hebrews, but only Abraham; and he also left this name to the people of God born from him; but because he surpassed the world more perfectly, his crossing or passing was, as it were, an inheritable right that he passed on to his descendants, it is indicated by the surname what more he had received in grace than his brother.

And aptly, Abraham is here first called a Hebrew, that is, a passer or crosser, as he was about to rescue his brother from the enemies, so that the Scripture might silently intimate that it is proper for those to save others from the perils of temptations by their teaching or intercession who themselves do not succumb weakly to the temptations of vices but know how to transcend them with a lively spirit. Moreover, Abraham freed his brother Lot, a man devoted to God, from the enemies, and also freed the Sodomites, people much odious to God, so that it might mystically prefigure that through his merits and intercessions often both the elect in the people of Israel and the

reprobate are to be liberated from temporal evils: since only the elect can be saved from eternal destruction. It should also be noted that while the province of Sodom remained and was not yet punished, Lot the righteous was afflicted with temporal losses because of the reprobates, and the reprobates were delivered from temporal hardships by God's mercy because of Lot the righteous. But when the judgment of ultimate strictness fell upon the reprobate citizens, then the just was in no way touched by the punishments of the wicked, nor could anyone of the wicked participate in his miraculous salvation, but then only the good were saved, only the wicked were lost:

in which clearly the state and the end of the whole world is expressed, for doubtlessly in this life, sometimes the good are temporally afflicted because of the nearness of the wicked, and because of the nearness of the good the wicked are temporarily delivered from adversities. But at the moment of final judgment, only the wicked will be eternally lost, only the just will be eternally freed.

Genesis 14:14

When Abram heard that his brother Lot had been captured, he numbered his trained servants, three hundred and eighteen, and so on. Indeed, it is a very great miracle of divine power that Abraham, with such a small troop, inflicted such a great slaughter on the enemies, but it contains the deeper sacrament of faith in which we must overcome the spiritual battle. There were three hundred and eighteen, a number that clearly designates the victorious sign of the cross and the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, through whom this has been consecrated for the fortification of our salvation. For among the Greeks, three hundred is marked by the letter T, which is shaped like a cross. For if it had received an apex in the middle, not the figure of the cross but the very sign of the cross would be clearly seen. However, ten and eight are marked among them by I and H, which are the first letters in the name of Jesus: and therefore when three hundred and eighteen are noted in Greek, it is not far from being read as the cross of Jesus. So, fittingly, Abraham overcame the enemies and freed his brother with three hundred and eighteen comrades, to mystically prefigure that the one who would recall the world from death through the passion of the cross would be born from his seed; and he himself would also, by the name of the Savior, that is, Jesus, stand out and be honored throughout the whole world: but also, that all who

would pertain to salvation would achieve salvation only through this venerable sign and through his terrible name.

Genesis 14: 15

And he pursued them as far as Dan, and having divided his companions, he fell upon them at night and struck them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is to the left of Damascus. The entire series of sacred scripture is full of mystic figures, and not only in what is said and done, but even in the very places and times where these things take place, it agrees with that apostolic saying, "For all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11). Dan is interpreted as Judgment, Hobah as Condemnation, Damascus as the Cup of Blood. Therefore, Abraham, pursuing his enemies, found them in Dan and struck them by night when they were unsuspecting and secure, those who were rejoicing as if with captured prey, boasting that they had raged up to that point; for all sinners and those exalting themselves in the riches of this life and in the oppression of the innocent are permitted to boast up to the brink of divine judgment about their works; but with imprudent blindness, as if set in the midst of the night, when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction will come upon them: hence it is well said that he struck them and pursued them to Hobah, that is, Condemnation, which is understood to mean no other condemnation than sudden and eternal destruction.

It is said, he says, 'to the left of Damascus.' Damascus, as we have said, is interpreted as the Cup of Blood; by which name the delight of vices is rightly signified. For what is the delight of sin but a cup of blood, when one strives to fulfill the desires of the flesh and blood without any hesitation? And Hobah is where Abraham struck his adversaries, to the left of Damascus, because the condemnation that is going to punish the impious will thrust them into eternal punishment with the devil and his angels, which is usually designated by the left. However, Damascus is a noble city of Phoenicia and formerly the metropolis of all Syria. Dan was also a town of Phoenicia, the boundary of the province of Judea towards the north where today is Paneas, which was formerly called Caesarea Philippi; from where also the Jordan derived its name, which flows from Lebanon. For Dan is one of its sources; the other is called Jor, which is interpreted as Stream. Therefore, with the two sources not far from each other united into one stream, it is thenceforth called the Jordan.

Genesis 14:18–20

But Melchizedek, king of Salem, bringing forth bread and wine (for he was priest of the most high God), blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abram by the most high God, creator of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God, by whose protection your enemies are in your hands, and he gave him tithes of all. Notable first in this reading is that the patriarchs foreshadowed what the apostles proclaimed: And if one member suffers, says Paul, all the members suffer together; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice together (1 Cor. 12:25). For when Lot suffered adversities, Abraham empathized; when they rejoiced over their deliverance and victory, Melchizedek also rejoiced and, blessing the victorious one who had exposed himself to danger for the sake of his brethren's troubles, with heavenly benediction. He magnificently praised not only the human victor but also the Lord who granted the victory, according to that evangelical saying: Let your good works be seen, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Next, it should be noted that after the struggle and victory, Abraham was blessed; and this was done by the king and priest of the most high God: because we all, too, who belong to the promise of the heavenly homeland, await the blessing of the eternal kingdom after the labors of good works, which is prepared for us from the foundation of the world by the great king and priest, namely the Mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ;

about whose kingdom, which he has coequal and coeternal with the Father, it is said in the psalm: The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet (Psalm 110:1), etc.: concerning whose priesthood, in which he offered himself as a sacrifice to the Father for us, it is added in the same psalm saying: The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Ibid. 4). Regarding the explanation of the verse and the priesthood and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was prefigured in Melchizedek, it is appropriate for our humble self to speak and treat briefly in this place, since the Apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews discussed and explained these topics most sublimely and comprehensively, following his lead we have considered it appropriate to insert a few points from the many he made here.

Genesis 14: 18

Therefore, Melchisedech signifies the Lord Savior: first indeed, as the Apostle says, who is interpreted as king of righteousness, and then king of Salem, which is king of peace (Hebrews 7:2): with these words, the blessed apostle demonstrates how the figure of Melchisedech should be understood, teaching us very clearly that in the letters of the Old Testament we should seek not only the significations of things but also of names. Just as Melchisedech by his name and person figuratively announces Christ the King of righteousness, he also by the name of his city denotes figuratively the Church of the saints, that is, the city of the great King; about which it is written: "And His place was made in Salem, that is, in peace" (Psalm 76:3). However, Salem is the same that was later called Jerusalem by King David, becoming the metropolis of the entire province of Judea, because he bought the place of the temple there, and left the expenses of the construction to his son Solomon, all of which and many others that are read about this city pertain to the Church as is clear to all readers. Also with the nature of his sacrifice, of which he made Abraham a participant while blessing him, he prefigured the offering of the New Testament, which our Lord Himself first offered in the sacrament of His body and blood, and which He left to the Church to always be offered for the remission of sins:

in whose unique participation He taught that all the children of the promise would be blessed: to such an extent that no one can be a part of eternal life without participation in this: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you will not have life in you: whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life" (John 6:54). Thus, in the great significance of the sacrament, Melchisedech the priest blessed Abraham, offering him part of the sacrifice which he had offered to the Lord in bread and wine: clearly insinuating that not only we who came in the flesh after the Lord's passion but also Abraham himself who had received the promises, and all his chosen seed were to be granted eternal blessing through the offering of the Lord's passion. And indeed, Abraham had heard from the Lord: "And I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you shall be blessed. He had heard: "And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed; but before any son who would be the co-heir of this blessing was born to him;

before he offered any sacrifice to God to give thanks for the granted blessing, Melchisedech king of Salem met him bringing bread and wine which he had offered to God, and blessed him, so that he might clearly understand that the blessing promised to him was to be received through the King of righteousness and the author of supreme peace, through the excellent high priest, through the mystical sacrifice of bread and wine, with all his seed. Therefore, let not the Jews boast of the Levitical priesthood against the Christians, since they offer the sacrifices of flesh, and we offer bread and wine to the Lord. For our sacrifice excels in both time and dignity: in time, indeed, because Melchisedech offered this first, before that Abraham or the priests from the stock of Levi came: and in dignity, because it was said to the Lord Christ by the Father concerning this and not that: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Psalm 110:4). Which is also completed by the work itself, and now made manifest throughout the world, only a fool and an impious person denies. Thus it is clear that Melchisedech was greater than Abraham the patriarch. For without any contradiction, as the Apostle says, the lesser is blessed by the better (Hebrews 7:7). The sacrifice of Melchisedech is greater than the sacrifices which Abraham is read to have offered subsequently: because this the Lord Christ, that Aaron: this the priests of the New Testament, that of the Old were to offer.

Wherefore it is well added: "And he gave him tithes of all. Which the Apostle understood and explained very sublimely; so that Abraham gave tithes to him not only for himself but also for all those who were to be born from him, among whom were the priests themselves who were to accept tithes from the people: "Through Abraham, even Levi, who accepts tithes, was tithed: for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchisedech met him" (Hebrews 7:9). Just as the Levitical tribe excelled, that is, the priestly people, from whom they received tithes; so Melchisedech excelled even those priests and Levites when he received from them in their father Abraham: for they were still in his loins. Abraham indeed in this place designates the people of Israel with their priesthood, while Melchisedech singularly expresses the Mediator between God and men with the priesthood which He left to the heirs of the New Testament: "And Abraham is blessed and tithed by Melchisedech," because even those who were most outstanding in the law and Levitical priesthood could only be blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and all that they could have of virtues had to be referred to Him, and they could

only be saved by confessing that these were of His grace: hence Peter, when the grace of the Gospel was becoming clear, as if to the priesthood which was to come according to the order of Melchisedech, said to the zealots of legal observance:

"Why do you test God by putting a yoke of servitude on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But by the grace of the Lord Jesus, we believe to be saved in the same manner as they" (Acts 15:10). Therefore, Abraham gave tithes of all to Melchisedech the priest, from whom he had received the blessing: because indeed he understood that the type and image of the better priesthood were prefigured in him; this is, that he bore the figure of the legal priesthood, Melchisedech of the evangelical priesthood. For he was going to generate temporal priesthood from himself, which was to be maintained through the successions of priests; Melchisedech is read to have neither beginning of priesthood nor end nor predecessor nor successor: wherefore he fittingly bears the image of Him to whom it is said: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech. Let these few things be said about Melchisedech as they seemed sufficient for our work. Moreover, whoever desires to know fully about him and the mysteries he prefigured, let him diligently read the entire Epistle to the Hebrews.

Genesis 14: 21-23

But the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But he replied to him, "I raise my hand to the Lord, God most high, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'" It should be noted carefully and drawn as an example of moral life, that Abraham, who, truly compassionate towards his neighbors in need, had exposed himself to danger to free Lot, and as a devout man to God gave tithes to the priest by whom he was blessed; he, as a despiser of money, refused to accept anything from the spoils he had taken, even when offered by the king he had defeated. As a lover of justice, he did not neglect to distribute their share to the soldiers who had fought with him. Rightly, such a conscience, in order to reach the peak of virtues more swiftly, is always elevated by new benefits of divine grace. Hence, after these things had rightfully passed, he immediately became a recipient of the gift of a heavenly oracle

and divine blessing, which should be better considered and examined by the reading of the following book.

CHAPTER 15

Genesis 15:1

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." The blessing that Abraham had received from the priest Melchizedek, the Lord himself now confirms. For the priest had said, "And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand" (Gen. 14:20). The Lord says, "I am your shield." The priest had said, "Blessed be God Most High." God himself says, "And your reward shall be very great." By reward he means not only the affection he had shown to his brother in distress but also all the devotion with which he had served the Lord with a whole heart since he left his homeland and relatives. [Genesis 15:2] -- And Abram said: Lord God, what will you give me? I go childless, and the son of the steward of my house is this Damascus Eliezer. And Abram added: You have given me no offspring; and behold, my servant will be my heir. He does not ask as though doubtful of God's promises, but simply inquires what reward he, who has no son in whom to rejoice as heir and participant of the divine promise, will receive from the Lord, and whether his servant will be his heir instead. This servant was called by two names, that is, Damascus, Eliezer, by whom, they say, the city of Damascus was both founded and named. But the Lord, favoring Abram's desires, promised him this reward which he sought, when he immediately added:

Genesis 15:4

This one shall not be your heir; but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir. This is proved by reason to have been said about Isaac and his offspring; of whom it was later heard: In Isaac shall your seed be called. For the sons of the concubines, although they were the seed of Abraham, could not be partakers of his inheritance; and since to this inheritance beloved by God, in which the divine protection and great reward would exist, only heavenly souls pertain, it is fittingly added:

Genesis 15:5

He brought him outside and said to him, "Look toward heaven and number the stars, if you can," and he said to him, "So shall your offspring be. For the

just and the elect are rightly compared to stars, not only because, like the stars, they cannot be counted by men; but also because they are exalted with heavenly happiness, because they transcend the base and low desires of this life with great sublimity of mind; because they shine among the reprobate as lights in the world, holding the word of life. Of such it may rightly be said in the end: "Star differs from star in glory, so is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:41). But what he said, "So shall your offspring be," he does not say only of those elect who were to be born corporally from his lineage but also of us, to whom it is said by the Apostle: "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed" (Gal. 3:29). Hence, he first heard while being situated inside: "But one who will come from your body will be your heir. Obviously for those who were to emerge from his seed, who were also to become co-heirs of the promised blessing and inheritance. Afterwards, bringing him outside, he commands him to number the stars, if he can; saying, "So shall your seed be," undoubtedly because of those who were not to be procreated from his body, but were still to be gathered as his seed from the whole world;

in accordance with what the Lord himself said in the Gospel to the believing centurion, who not carnally but spiritually pertained to the seed of Abraham: "I say to you that many will come from the east and west, and will sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11). For he brought him outside so that he might learn that he was yet to receive the seed of blessing in the breadth of the whole world. He commands him to look toward heaven and number the stars, so that he might know that he was to be enriched with this inheritance in the heavenly homeland.

Genesis 15:6

He believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. The Apostle recalls this sentence (Rom. IV, 3) to commend the grace of God, lest circumcision should boast, and the uncircumcised nations should be unwilling to admit to the faith of Christ: for this was done when faith was reckoned to the believing Abraham for righteousness, and he had not yet been circumcised. Therefore, faith is reckoned as righteousness, not idle and naked, but that which works through love; and also, faith which, although it does not yet have the time to work, still has a perfect will to work. For the faith of the thief was reckoned as righteousness, which, even though it could have no time for works given the imminent article of death, was judged so perfect by the inspector of hearts, that on the same day, it was rewarded with habita-

tion in paradise with him. The faith of Cornelius and his household was reckoned as righteousness, even so much that before the washing of regeneration, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit; because as soon as it was conceived in the heart, it was prepared to work through love. Thus, Abraham's faith was also proven sufficient to be reckoned as righteousness, since he was prepared to offer even his only son as a burnt offering at the command of the Lord. Therefore, the just man lives by faith (Rom. I, 17), that faith surely which is ready to work through love, and if it has time, it works.

Genesis 15:7

And he said to him: I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it. Some think Ur is the name of a place, but because Ur is interpreted as Fire, it is better understood according to the tradition of the Hebrews, as we said above, that he was rescued from the fire of the Chaldeans, who wanted to consume him with flames because he refused to worship and adore the fire which they worshipped as God. But, with God protecting him, they could not accomplish this. [Genesis 15:8] -- But he said: Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it? Abraham is not to be thought to have failed in faith after he believed in God, and it was counted to him as righteousness, so as to say: Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it? For he is not seeking a sign to believe as if he were still unbelieving; rather, he entreats that some similarity be given to the thing he believed would happen, by which the manner of it being achieved might be recognized. Hence the old translation has more significantly: Sovereign Lord, according to what shall I know that I will be its heir? Just as there was no lack of faith in the Virgin Mary when she said: How will this be, since I do not know a man (Luke 1:34)? She was certain of what was to come, she inquired about the manner of how it would happen. And when she had asked this, she received an answer. Consequently, here too a similitude was given from the animals: a heifer, a goat, a ram, and two birds, a turtledove and a pigeon, so that he might know through these that what was to come would surely come. For it follows:

Genesis 15: 9–10

The Lord replied: "Take for me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old goat, and a three-year-old ram, also a turtledove and a pigeon." He took all these and divided them in half, and placed each half opposite the other, but

he did not divide the birds. For the heifer may signify the people under the yoke of the law; the goat the same people who would be sinful, the ram the same people who would also reign. Therefore, these animals are called three because in the third age of the world that people matured and entered the land of promise. The first age is from Adam to Noah, the second from Noah to Abraham himself, the third from Abraham to David; in which the people were saved from Egyptian servitude and transferred to the land of promise. Or if these signify something else more fitting, I would by no means doubt that the spiritual are prefigured in the addition of the turtledove and the pigeon; and thus it is said: "But he did not divide the birds," because the carnal are divided among themselves, but the spiritual by no means, whether they remove themselves from the busy dealings of men like the turtledove, or dwell among them like the pigeon; yet both birds are simple and harmless, signifying that in the very Israelite people, to whom that land was to be given, there would be undivided peoples of promise and heirs of the kingdom remaining in eternal happiness.

Genesis 15:11

And birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. These divided birds, which descended upon the carcasses, do not indicate anything good, but rather certain spirits of this air seeking their sustenance from the division of the carnal; or certainly the carnal adversaries of the same people, who, according to the counsel of Balaam the diviner, were seeking an opportunity for victory from their crimes, concerning whom the prophet says: "Our pursuers were swifter than the eagles of the heavens" (Lamentations 4:19). [Genesis 15:11] -- But Abram drove them away, because by his merits Israel was often delivered both from the distress of temporal evils and from the snares of evil spirits. [Genesis 15:12] -- But what is added: When the sun was setting, a deep sleep fell on Abram, and a great and dark dread fell upon him, signifies the great distress and tribulation of the faithful that will occur near the end of this age. About which the Lord says in the Gospel: For then there will be great tribulation such as has not been since the beginning (Matthew 24:21).

Genesis 15:13

And it was said to him: Know for certain that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not their own, and they will enslave them, and oppress

them for four hundred years, etc. This was very clearly prophesied about the people of Israel who were to serve in Egypt. Not that this people were to be afflicted for four hundred years in the same servitude under the Egyptians who oppressed them, but it was foretold that this would happen within the four hundred years. For four hundred years are called so because of the fullness of the number, although they are somewhat more; whether computed from the time these promises were made to Abraham, or from when Isaac was born because of the offspring of Abraham of whom these promises are spoken. They are counted from Abraham's seventy-fifth year when the first promise was made to him, to the exodus of Israel from Egypt, four hundred and thirty years, of which the Apostle thus makes mention: Now this I say, says he, the covenant confirmed by God, which was made four hundred and thirty years later, does not nullify the promise (Galatians 3:17). Therefore, these four hundred and thirty years could already be called four hundred, which are not much more; how much more so when a few of this number had already passed when these things were shown and said to Abraham in a vision, or when Isaac was born to his hundred-year-old father twenty-five years after the first promise; when of those four hundred and thirty, four hundred and five remained, which the Lord wished to call four hundred.

Genesis 15:16

But in the fourth generation, they shall return here. Kohath entered Egypt with his father Levi, whose son was Amram, whose son was Aaron, whose son was Eleazar, who was the fourth from Kohath. And he went out from Egypt with his father Aaron, and when he died in the wilderness, he himself entered the Promised Land. [Genesis 15:17] -- So when the sun had set, a dense darkness came over, and a smoking furnace appeared, and a blazing torch passed between the pieces. This darkness and the fire furnace occurring after the sunset signifies that at the end of the world, the carnal will be judged by fire. For just as the affliction of the City of God, such as never was before and is expected to come under the Antichrist, is signified by the frightening darkness upon Abraham at sunset, that is, as the end of the age approaches; so at sunset, that is, at the end itself, it is signified by this fire that the day of judgment will save the carnal through fire and condemn them in fire.

Genesis 15:18

On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants, I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates. The river of Egypt, which is the Nile, he does not call great but small, which separates Egypt and Palestine, where the city of Rhinocorura is. Therefore, the Lord made a covenant with Abram on that day, when he offered the sacrifices of animals and birds. Certainly, that covenant was that he and his descendants would always offer prayers and sacrifices to the Lord with a faithful heart; and the Lord in turn would grant him and his descendants the land of Canaan to possess forever.

CHAPTER 16

Genesis 16:1

Therefore Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne no children, but she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar. She said to her husband, "Behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children, so go into my maidservant; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And when he agreed to her request, she took Hagar the Egyptian maidservant after ten years of dwelling in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband as a wife. He went in to her, and when she saw that she had conceived, she despised her mistress, etc. The Apostle to the Galatians has fully discussed how Hagar and Ishmael symbolize the Synagogue and the Old Testament, while Sara and her son Isaac symbolize the Church and the New Testament. As for the matter in question, it is not to be inferred at all that this concubine's relationship implies a crime on Abraham's part, for he used her to produce offspring, not to fulfill lust; nor did he act insultingly, but rather in obedience to his wife, who believed that the fertile womb of the maidservant would provide comfort for her own barrenness, an act that nature could not accomplish but will made her own; and that right which the Apostle states: "Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does" (1 Corinthians 7:4), the wife could make use of another for bearing children when she could not do so herself. Lastly, when the pregnant maidservant became haughty towards her barren mistress, and Sarai, in womanly suspicion, blamed her husband, Abram demonstrated that he had been not a lover, but a willing progenitor, preserving modesty with Hagar and fulfilling his wife's will rather than his

own. He said, "Behold, your maidservant is in your hand, use her as you see fit."

Genesis 16:7

And when the angel found her by the spring of water in the wilderness on the road to Shur, he said to her, "Hagar, maidservant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" Consequently, the Egyptian on the road to Shur, which leads through the desert to Egypt, was hastening. For the desert of Shur stretches up to the Red Sea, which reaches the borders of Egypt. [Genesis 16:11] -- Behold, he said, you have conceived and will bear a son, and you shall call his name Ishmael. Ishmael means God hears, and the reason for the name is explained when it is immediately added: because the Lord has heard your affliction. It is to be noted, however, that he was the first to receive a name from the Lord before he was born, and Isaac the second, clearly for a certain mystery, because both the Old Testament, which is signified in Ishmael, and the New, which is in Isaac, were heirs foreknown in divine election before the ages.

Genesis 16:12

He will be a wild man, his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and he will dwell opposite all his brothers. His offspring will inhabit the desert, that is, the wandering Saracens with uncertain dwellings, who attack all the nations bordering the desert and are attacked by all: but this was in ancient times. Now, however, his hand is against everyone, and everyone's hand is against him to such an extent that they oppress all of Africa in its length, as well as the greater part of Asia and some of Europe, being despised and opposed by all. But when it says: He will pitch his tents; it shows the ancient custom of the people, who always used to dwell in tents, not in houses.

Genesis 16:13

She called on the name of the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me." For she said, "Surely here I have seen the back of the one who sees me," therefore she called that well, "The well of the living one who sees me." It is clear from these words that Hagar could not see the face of the angel speaking with her, but only the back as he was departing; nevertheless, she recognized that she had seen him showing mercy and that he was living, that is, that he was truly God, or had come to her in the presence of the liv-

ing God. The woman's wisdom is remarkable, or rather not remarkable at all, since she belonged to Abraham's household, in naming the well, by which she was comforted by the divine oracle, after that same God's name; as if clearly understanding that the well signified the deep divine dispensations by which He showed mercy to her affliction, commanded her to return to her mistress, and foretold that her offspring would be great; and just as in that well or fountain, as mentioned above, she saw living and perpetual water, so she understood the depth of the divine substance as always living and enduring without end or beginning, and rightly believed the well should be named after it. In correspondence with this figure, the Psalmist, having said: "As the deer longs for the streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God" (Psal. 41:2); immediately added: "My soul thirsts for the living God." So that we might understand that just as the fountains have living and unfailing water, so God maintains an enduring life within himself. It is also noteworthy that Hagar's well between the wilderness of Kadesh and Bered is still shown today, and rightly so; as a testimony of her faith and confession.

CHAPTER 17

Genesis 17:1

After he had turned ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be perfect. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and I will greatly multiply you exceedingly." Hence, the name of Abraham is amplified at the age of one hundred years, the covenant of circumcision is given, and the promise of the birth of Isaac is made, so that in a great mystery, a one-hundred-year-old receives the son of promise already circumcised. He walks before the Lord to be able to be perfect, who every moment remembers himself to be standing in the sight of the Divinity and as if placed in his service; as Elias, who said, "The Lord lives, in whose sight I stand" (1 Kings 17:1); he always indicated that he kept himself prepared for divine service, having the presence of his Creator in mind; and because the first step of perfection is humility, it is rightly added:

Genesis 17:3

Abram fell face down. We read that in the earlier places of sacred history, holy men invoked the Lord, offered him sacrifices of praise, and lived innocently in his sight, but none had fallen face down before the Lord before

Abram. However, the more superior gifts he received compared to the previous ones, the greater thanks he gave to the Giver of gifts by humbling himself; and because in falling to the ground he humbly recalled his fragility, he immediately deserved to sublimely recognize the eminence of divine power. For it follows:

Genesis 17: 4

And God said to him: I am, and my covenant is with you. For what is it for the Lord to say: I am, if not to clearly declare the state of his eternity, in which he is always the same? About which the Psalm also says: But you are the same (Psalm 102:28). This place harmonizes with the Gospel where the Lord said to the Jews: Before Abraham was, I am (John 8:58). For appearing in the flesh, he taught that he himself was the one who had once appeared to Abraham in spirit, when he repeated to the Jews the same testimony of his essence that he had given to Abraham; but the Jews were troubled because they had heard: Before Abraham was, I am; yet Abraham rejoiced when he heard: I am, and did not doubt that God existed before he did; hence, because he faithfully heard the word of divine eternity, he received in the increase of reward that he would be called and be the father of many nations. Moreover, the Jews, because they could not grasp the mysteries of divinity they'd heard, were cast out from the lineage of Abraham, and were counted among the offspring of vipers: Finally, they took up stones to throw at him; but he hid himself from them, and went out of the temple (John 8:59), so that, evidently hidden from their stony hearts, and going out, he would come to reveal to the Gentiles the knowledge of his majesty. For even then having gone out of the temple, he restored sight to the man born blind. Evidently as a figure of grace, with which he was to enlighten the hearts of the Gentiles. It follows:

Genesis 17: 5

And you will be the father of many nations, and your name will no longer be called Abram, but you will be called Abraham, because I have made you the father of many nations. Because blessed Abraham left his kin and his father's house at the command of the Lord, he received deservedly also in this gift of reward to exist as the father of many nations; indeed of so many, that not only those who came from his seed according to the flesh, but also those who deriving their origin of flesh elsewhere, would follow the footsteps of his

faith and obedience, as the Apostle writes to the Romans with full exposition. It should be known that Abram means Exalted Father, but Abraham means Father of Many, so it is understood, of many nations. [Genesis 17:7] -- And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and between your seed after you in their generations with an everlasting covenant; that I may be your God and the God of your seed after you. The old translation has: And I will establish my testament. It should be noted, however, that wherever we read "testament" in Greek, in the Hebrew language it is "covenant" or "pact," that is, "berith." It is not surprising, then, that the testament or covenant of God is with Abraham and his seed in an everlasting covenant, that He may be their God: because indeed this covenant will be preserved throughout the entire duration of this life without any interruption in the generations of the chosen following in succession, and will be celebrated without any end in the future age. What follows, however, is:

Genesis 17:8

And I will give to you and to your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. It requires a more laborious exposition on how it should be understood as fulfilled or still expected to be fulfilled, since any earthly possession cannot be eternal for any nation. But it should be known that "eternal" is interpreted by our people as what the Greeks call "Aeonion," which is derived from "age." For in Greek "Aeon" is called an age. But the Latins did not dare to say "age-long," lest they send the meaning far off into something else. For many things are called "age-long" that are done in this age in such a way as to pass away in a short time. However, what is called "Aeonion" either has no end or extends to the end of this age. And therefore, as we said above, the land of Canaan is given as an everlasting possession to the seed of Abraham, because in it Christians, up to the end of this age, whether from the Jews or from the Gentiles, that is, the seed of Abraham, are believed never to be lacking.

Genesis 17:9-11

God said again to Abraham: And you shall therefore keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations; this is my covenant which you shall keep between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised; and you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and

you. The Lord, in His kind provision, first established the covenant of His grace with the blessed Abraham and his offspring; and then He requires of them the covenant of obedience: so that the labor of striving might be less terrifying when the reward of perpetual remuneration is heard first. Therefore, the foreskin of the flesh is commanded to be circumcised, as a sign of the covenant between God and men, so that by this sign the faithful of that time might be reminded to cleanse themselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God; but also by a higher mystery, that carnal circumcision was done as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham's offspring, because it was given as a sign of that covenant of which it was said above to Abraham: In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed; which no faithful person doubts pertains to the grace of the new testament. Therefore, in the sign of this covenant, no faithful person doubts that Abraham and his offspring were circumcised in the flesh of their foreskin, so that it might be typologically prefigured that one would be born from his seed who would cleanse his chosen ones from all stain of sins, and grant them perpetual blessing; to the sacrament of which cleansing aptly corresponds what follows:

Genesis 17:12

A child of eight days shall be circumcised among you. For on the eighth day, that is, after the Sabbath, the Lord rose from the dead, in whose passion and resurrection we are baptized, absolved from the oldness of faults, as if we are renewed by spiritual circumcision; the Apostle explaining and saying: For as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death, therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death: so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. VI, 3). This number can most fittingly correspond to the time of our resurrection, when we shall be clothed universally with the immortality of the flesh, which we laid down through death, and we shall suffer nothing of sin nor of corruption in the flesh. For our resurrection is also not incongruously figured by the number of the eighth day; because after the six ages of this world and the seventh of rest, that is, the rest of souls, which is now celebrated in another life, the future one will be. Therefore infants were commanded to be circumcised on the eighth day as a sign of the divine covenant to indicate mystically that all the elect by the grace of God would be absolved from all iniquities in this number, cleansed

from all corruption of the flesh, and also freed from the very death that they incurred through the guilt of the first transgression.

Genesis 17:12

Every male among your generations, whether born in the house or bought with money, and whoever is not of your seed, shall be circumcised. This signifies that the grace of regeneration and immortality pertains to all the faithful, whether they derive their origin from the stock of Abraham or from another source of the flesh. [Genesis 17:13] -- And My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. By which covenant it is surely signified that I will clothe your flesh and soul together with perpetual renewal and immortality.

Genesis 17:14

A male whose foreskin's flesh has not been circumcised, that soul will be cut off from his people: because he has broken my covenant. By this sentence, the greater mystery of the same circumcision is revealed, which is not only a sign of renewal to come in Christ but also an abolition of the transgression committed in Adam; for what baptism now accomplishes through faith in Christ, circumcision accomplished from that time on the eighth day, which was a designation of Christ's resurrection; except that the entrance to the kingdom of heaven was not yet open to those circumcised, before the Lord, rising from death, unlocked the door of that same kingdom to all the elect by ascending to the heavens. For this reason, they were circumcised on the eighth day specifically; to signify that they would not truly be cleansed from all stain of vice except through the effect of the Lord's resurrection. However, it may raise a question how it is said, that soul will be cut off from his people, because he has broken my covenant, when there is no fault of the infant, whose soul, he said, will perish, nor has he himself broken the covenant of God, but those older who did not care to circumcise him; unless because even infants, not according to their own life's property, but according to the common origin of the human race, all broke the covenant of God in that one in whom all sinned. Therefore, since circumcision was a sign of regeneration, and not without reason the infant, on account of original sin, by which the first covenant of God was shattered, would be destroyed by generation unless liberation freed him; thus these divine words must be understood as if it were said: Whoever has not been regenerated, that soul will be

cut off from his people, because he has broken the covenant of God; since in Adam, even he sinned with all.

Genesis 17:15

And the Lord said to Abraham: "You shall not call your wife Sarai, but Sarah, and I will bless her, and I will give you a son by her, whom I will bless, and he will become nations, and kings of peoples shall come from him. Here the promises about the calling of the gentiles in Isaac are more evident, that is, in the son of promise, which signifies grace, not nature, because a son is promised from an old man and a barren old woman. Although God also works in the natural course of procreation, where however the evident work of God is, with nature being corrupted and ceasing, grace is understood more evidently; and because this will happen not by generation, but by regeneration, therefore circumcision is now commanded. When a son was promised from Sarah, the names of the parents are also changed, everything resonates with newness, and the New Testament is foreshadowed in the Old. Sarai is interpreted as "My Princess," but Sarah as "Princess," and the reason for the change of the name is this: because she was previously called "My Princess," that is, the mother of one household only, but afterwards she is called "Princess" absolutely; for it follows:

Genesis 17:16

And I will give you a son by her, whom I will bless, and he will become nations, and kings of peoples shall come from him. And notably, not as we read in Greek: God said to Abraham, Your wife Sarai will no longer be called Sarai; in Hebrew it is, You will not call her name Sarai; that is, you will not call her My Princess: she is now to be the princess of all nations, wherefore the Apostle Peter, instructing the life of women, says: So once holy women also, who hoped in the Lord, adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, of whom you are daughters, doing good and not fearing any disturbance (1 Peter 3:5). [Genesis 17:17] -- Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, saying in his heart: "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old, and will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" The laughter of Abraham is the exultation of one rejoicing, not the mockery of one disbelieving: those words which he said in his heart are not those of one doubting, but of one admiring; as testified also by the Apostle who, speaking of him, said: "He did not waver at the

promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform." (Romans 4:20).

Genesis 17:19

And the Lord said to Abraham: "Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac." Isaac is interpreted as Laughter, and it is not to be doubted that he was so called because when his birth was announced, Abraham laughed in his heart. This laughter fittingly signifies the joy of the New Testament, in which the children of the promise, with the Lord dwelling within them, shall rejoice forever. [Genesis 17:19] -- For what follows: "And I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him," etc. He says his seed in those who, by imitating the faith of Abraham, merit to hear from the Lord: "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh" (Luke 6:21); to such as these the Apostle, joining himself, says: "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise" (Galatians 4:28). Specifically, however, the name Isaac, that is, laughter, which is born from the promise, fittingly applies to the Mediator between God and men, about whose birth an angel said to the shepherds: "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

Genesis 17:24

He was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and Ishmael his son had completed thirteen years at the time of his circumcision. Therefore, Abraham was a hundred years old, and Ishmael was thirteen years old when they were circumcised: so that, after a year, when Isaac was born, Abraham was a hundred years old, and Ishmael was fourteen, that is, twice seven, years old? Indeed, in a great mystery: because evidently Isaac held the figure of the New Testament, and Ishmael of the Old Testament. For Isaac, when he was born, his father was a hundred years old, to signify that the grace of the New Testament would bring the children of his promise to the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom. Indeed, the number one hundred, as has often been said, in the arithmetical count, passes from the left to the right, and our heavenly mother Jerusalem is rightly marked by the right hand; for those to whom it is permitted to enter it will stand on the right hand of the Judge in the last examination. In the birth of the same Isaac,

Ishmael had completed two weeks of years; evidently because of the sacrament of the Sabbath, which was observed in the Old Testament; so that in the fifteenth year, as if in the sign of the resurrection, that is, of the true circumcision, Isaac would be born;

where it would be typified because the passing legal observance given by Moses would be succeeded by grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Therefore, when Isaac, who prefigured the grace of the New Testament, was born, his elder brother Ishmael, who signified the Old Testament, had completed the number seven in his age; because the observance of the law, in which the Sabbath held the greatest place, was fit to be extended until the time of grace; but the same number seven is doubled concerning the perfection of the same sacrament; because the law of God desires us to be freed both from servile, that is, from evil works in the body, and from harmful thoughts in the mind. The number seven is doubled because the law commands rest for bodies to its followers in this life and promises rest for souls in the future life; when Isaac was born and the first year of his age began, Ishmael began his fifteenth year because, with the grace of the Gospel appearing, even the law itself, spiritually understood, was found to be full of heavenly sacraments and to have preached the glory of the resurrection; but when Isaac had grown up, at the command of Sarah, Ishmael with his mother was cast out, it should not be thought that the Old Testament is to be abolished by the succession of the New Testament;

but rather that the carnal observance of the law, with those who carnally, even while the grace of the Gospel shines, contend that it should be observed, ought to be expelled from the boundaries of the Church; but itself, understood in a spiritual sense, will lose neither a jot nor a tittle until all things are accomplished.

CHAPTER 18

Genesis 18:1

The Lord appeared to him in the valley of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day, etc. This appearance of the Lord is considered to be more sacred than all the previous ones, in which He was seen so many times by the blessed Abraham. And rightly so, after receiving the sacrament of circumcision, after the name was amplified by which he was to be marked as the father of all nations, he came to know the more secret mysteries of God, of which, notably, not only circumcision but also

the uncircumcised were to be participants. Rightly, the appearance in the valley of Mamre is remembered as having taken place. For Mamre, as we read above, was indeed an Amorite by race, but together with his brothers, he was allied with Abraham; hence the valley of Mamre aptly represents our humility, who, having derived fleshly origin from the nations, have Abraham as our father in spirit and faith. To whom the Apostle, drawing from Abraham both the origin of flesh and virtue, says: We announce to you eternal life, which was with the Father and appeared to us; what we have seen and heard, we declare to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us (1 John 1:2). And indeed in this reading, apart from the spiritual understanding, it greatly edifies the readers that Abraham, seeing unknown men, immediately ran to meet them as if to offer the grace of hospitality to strangers;

that he approached them humbly, worshipped on the ground, that he asked them to wait and accept his service, and hastily provided what they agreed to; and that he completed this not through servants and maidservants, but by himself and Sarah. It is indeed remarkable if, upon first seeing them, he did not believe they were men, why he would want to bring them water to wash their feet; how he would ask them to rest under a tree as if weary from walking; why he requested to strengthen their bodies with refreshment, as if they were laboring in fasting. If anyone seeks to investigate this reading more deeply, he will find it to be full of spiritual senses. For the fact that the Lord appeared to Abraham sitting at the entrance of his tent greatly suits both Abraham's devotion and that of all the heirs of the same promise, who testify that they are strangers and sojourners in this world but truly citizens of another life, that is, of the heavenly homeland. For we use tents in a journey or in war, but a house in our homeland, in which mystery, Isaac and Jacob are also read to have dwelled in tents. He who remains in the midst of his tent, knowing that he is a stranger and not destined to live forever in this world, and yet is not ashamed to engage himself as much as he can in the affairs and allurements of the world, remains.

But Abraham and his followers, who conduct the things of the world out of necessity and not out of pleasure, sit as if at the entrance of their tent, because they are ready to leave the world at any moment, always with a joyful mind stretched towards the future rewards and waiting for the entrance into the following life. And it is well added, in the heat of the day; for the heat of the day, in which Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent, signifies

the virtue of love with which he was burning in his mind with respect towards the Sun of righteousness. And such a state of place and time was fitting for him who was to see the Lord and enjoy His conversation, in which both the sojourner of this world would be figuratively represented, and irradiated by the light of true heavenly grace, and zealously enflamed with the love of divine contemplation.

Genesis 18:2

And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw three men standing near him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the door of the tent, and worshipped upon the ground, and said: Lord, if I have found grace in thy sight, do not pass by thy servant, etc. The fact that three men appeared to him is a mystery of the Holy Trinity; indeed, when he saw three, he worshipped one, and prayed to the Lord, because although there is a Trinity in persons, there is nevertheless one and co-adorable equality in divinity of the Lord, just as in Isaiah when the angelic hosts were singing the glory of the Holy Trinity, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, they immediately add the unity of dominion and deity, saying: The Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of His glory. And it is fittingly said that Abraham lifted up his eyes to see the angels, because indeed it is necessary that one who wishes to see the citizens of heaven, who desires to know the glory and secrets of the Divine Majesty, should raise every gaze of his mind from lowly desires and with diligent intention open up to the light of the true Sun.

It is fittingly added that when he saw the angels, he ran to meet them, worshipping, and asked them not to pass him by, because it is necessary that whenever we conceive any taste of internal sweetness in our soul, we should immediately strive with all our prayers and prompt steps of good works, lest the same sweetness should leave us too quickly; but what is tasted for a time should refresh our minds somewhat longer by the memory of supernal sweetness and suspend them in the contemplation of eternal things, abstracted from the delights and cares of this world. It may perhaps move some that in this reading both Abraham and in the following Lot, having seen the angels, received them as guests as if they were men, and refreshed them with human food as if they were mortals, while yet they spoke with them as with God, and received their words no otherwise than as heavenly oracles. "But it is credible," as Saint Augustine says, "that both Abraham in the three men and Lot in the two men recognized the Lord; to whom they spoke with sin-

gular number, even when they considered them to be men. For they received them in no other way than as mortal men and ministered to them with human refreshment as if they were in need;

but surely there was something by which they so excelled, though as men, that in them the Lord was present as He is wont to be in prophets, so that those who offered them hospitality could not doubt; and therefore sometimes they called them in the plural, and at other times the Lord in the singular in them. Scripture testifies that they were angels, not only in this book of Genesis where these events are narrated, but also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where, when hospitality was praised, it says: By this some, being unaware, entertained angels (Heb. XIII, 2). However, in this reception one can appropriately sense that it was divinely arranged so that the patriarchs, seeing angels, would receive them as men indeed but venerate them as God, so that through the distinction of such service and devotion it would be pre-figured that in the future the Lord Himself, appearing in the flesh, would be satisfied with carnal foods and received in human hospitality. In which hospitality, however, He would more be devoted to preaching the gospel and healing the sick than to eating and drinking, as the gospel history often testifies. Finally, the interpreters of the sacred scriptures have understood this place as accomplishing what the Lord said to the Jews: Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad (John VIII, 56).

He saw indeed the day of the Lord, when seeing the three angels, he worshipped one, and addressed the Lord, because in the distinction of the three persons, he recognized the essence of one majesty.

Genesis 18:5

He refreshed them with the feasts that were prepared because he understood that from his seed would be born the one who, although he is God before the ages, consubstantial with the Father, appearing at the end of the ages as a true man, would truly dwell among men; the food with which he refreshed them is also full of spiritual sacraments, of which it is thus remembered: [Genesis 18:6] -- Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said to her: "Hurry, mix three measures of fine meal, and make cakes upon the hearth." And he himself ran to the herd, and took a tender and good calf and gave it to the servant, who hastened and cooked it. Where it is firstly to be noted that everything is done quickly, as if in the service of divine reception; Abraham hastens, he orders Sarah to hurry, the servant quickly completes the as-

signed task, so that it becomes clearly evident that blessed Abraham truly, according to the voice of the Lord, rejoiced to see his day, and he saw it and was glad (John 8:56). But also all who are touched in soul by the regard of divine grace immediately leap with joyful steps of good works and thoughts into the service of the heavenly will, and with diligent exhortation provoke themselves and those who hear them to the speedy observance of the commandments of heaven.

Genesis 18:6

The flour that Sarah mixed to refresh the angels is the internal sweetness of God's word, which the prophet promises to the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the holy Church, saying of the Lord: "He makes peace your borders, and fills you with the finest of the wheat" (Psalm 147:14). And immediately, explaining more clearly what the finest wheat is, he added: "He sends out his command to the earth. Now there are three measures of this same flour because in the sacred Scripture there is a threefold sense of understanding, namely the historical, the allegorical, and the anagogical; for example: "Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house" (Psalm 26:8); according to history, he desired the beauty of the house which Solomon made for the Lord to remain inviolate, being praised by his people in it. According to allegory, he desired the beauty of the holy Church to shine throughout the whole world, to whom the Apostle says: "For you are the temple of God" (2 Corinthians 6:16). According to anagogy, that is, the sense leading to higher things, he desired to see the beauty of the heavenly homeland, that is, the house not made with hands but eternal in the heavens. The Lord also mentions this threefold measure in the gospel parable, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.

For the evangelical leaven the woman hid in the three measures of flour to leaven the whole, when the holy Church, which Sarah signifies in this place, either preaches history in the Scriptures, reveals allegory, or lifts up the eye of its exposition to contemplate higher things. It always instills the power of either the Lord's or fraternal charity in its words. And no one should think they have rightly understood Scripture in which they have not found the institution of charity. A "measure" was a type of measurement among the Palestinians, holding one and a half bushels.

Genesis 18:6

But the fact that Sarah makes bread under the ashes is very relevant. Bread baked under the ashes, while being baked, is indeed cooked with fire and lies hidden in the darkness, but only the ash that accumulates on top is visible to the eyes of onlookers. However, when they are baked, the ash is removed, and the clean bread is presented before the faces of those who will eat, because the words of the Lord have been tested by fire, namely the Holy Spirit, through whom the scripture itself was made. Sometimes, however, the style's baseness and simplicity contain so much knowledge in themselves that the spiritual fervor and celestial nourishment within them are not easily apparent; but when the veil of the letter is removed through the preacher's ministry and the sweetness of the spiritual sense is revealed to the hearts of the listeners, just like shaking off the ash, the sweetest bread is offered to refresh the faithful.

Genesis 18:7

The tender and excellent calf that Abraham took from the herd signifies the Mediator between God and humans, whom the most merciful Father killed for his returning younger son, that is, the Gentile people, according to the parable of the Gospel. He is the tender and excellent calf taken singularly to be slain and cooked for the citizens of heaven because he alone from the entire human race was specially chosen, whose blood would redeem the world, and through whom all things on earth and in heaven are restored in him, as the Apostle says. This calf is rightly called tender and excellent. For what is as tender and excellent as He who humbled Himself for our elevation: Becoming obedient to the Father unto death, even death on the cross? [Genesis 18:8] -- He also took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had cooked, and set it before them. By the milk, the beginnings and as it were the elements of the Mosaic law; by the butter, the perfection of evangelical doctrine; by the milk, the simplicity of the letter in the Scriptures, by the butter, the virtue of the mystical sense which is usually generated from the letter, is expressed. Or certainly, the milk indicates the beginning of faith, the butter indicates the perfection of the work which is created from faith. All of which Abraham placed before the men whom he had received, to signify that the sons of promise would always offer spiritual feasts to the Lord, namely the breads of holy readings, the calf of the Lord's Incarnation, the milk of faith or histor-

ical perfection, the butter of good senses or good works, where it is well added:

Genesis 18: 8

But he himself stood by them under the tree, because certainly we should so feed the Lord with the feasts of faith and virtues by good living, that is, delight Him, so that we always remember to stand in His presence, according to the saying of Blessed Elijah: "The Lord lives, in whose sight I stand" (3 Kings 17:1). And as the Psalmist says: "In the sight, I will sing to you among the angels" (Psalm 138:1). And this under the tree of the Lord's passion, saying with the Apostle: "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14).

Genesis 18: 9

And when they had eaten, they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife? He answered, "Behold, she is in the tent. Then he said, "I will return to you at this time next year, if life be with us, and Sarah your wife shall have a son. Both indeed the lords of the house, and evidently Abraham and Sarah, prepared with the utmost haste a meal; but as if in a well-ordered house, Abraham, with the meals prepared, more boldly approached the Lord; Sarah, with womanly fear and modesty, restrained herself in the tent, in fact behind the tent door, and no longer dared to approach, but listened from within to what her husband spoke with the Lord. Therefore, since she was both devoted to God and well subjected to her husband, she heard the joy of childbirth which she greatly desired; not indeed any childbirth, but that in which both she in the future and all nations would receive a blessing. And well, after the angels had eaten, they promised a son to their hosts, because when the Lord has accepted the meals of our good work and faith, he rewards us with the grace of his blessing. But the angels ate, or rather seemed to have eaten, as holy Raphael explained to Tobias, to signify the mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, in which he, the Angel of Great Counsel, was to eat as a man, not only visibly appearing, but even sitting at the table of men and eating;

but they, as the same Raphael said, used invisible food, that is, which cannot be seen by men living in the flesh, namely the joy of contemplation; of which also the Lord in the Gospel: "For their angels," he says, "always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10); for they always see, that

is, even when they come outside to us to minister something; it is credible, moreover, that the food which they ate, as soon as it touched their spiritual or ethereal body, was consumed like water thrown into a burning flame, and not like water poured into dry land to refresh their bodies, as happens to us when we eat.

Genesis 18:11

They were both old and advanced in years, and it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. To highlight the growth of heavenly power, he says that both were old, and moreover that Sarah, having been barren, was now also deprived of her menstrual blood, because of which she could no longer conceive, even if she had not been barren. Further, if a woman is of such an advanced age that the usual flow of women still occurs to her, she can conceive from a young man, but not from an old man; although the old man can still beget from a young woman, as Abraham, after Sarah's death, was able to beget from Keturah, because he found her age to be vigorous; this therefore is what the Apostle clearly commends when he says: "He believed against hope in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to what was said to him: Thus shall your offspring be; and not weakening in faith, he did not consider his own body already dead, being about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; in the promise of God he did not doubt" (Romans 4:18). For this reason he says that Abraham's body was already dead, because he could still beget from any woman who still had some final period of time left for bearing children at that age: we must understand the body as dead for some purposes, not for all; for if for all, then it is not the old age of the living, but the corpse of the dead.

Genesis 18:12

Who laughed secretly, saying: After I have grown old and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure? The Apostle Peter recalls this sentence when, admonishing women to obey their husbands, he added: "As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." It seems, however, similar to this passage what is read about Abraham above, for when he heard about Sarah's childbirth, he fell on his face and laughed in his heart, saying: Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? And he added, speaking to God: Oh that Ishmael might live before you! But since the Apostle says that Abraham did not waver in unbelief, but Sarah did

hesitate, the following word of the Lord clarifies, saying to Abraham: [Genesis 18:12] -- Why did Sarah laugh, saying: "Shall I indeed bear a child, old as I am?" It remains to be understood that when she heard that Sarah would bear a son, Abraham had previously laughed in wonder with joy, and Sarah herself subsequently doubted in joy; whose doubt, nevertheless, was immediately removed when the reason for divine power was given, as the angel said to him:

Genesis 18:14

"Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son. With this statement heard, all doubt was so removed, and her faith so confirmed, that the Apostle rightly says of her: "By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive. But when he says "I will return to you," and added "with life as a companion," he speaks in a human manner, as if he were to say: "If life is a companion. But it should be understood more deeply that the angels always converse with life as a companion either in heaven or descend to earth, certainly with that life that says: "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself; by whose vision and enlightenment the angels and holy men are perpetually blessed. Indeed, this place seems comparable by contrast with the deeds of the first man; for after his transgression, he did not see the Lord God but is said to have heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden; here, the future blessing's faith, hope, and love inflamed he saw the Lord standing, because surely with this he was to remain, the contemplation of divine clarity having departed from him. Hearing the voice of the Lord God, trembling he hid himself because he truly blushed at his error.

Here, having seen the Lord, he immediately joyfully ran, believing that by the merit of obedience he had pleased Him. He on the cool of the day, this one at the very heat of the day; because this one burned with the fire of divine love, the other by sinning had driven away the light of divine protection and love from himself. This one receives and entertains the Lord as a guest, to show with the carnal feast provided that he would foster Him with spiritual feasts in his heart by living devoutly, according to what the Lord Himself promised about His lovers: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20). The other, that is, the first

man, who ate what was forbidden, lost those delights which he could have had perpetually in the presence of the Lord and His angels, also being visibly excluded from the tree of life so that it might be openly shown that he had lost the incorruptible fruit of wisdom, which he used to enjoy invisibly. And because the blessed Abraham by the merit of pious devotion had already tasted the fruit of wisdom and life, which is Christ, rightly he is said to have seen and received the Lord standing under a tree.

There Eve, having abandoned the fear of God, having neglected her husband's counsel, rashly approached the serpent, in which the devil was speaking, by whom she was deceived into eating what was forbidden, and also made her husband complicit in her transgression; for which reason, receiving the sentence of just condemnation with her husband, she heard among other things: "In pain you shall bring forth children" (Genesis 3:16); and first she bore Cain, the cursed son and fratricide. Here Sarah, submitted to the fear of God, following likewise the religious faith and deeds of her husband, awaited at home the Lord's appearance until her husband came and learned what should be done; but also with the dishes prepared for the Lord's reception, she nevertheless modestly remained at home and rejoiced in having her husband go ahead with them to the Lord and offer the gifts of her devotion and his own. Therefore both received the reward of their kindness with a promised offspring; and not just any offspring, but indeed the one in whom all nations would be blessed. And rightly so, for there the guilt of transgression was punished with due retribution in the first Adam; here the time of redemption through the second Adam was both foreshadowed and prepared. It follows:

Genesis 18:16

When the men got up from there, they directed their eyes toward Sodom, and Abraham was walking with them to see them on their way. When it is said that the men got up from there, it is shown that while they were sitting, Abraham was standing and ministering to them, although he had initially seen them standing. They directed their eyes toward Sodom so that just as they rewarded the faith of blessed Abraham with joyful promises, they would destroy the faithlessness of the impious city with avenging flames, according to what the Psalmist said, who after proclaiming the Lord's mercy toward the holy: "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are attentive to their cries" (Psalm 34:16), immediately added His severity in the pun-

ishment of the wicked: "But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to blot out their name from the earth" (v. 17). But that Abraham walked with the angels to see them on their way, he is believed to have done from the custom of devoted hospitality; but blessed were those steps by which a man was deemed worthy to walk with angels on earth, and to lead them who had come to visit him back to heaven; now blessed are those lives that follow the angelic way of life on earth, by living soberly, righteously, piously, and chastely, and by always, as much as mortal is possible, devoting themselves to divine praises. Truly, blessed Abraham, because he so joyfully received the Lord coming, that he cared to see them off as if they were household members, deserved to know higher secrets of divine works; who, understanding himself the strictness of the forthcoming divine retribution on the world, as he had previously shown himself devoted to God in receiving guests, so afterward he showed himself solicitous for his neighbors by interceding for them.

Genesis 18:20

The Lord therefore said: "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah has been multiplied, and their sin has become very grave." He calls the outcry of Sodom the reputation or rather the infamy of their crimes, from which the Apostle, admonishing us, says: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and blasphemy, be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31). To this clamor indeed is opposed the clamor of the elect, who confidently supplicating their Creator, individually say: "Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to you" (Psalm 102:2). Indeed, great is their clamor, a sublime merit and the intention of faith seeking heavenly things alone, where Christ sits at the right hand of God; since they do not desire earthly riches, nor vain and perishable glory, nor the fleeting joys of the flesh, but only heavenly goods, everything they do is surely lofty and, as it were, resonates with a clamor. But with the multiplied outcry of sins, that is, their enormous crime, let us see what follows.

Genesis 18:21

"I will go down," he says, "and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know." Therefore, when the Lord said that he would go down to see whether the same outcry was true, he did not show his ignorance, who possesses the knowledge of all things, but instructs our rashness, lest we presume to blame the deeds of oth-

ers before we learn perfectly; which He also teaches us in the construction of the tower, where it is written that the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of Adam had built; for what would He not see from heaven to earth, of whom it is written that "Hell is naked before Him, and there is no covering for perdition"? [Genesis 18:23] -- And they turned themselves from there and went towards Sodom; but Abraham still stood before the Lord, and approaching he said: Will you indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? If fifty righteous are in the city, will they perish along with the rest, until he said: If ten are found there; and the Lord said: I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten. It is read further that two angels came to Sodom and were received by Lot; hence it seems likely that at this place two angels departed from Abraham, and he spoke with the one who remained with him, interceding for the perishing city. In which intercession, the humility of the blessed Abraham is especially to be considered, who, although he was esteemed so highly by God that he received Him as a familiar guest and interceded with Him as if with a friend of one mind for others, nevertheless in his own estimation he remained vile and despicable; hence in his second prayer he says to Him:

Genesis 18:27

Since I have begun, I will speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes. By this word he clearly rebukes our pride, we who are far distant from the height of his merits, far removed from divine conversation due to our slowness and inertia, nevertheless inflated with the pride of arrogance, do not recall that we are destined to be dust and ashes; for blessed Abraham, the closer he approached the purity of the divine vision, the more certainly he dispersed and cast away the weaknesses of his own frailty. But we, who are excluded from the gaze of inner clarity by the cloud of our own depravity, the less we lament the darkness of misery inherent in us, the more we are accustomed to see nothing but these.

CHAPTER 19

Genesis 19:1

And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, while Lot was sitting at the gates of the city. Not without cause, the angels who had come to Abraham at midday are reported to have come to Sodom in the evening, because they came to announce prosperity and joy to the former, but to bring ad-

versity to the latter; he was burning with the fruit of light towards heavenly things, but this one, besieged by the darkness of vices, was approaching eternal perdition. [Genesis 19:1] -- When he saw them, he rose, and went to meet them; he bowed down with his face to the ground and said: I beg you, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and stay there, and so on. In blessed Lot a great and perfect example of godly hospitality is shown, who, seeing the guests entering the city, was not only prepared to meet and welcome them but also persistently asked them to turn aside to his house and rest with him. At first, they refused to enter his house, but eventually, at his urging, agreed to do so, so that they might more thoroughly test his hospitality's diligence and more worthily reward it, delivering him from the destruction of the sinners along with his house.

Genesis 19: 4

But before they lay down, the men of the city, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; and they called to Lot and said to him: Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them, etc. This is what the prophet Isaiah said about the exceedingly sinful people of Israel: They proclaim their sin like Sodom, they do not hide it (Isaiah 3:9). Indeed, they proclaimed their sin like the Sodomites, they did not hide it, for without any sense of shame, all, from youth to extreme old age, used to practice abominations with men; so much so that they did not even hide their crimes from guests and strangers and sought to make them alike in crime by force and to involve them in their wicked deeds. [Genesis 19:8] -- Indeed, when they [the men of Sodom] were raging to commit such a crime, Lot says among other things: "I have two daughters who have not yet known a man. I will bring them out to you, and you may abuse them as it pleases you, provided that you do nothing evil to these men." Because he wanted to offer his daughters as a form of compensation so that his male guests would not suffer such an outrage from the Sodomites, it is rightly questioned whether such a compensation of crimes or any sins should be admitted, that we might do something evil in order to prevent another from doing a greater evil, or whether it should rather be attributed to the disturbance of Lot's mind rather than his intention, since he said this; indeed, this compensation is most perilously admitted; but if it is attributed to human disturbance and a mind disturbed by such great evil, it should in no way be imitated.

Genesis 19:11

And behold, the men reached out their hands and brought Lot to them and closed the door, and they struck with blindness those who were outside, from the least to the greatest, so that they could not find the door. And the rest is up to the point that Lot said to his sons-in-law: "Get up, leave this place, for the Lord will destroy this city," and he seemed to be speaking jestingly. That the angels closed Lot's door, so that neither he nor anyone from his house could be taken by the Sodomites to destruction, clearly indicates that none of God's elect will be lost to the impiety and persecution of the reprobates, as the Lord says about his sheep: "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28). That Lot, having the authority given by the angels, could not bring back to salvation any of the wicked citizens, not even his own relatives or friends, even though he tried very much, signifies that no human effort can add even one soul to the number of the predestined, who were chosen by the Lord before the foundation of the world; for the Lord knows who are his own. Indeed, although the weakness of our condition may hide from us the fate of those who belong to the lot of the elect, we must not cease from caring about our own salvation, nor should we be silent in instructing our neighbors. But, following the example of the blessed Lot, we ought to live chastely and devote ourselves to the correction of those who err, for it is certain that even though we cannot save those predestined to destruction, we do not lose the reward of our kindness, which we extend toward their salvation.

Genesis 19:16

And they led him out and placed him outside the city. There he spoke to him: "Save your soul, do not look back, nor stay in any region around, but save yourself on the mountain, lest you also perish together. Generally, indeed, the fire and destruction of Sodom, from which Lot was rescued, designates the punishment of ultimate severity; when, with the completion at the end of the age of the total number of the elect, all the impious will be seized into eternal fire, the Lord explaining, who said: "Similarly as it happened in the days of Lot, they ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built; but the day Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all. So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is re-

vealed" (Luke 17:28). To which the apostle Jude also attests, saying: "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). However, the same fire of Sodom can also, not incongruously, suggest the flames of the vices with which the reprobate are burned in this life and are thus prepared for eternal fire; who, although they now do not cease to burn with earthly desires and carnal allurements, then will never cease to burn with the fire of vengeance. This sense, too, the Lord affirms, indeed even teaches, who says:

"In that hour, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away; and likewise, let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:31). For we are not taught that in the approaching moment of the final judgment, deserting the peak of upright conduct, we should turn our mind to the depths of worldly desire; or, leaving the plow of spiritual agriculture, that we should look back, when no further correction of our works remains to us, but rather the reckoning of what we have worked is at hand. Rather, indeed, as judgment approaches, the faithful are given this exhortation, to persist in good and wholesome beginnings, lest, repeating the contagions of sins which they had left behind, they imitate Lot's wife, who, when she looked back heedlessly at the sulfurous burning Sodom, was turned into a pillar of salt. Therefore, as the Lord forbids us from imitating Lot's wife, he certainly shows that the burning of the city, to which she had looked back, expresses the flames of vices which we are both able and ought to avoid. Hence now the exhortation of the angels, by which they had admonished Lot, who was led out of Sodom, not to look back, nor to stay in any region around, but to seek the mountain to be saved, must be spiritually understood and followed with the utmost intention by us;

lest we carelessly repeat the ardor and incentives of the vices we seemed to have momentarily escaped, nor consent to remain, as much as possible, in the vicinity of sinners, lest by their example we deviate from the rectitude of our path, as the Psalmist says of the blessed man: "And he does not stand in the way of sinners" (Psalm 1:1), but we should quickly strive to ascend to the height of elevated conduct.

Genesis 19:19

And Lot said to them: "Please, my lord, because your servant has found favor before you, and you have magnified your mercy, which you have done with me, to save my life, I cannot be saved in the mountain, lest some evil overtake me. There is a city nearby to which I can flee, a small one, and I will be saved there." Blessed Lot did not seek the protection of the nearby city as if he feared some plague would overtake him if he reached the mountain; rather, he desired to turn to the nearby city with this intention, lest while seeking the height of the mountain, which was farther away, he would be consumed by the flame threatening nearby the impious on the way. [Genesis 19:21] -- And he said to him: "Behold, I have also accepted your request in this matter, that I will not overthrow the city you have spoken of, etc." Oh, how great is the compassion of divine mercy! Not only does it deliver the just man from the destruction of the wicked, but it also grants life to many of them on account of the same just man's safety, which they did not deserve, so that it might show in those who perished what impiety deserved, and in those who remained how much the intercession of the pious prevailed with God.

Genesis 19:22

Therefore, the name of that city was called Segor. Segor is interpreted as "Little," which for this reason was so called because Lot had said, "Is it not small?" Previously it was called Bale, as mentioned above: "Against the king of Bale, this is Segor." Bale is interpreted as "devour," which the Hebrews say was called such because it was swallowed up by a third earthquake. But just as Sodom burns with the flames of vices, and the mountain to which Lot is ordered to ascend indicates the summit of virtues, so Segor designates a certain lesser mode of good behavior; although it is far from the heights of the perfect, it is still separated from the contagion of the wicked. For example, one who rightly keeps a conjugal life escapes the sulfurous flame of fornication but does not yet ascend the mountain of continence; he who turns his hand and mind away from rapine and avarice, and is accustomed to give what he has to the poor, cannot yet leave everything behind. He indeed escapes the fire of the Sodomites, enters the walls of the small city where he avoids the danger of destruction, but has not yet ascended the fortress of virtue where he would already shine as perfect, and other such things.

Genesis 19: 23–25

The sun rose upon the earth, and Lot entered Zoar; then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities and all the surrounding region. The sunrise upon the earth, at which Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, marks the manifestation of the final judgment, when, after all the righteous have been rescued, the wicked will be suddenly overwhelmed by destruction. And surely it was rightly done by the judgment of God that those who had tried to snare the blessed Lot in the darkness of night, laboring much and resisting with their crimes, when day suddenly came upon them, saw him rescued while they themselves perished entirely; and they who had burned with vile pleasures of the flesh in darkness, were consumed with sulfur and fire once morning suddenly appeared, because all who serve vices secretly in the blindness of their minds are openly struck in the knowledge of their crime by the stern judge. Also, it should be noted that on one and the same night while Lot was rejoicing with the Lord as his guest and was being defended from enemies, the Sodomites were laboring to accumulate their crimes, even desecrating Lot with his guests; but at sunrise, Lot was liberated for his righteousness, and they were condemned for their impiety, because indeed in the night of this world holy people also rejoice in welcoming Him who said: 'Behold, I will come and dwell in the midst of you' (Zech.

x, 11), and in Revelation: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me' (Rev. iii, 20). And the wicked seek to corrupt either the works of the faithful or the very faith itself with their temptations; but when the morning of the future age appears, they receive the crown of life, and the others incur the punishment of perpetual death. The Sodomites therefore perish with a punishment worthy of their crimes. For since they led an impious life in the filth of luxury and the burning of lust, they are deservedly punished with flames of fire and the stench of sulfur. Nor should it be doubted that by such punishment they were not only condemned to present suffering but are also to be condemned perpetually, as the apostle John says: 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone' (Rev. xxi, 2). The punishment and retribution are therefore made equal to the kinds of sins,

according to the saying of the wise man, interpreting the plagues of the Egyptians: 'That they might know, that by the same things wherewith a man sins, by the same also he is tormented' (Wis. xi, 17), just as the blessed Lot deserved to be freed according to the mode of life he led;

for since he was hospitable, it happened that he was saved from destruction by receiving good guests. Nor should it be doubted that after death he was received into eternal tabernacles by these same guests; so that he who introduced the citizens of heaven into his own lodging and refreshed them with his feasts would himself be led by them into the heavenly dwellings, where he would be perpetually refreshed with the bread of angels, that is, the glory of the vision of divine brightness. And as it is said that the Lord rained sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven, the person of the Father and the Son is clearly distinguished, and the heresy of Sabellius is repudiated, which says that the Father is the same as the Son. The Lord rained from the Lord, the Son from the Father; hence it is also elsewhere said to the Father: 'You have made all things in wisdom' (Ps. 104:24), that is, in the Son. Similar to this is what the Psalmist says, describing the two persons of the Father and the Son in such a way that he nevertheless indicates one divinity in the two persons: 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God, your God, has anointed you' (Ps. 45:6-7). 'Your throne, O God,' is said to God the Son; 'God, your God, has anointed you,' he adds concerning God the Father.

Genesis 19:26

And his wife, looking back, was turned into a pillar of salt. This indeed must be believed to have happened literally. Finally, Josephus reports that even up to his time the same pillar of salt had endured at the gates of the same city. And indeed, the wife, out of fear due to her feminine frailty at the sudden clamoring of the perishing and the crashing of the flames falling from the sky, looked back; but it nonetheless holds their figure in this infirmity, who, once renouncing the world and beginning the arduous journey of virtues, suddenly return with an unstable and almost feminine heart to the desires of the world they had forsaken; about whom the apostle Peter says: "It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them" (2 Peter 2:21); as, conversely, Lot, who left behind everything he pos-

sessed that was destined to perish with the sinners, suggests those who truly renounce the world, and regret not their renunciation; those whom also the blessed Noah, who left behind all his possessions to be destroyed by the floods with the reprobates, just as [Lot] did with the fire, clearly denotes; but the fact that the wife of Lot, when she turned away from the path which the Lord showed, perished and was turned into a pillar of salt;

aptly signifies that those who deviate from the way of truth by returning to sins perish in their own depravity; yet by the example of their perdition they leave behind, as it were, a seasoning of wisdom for others, so that those remembering their destruction may guard themselves more cautiously and circumspectly in the purpose of righteousness they have taken up. Finally, the Lord, warning the faithful not to abandon the path of faith they have begun, employs for them, as it were, a rock of salt that they may more sweetly savor His words, when He says among other things: "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). Therefore, anyone who desires to escape the fire of vices, which is the final judgment, must forget what is past and always strive towards the joys of divine promise that lie ahead.

Genesis 19: 30

Lot went up from Zoar and stayed on the mountain with his two daughters. He had feared to stay in Zoar. He hurried to ascend the mountain from Zoar because he recognized that this was more pleasing to the angels through whom he was rescued, fearing that the city which at the moment of his intercession had escaped the danger of death might later, due to the citizens' sins, be consumed with a similar destruction as the neighboring cities; he feared greatly, since he knew that it had been frequently devastated by earthquakes in earlier times, hence it was called Bela, that is, 'submerging' or 'devouring.' But also according to spiritual understanding, because Sodom represents the flames of vices, Zoar a small beginning of good works, and the mountain the height of virtues, it is necessary that when someone has moved from the fire of vices to the beginning of virtue, they should not remain sluggish at the outset, but should always strive and hurry with a lively step toward higher progress in good action.

Genesis 19: 32

And the elder said to the younger: Our father is old, and there is no man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth; come, let us make

him drink wine, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed from our father. And it was related how the daughters of Lot, by making him drunk with wine, lay with him, and conceived and bore Moab and Ammon, the patriarchs of the Moabites and the Ammonites. This story indeed seems to be against the natural custom of human conception, but it cannot be doubted as a fact, because such great authority reports it to have happened. Lot can be seen as excusable, because he suffered such a crime of incest unknowingly rather than committed it; but he is not excused in that, forgetting the recent extermination of the impious, he indulged in wine so much that he could not perceive what was being done to him. The daughters also seem excusable, because they did not commit incest with their father due to lust; but because they believed no men were left on earth, thinking all had been consumed by the same fiery punishment; and they suspected that just as after the flood the human race was restored through the three sons of Noah and as many daughters-in-law, now through themselves and their father, who alone had survived the fires, it must be restored anew;

thus they thought it should be done rather in sleep, lest the father, knowing such a marriage, would shun and reject it in scorn. So they can thus seem excusable, for they believed they were performing an act of obedience to divine disposition; but they are not excused in that they neither sought the will or counsel of their father in such a matter, nor waited for time to pass until they could learn more certainly what had happened regarding the human race throughout the earth. In a moral sense, we can understand from this event that no state of earthly habitation, however exalted it may appear, can be free from the contagion of tempting guilt. For behold, the blessed Lot escaped the stinking flames of Sodom, avoided the ruin of the equally sinful city of Zohar, and ascended the peak of a mountain; but where you might think him positioned in the lofty summit of virtues, there you see him, by night, drunk and suddenly defiled by his daughters, because it often happens that those who have conquered other temptations of vice through the enlightenment of heavenly grace, again succumb weakly to others through the inertia of their own weakness. For the assistance of angelic guidance signifies heavenly aid by which we are freed from the dangers of sin; while the daughters of blessed Lot represent even the carnal thoughts of exalted men, which by neglect sometimes subdue them; so that from a pious heart an unworthy word or deed, like nefarious offspring, is conceived.

Nor is it to be doubted that the sons born to Lot by his daughters, who begot Gentile peoples and alien to the faith of their father, represent those works of the saints which do not pertain to the rule of holiness, but rather to the depravity of the wicked; such was the adultery of David, the arrogance of King Hezekiah, the rash march of King Josiah to the battle in which he would perish and subsequently betray the Davidic kingdom to enemies; and then the denial of the most blessed prince of the apostles. The times so often correspond with events; for Lot, who had been rescued from Sodom at dawn, was drunk and deceived at night, because of course what saves us from dangers is the grace of God illuminating us; what makes us relapse into vices is our own blindness and weakness. Moab and Ammon are born of Lot's daughters, who also signify sins, as testified by that law's commandment which says: The Moabite and Ammonite shall not enter into the Church of the Lord until the third and fourth generation, and forever, because errors and vices, as we said, of the elect are by no means counted among the virtues by which the Church is perfected and adorned, but are rather covered by an abundance of good works so as not to appear. But the names of Lot's sons, the first of whom is interpreted as "from the father," and the second "my people," are fittingly applied to the nature of vices;

which I find divinely implanted not from the Creator God in us, but originating from the first cause of our condition. I call Ammon also "my people," because this also pertains to me, and I recognize that it is not to be ascribed to the Creator of natures. Behold it should be noted that the people are properly interpreted as *merosus* (rebellious). My people are called Ammon even if this too does not differ from the significance of sins. For just as we should rejoice in the fruit of virtues that are given to us by the Lord, so it is necessary that we be pricked with salutary sorrow at the emergence of vices, which is known to arise from the corruption of our nature. And these are indeed the sons of Lot conceived in incest. But Isaac, who was born of the promise and is interpreted as Joy, designates the grace of virtues.

CHAPTER 20

Genesis 20:1

Abraham departed from there to the southern land, lived between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. That Abraham came to the southern land suggests a celestial progress of the mind through his earthly journey, by which he always used to ascend to more perfect works of virtues, as did the

other saints. The southern land, being nearer to the light and heat of the sun, often indicates that life of the faithful which, shedding the stupor of worldly desire, used to be renewed more and more daily by the inner light of heavenly love. And Abraham, having destroyed Sodom, sought the southern land, since each chosen person, witnessing the destruction of the wicked, more devotedly girds himself in the service of his Creator so that having been inwardly granted to transcend the perdition of the wicked, he might merit to partake eternally in the joys of the good. "When the scourge is inflicted, the little one will become more prudent. The following words, too, which state that Abraham lived between Kadesh and Shur and sojourned in Gerar, aptly suit the spiritual progress of the elect. For Kadesh means Holy, or Changed, Shur means Strong, and Gerar means Sojourning. Therefore, Abraham having journeyed to the southern land, dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, hence, surely, all the chosen, being inwardly enlightened by the recognition of truth and inflamed with love for the divine vision, strive together to exercise works of holiness;

they endeavor to lead a life changed among men, that is, heavenly for earthly, angelic for human, and continually adhere to Him who is uniquely strong with the invincible strength of faith, saying individually, saying together: "But as for me, it is good to be close to God" (Ps. 73:28). Notably, Shur among the Hebrews is one of the ten names for God, by which the power of the Almighty is commonly signified. Therefore, he dwells between Kadesh and Shur, who, through works of virtues, daily yearns for the vision of his Creator; and since this vision is usually to come in the future, but in the present age they confess themselves to be sojourners who have learned to hope for an eternal homeland in the heavens, it rightly follows:

Genesis 20:1

And he sojourned in Gerar. For by both the word of sojourning and the name of Gerar, that is, of lodging, the life of the holy ones is aptly depicted, which, as much as it is devoted to divine commands, so much it is alienated from temporal joys; whence also the Apostle, glorifying the life of the same patriarchs, said: By faith, Abraham sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for a city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Heb. XI, 9). And a little later: According to faith, all these died, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar and

greeted them, and confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth (*Ibid.*, 13). For those who say such things signify that they are seeking a homeland; but Gerar was formerly the border of the Canaanites to the south, and a metropolis city of Palestine, situated between Kadesh and Shur, that is, between two deserts, one of which is joined to Egypt, to which the people arrived after crossing the Red Sea, and the other extends from Kadesh to the desert of the Saracens. It follows:

Genesis 20:2

And he said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister. So Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took her. Why Abraham said this about Sarah, and whence it should be believed that she, although taken into the king's house, was by no means touched by the king's embrace, has already been said above, where in a similar manner she was taken by Pharaoh but returned to her husband at the command of the Lord. It follows. [Genesis 20:3-4] -- But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him: Behold, you are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she has a husband; but Abimelech had not touched her and said: Lord, will you kill an innocent and righteous nation? And the rest of this reading. It seems that Abimelech was diligent in practicing the worship of the true religion and knew it with all his people; for how would a man, ignorant of the knowledge and fear of God, deserve to be rebuked by God for his sin, or receive God's rebuking words with such humility; for he demonstrated his people's innocence when he said: Will you kill an innocent and righteous nation? And he showed his own purity of heart and action when he added: In the simplicity of my heart and the cleanliness of my hands, I did this. Hence also, because he prudently and humbly answered the Lord, he soon merited to be praised and consoled by the second voice of the Lord saying:

Genesis 20:6

And I know that you have done this with a simple heart; therefore I have kept you from sinning against me. But also that he immediately rose in the night, called all his servants, and narrated to them what had happened to him; and that they, having heard the danger of the offense into which the king had fallen, were all greatly afraid, demonstrates how devoted to justice both the king and his servants were: For the king himself, when he said to Abraham: What have you done to us? What did we sin against you, that you

have brought upon me and my kingdom a great sin? clearly implies that he did not consider the sin of ignorance to be trivial, which he confessed was harmful not only to himself but also to his kingdom. Hence, he did not believe it sufficient for him that he had obtained pardon from God, or had deserved to be kept from sinning by God's favor, unless he also gave money abundantly along with the returned wife to the man against whom he had unknowingly sinned, so that he might be appeased, as it is read in the following passages. Nor is it to be wondered that uncircumcised men at that time could have been worshippers of truth, since the blessed Job and his royal friends are believed to have faithfully served the Lord with all that they had after the times of the given circumcision, without the sacrament of circumcision:

but also, it is evident that the patriarch Shem, along with Arphaxad, Salah, Heber, his sons or grandchildren, were still alive in the flesh at that time and led a life pleasing to God without the law of circumcision. From this, it seems likely that the sign in the circumcision of Abraham was given only to him and his seed and family, but among other nations, there could still have been some who naturally served God devotedly according to the law; whether by the offerings of sacrifices or certainly by the profession of true faith alone, cleansed from the stain of the first transgression, especially those who still survived and remembered the destruction of the human race in the flood, the building of the tower and the division of tongues, or the ruin of Sodom. For the very history of Genesis testifies that Shem himself endured in the body up until the fiftieth year of Jacob's birth; to which opinion the blessed Pope Gregory agrees, saying it should by no means be believed that the lifespan of men in those times was as short as the few records of his writers seem to comprehend in Moses' law. And when Abraham replied to the king who persistently questioned him why he had said his wife was his sister, and answered among other things: Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; the ancient translation has more fittingly: Indeed, she is my sister by my father, but not by my mother;

that is, the daughter of his brother, not his sister; for brothers or sisters are sometimes called kin in the Scriptures, who are of one family, that is, from the fatherland, which the Latins interpret as fatherhoods, when many branches of the family spread from one root; otherwise, how is it that Abra-

ham, a just man, took his father's daughter as his wife, when in the first men for the sake of the ears' health the Scripture does not name it, preferring to be understood rather than openly stated? And that the king said to Sarah:

Genesis 20:16

Behold, I have given a thousand pieces of silver to your brother; this will be a veil of the eyes to all who are with you, wherever you shall go; and remember that you have been discovered. While speaking playfully, because she herself had said that he was her brother, and he says that she was discovered when by pretending she covered the truth, saying that he who was her husband was her brother, and he encourages her to remember this in the future, lest she should incur the same disgrace by similar pretense henceforth. But if in this reading, where Sarah, with Abraham's permission, is taken by kings, but, with God's provision, is returned to her husband undefiled, it pleases to understand something allegorical, it signifies that the Church is often to be assailed by the temptations of worldly powers, certainly with God permitting, who is called her husband by the gift of heavenly protection and grace, so that being tested by adversities, it may become more evident with what firm faith, with what chastity devoted to God, with what great care of her Creator she is always to be protected from all the snares of enemies, and never corrupted from the simplicity of her faith. However, that the king, in returning Sarah to Abraham, likewise gave sheep and oxen, servants and handmaids, and much money, signifies the time when the kingdom of this world would submit its neck to the Christian faith, and hold in veneration that religion which once it strove to overthrow.

That Sarah, being desired and taken by kings twice and yet was never defiled, first indeed as a young woman by Pharaoh, and now of more advanced age by Abimelech, signified that the Church, though always to be troubled by labors in this life, would yet experience two greater persecutions than the rest; one of the Roman Empire, which she endured, as it were, in her youth, and overcame most valiantly and gloriously with the help of the Lord; the other of the Antichrist, which she is to suffer, as it were, in old age, that is, at the impending end of her temporal life, and with the same merciful Lord's help, she is to defeat. For that Sarah was of such great beauty that even in old age she could be loved for her grace of form, signifies that the Church, in that last time, will be adorned with such glory of virtues, that the fierce enemy with his satellites will greatly envy her, and therefore will strive to at-

tack her with all his snares and forces; fulfilling the prophecy where it is said of her sons: They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing (Psalm 92:14), that is, that they may steadfastly declare the faith in which they glory among the evils they suffer.

That each king was prevented by God's provision from violating Sarah, signifies thus the rage of persecutors, with God's mercy, being restrained, so that none of those who truly belong to the Church can be seduced from the chastity of faith and charity which is in Christ. That each king was compelled by plagues to restore Sarah to her husband and corrected the presumptuous abduction by giving money, signified that the persecutors are often restrained from harming the faithful by adversity and losses of temporal goods; and are to be changed to the reverence or companionship of the same faithful, which we know has happened in persecutions sometimes, and we believe will be eminently so in that last great persecution; and this by the prayers of spiritual leaders, and the indulgence and mercy of the Lord Savior, who has deigned to unite the holy Church to Himself by the bond of matrimony. For both the blessed Abraham, praying for Abimelech, aptly designates both the Lord Savior himself who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us, and the pastors and rulers of the same Church who, since they take care of her chastity, do not neglect to pray to the Lord even for her adversaries that they may not be able to defile her but may cease sooner from harmful undertakings. Nor should it be considered irrelevant that by Abimelech, a good man and fearing God, the persecutors of the good can be symbolized.

For it is customary in Scriptures for both evils to be designated through good people and goods through bad people. For even the blessed Pope Gregory did not hesitate to place the most wicked kings Saul and Jehoiachin in the figure of the Lord Savior, and on the contrary, through the faithfulness of Uriah's deed, he says the faithlessness of the Jews is designated.

CHAPTER 21

Genesis 21:2

The Lord visited Sarah as He had promised, and fulfilled what He had spoken to her; she conceived and bore a son in her old age at the time God had predicted to her. God is said to visit Sarah as one who is sick and already despaired of all offspring, so that what nature seemed to deny, the presence of divine grace bestows: which word aptly suits all the children of the prom-

ise, who are saved not by their own free will but by the choice of grace, not by the effort of their own labor but by the Lord visiting their hearts and fulfilling the gift of grace which He promised. [Genesis 21:3] -- And Abraham called the name of his son whom Sarah bore to him Isaac. Isaac is interpreted as Laughter or Joy, which very name is fitting for all the faithful, to whom among other goods of the heavenly inheritance, their Redeemer promises by saying: "Again I will see you, and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you" (John XVI, 1).

Genesis 21: 4

And he circumcised him on the eighth day, as God had commanded him when he was a hundred years old. Just as Isaac was indeed born during the time of the Old Testament, yet by his very birth he designates the heirs of the New Testament, so the circumcision by which he was consecrated is indeed a sacrament of the Old Testament, but it was foreshadowed in the figure of the grace of the New Testament, by which the world was to be cleansed in Christ from all filth of sin, death, and mortality. For at that time circumcision freed the faithful from the bond of original transgression; yet it was given as a type of the higher grace, by which the entire kingdom of sin and death was to be destroyed by the passion and resurrection of the Lord; in the image of which we also are absolved from all sins in baptism, and on the last day, renewed from all corruption and mortality of flesh and soul, we will reach eternal life; where, as the Lord said, the sons of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven; for they can no longer die (Mark 12:25). And because the Lord rose again from the dead on the eighth day, that is, after the Sabbath, we also hope to rise again in the eighth age;

for there are six ages of this world, the seventh is the Sabbath rest of souls in another life, the eighth itself is of our resurrection and the universal judgement; therefore, it was rightly commanded that circumcision be performed on the eighth day. But the fact that Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born and his son of the promise was circumcised, most fittingly corresponds to the perfection of that same promise. For since a hundred is a perfect number, which is especially evidenced by the fact that it passes from the left hand to the right; therefore, it mystically pertains to heavenly and perpetual goods, Isaac is rightly born into this, who by his birth born miraculously to aged parents, would designate the heirs not of a

temporal and lowly kingdom, but of the eternal kingdom in the heavens, in which indeed as a sacrament, Noah's ark was built over a hundred years, and Abraham dwelt a hundred years in the land of promise, and Isaac, sowing in Gerar, found a hundredfold in that very year, and the court of the tabernacle is a hundred cubits long; and in the parable of the gospel seed, the good ground produced a hundredfold fruit, and the Lord promises a hundredfold in this time and, moreover, eternal life to those who leave their own: in all of these, the number one hundred either designates the joys of eternal life or the good works by which one attains these.

Genesis 21: 8

The boy grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day of his weaning. Isaac is nourished with milk when each chosen one, that is, the son of the promise, newly begotten in Christ, receives the first rudiments of faith, and although he cannot yet sufficiently search the most profound secrets of divinity, nevertheless, delighted by the sweetness of celestial rewards, he strives to engage in good works through which, with God's help and generosity, he may deserve to receive greater things, according to what the apostle Peter said: "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good." But Isaac, being weaned and coming to the nourishment of bread, occurs when the chosen ones, with the progress of faith, learn not only to confess Jesus Christ and him crucified but also to add that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Genesis 21: 8

And Abraham held a great feast on the day of Isaac's weaning, because it is indeed a great solemnity for the highest teachers of the mind when they see those whom they have nurtured ascend to the summit of wisdom and virtue.

Genesis 21: 9–10

And when Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian playing, she said to Abraham: "Expel this slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac. Some manuscripts have: "The son of Hagar the Egyptian playing with her son Isaac," which does not appear in the Hebrew; but whether he was playing with Isaac or in the presence of Isaac,

Sarah did not want the son of the slave woman to be a playmate to her son; she did not want him, whom the old woman had received in promise, to be unworthy of the promises and heavenly blessing by the ignoble examples or associations of a bastard; therefore the Apostle did not hesitate to call this play persecution. For one persecutes his brother not only by pursuing him with swords, hatred, or insults, but also by trying to divert him from the rectitude of his purity with playful or silly conversations; hence also the Psalmist says: "The wicked have told me fables, but not as your law, O Lord; all your commandments are truth; the wicked have persecuted me, help me" (Psalm 118:85). And he himself, because he loved the law of the Lord and the commandments of truth, tolerated the storytellers as persecutors; and therefore he implored divine help to overcome them; the Apostle, moreover, clearly shows what each of Abraham's sons typically demonstrates, writing to the Galatians:

"It is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman; but the one by the slave woman was born according to the flesh; the one by the free woman through the promise, which things are spoken allegorically. For these are the two testaments; one indeed from Mount Sinai giving birth to bondage, which is Hagar. For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which corresponds to the present Jerusalem, and is in bondage with her children; but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:22). When he says that the son of the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but the son of the free woman through the promise, he openly implies that the former was born by natural custom; the latter was given by the promise signifying grace. For Ishmael was born as men are born through the usual natural sexual intercourse; therefore it is said according to the flesh; not that these are not the blessings of God, but where it was necessary to signify the gift of God, because grace is given to men undeservedly by God's generosity; it was fitting to give a son in a way that was not owed to the workings of nature.

Therefore, Isaac was not born to Abraham according to the flesh, but from the promise, not because he was not produced by flesh, but because he was received from utter despair, and unless the promising God had been present, an old man would not have dared to hope for any offspring from the old wife's womb. The Apostle, explaining this law, adds: "Now we, brothers, are children of the promise like Isaac; but as then the one born according to

the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, so also now" (Galatians 4:28); he does not condemn the Old Testament as contrary to the New, lest he confirms by his authority the mad doctrine of the Manichees, God forbid; for the apostles and evangelists would not be preferred in any way over Moses and the prophets who composed the Old Testament, of whose shared grace of spirit and faith he says elsewhere: "But having the same spirit of faith, as it is written: 'I believed, therefore I spoke,' we also believe, therefore we also speak" (2 Corinthians 4:13); but he surely reproves those who understand the spiritual law carnally, who seek temporal benefits and a temporal kingdom from the Lord by observing the law, not eternal goods in heaven; he blames those who trust that the letter of the law without assisting grace is sufficient for salvation, which is characteristic of the Jews, about whom he also says:

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:13); he rejects them and concludes that they are persecutors of the faithful, who, with the Gospel shining, and the grace of the New Testament clearly revealed by the Incarnation of the Lord throughout the world, nonetheless contend that circumcision, sacrifices, and legal ceremonies are necessary for those baptized in Christ; against whom his intention especially watched as he wrote this, as the well-considered text of this entire Epistle openly teaches, finally as he attaches to the words we have set out. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son; for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman. So then, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman, with the freedom by which Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you (Gal. 4:30). By these words, it is clearly shown that it is not the Scriptures nor the writers of the Old Testament that are to be cast out of the boundaries of the Church as if they were the slave woman and her son;

but it is the carnal observance of that same Testament, after the grace and freedom of the Gospel has shone forth through Christ, that he says will cease, and faithfully fulfilled by the heirs of the New Testament in a spiritual sense. For this is how it is to be understood what the Lord says in the Gospel: "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot, not one

tittle, will pass from the law until all things are accomplished" (Matt. 5:18); which means that the things which the law and the prophets clearly speak of concerning the faith of the truth, or works of justice, and purification of heart, in order to see God, should always be accepted literally; but whatever was commanded to be observed carnally by a carnal people, such as circumcision itself, the offering of sacrifices, the daily cleaning from persistent leprosy, not only of men but also of houses and clothing, and countless such things, these should have been observed literally until the times of the Lord's Incarnation. But from the time when the Lord, rising from the dead, opened the minds of the disciples to understand the Scriptures, and to discern clearly the mysteries of prophecy in their full light, though these should be read in the Church on account of the authority of the prophecy, they should be observed spiritually and not carnally because of the clarity of grace;

although the early Church in Jerusalem also observed many of the ceremonies of the law according to the letter, even among those who from the Gentiles were called to the faith and who were Judaizing, until the Church had spread far and wide throughout the world, and began to have priests and teachers from the Gentiles, who had no concern for Jewish observances but only delighted in listening to the apostolic and evangelical decrees with Christian simplicity; to this ecclesiastical disposition most beautifully corresponds the figure of the children of Abraham; for before Isaac was born, Abraham and Sarah rejoiced over Ishmael as their only son, as one who had not yet shown any pride or levity in mind or behavior, because before the Lord's Incarnation and the revelation of grace, even the spirituals rejoiced in the law, as the people kept that same law with sincere heart devotion according to the letter. And rightly so; for the same people did not resist grace, nor did they prefer the law to the Gospel; but faithfully followed the precepts of justice they had received.

But after Isaac was born and not yet weaned, the love for Ishmael began to wane, as the parents rejoiced over the birth of Isaac, their mutual son, although they did not entertain any thoughts of expelling Ishmael and his mother yet, because, when the grace of the Gospel was already revealed, and the apostles were preaching Christ, the Church of believers rejoiced, the teachers themselves rejoiced over the promise of the kingdom of God bestowed upon them, but they did not immediately strive to reject the observance of circumcision and the sacrifices of the law as superfluous. For they

knew that these were constituted by God, and could not reject them as harmful suddenly, especially since the infant Church was still tender and almost like an infant being nourished among such customs. But after Isaac was weaned, Sarah saw the son of the slave woman mocking, and decided that he must be cast out with his mother, because after the Church of the Gentiles grew strong in the faith of Christ, some came from Judea, carnal in mind, as if truly sons of the slave woman, not yet made free in the spirit of grace for Christ, teaching the brothers and saying: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1), which was more mocking and vanity than the truth of the Gospel; indeed, it was a significant persecution to want to reduce those who were already enjoying the gift of revealed light back into the shadows of figurative representations;

hence, the grace-filled mother promptly decided through the council of the apostles that this doctrine with its advocates was to be cast out.

Genesis 21:10

For the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac. Which the Apostle states as with the son of the freewoman, because in no way should false teachers, who affirm that this grace benefits us only if we are also consecrated by circumcision according to the rite of the law, be received with the preachers of the truth, who proclaim that we should be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus. Rather, they shall remain forever excluded from the inheritance of grace, which is in Christ, those who deny the power of the same grace, or who exalt themselves by works without grace. There are also some today in the Church, indeed initiated into the sacraments of the new testament, but through the intention of a carnal mind pertaining to the old testament and to the figure of Hagar and Ishmael; not that they truly follow the commandments of the old testament, of which the Lord says: If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments (Matthew XIX, 17), but because they seek temporal benefits from the Lord, neglecting eternal ones, which the old Scripture understood according to the letter sometimes seems to sound, embracing more what the Lord says through the Prophet: If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land (Isaiah I, 19) rather than what He says through Himself: Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (Matthew V); concerning whom the Apostle says:

For all seek their own, not the things which are of Jesus Christ (Philippians II, 21), who either continue in wicked deeds among good Catholics till

death, or because of heresies and obvious schisms are expelled from the Church by the judgment of the priest as the sons of the bondwoman through the free Sarah, all the same, in the future judgment, who have not previously corrected themselves, will be rendered and excluded from the inheritance of blessing: For everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin; the slave does not stay in the house forever; the son remains forever. If therefore the son sets you free, you shall be free indeed (John VIII, 34).

P A R T T W O

On the Tabernacle and the Priestly Garments

The tent of meeting and the robes of the priests, in three books.

On the Tabernacle and the Priestly Garments

THE VENERABLE BEDE

AD 673–735

Bede explains the tent that Moses made in the desert, its furnishings and the robes of the priests, in three books. He takes the ark, the table, the lampstand, the curtains, the altars and each piece of the high priest's dress as signs of Christ, of the Church and of the Christian life.

BOOK I

CHAPTER 1.1

Moses, ascending the mountain of God with Joshua, left Aaron and Hur to govern the people. As we are about to discuss, with the Lord's help, the representation of the tabernacle and its vessels and utensils, we must first examine and more closely consider the location's layout and the circumstances of things, how they were when these commands were given. For all things, as the Apostle says, happened to them in a figure: they were written for our instruction (1 Corinthians X). Indeed, all things, not only the deeds or words contained in the Holy Scriptures, but also the positions of places, hours, and times, and also the circumstances of the events spoken or done. The Lord said to Moses, "Ascend to me on the mountain," etc. Therefore, the Lord giving the law to Moses first called him to the summit of the mountain so that, having stayed there on high, he could more freely hear what he should teach the people as commandments when he descended back to the lower regions. And from the height of that place, he could gather how lofty and how far removed from human doctrines is the law he receives, and how it can only be perfectly understood or kept by those who, by living more loftily and perfectly, separate themselves from earthly contagions. Hence, he also commanded the people to wait in the lower regions until Moses returns, to imply typically that the mysteries of his law are heavenly indeed and can only be

grasped by the more perfect, but that even the weak are not deprived of the occasion of salvation, if they humbly endeavor to listen to the wisdom of their elders. Similarly, in the Gospel, the Lord, calling the new heralds of grace to a mountain, instructed them with salutary precepts; so that from the very position of the place it might be evident that he gave them lofty commands for living and promises of reward: according to the Psalmist's phrase, "Your justice is like the mountains of God" (Psalm 36:6). But even after the resurrection, again appearing to them on a holy mountain, he sent them to preach, not only to the people of Israel but to the whole world: "Go," he said, "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). So the Lord gave the commandments of both the law and the Gospel on a mountain to commend the sublimity of both Testaments.

But because the Scripture of the law was to be committed to the people of Israel alone at that time, while the grace of the Gospel was to be preached by the apostles to all the nations throughout the world, it was appropriate that Moses alone ascended to the mountain to receive the law, whereas the apostles together with the Lord on the mountain, listened to the doctrine of the Gospel with the people hearing. And at the coming of the Holy Spirit, by which the same grace and truth of the Gospel were more manifestly given to the Church, not only the apostles but also a large multitude of the faithful gathered together in the upper room on Mount Sion received it, and this in the division of diverse tongues, so that by such a miracle it might be signified that the Church would praise God in the languages of all nations throughout the world.

"And I will give you," he says, "two stone tablets, and the law and commandments," etc. This is similar to that which we have placed above from the Gospel: "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Therefore, neither Moses, nor the apostles, nor any of the learned should teach the people of God any other precepts than those which the Lord himself taught, which he has prescribed for us to observe according to the eternal decree of his council, and in the observation of which he wished us to have eternal life. Just as nor can teachers omit anything from those things which he commanded to be done, but it is necessary for them to commit all that he commanded to their hearers. And he wrote these on stone tablets, because he

firmly established them to be guarded with a fixed intention in the faithful hearts of the elect. When he proposes their examples for us to imitate, he shows the established statutes of his law as if written in stone. For Daniel also saw the Lord in the figure of a stone cut from the mountain without hands demolishing the pomp of the worldly kingdom, so that his kingdom alone might remain without end (Dan. II). And Peter exhorts the faithful, saying: "And you, as living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house" (I Pet. II).

Moses and Joshua, his minister, arose. Joshua, the minister of Moses, both by name and by action designates the Lord and Savior. He is rightly called the minister of Moses because, appearing in the flesh, he deigned to undertake the ceremonies of the Mosaic law: for he did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. He follows in all the footsteps of Moses: because in all that Moses speaks or writes, he is either typically or manifestly designated as if an inseparable companion, he will be found if he is diligently sought. Hence he says to the Jews: "If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me also, for he wrote about me" (Matt. V). And Moses, ascending the mountain of God, said to the elders: Wait here until we return to you, etc. Aaron is interpreted as the mountain of strength, Hur is interpreted as fire or light. Hence Aaron designates the Savior, the Lord, and Hur designates the Holy Spirit: because Isaiah also says of this, And in the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be prepared at the top of the mountains (Isaiah 2:2). And He appeared upon the apostles in the light of fire. Therefore, ascending to the Lord, Moses left Aaron and Hur, that is, the mountain of strength and the light of fire, in the plains, to govern the people. And if we cannot follow our teachers to the height of divine contemplation, let us diligently be careful that no temptation draws us back from the vicinity of the mountain of God; but let us insist on the works of virtues according to our own measure, adhering with a steadfast heart to the sacraments of our Redeemer, in which we have been initiated; and let us strive to preserve the grace of His Spirit, with which we have been sealed, unsullied in ourselves. And if any adversity questions us, let us immediately invoke the help of the same Redeemer, who through the gift of the Holy Spirit has been accustomed to protect and deliver His faithful from all evils. And there is no doubt that if we persevere in our endeavors, our weakness and humility will be strengthened and exalted through the mountain of strength, and will become stronger than all the temptations of the enemy; and through the light

and fire of the Holy Spirit, our ignorance will be enlightened, and our soul will be kindled to the love of the same merciful Creator.

And when Moses had ascended, the cloud covered the mountain. Just as the mountain on which Moses received the law designates the height of perfection which was to be written in the same law, so the cloud covering the mountain signifies the grace of divine protection: by which every person enjoys the more, the higher they ascend to scrutinize the wonders of God's law with the eyes of their heart revealed. For the cloud covered not only the mountain on which Moses ascended; but also the people walking through the deserts, who could by no means ascend to the heights, the cloud nevertheless sent from heaven cast a shadow over them. From where it is written: He spread a cloud for their protection, because truly the Lord protects all who fear Him, the small with the great, with heavenly blessing. And the glory of the Lord dwelled on Sinai, etc. It must be known that not only the height, but also the name of the mountain, where the law was given, figuratively denotes the perfection of that law. Sinai means "My Measure" or "My Amphora." Therefore, it was divinely arranged that the mountain where the law would be given would be called "My Amphora": as if the Lord Himself, by this name, signified that His law would promulgate a perfect rule of living to all and would render to each according to their works, as He Himself said: "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged" (Matthew 7). And: "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Mark 4).

It is well said that, with Moses ascending, the cloud and the glory of the Lord covered the mountain for six days, but on the seventh day, He called him to the higher parts of the mountain. For we are commanded to work for six days in the law and rest on the seventh. And Moses, ascending the mountain, is covered by the cloud and the glory of the Lord for six days: so that it is mystically insinuated that anyone who follows the Lord's commandments with just works is indeed worthy of divine protection. For the same Lord, who commanded Moses to ascend the mountain, also surrounded him with His cloud and brightness as he ascended: because He who grants us the gift of working well also enlightens us as we work well, lest we falter, and protects us lest we be consumed by the temptations of the ancient enemy, as by the heat of the sun.

On the seventh day, however, the Lord calls Moses to the higher places because, after the perfection of works, the law promises us eternal rest: so

that those who cared to stand before the Lord in the height of righteous action may now merit to ascend to His vision and conversation, as the Psalmist says, "Indeed, the one who gives the law will also give a blessing" (Psalm 84). "They will go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion." This is known to be granted to some of the elect in this life, that after the perfection of an active life, they ascend to the grace of divine contemplation, as much as and how much this can happen to those still clothed in flesh: which was also granted to many of the patriarchs and prophets, and preeminently to Moses himself, of whom it is specifically said that he spoke with God face to face, as a man speaks with his friend (Exodus 33). Hence it can be specifically understood that he was protected by the cloud and the glory of the Lord on the mountain for six days; on the seventh day, however, called to His conversation, he ascended to the higher parts of the mountain, because certainly, through the good works given to him by the Lord, he deserved to be more enlightened by Him and overshadowed by all the incursions of evil, and thus he reached the higher gifts of vision and conversation with Him.

The midst of the darkness, from which he is said to have been called, does not signify any darkness in God: but because He inhabits inaccessible light (1 Timothy 6), and as the same Apostle says, "Whom no one has seen or can see" (ibid.). For that darkness is the obscurity of heavenly mysteries, indeed inaccessible to earthly hearts, but penetrable to Moses and the other blessed pure in heart by the revealing grace of God: to whom it is said in the Psalm, "Come to Him and be enlightened" (Psalm 34). For His light is inaccessible to our powers, yet it is approached through His gifts. Where it is aptly added: But the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like burning fire, etc. For the appearance of the glory of the Lord appeared like burning fire; because it illuminates the hearts of the elect with the gift of heavenly knowledge, and inflames them with the ardor of its charity. In the cloud, therefore, in darkness, and in fire the glory of the Lord appeared. Namely in the cloud, because it protects us from the heat of temptations. Truly in darkness, because the power of His majesty cannot be fully comprehended by any creature. For the peace of God surpasses all understanding (Phil. IV). Moreover, in the burning fire, because it illuminates the minds of the faithful with the knowledge of heavenly goods and inflames them with hope and love. And this glory of the Lord indeed the sons of Israel see from afar and from below, but Moses pen-

etrates more deeply by ascending higher; for indeed the perfect ones see the hidden mysteries of the divine perfectly and sublimely. But we, mindful of our fragility and inertia, although we are unable to enter and comprehend this, let us at least strive to remain close by believing, hoping, and loving, and to gaze upon it. For just as the sons of Israel keep their eyes on the mountain of God and on the appearance of His glory from afar, so those weak ones in the church, desiring to see God with all their heart, keep the eyes of their mind intensely fixed on the memory of eternal brightness. Just as they dwell in the vicinity of the mountain of God, which they knew Moses ascended, when they restrain themselves by that rule of living, so that they never allow their steps of action to stray too far from the imitation of the highest lives, even if they are not yet able to fully follow their footsteps to perfection.

CHAPTER 1.2

Moses, called to the higher parts of the mountain on the seventh day, stayed there with the Lord for forty days and nights. And Moses, having entered the midst of the cloud, went up the mountain and remained there for forty days and forty nights. Moses, having entered the midst of the cloud, went up the mountain, with the preachers of the divine law, among whom Moses himself was eminent for observing sublimely the uncertain and hidden things of divine wisdom, as the Lord invited and led them. Moses was with the Lord for forty days and nights so that by this span of time he might learn that only those who would receive the decalogue of the law, which he had received with his people, could fulfill it, aided by the grace of evangelical truth, which was to be described in four books. For four times ten make forty. Or certainly that a time would come when the same decalogue precepts, which he then received with one people of the children of Israel, by the largess of divine grace, would be spread to the knowledge of all nations, which are contained in the four parts of the world, and that all might attain eternal salvation through the observance of these precepts by their nations. But since we have briefly learned by what miraculous ascent Moses reached the reception of the law, let us now turn our ears and minds to hear what he heard and to explain to the best of our ability the very mandates of the law. It follows:

CHAPTER 1.3

The sons of Israel are commanded to offer first fruits to the Lord and to make a sanctuary. (Exod. XXV.) The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the sons of Israel, that they take, etc. And we take the first fruits of our goods to the Lord, when whatever good we do, we truly attribute all of it to divine grace, and from the depth of our heart profess that we cannot have even the beginning of a good action or thought except from the Lord: but we confess that our evils, always from ourselves with the devil instigating, are both begun and completed, and can only be forgiven by the Lord granting it. The Pelagians do not want to take the first fruits of their goods to the Lord, but to retain them for themselves, because they presumptuously think they have some good of their own without the grace of God. It is well commanded to Moses to accept the first fruits from a person who offers willingly. For God loves a cheerful giver (II Cor. IX). And the Apostle commands us to do good not out of sadness or necessity, but from the purpose of the heart (Ibid.). Knowing that he does this, the prophet glories in the Lord, saying: I will freely sacrifice to you (Psal. LIII).

These are the things you ought to take: gold, silver, and brass, etc. All these material things which the Lord commanded to be offered by the former people to make a sanctuary; we too, who desire to be spiritual children of Israel, that is, imitators of the people who see God, ought to offer with spiritual understanding, so that through such voluntary offerings we may also deserve to make a sanctuary for Him within us, and He may deem to dwell in our midst, that is, to consecrate a dwelling for Himself in our heart. We offer gold when we shine with the clarity of true wisdom, which is in right faith. We offer silver when confession is made from our mouth unto salvation. We offer brass when we rejoice to spread that same faith by public preaching. We offer hyacinth when we lift our hearts upwards. We offer purple when we subject our body to suffering. We offer twice-dyed scarlet when we burn with dual love, that is, of God and neighbor. We offer fine linen when we preserve the chastity of the flesh. We offer goats' hair when we put on the habit of penitence and sorrow. We offer red ram skins when we see the leaders of the Lord's flock baptized in their own blood. We offer blue skins when we hope to have spiritual bodies in the heavens after death. We offer acacia wood when, having purged the thorns of sins, we serve the Lord alone with clean flesh and soul.

We offer oil for the lamps when we shine with the fruits of charity and mercy. We offer spices, ointment, and sweet-smelling incense when we spread the good reputation of our good actions far and wide as an example of living well. We offer onyx stones and gems to adorn the ephod and the breastplate when we praise with due admiration the miracles of the saints, which have adorned thoughts devoted to God and works of virtue. And we take these into aid of our faith whenever necessary. For since we usually carry burdens on our shoulders, rightly through the ephod, that is, the upper garment, the works of the just and pious labors for the Lord are signified. And since the seat of thoughts is in the breast, rightly in the breastplate, which is the garment of the priestly breast, the pure thoughts of the elect are expressed. And onyx stones and gems adorn the ephod and the breastplate, when to the remarkable actions and thoughts of the greatest Fathers the signs of miracles are also joined. Nor does anything prevent us from understanding the merits of martyrdom added to good works in the onyx stones, which are said to be of a blood-red color. Of all these things, each in its place, we must speak more fully with the help of God's grace.

And they shall make a sanctuary for me (he says), and I will dwell in the midst of them, etc. The Lord showed Moses the tabernacle on the mountain, and the vessels consecrated for its worship: because He manifestly demonstrated to him, who remained with Him for such a long time, how much piety, humility, and purity, angelic virtues joyfully obey their Creator. These virtues are the perfect tabernacle of Him, who has never ceased to dwell and inhabit them since they were created. In the resurrection, the likeness of their life and common conversation before the Lord is promised to us too: whoever now, having left behind the contagions of this world, strive to imitate their life on earth, that is, in praising and loving the Lord, and also in loving and helping one's neighbor in God, provoking even enemies to the love of God through works of piety, such were they to whom the Apostle says: But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Rom. VIII). Therefore, the tabernacle that was shown to Moses on the mountain is that heavenly city and celestial homeland, which at that time was believed to consist only of holy angels: but after the passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven of the Mediator between God and men, it received the glorious and abundant multitude of holy souls too. The vessels of that tabernacle are each of the per-

sons of blessed spirits: from all of whom that Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all, consists in true peace and unity.

It should be noted more diligently that the children of Israel are commanded to make a sanctuary for the Lord, not partially similar, but according to every likeness of the tabernacle which He showed to Moses, and of all its vessels for its worship. For if we aim for the companionship of angels in heaven, we ought to always imitate their life on earth, . . . as far as harmless bodies do not slow us down, and earthly limbs, mortal members dull us. But if perhaps you ask, how can a mortal man imitate this heavenly tabernacle, living in flesh? They love God and their neighbors: imitate this. They help the miserable, though not angels who are all blessed, at least men: imitate this. They are humble, gentle towards each other, appeased, they obey divine commands: imitate this as much as you can. They say, do, and think nothing evil, nothing idle, nothing unjust, persevering in divine praises, with word and mind attending: imitate this as much as you can, and you will have built a sanctuary for the Lord according to the example shown to Moses on the mountain, and our Lord and Savior coming with the Father will make His dwelling with you: and after this life, into that tabernacle which you imitated, He will introduce you to perpetual blessedness. This follows.

CHAPTER 1.4

Description of the Ark. And thus you shall make it: construct the ark of acacia wood. The ark, which is commanded to be made first of all in the tabernacle, not incongruously signifies the very incarnation of our Lord and Savior, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2). Indeed, the ark is rightly ordered to be constructed of acacia wood. For acacia wood is said to be of a light and incorruptible nature, not much different from the quality of the white thorn. Therefore, the ark was made of acacia wood: because the body of the Lord was composed of members free from all stain of vices. And these same woods are very similar to thorns, because although He did not come in the flesh of sin, yet He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, as the Apostle says (Romans 8). It follows:

Of which the length should have two and a half cubits, etc. Some are accustomed to ask of what quantity the cubit should be estimated, which Moses placed either in the ark of Noah or in the making of the tabernacle: which, if we see the words of Josephus, the question will be easily solved. For it should not be thought that a man of Jewish priestly lineage, of excellent

genius, and very learned in both divine and secular scriptures, could have been unaware of this. He therefore says: Also, the ark was made of five handbreadths in length, three handbreadths in width (*Antiq. Book III, Chap. 8*). Whence it is clearly evident that it designates that cubit which two handbreadths complete. Mystically, however, the length of the ark signifies the longsuffering of our Lord and Redeemer, by which he lived among men. The width signifies the very breadth of charity, by which he wished to come to us and dwell among us. The height signifies the hope of future exaltation, for he foresaw that either he himself would be glorified or that he would glorify others after his passion. Whence it is aptly said that the length of the ark was of two cubits, obviously because of the doctrine and works by which he shone forth in the world. Hence also the evangelist Luke claims to have made a speech about the things which Jesus began to do and teach (*Acts I*). And his fellow citizens, marveling, said: Whence does this man have such wisdom and mighty works? (*Matt.*

XIII) referring wisdom to the wondrous things he said: mighty works, to the things he did. But that the ark had, in length, after two cubits even a half, can be referred to the slowness of human frailty: which could not yet, as was worthy, grasp the sublime sayings or works of the Savior. Whence it was also plainly said of some of his mystical actions: These things his disciples did not understand at first, but when Jesus was glorified (*John XII*). Similarly, concerning his more sublime sayings: "And this word was hidden from them, and they did not understand what was being said" (*Luke 18*). The ark had two cubits in length because the Lord, clear in flesh by word and deeds, appeared. It also had half a cubit because he patiently bore the slowness of the disciples, who could not yet fully grasp his words or deeds. The width of the ark was one cubit, due to the administration of the Lord's charity, by which he sought to unite his chosen ones in God. Therefore, praying to the Father for them, he said: "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but also on behalf of 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 one in Us" (*John 17*). And shortly after:

"I have made your name known to them and will make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them" (*Ibid.*). It had after one cubit also a half, namely, for the signification of our frailty, by which, positioned in this life, we are not yet able to perfectly love God or

comprehend the love that God has towards us: more, as the Apostle witnesses (1 Cor. 13), we know in part and prophesy in part, thus indeed we also love in part. Therefore the ark has one cubit and also a half, because the Lord with singular piety loves us to be associated with himself and the Father, and he equally embraces our capacity for love, whatever it can be in this life, with his pious kindness until we deserve to enter his vision, where we may love him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength. The height of the ark was also most fittingly one and a half cubits, namely, for the indication of the singular hope, by which either the Lord himself, while in the flesh with us, awaited the outcome of his future resurrection and subsequent glory, or he always admonishes us to rejoice in the rewards of future goods amid the adversities of the world.

Therefore the ark has a full cubit in height, because our Lord and Savior most fully knew, even while still conversing in corruptible flesh, how much glory was preserved in the future either for himself or for his members, which are us. It also has a half cubit of height, because he willingly took on, in his body, our humble devotion, who indeed piously love the future homeland: but not yet perfectly, can we grasp what its happiness is; yet as much as we grasp, we have this only from him. And you shall overlay it with pure gold, etc. The Ark is overlaid with pure gold inside and out, because the human nature assumed by the Son of God was full of the virtue of the Holy Spirit within and openly demonstrated the works of the Holy Spirit to people outwardly. Indeed, this Ark is rightly commanded to be surrounded by a golden crown above, because appearing in the flesh and coming to redeem the human race, the Son of God awaited the definite time and hour when He would overcome the death He had taken on for us along with the author of death, and would ascend victoriously to the Father in heaven. About this crown the Apostle says: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2). Of this in the Apocalypse, John says, "And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer" (Revelation 6). Certainly, the white horse is the Church, and the rider who sat on it is the Lord, who had a bow, because He was coming to battle against the powers of the air. And a crown of victory was given to Him, who by dying overthrew the kingdom of death.

And four golden rings, etc. The four golden rings are the four books of the Gospels, which rightly are golden because of the brightness of the wisdom by which they shine; rightly compared to rings, because the wisdom of God itself which they proclaim is eternal. Neither beginning in time, nor ceasing to be, the eternal divinity which Christ the man has received. Wherefore, at the nearing hour of His passion, He prays to the Father, saying: And now, glorify Me, You Father, with Yourself with the glory which I had before the world was made with You (John XVII). The ark has four corners, because the sacrament of the Lord's incarnation is celebrated throughout all the regions of the world, in which the holy Church is expanded, without ceasing. And at the same four corners, the four rings are placed; because the Gospel of Christ is preached in all the ends of the world to the hearts of the faithful who are to be saved. Now there are two rings on one side, and two on the other: either because two evangelists adhered to the discipleship of the Savior preaching in the flesh and performing miracles; and the other two came to faith after His resurrection and ascension to heaven: or because in the figure of the four animals, two who are designated by man and ox carried the signs of His sufferings and death;

but the other two who are figuratively represented by the lion and the eagle, demonstrated the signs of the victory by which He destroyed death. Indeed, the Lord as a man, having become mortal by incarnation, appeared. The ox indeed was offered for us on the altar of the cross. The same became a lion by strongly subduing death and an eagle by ascending to heaven. And so there are two rings on one side, and two on the other, because certainly two evangelists, by their figure, mark the assumption of human frailty in the Lord; and the other two signify the victory by which He triumphed over the same assumed frailty and death. For the left side of the ark had, as it were, two rings, since two evangelists figured the incarnation and passion of the Lord. Similarly, there were two rings on the right side, which also figuratively express the resurrection and ascension of Him, which belong to the glory of future life.

You shall also make poles of acacia wood, etc. The poles by which the Ark is carried are the holy teachers who, by preaching the Lord, bring Him into the hearts of their listeners. These poles are commanded to always remain in the rings because it is necessary that whoever preaches the heavenly mysteries never detaches their mind from the memory of sacred Scripture, and never

withholds their hands from the observance of divine commandments. It is fittingly followed by: You shall put the testimony into the Ark, etc. Because we must only speak and believe about the incarnation of the Son of God what the Lord Himself has deigned to reveal to us through the authors of sacred Scripture. But if you wish to know what is that testimony which the Lord commanded Moses to put in the Ark, listen to the Apostle: Beyond the veil was the second tabernacle, called the Holy of Holies, having a golden censer and the Ark of the Covenant, overlaid all around with gold; in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that had budded, and the tablets of the covenant (Heb. IX). Thus, the golden urn with the manna in the Ark signifies a holy soul in Christ, containing within itself all the fullness of divinity. Aaron's rod that had budded signifies the invincible power of His priesthood; of which the prophet says: The scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness (Ps. XLV). Which, after seeming to be cut off for a time through death, was found to have flourished more vividly with the dawn of resurrection, and is known to remain perpetually unsullied and immortal. For Christ, rising from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has dominion over Him (Rom. VI). The tablets of the covenant in the Ark designate all in Christ both the knowledge of the divine secrets of the Father and the power of His judgments.

For on the tablets of the covenant, there was inscribed the faith of the eternal divinity, which created and governed the world; the commandments by which God must be served; and the discernment of judgment, by which He rightly condemns those who hate Him and rewards with mercy those who love Him. Therefore, this is the testimony which the Lord gave Moses to be placed in the Ark, and it signifies to us the truth of Christ's body, soul, and word: showing that this very flesh, after the suffering of death, is glorified by resurrection and exalted with the dignity of the eternal king and priest, teaching that He alone is aware of the Father's secrets, and as truly being one majesty with the Father, is the judge of all ages.

CHAPTER 1.5

Description of the Mercy Seat and Cherubim. You shall make a mercy seat, etc. It is often asked what the mercy seat is, with which the ark is to be covered. But since he commands it to be made of gold and of the same length and width as he ordered the ark to be made; it is undoubtedly clear that he wanted a golden plate to be made, large enough to cover the ark.

This mercy seat, namely, is none other than the Lord Savior himself, but more specifically signifies the depths of his mercy: concerning which the Apostle says: "Whom God has set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom. III). For it is also placed above, because mercy exalts above judgment. Hence the Psalmist also says, "The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all his works" (Psalm 145). Also the two golden Cherubim, etc. That Cherubim is the name of angelic powers, the prophet Ezekiel clearly declares, who also, according to the example by which they are ordered to be made here, indicates that they appeared with wings, saying: And the sound of the wings of the Cherubim was heard even to the outer court, like the voice of the Almighty when He speaks (Ezek. X). And indeed in the singular it is called Cherub, but in the plural Cherubim, and it is a name of the masculine gender, but the Greek usage has placed Cherubin in the neutral gender, changing the letter m to n. However, our interpreter, following the Hebrew idiom, has placed it in the masculine gender. You shall make two cherubim of gold and hammered work, not two golden cherubim and hammered work, which I believe to be corrupted in its translation by the negligence of the scribes, so that instead of Cherubim it would be written Cherubin after the manner of the ancients. Cherubim, or Cherubin, is interpreted as a multitude of knowledge, or understanding of knowledge: which name indeed more rightly suits the angelic powers, insofar as they, perfectly alienated from any impulse of impure thought, adhere to the vision of their Creator.

Therefore, Moses is commanded to make wings either in the figure of the Cherubim or in the very form in which the prophet testifies to have seen them, which the license of painters is also accustomed to imitate, so that angels are signified to have their seat on high and to be able to move everywhere with light flight, nor to have any delay, but indeed to be present immediately wherever they wish. This same thing is also unquestionably promised to be granted to us, clothed with a spiritual body after the resurrection. Therefore, the Cherubim spread their wings and cover the mercy seat: because the angels offer all the power of their nature, by which they deserved to dwell in the heights and to penetrate all the places of that heavenly homeland with a light and joyful journey, in the service of their Creator, and as if looking upon the mercy seat, they overshadow, that is, they honor by covering: because they attribute all the state of perpetual happiness which they

have to the grace of Him from whom they received that they can wish for nothing evil. But there are two to signify the society of angelic peace; because there can be no charity with less than two. Thus, they are also commanded to look at each other and have their faces towards the mercy seat, because undoubtedly in the glorification of the divine vision they harmonize with each other.

Likewise, by the two cherubim, the two Testaments can be figured, of which one proclaims the future incarnation of the Lord, the other proclaims it as having occurred. And they look at each other, because in the testimony of the truth which they preach, they do not differ from one another in any way. They turn their faces towards the mercy seat; for they highly commend the mercy of the Lord, in which is the only hope for the world. And for this reason, they are on either side of the oracle, because both the times preceding the Lord's incarnation and those following it are filled with the preaching of spiritual knowledge. Also, the name "knowledge of the multitude," or "multiplied knowledge" fits them, because sacred Scripture is full of spiritual and divine knowledge, and this very knowledge, since the Scripture began to be written, continuously increases and multiplies. Hence the angel said to Daniel: "Many shall pass through, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. XII). For the Lord himself testifies that Moses received greater knowledge than the patriarchs, saying to him: "I am the Lord who appeared to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name Adonai I did not make myself known to them" (Exod. III). Therefore, the knowledge of divine cognition has been multiplied since time began when the Lord revealed something about Himself to Moses which He had not disclosed to the patriarchs.

Let us see whether David, who meditated on the law of the Lord day and night, understood anything more about the Lord than Moses, who wrote the law, did. He says, "How I love Your law, O Lord; it is my meditation all day long" (Psal. 118). And immediately he adds: "I have more understanding than all my teachers. Hence, elsewhere he boasts in the Lord, saying: "The hidden things of Your wisdom You have made known to me" (Psal. 51). Similarly, the Lord Himself declares that the apostles know greater things than the prophets, saying to them: "Many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" (Matt. 13:17). But after His resurrection and ascension, He promised them

even greater grace of knowledge, saying: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now; but when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:12-13). To whom He also promises that He will reveal even greater things in the future than can be known in this life, saying: "He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and reveal myself to him" (John 14:21). Therefore, the Cherubim are rightly called multiplied knowledge, because in both Testaments, the knowledge of the truth has been increasingly made known to the faithful over time. The Cherubim are rightly said to overshadow the mercy seat with glory;

because as the testament grows over time, and knowledge multiplies, they preach to us the propitiation of our Lord the Savior; and, always with their voices as with outstretched wings for flight, they do not cease to honor it. For indeed, the words of those in conversation, like flying through the air from the mouth of the speakers, reach the hearts of the hearers, so the Cherubim with outstretched wings and as if prepared for flight can rightly be designated. From there I will command and speak to you, namely above the mercy seat, etc. Above the mercy seat the Lord speaks to Moses all things that He commands to the children of Israel through him; because through the grace of God's propitiation it has happened that He deigned to appear to humans after the fault of transgression and to show them the way of truth after error. He speaks from between the Cherubim; because through the angelic vision, and not in His own substance, God appeared and spoke to Moses, as the apostle attests: "For the law was put in place because of transgressions until the seed to whom the promise was made should come, ordained through angels in the hand of a mediator" (Galatians III). Again, the Lord speaks from between the Cherubim, because through the words of each testament, in harmony, He educates us to the faith of truth. Or certainly He speaks from between the Cherubim, because through His Only Begotten, who appeared in the flesh between the two Testaments, God the Father deigned to reveal His will to the human race. In this sense it can also be understood what Habakkuk says: "In the midst of two animals you shall make yourself known" (Habakkuk III). However, the ark can also figuratively be understood as the holy Church, which is built from incorruptible wood, that is, holy souls, and stretched out in the faith of the holy Gospel through the four corners of the world, expecting the crown of eternal life from God.

It holds in itself the tablets of the Testament in continuous meditation on God's law, and also a golden urn with manna in faith of the Lord's incarnation, and also the rod of Aaron; which had budded, in participation of the kingdom and priesthood of the Lord, as the apostle Peter says: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood" (I Peter II). It has a mercy seat above, so that all the good things it possesses, it remembers to have received by the gift of divine grace. It also has the Cherubim of glory on the mercy seat, either as angelic supports, with which it is always helped by God in His mercy, or the Testaments, by which it is taught how to live and how to rightly seek the help of living rightly from divine propitiation. Thus the Cherubim are placed above the mercy seat, as the city of Christ, that is, the holy Church, is said to be established upon the mountain, that is, upon Christ Himself: not that the city can be higher than Him, but that it progresses supported by His aid. The ark has Cherubim above the mercy seat: because either angelic ministries or divine words help the Church more truly, the more it is established on the foundation of supreme truth.

CHAPTER 1.6

Description of the Table. Make a table of setim wood, etc. The table made of setim wood represents the sacred Scripture, composed of the strong words and deeds of the holy Fathers, which, while showing us what the joys of eternal blessedness are and how to attain them, indeed offers us the food of salvation and life. It has length, when it indicates the perseverance of our initiated religion; breadth, when it indicates the breadth of charity; height, when it insinuates the hope of eternal reward. And well the length is of two cubits because our actual conversation consists mainly in two virtues, namely mercy and innocence: as the Apostle James says: Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world (James 1). For in commanding us to visit orphans and widows in their tribulation, it shows that we ought mercifully to act towards all who are in need: in admonishing us to keep ourselves unstained from this world, it signifies in what respects we ought to live chastely ourselves. The Lord Himself declared that these two cubits of good action belong to the table of His words, when He said: Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning (Luke 12). By having our loins girded, we remain immune from the contagion of this world. By having our

lamps burning, we shine brightly before the Lord by our works of mercy. The following:

And you like men who wait for their lord when he returns from the wedding, pertains to the height of the table, that is, to the hope of future reward. That the table has one cubit in breadth figuratively denotes the unity of that same love, which the whole series of the Old and New Testaments recommends to us: for there is one charity, that is, the simple and pure devotion of the mind, by which we are commanded to love God, our neighbors, and even our enemies, although we must rightly love God first and our enemies last by a great distance and distinction of that same love. The love we owe to our neighbors also varies according to their merits, as we know from Scripture that while patriarch Jacob loved all his sons, he loved Joseph more than the rest due to his singular merit of innocence. Hence beautifully in the Song of Songs the Church says to Christ: He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love (Songs 2). Further, the height of a cubit and a half equally insinuates the unity of our heavenly hope, by which we await our Lord, when He returns from heaven, to reward the servants whom He finds watching with girded loins, and lamps burning with good works. For although there are many mansions in the Father's house due to the diversity of merits (John 14), the kingdom of heaven is one, in which all the elect are received.

The remaining half-cubit indicates the beginning of the contemplative life, which some saints, even while still in the flesh, have deserved to enjoy: for they have not only been permitted to hope for heavenly rewards, but also to taste them by vision in part, such as Isaiah and Micah, and the other prophets, who saw the Lord sitting on the throne of His glory, surrounded by the host of angels (Isaiah 6): such as Peter, James, and John, who saw the Lord glorified between Moses and Elijah on the holy mountain (Matthew 17): such as the teacher of the Gentiles, who, before he dissolved the debt of the flesh, was caught up into paradise and the third heaven, and heard secret words which man may not utter (2 Corinthians 12). So also for us, in these and suchlike servants of Christ, the table of the tabernacle, that is, the divine Scripture, by which the Holy Church is ceaselessly refreshed, joins the common hope of one cubit to a half-cubit in height, because it shows them the joys of heavenly happiness in anticipation before it gives them in full: this

anticipation, because it appears swiftly and transiently to the minds of the saints, is rightly figured by a half-cubit and not by a complete cubit.

And you shall overlay it with purest gold. The table of the tabernacle is overlaid with gold because the holy Scripture shines with the clarity of heavenly wisdom, and the prophets who composed it were illustrious in life and speech. And you shall make for it a rim of gold round about. A golden rim is made around the table because the teaching of the sacred word is delivered to us by the most pure mouths of faithful preachers. Nor did the speech of those who handed down the divine mysteries to us ever consent to be tainted by the language of human chatter; rather, they took care to severely rebuke and scorn not only harmful but also idle words of men. Or indeed, a golden rim is made around the table because the holy Scripture, in all parts of its speech, when rightly understood, sounds forth to us the clarity of heavenly wisdom. To this rim, a crown is added; because the tongue of the preachers promises eternal life to its listeners. And fittingly, the crown is commanded to be four fingers high; because the height of the eternal crown is shown to us through the four books of the holy Gospel, or because by the keeping of evangelical faith and action, we are to attain the crown of life. Fittingly, the books are represented by fingers, because the tablets of the law are said to have been written by the finger of God: and in the Gospel, the Lord, moderating the severity of the law, wrote with his finger on the ground, saying of the adulteress whom the Pharisees and scribes accused, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John VIII).

The finger of God, however, is understood as the Spirit of God. Hence that which Luke reports the Lord as saying, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils" (Luke XI). Matthew explained more clearly, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God" (Matthew). Therefore, the golden crown four fingers high is placed over the golden rim of the table; because the purest words of the holy preachers expect the hope of heavenly happiness, which is contained, described by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the four books of the holy Gospel. And not only do the preachers themselves receive the reward of their labor in the heavens, but they also promise the same crown of life, with the assured authority of evangelical truth, to all who obey them. Rightly, however, this same crown is commanded to be made intricately; because the reward of the eternal kingdom is not given indiscriminately to all, but a distinction is divinely distributed to each according to their merit by the judg-

ment. For the golden crown of the Lord's table would be pure and not intricate if the brightness of the future reward for the righteous were revealed equally to all: like this worldly sun, whose splendor God makes to rise indiscriminately on the good and the bad. But as one star differs from another in brightness, so also will be the resurrection of the dead. The crown of the Lord's table is decorated with various distinct carvings, appropriately arranged.

For eternal life in the future is promised to all the righteous, but in it, the glory of each one is manifold according to the diversity of merits. The fact that one crown is first described and then added: And upon that other gold crown, a small golden crown. The reward of those can rightly be understood, who by a voluntary choice of life transcend the general commandments of Holy Scripture, and therefore expect a special reward of voluntary offering above other faithful ones. For a gold crown four fingers high is placed on the edge of the gold table, when through the Gospel, to those who keep the commandments of the divine law, eternal life is promised: the Lord saying to the rich man: If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 19). But another small golden crown is placed upon the same crown, when it is immediately added: If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me (Ibid.). To this crown pertains that new song, which virgins alone are said to have sung before the Lamb, who were redeemed from among men, firstfruits to God and the Lamb. To this, as well, pertains that they follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Rev. 14). Or certainly a gold crown is placed on the edge of the table of the Lord, when in the words of Holy Scripture we say, the souls leaving the flesh are to be received for eternal rewards in heaven. And another small golden crown is added upon that, when it is repeated in the same Scripture, that for them a more sublime glory at the end of the world is preserved in the reception also of immortal bodies.

You will also prepare four golden rings, etc. These, as we have explained above about the ark, should also be understood here. For the four golden rings are the books of the four Gospels; through whose faith it came to pass that all holy Scripture would be read and understood throughout the entire

world. However, the table has four feet; because the whole series of divine discourses is distinguished by a fourfold reasoning. In all holy books, indeed, it is necessary to observe what is intimated there as eternal, what deeds are narrated, what future things are foretold, what actions are either instructed or advised to be done. Likewise, the table of the tabernacle has four feet; because the word of the heavenly oracle is customarily accepted in a historical, allegorical, tropological, that is, moral, or certainly anagogical method. For history is when some matter, how it was done or said according to the letter, is related in plain speech: how the people of Israel, saved from Egypt, are narrated to have made a tabernacle for the Lord in the desert. Allegory is when the sacraments of Christ and the Church are signified by words or mystical things: by words, notably, as Isaiah says: "A rod will come out from the root of Jesse, and a flower will ascend from his root" (Isa. 11). Which is plainly to say: The Virgin Mary will be born from the lineage of David, and Christ will arise from her lineage.

However, by things, as the people saved from Egyptian servitude by the blood of the Lamb signifies the Church, which is freed from demonic domination by the passion of Christ. Tropology, that is, moral discourse, looks towards the correction and establishment of morals, either conveyed in plain or figurative terms. Plainly, as John admonishes, saying: "My little children, let us not love in word or tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3). Figuratively, as Solomon says: "At all times let your garments be white, and let oil not fail on your head" (Eccl. 9). Which is plainly to say: At all times let your works be pure, and let charity not fail from your heart. Anagogy, which leads to higher things, is a discourse that discusses future rewards and that future life in heaven, either in mystical or plain terms. Plainly, as: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5). Mystically, as: "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the city by the gates" (Rev. 22). Which is openly to say: Blessed are those who cleanse their thoughts and actions, so that they may have the right to see the Lord Christ, who says: "I am the way and the truth and the life"; and through the teaching and examples of the preceding fathers, may enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Under the crown shall be golden rings, etc. Fittingly, there shall be rings under the crown, because we use the books of the Holy Gospel in this life, while we hope for the crown of life to come in heaven. Through these rings,

indeed, rods are inserted to carry the table, because the holy teachers, in order to refresh the hearts of their listeners with the words of the sacred Scriptures, must themselves always keep their minds fixed on the evangelical readings, so that they direct all their understanding and interpretation to the intention of their teaching, and they carefully ensure that they teach nothing else to be done, hoped for, or loved in all the Scriptures than what is found in the four books of the Gospel. While they refer all the utterances of the Scriptures to the faith and love written in the Gospel, they are, as it were, carrying the entire Lord's table with its loaves and vessels on four rings.

CHAPTER 1.7

Description of the vessels of the table and the loaves of proposition. You shall prepare bowls and chalices, etc. Various vessels made for offering libations represent different distinctions of divine eloquence, corresponding to the diverse capacities of the listeners. For the same doctrine cannot be suitable for everyone: the wise must be taught one way, the foolish another; the rich in one manner, the poor in another; the healthy differently from the sick; the old from the young; men from women; singles from married persons; superiors from subordinates. Nevertheless, all these vessels pertain to the table of the tabernacle and to offering libations, because whatever a prudent teacher speaks, differing according to the diversity of the listeners, all is found within the rule of Holy Scripture and stirs the hearts of the listeners to offer vows of good works to the Lord. This fitting diversity of holy preaching was signified by the mouth of the Lord Himself when He said: "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom the Lord has set over His household, to give them their portion of grain in due season?" (Matthew 24). For the faithful and wise steward gives the measure of grain to his fellow servants in due season, when a discerning minister of the word not only observes the proper time for speaking but also diligently considers the nature and intelligence of the listeners, and adjusts the manner of his speech according to their differences.

And you shall place upon the table the bread of the Presence, etc. The bread of the Presence placed upon the table always represents spiritual teachers, who, meditating on the law of the Lord day and night, offer the nourishment of the heavenly word to all who enter the Church. These are rightly called the bread of the Presence because the word of salvation must always be openly available to all the faithful, and the comforting word should never be

absent in the Church for devout listeners. The Lord, through the heralds of truth, presents this to the world such that it should always appear before Him and continually abound to the end of the world for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Concerning this bread in Leviticus, it is more fully related how many and what kind of loaves are to be made, or how they should be placed, as the Lord says to Moses: "You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it, each loaf being two-tenths of an ephah. And you shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the Lord. And you shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion, an offering made by fire to the Lord. Every Sabbath day Aaron shall set it in order before the Lord continually; it is an everlasting covenant on the behalf of the children of Israel.

And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place" (Leviticus 24). Where clearly, in the very number of the loaves twelve, the figure of the twelve apostles is prefigured, whom the Lord, appearing in the flesh, first chose, by whose ministry He would give the bread of life to all nations. Hence, to the hungry crowds in the desert, He says to the same disciples, namely to our apostles: "You give them something to eat. And after feeding five thousand men with five loaves, they themselves collected twelve baskets of fragments (Mark 6, Luke 9, John 6), because indeed it is the role of the apostles and apostolic men to grasp the mysteries of the Scriptures which the crowds cannot. Therefore, the twelve loaves on the tabernacle's table are the twelve apostles and all their followers in the Church. Since until the end of the world they do not cease to nourish God's people with the food of the word, the twelve loaves of the Presence never depart from the Lord's table. And fittingly, these loaves are ordered not to be made from any type of flour, but from fine flour: because it is necessary that those who minister the word of life to others must themselves first excel in the fruits of virtues, so that what they admonish by preaching they also commend by practicing, shaped by the example of Him who said of Himself:

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone" (John 12). Moreover, it is fitting that these loaves are commanded to be set in two rows, indicating the harmony of charity and fellowship, for the Lord is also reported to have sent the disciples out two by two to preach: figuratively suggesting that holy teachers never differ from one another either in the assertion of truth or in the effect of love. But that which is placed over

the bread, the purest incense, signifies the power of prayer, because the same teachers commend their ministry of preaching and the devotion of their work to the Lord. For the Psalmist testifies that prayer is signified by incense, who says: "Let my prayer be directed as incense before you" (Psalm 140). And the purest incense is placed over the bread as a commemoration of the Lord's offering, when pure prayer is added to the holy actions and teachings of the saints. By these two things being rightly joined, the memory of the holy offering always appears in the sight of the highest judge. However, it is well commanded that the bread before the Lord be changed every Sabbath;

for the bread that was placed on the Lord's table for six days of work is changed for us on the Sabbath, when the teachers of the holy Church, having completed the time of their holy labor, are rewarded with eternal rest in the heavens, and they leave others after them to labor in the same work of preaching the word, under the same hope of reward. And so it happens that the Lord's table never remains without bread, but as soon as one bread is taken away, another is substituted in its place, while ministers of the word succeed each other in order, so that the Church is never lacking in those who, apostolically, show the faith of piety or purity of action, both in words and deeds. That most beautiful sentence remains always in the praise of the same holy Church: "In place of your fathers, your sons are born; you will make them princes over all the earth" (Psalm 45), as if it were said to the tabernacle of the Lord in other words: "In place of your old loaves, new ones are prepared for you, you will make them a refreshment for the spiritual hearts of the faithful throughout the whole world. Therefore, the loaves were changed for loaves, but the table always stood the same in the tabernacle because teachers of the word come and go, and, yielding to others, others succeed in their order.

However, the sacred Scripture remains unabolished by any ages, until in the end of the world, with the Lord appearing, we will neither need the Scriptures nor their interpreters anymore, fulfilling that most longed-for prophecy of the Lord, which says: "And no one will teach his neighbor, and no one his brother, saying: Know the Lord, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them" (Jeremiah 31). According to Josephus (*Antiquities*, Book III, Chapter 13), the loaves were baked before the Sabbath, divided into pairs before the Sabbath, and on the Sabbath morning they were placed on the sacred table, facing one another, with two

golden bowls full of incense placed over them, which remained until the next Sabbath. Then others were brought instead of those, and they were given to the priests. With the incense burned on the sacred fire, on which all holocausts were made, other incense was added over the other loaves, and it is written in the book of Kings that when David entered the tabernacle, he received the holy loaves from the priests, which happened on the Sabbath morning. He came to the tabernacle at that hour when the loaves of the previous week were taken from the Lord's table, so that the new loaves, which were baked the day before, might be placed there; and thus he took the holy loaves so that not even for a moment would the Lord's table be without bread.

Hence, it is worthwhile to consider more closely that the loaves were commanded to be changed every Sabbath: for they were changed so that each of them would be placed on the table on the Sabbath and again taken away on the Sabbath for the priests to eat; and indeed, they appeared on the table for six days of work, but they were set on the table on the Sabbath, the day of rest, and taken away again the next Sabbath. What else can we mystically understand from this order of placement, except that holy teachers, or rather, all the just, after their good works which shine in the Church, reach rest, and are incited to work good deeds by the hope of future rest and beatitude? Therefore, the loaves were placed on the Lord's table on the Sabbath with the intention of those who placed them that they might remain there through the six days of working; and after these days had passed, with the arrival of the next Sabbath, they were consumed for the refreshment of the high priest and his sons: because evidently, at the beginning of our devotion to God we are promised rest and eternal life, but on the condition that we ought to attain it through the labors and good works of temporal life. By what reasoning, then, this consumption of the loaves of proposition by the high priest and his sons pertains to the entrance into heavenly life will be more aptly explained in the exposition of the following verse.

The same loaves, moreover, were accepted by the sons of Israel, because those who are to undertake the rank of priesthood or doctrine should be chosen and appointed from the company of God's spiritual servants. As to the conclusion added, "They shall be for Aaron and his sons," this can be understood in two mystical ways. For Aaron ate with his sons the holy loaves taken from the table of the tabernacle when our high priest introduces the

elect taken from this life into the increase of his body, which is in heaven, that is, into the great multitude of the elect. Or indeed, the holy loaves will be for Aaron and his sons, when each prelate, and those subject to them in the Lord, are nourished for eternal life by the examples of the preceding fathers.

CHAPTER 1.8

The Lampstand. You shall also make a lampstand of pure beaten gold. The lampstand of the tabernacle, like the table, signifies the universal Church of the present time. For this reason, they are before the veil, within which the ark of the covenant is placed; because it has not yet been deemed worthy to enter into the vision of its Redeemer in heaven. But it is a table; because to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, it daily provides heavenly sustenance, lest they falter in temptations. It is a lampstand; because it shows the path of light to those who wander. It is both a table and a lampstand; because taught by the sacred scriptures it has learned both to satisfy the hungry soul with good things, and to provide the lamp of the word to those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Indeed, while it humbly subjects itself to this lamp, entailing the deeds that the word of God commands, restraining itself from its own pleasures, lifting itself up from visible joys to hope for the rewards and to love the promises, it becomes as it were the lampstand of it; because it places the sovereign heavenly command above all its own pleasures, humbling itself, and showing the clarity of the word of God to all by both preaching and doing.

His shaft, reeds, cups, etc. The shaft of the lampstand, He who is the Head of the Church, the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, should be understood. Of whose body, which we are, as reeds proceeding from the shaft, the Apostle says: From whom the whole body, supplied and constructed through joints and ligaments, grows with the growth of God (Col. II): for indeed the Almighty God, our Redeemer, who in Himself has nothing to increase, still has growth daily through His members. The reeds proceeding from the shaft are therefore preachers, who, instituted by the Lord, have produced a sweet sound in the world, that is, a new song. The reeds are all the children of the Church, who willingly obey Him (the prophet saying: Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth [Psalm 31]), resounding praise to the Lord and saying: And He directed my steps, and He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn to our God (Psalm

30). Because cups are usually filled with wine, not unreasonably they are interpreted as the minds of those who hear, which are filled with the wine of knowledge at the voice of the preachers. And because the hearts of the faithful, intoxicated with the wine of inner love, tend toward God with tireless desire, correctly in the lampstand after the cups spheres are made; for a sphere can turn in every direction, since indeed the minds of the elect can be neither detained by the adversities of the world nor corrupted by its prosperities, but in everything that happens, they progress to God through holy desires. And well after the reeds, cups, and spheres, lilies are designated in the lampstand; because after the grace of preaching, after the intoxication of spiritual drink, after the unreturnable course of holy operation, that verdant country follows, which flourishes with eternal flowers for holy souls.

Six reeds extend from the sides, etc. It is well known that the number six, in which the world was made, signifies the perfection of works. But since it is set forth in the description of the reeds in such a way that it is divided into two sets of three, it is better to speak of the number three. For three reeds extend from one side of the shaft, and three from the other; because there were teachers before the coming of the Lord in the flesh who would designate the faith of the holy Trinity with mystical voice, and preach as much as the unlearned could still grasp. Hence, the saying of the Psalmist: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33). Indeed by the name of the Lord, the Father; by the name of the Word, the Son; and by the Spirit itself by its own name, he calls it the breath of his mouth. He thereby designates that the power, will, and operation of this holy Trinity is one, since he asserts that both the heavens were made by the word of the Lord, and all their host by the spirit of his mouth. There are now teachers who openly preach the same faith of the Holy Trinity, so that all who belong to Christ ought to be consecrated by the same faith: as the Lord says to the apostles:

"Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28). Hence Paul, praying for the faithful and desiring that they be strengthened by the accepted faith in the Trinity, says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13). Again, three reeds extend from one side of the candlestick, and three extend from the other: because both before and after the Lord's in-

carnation, there were three ranks of those who served the Lord faithfully in the Church, namely the married, the continent, and the rulers: whose distinction the prophet Ezekiel mystically describes, when at the coming of the punishment he predicted that only three men, namely Noah, Daniel, and Job, would be delivered (Ezekiel 14). For indeed, in Noah, who directed the ark upon the waves, there are the leaders of the Church: in Daniel, who aimed to live chastely in the royal court, there are the continent or virgins: in Job, who, placed in married life, provided everyone a remarkable example of patience, the life of good married people is shown. Similarly, the Lord in the New Testament under a figure indicates the difference between them who in the bed, in the field, in the mill are to be found on the day of judgment (Matthew 24; Luke 17). Of these, He says that some are to be taken and some to be left.

For indeed, in the bed is symbolized the rest of the continent, in agriculture the industry of the preachers, in the turning of the mill, the labor of the married is expressed. And because in all these ranks some should be chosen, some indeed to be rejected, it rightly says of each one: Because one out of two shall be taken, and the other shall be left. And since among the chosen ones the merit of preaching is more exalted than those who merely apply themselves to continence and not also to the work of teaching, likewise the life of the continent is more exalted than that of the married: thus the supreme reeds, which arose from the shaft on both sides, denote those who dedicated themselves to the studies of doctrine among other virtues in both Testaments. Rightly lower reeds, equally emerging from each side of the shaft, symbolize the life of the continent devoted to God; rightly the lowest reeds, also originating from the same stem of the single candlestick, typify the life of good married people, faithfully serving the one and the same Lord in the time of both Testaments. Therefore, reeds emerge from the shaft at different places, yet all, each in its own place and order, being bent upwards, reach a single summit, so that they may preserve an equally positioned light above them; because, indeed, the chosen, though distinct in the degrees of their merits, are imbued with one faith of truth, destined to reach one light of eternal truth in heaven:

and the more one strived to cleave to Christ in this life, the closer they shall enjoy the vision of Him in that life, so that of certain people it may be said for the great merit of their virtue: These are they who follow the Lamb

wherever He goes (Revelation 14). Of whom it was stated just before, as of the reeds near the candlestick: And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders (*ibid.*). Where it is shown that all the saints in the streets of that upper city sing a new song of joy to the Lord. But those are especially uplifted in the joy of song above others who, here, have transcended the general life of the faithful by the privilege of sacred virginity. Three goblets, as in the shape of a nut, etc. It is customary for a nut to be placed in the figure of the present Church, confirmed by Solomon, who speaks on behalf of faithful teachers: "I have descended," he says in the Song of Songs, "into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley" (Cant. VI). For just as a nut has a sweet fruit inside, but cannot show this outwardly unless the hardness of the shell is broken, so the present life of the just keeps the sweetness of spiritual grace in the innermost heart, so that how great it is from nearby cannot be fully seen until, after the removal of the body's domicile, their souls in celestial light may freely see each other, and how much each shines with the grace of the Holy Spirit, how each is loved by the other, may in no way remain hidden from anyone. And thus goblets are made in the candlestick in the manner of a nut, when any of the elect desiring to be filled with the wine of wisdom hasten to form themselves after the example of the preceding just, whom they know to be full of the great sweetness and love of invisible goods. But the fact that there were three goblets, spheroids, and lilies for each branch signifies the three differences of times in which the elect lived both before the Lord's incarnation and afterwards devoted to God.

For there were just ones before the law, there were under the law, there were in the times of the prophets. Similarly, after the Lord's ascension, the primitive Church was gathered from Israel, is now gathered from the gentiles, and is to be gathered at the end of the world from the remnants of Israel. Therefore the first branch on one side had three goblets, spheroids, and lilies because on the part of teachers before the Lord's incarnation there were three orders of those who, like goblets, thirsted for a draught of heavenly grace, ran most promptly into the way of the Lord, like spheroids, and joyfully expected the gift of a heavenly reward, like the whiteness and fragrance of lilies: that is, before the law, under the law, under the prophets. The second branch also had three goblets, spheroids, and lilies, because the continent of that time equally contained three orders of saints in the aforemen-

tioned distinction of times, desiring spiritual drink, running on the path of the Lord's commandments, and awaiting heavenly rewards. The third branch similarly had three goblets, spheroids, and lilies: because there were many married before the law, many under the law, many in the days of the prophets, who rejoiced to hear the word of the Lord, to run in his way, to expect the rewards of good works from him. Also on the other side of the shaft, the first branch, the second, and the third, had three goblets and spheroids, three lilies as well:

because in the New Testament, both in teachers, and in the continent, and in married people devoted to God, there were three orders of different times: that is, in the primitive Church from Israel, in our election from the gentiles, in the final gathering of the remnants of Israel, all of whom in their proper time desire to be intoxicated with the word of life, to hasten in the way of peace, to see the brightness of eternal light. On the lampstand itself there will be four cups, etc. We have said that the lampstand itself, that is, the middle stem of the lampstand from which the branches proceeded, represents the Lord Savior; from whose grace the righteous have received whatever good they possess. Therefore, in the Gospel, when He said to the disciples: I am the vine, you are the branches; He immediately added: As a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in Me (John 15). It is as if He were saying in other words: I am the lampstand, and you are my branches: just as a branch cannot lift itself to support the lamp unless it remains fixed in the stem of the lampstand, neither can you bear the light of truth and faith within yourselves unless you abide in Me. Surely in this lampstand, there are four cups because in the four books of the holy Gospel, which are written about the Lord, we find the taste of new wine, that is, of heavenly doctrine, which not old wineskins, that is, minds still clinging to earthly desires, but only hearts renewed by the Spirit of grace can hold. In each cup, there are little spheres along with deformed lilies, because the same Lord, who has offered us the cup of spiritual wisdom, has also shown us the path of pious operation to be straightforward and unfaltering:

and that we may have it, He Himself will grant it, and so that we might not run in vain, He promised us the brightness of the heavenly homeland to which we should aim; and He has opened this access to us by His grace, or surely, because under two branches the cups, spheres, and lilies are com-

manded to be made in three places. We can mystically interpret these things in this way: because to the three stages of the faithful—namely, the married, the continent, and the virgins, about whom we have often spoken—He revealed the doctrine of truth, commanded the course of good work, and promised and granted the blessing of an everlasting and incorruptible inheritance. And it is fitting that the cups, globes, and lilies of the lampstand are ordered not to be above the stalks, but below them; because the hearts of the preachers, indeed of all the elect, are sustained by the gifts, commandments, and promises of the Lord, so that they might not fall into the depths, and are raised to love and seek the heavenly things. Hence, the holy Church, that is, the bride of Christ, glories in Him, saying: "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand will embrace me" (Cant. II). For the bridegroom's left hand is placed under the bride's head; because the Lord, separating the minds of the faithful from earthly pleasures and desires with temporal benefits, raises them to hope and desire for eternal goods.

And His right hand will embrace her, because the vision of His divine majesty revealed will glorify her without end. The cups, globes, and lilies are fittingly under the two stalks, because in both Testaments, although varying in ceremonies, the same devotion of serving the Lord is commanded, the same glory of the heavenly kingdom is preserved for the faithful. However, the fourth cup, globe, and lily, which were above all the stalks near the top of the lampstand itself, pertain specifically to the Lord the Savior; who not only grants the knowledge of virtues, the operation, and the reward to His elect, but also in Himself, the same man Christ showed the figure of the cup when He declared Himself full of the Holy Spirit. He showed the form of the globe when appearing in the world, without any obstacle of the surrounding things, He rejoiced like a giant to run His course (Psal. XVIII). He showed the appearance of the lily when rising from the dead and ascending to the heavens, He was glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world existed (John XVII). And rightly here, the cup, the globe, and the lily stood out higher than the stalks; because indeed the gifts which God the Father conferred on the Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, transcend every measure of human capacity. For to each one of us, grace has been given according to the measure of Christ's gift. In Christ Himself, as the Apostle says, dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Eph. IV). Furthermore, it follows:

And therefore both the spheres and the branches from it, etc. For all the work of the lampstand, that is both the central shaft, and the branches proceeding from it, with all their ornamentation, are made of gold; because the Lord Himself, particularly free from sin, and distinguished in all works of righteousness, appeared in the world; and His members, in this interim life, imitate the same innocence and righteousness as much as they are able; but in the future, they truly progress by adhering to Him. And aptly the same gold was ductile, for ductile gold is produced by striking; because our Redeemer, who was perfect God and man from conception and birth, endured the pains of suffering, and thus arrived at the glory of resurrection: and all who desire to live piously in Him suffer persecution (II Tim. III), because they also, like metal expanded by striking, advance through the insults of suffering into the grace of immortality. Hence also in the fourth psalm, which is inscribed, *In the songs*, which in the mystic branches of faith, the Church says to its Redeemer: *You have enlarged me in tribulation*. As if the ductile gold were to say to its maker: *You have enlarged me by the smith's striking, and by striking have given me greater progress*.

CHAPTER 1.9

The Lamps of the Candlestick and the Snuffers. "You shall make seven lamps," etc. The lamps are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; which always remained whole in our Lord and Redeemer, and were distributed among His members, that is, all the elect, according to His will. Thus, the seven lamps are placed on the candlestick because the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and piety, rested upon our firstborn Redeemer from the root of Jesse, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord filled him (Isaiah XI). And as the same one speaks through the same prophet: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me" (Isaiah LXI). What is said, "That they may shine towards the front"; this is what the prophet subsequently added: "To proclaim good news to the humble, he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God."

For the lamps of the candlestick shone towards the front and lighted up the Lord's tabernacle, when the Lord, being full of grace and truth, granted us all from His fullness, and grace for grace, when He entrusted the word of

the Gospel to the meek and poor in spirit, when He granted the marrow of forgiveness to the penitent, when He declared that now is the time to please the Lord, but the future will be the day of universal judgment. This number and position of the lamps is in harmony with what John says in Revelation: "And I saw, and behold, in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth" (Revelation V). For if the seven horns there, or the seven eyes of the Lamb, can signify the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: why should not the same also be believed to be signified by the seven lamps of the candlestick by merit? Indeed, as it is rightly signified by the horns and eyes on account of the omnipotence of the power by which He governs all things, and the fullness of knowledge by which He sees all things;

so too the same septiform Spirit is aptly expressed through the figure of the lamps, on account of the light of grace by which He illuminates the darkness of our blindness in the night of this world. Hence it is aptly subjoined: Dust-cloths also, and where those things which are wiped off are extinguished, etc. For there are certain precepts in the divine Scriptures that must always be observed both in this life and in the future, by perpetual law: such as this, Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exod. XX): and, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Matth. XXII, Luc. X). There are others which are commanded to be observed throughout this entire life, but receive the eternal reward of their observance in the future life: such as the one from the Gospel, Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive you into everlasting habitations (Luc. XVI). For here alms should be given for a time, there the fruit of those alms is to be received eternally. There are also others which were diligently commanded by the Lord to be observed in the time of the Old Testament:

now with the Gospel shining throughout the world, they are commanded to be observed in the Church not according to the letter, but according to the mystical sense, such as the observance of the Sabbath, the rites of sacrifices, and the blood of the Paschal lamb, and other things of this kind, which in their appropriate time were solemnly kept by the people of God, like wicks burning in the lamps of the candelabrum, filled with the oil of pi-

ous devotion and kindled by the fire of the heavenly word: but when it was preached by the apostles and apostolic men that an end was imposed by the Lord to these and the like observances, all these are to be kept more spiritually in the Church rather than according to the letter. As if the wicks of the candelabrum were being wiped so that they could shine brighter when renewed, because they provided the light of the saving doctrine to the Church, more sublimely understood through the Spirit. About this renewal of the lamps of the tabernacle, that is, the more sublime understanding of the divine Scriptures, the Lord promises His people in Leviticus, saying: You will multiply and I will establish my covenant with you. You will eat the old store long kept, and you will cast out the old to accommodate the new incoming. For with the children of Israel multiplied, the covenant of God was confirmed with them:

when also the Gentiles were called to the faith, the grace of the New Testament was planted in the hearts of the elect with a firm root. And we eat the most ancient of the old, when we retain in the sweet memory of the heart the old commandment, which from the beginning was given to the human race: loving the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength; and loving our neighbor as ourselves. And we cast away the old things with the coming of the new, when we cease to observe the typical statutes of the Mosaic Law according to the letter; but the same, more graciously understood through the spirit, we keep with a heart renewed in hope of the heavenly kingdom: according to that of the Apostle, "If therefore any be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. V). And in the Apocalypse, "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Apoc. XXI). Now the snuffers by which these things were done are the very words of sacred oratory, by which it is clearly designated that the letter of the law is to be dissolved in many respects, and to be kept only with a spiritual sense. Among these is that in the Acts of the Apostles, where the Gentile believers are prohibited from being circumcised and are commanded to obey evangelic grace without the ceremonies of legal sacrifices.

And what the Apostle, explaining a verse of the Psalm to the Hebrews, said, previously saying: "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure in them, which are offered according to the law; then he said, "Behold, I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. X).

He takes away the first, that he may establish the second: in which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ Jesus. Therefore, the snuffers, and the vessels where those things that are snuffed out are extinguished, are made of the purest gold; because both the divine words, by which the cessation of legal ceremonies is preached, and the hearts of those, in whom the same figurative shadow of the law takes an end, are illuminated by the grace of God, that the succeeding truth of the Gospel might shine more clearly to the world. For it is well known that the first apostles loosened the Sabbath in the Gospel before the passion of the Lord, and after the ascension of the Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit, they utterly put an end to the legal sacrifices, and changed many decrees of the letter of the law to the evangelical grace of liberty. Therefore, in these, the snuffers by which those things that were snuffed out extinguished: in which the literal observation being completed, exhibited the beginning of grace more clearly shining to the world.

Likewise, because the mortal life being finished, and immortal life succeeding, the greatest part of the works or gifts of light, which we now use, will cease, that the rewards of eternal light might follow in the presence of the divine vision. Those testimonies of the Scriptures, which testify that these things will be, are certainly golden snuffers, which by the hope of future brightness are excellent. The vessels also in which those things that are snuffed out are extinguished, are doubtless the bodies and hearts of all the righteous immortal. And therefore most rightly compared to gold, in which this most desirable change will be made, that after the temporal benefits of God, they may come to the eternal. Finally, the Apostle provides us golden snuffers of the lamps of God, and places where those which are snuffed out are extinguished, when he speaks of the difference between present and future goods, saying: "Whether prophecies, they shall fail; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. And a little later: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (I Cor. XIII).

All the weight of the candlestick... a talent of the purest gold. All the weight of the candlestick with all its vessels is the whole body of Christ, with the very head of our Mediator between God and men, and with all His

chosen ones from the highest to the lowest, from those of whom no one is greater among those born of women down to those of whom He says: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones who believe in me" (Matthew 18). Indeed, all these, although in different ranks, ages, sexes, conditions, abilities, and times, cling with the fixed root of their mind to one and the same Author and Giver of perpetual light, each in their own time and place, as if to a golden candlestick, so that they may become participants in the same light. This candlestick, in fact, is properly said to have to be a talent of the purest gold, for a talent is a full and perfect weight: "Because the Lord is righteous in all his ways" (Psalm 145); and He who in this life grants His grace to the faithful to act well, in the next life renders the crown of justice to their good works. On the other hand, the prophet Zechariah describes iniquity sitting upon the talent of lead (Zechariah 5); because He will also render to the reprobates in the same just examination according to their deeds: "You will render to each one according to his works" (Psalm 62).

But it makes a difference whether someone brings gold or lead to the divine judgment. For those who, like gold, shine with good works advance to the Lord's candlestick, because they become participants in the glory of their Creator. But those who appear heavy with sins in the strict examination are submerged like lead in the very deep water; because by the merit of their crimes they fall into the abyss of grievous punishment. Yet, both lead and gold have the measure of a talent; because both in condemning the wicked and in saving and crowning the elect, the judgment of our Creator is just. Look, and make according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain. The mystery of this commandment is very easily evident from those things which were explained above. For an example of the lampstand that Moses would make was shown to him on the mountain; because in the height of intimate contemplation he clearly learned the manifold sacraments of Christ and the Church; however, he did not want to openly declare these to the people whom he was teaching, but rather typified them through the figure and work of the lampstand and its vessels, until the Lord and our Redeemer Himself would come in the flesh, who would reveal the inner sense of that figure to His Church by giving the grace of the Holy Spirit: so that by dying on the cross He tore the veil of the temple, and revealed the secrets of the holy places that had been covered; and after the resurrection, appearing to his disciples, He opened their minds, so that with the eyes of

their minds spiritually revealed, they might perceive these and other secrets of the Scriptures. But every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is also commanded diligently to follow and to teach others those things which he has learned in the holy writings about the catholic faith or holy action, what else is he enjoined to do but to look and make according to the pattern that was shown to him on the mountain?

For he diligently looks at the shown pattern, and returning to the lower things, he makes it, when he carefully examines with a devoted heart those things which through the sublimity of the divine word he understands to be believed or acted upon within: and he always shows to his hearers the pattern of these things both by the execution of righteous work and by the word of salutary doctrine; who lives and reigns with the Father and the Son together with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

BOOK II

CHAPTER 2.1

Description of the tabernacle and the temple. The tabernacle will indeed be made thus. The tabernacle made by Moses in the wilderness, just as the temple which Solomon made in Jerusalem, signifies the state of the holy universal Church, which partly already reigns with the Lord in the heavens, and partly, in this present life still, with its departing and succeeding members, is a pilgrim away from the Lord. Indeed, in the construction of each house, this is usually the principal distinction of the figures: that the tabernacle designates the present building of the Church, where daily it is exercised in labors, and the temple signifies the future rest, which is completed by the daily reception of souls departing hence after their labors. For Moses made the tabernacle with the people of God while they were still in the way, going to the promised land; Solomon, however, built the temple when he had gained possession of the promised land and the kingdom in it. Moses made the tabernacle in the wilderness, Solomon made the temple in Jerusalem, which means 'vision of peace'; for here indeed the Church is built in the labor and affliction of the passing life, in thirst and hunger for the perpetual kingdom; but there it is consummated in the vision and perception of true peace.

Hence it was well said in the construction of the temple that the hammer and axe and all iron tools were not heard in it when it was being built, with

all the stones and woods prepared outside Jerusalem, and properly fitted into their positions: which there most easily and undoubtedly were each returned to its place, either with cement or nails; because in the peace of supreme blessedness there is no need for our faith to be tested by tribulations, or for our life to be proved, but what was chastened here in the present age and fitted regularly for the heavenly seats, there with the glue and bonds of mutual charity, so that it cannot be dissolved perpetually, must be joined together in the sight of its Creator and King. For when the heart and soul of the multitude of believers become one in this life, and all things are common to them, what are they but the living stones squared into the building of the future house of the Lord, which, being transferred from here and there, without any laborious delay, are inserted into their proper places, and joined to each other by the bond of divine and their own love? Moreover, the figure of each sanctuary can be generally distinguished thus. The work of the tabernacle signifies the time of the synagogue, that is, the ancient people of God: but the work of the temple signifies the Church, that is, that multitude of the elect, which came to life after the Lord's incarnation:

for Moses completed the tabernacle with only the Hebrew people, but Solomon perfected the temple with the gathered multitude of proselytes, also being assisted by the king of Tyre with his artisans, who were neither Jews by nature nor profession. For it is evident that in the former people of God, their teachers were presided over only from among their own race; but as for the Church, its first governors were indeed from the Hebrews: but soon, as it grew and expanded throughout the world, its builders rose also from the Gentiles, so that even the evangelist Luke, and Timothy and Titus, apostolic men from the calling of the Gentiles, came to its leadership. But if we inspect each detail more diligently, the construction of each house mystically describes the state of the entire present Church, which from the beginning of worldly condition to the last one who is to be born at the end of the age, always continues to be built: and it also wonderfully depicts the glory of future life, which it now partly enjoys, but after the end of this age, will enjoy eternally in all its members, with the truth of the figures marvelously represented.

Therefore, as we are about to say something about the tabernacle, with the Lord's help, invoking Him first with humble prayer, we beseech that the eyes of our heart may be revealed, so that we might be able to consider the

wonders of His law, and understand that the adornment of pernicious metals and garments is recommended to us as the decoration of morals, shining with faith and devotion. For surely otherwise that apostolic word cannot apply to us, where he says: "For you are the temple of the living God" (II Cor. VI), as God says: "For I will dwell in them, and walk among them" (Levit. XXVI). And what John heard, a great voice from the throne saying: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them" (Apoc. XXI), unless we imitate the ornamentation of the material tabernacle or temple with the religious adornment of the cleanliness of heart and body of the world. But before we discuss the spiritual sense, let us first briefly look at the material text of the letter itself. The tabernacle was a house consecrated to the Lord, having thirty cubits in length, ten cubits in width, and equally ten cubits in height, having a roof level through the whole, as is the custom in Egypt and Palestine to build houses. Its three walls, southern, northern, and western, were compacted of wooden boards, gilded on both sides.

Furthermore, for the eastern part, there was one bar, where the entrance was, which extended through the middle of the boards from corner to corner, that is from the top end of one wall to the top of the other wall. On it rested the curtains of the tabernacle and the roof, where also a tent was suspended by five columns. The house, moreover, was covered all around and above with curtains woven in wonderful variety, which was properly called the tabernacle. This was also covered all around with curtains of goat's hair, reaching down to the ground. There was also another covering on the roof made of ram skins dyed red. Again, above this, there was another covering of hyacinth-dyed skins. There was also a veil embroidered with variegated work, hanging on four columns, which divided the sanctuary and the holy of holies: within which was placed the Ark of the Covenant, and in front of the Ark outside the veil was the altar of incense. Likewise, in the middle of the sanctuary itself was a lampstand on the south side. The table stood on the north side; the altar of burnt offering outside before the entrance of the sanctuary; the bronze basin between this altar and the tabernacle. And around all of this was the court of the tabernacle, having a length of one hundred cubits and a width of fifty cubits.

Therefore, for the sake of elucidation, we briefly introduce these matters, so that through these words of history we might be able to reach a deeper and clearer understanding of the allegorical sense. When the Lord had taken

Moses to Himself on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, and was delivering the ceremonies of the law and the manner of living, He said among other things:

CHAPTER 2.2

The Ten Curtains (Exodus XXVI). But you shall make the Tabernacle, etc. The Tabernacle of the Lord is made from curtains varied in different colors; because the holy universal Church is built from many chosen persons, from many Churches throughout the world, and from various flowers of virtues. All its perfection is contained in the number ten; because the Church throughout the world, spread among different nations, tribes, peoples, and languages, subsists wholly in the love of God and neighbor alone, which is encompassed by the Decalogue of the law. Nor can anyone otherwise truthfully reach the members of the Church unless he has learned to love with a whole heart both Him by whom the Church is built, and those in whom the Church is built; that is, God and His chosen ones. The various decorative colors with which these curtains are distinguished are the grace of various virtues, by which the holy Church, composed by marvelous and entirely heavenly craftsmanship, shines in the sight of its Creator: with this variety, and as it were with embroidered work, blessed Peter endeavored to build the Tabernacle of God when he said: "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4). Paul saw this present in the curtains of the Tabernacle, that is, in the minds of the faithful, when he says:

"To one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12), and the rest of that passage. And indeed the fine linen, which is mentioned first, because it designates the ornament of virtues, John testifies in the Apocalypse, saying: "For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready, and to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright" (Revelation 19): for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Solomon speaks of the same wife of the Lamb, that is, the Church of Christ: "She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple" (Proverbs 31). However, John, in expounding the figure of one color, suggests that the others also should be interpreted figuratively. Therefore, the fine linen, which indeed comes forth from the earth, but extracted from the earth, through long process of drying, beating, purifying, scalding, and

spinning, is accustomed to lose its grassy hue and to take on a bright white color, represents bodies adorned with the beauty of chastity: who, born indeed of the allurements of the flesh, through great labor of continence, as it were, sweat out the native moisture, and attain to the decoration of purity worthy of God by diligent fasting and watchings, prayers and readings, patience and humility. About them, the apostolic words might rightly be said:

"Or do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you" (1 Corinthians 6)? This fine linen is twisted into the curtains of the Tabernacle; because we not only gird the loins of our flesh, but also, as Peter admonishes, the loins of our mind in sobriety (1 Peter 1), so that we may restrain both the flesh from lascivious movements and our heart from seductive thoughts. Hyacinth, because it imitates the appearance of the air and the sky, signifies the minds of the same chosen ones, seeking heavenly things with all hope and desire. The Apostle recommends to us the mystery of this color, saying: "If you have been raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3). Purple, because it shows the color of blood: and true purple is also dyed with the blood of sea snails, designates the devoted hearts of those who can say with the Apostle: "For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21). And with the prophet David: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered" (Psalm 44). Scarlet, because it has the appearance of fire, is rightly compared to the most fervent love of the saints. Hence, some of them, who had conceived this with the Lord present and accompanying them, said:

"Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us" (Luke 24)? To whom, in contrast, it is said of the reprobate: "And because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24). This is dyed as if twice, when it flames with love for God and neighbor, when we love Him with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Thus, in these four colors of curtains, the four justifications of the chosen are expressed. In twisted fine linen, the flesh maintaining chastity; in hyacinth, the mind desiring heavenly things; in purple, the flesh subjected to passions; in twice-dyed scarlet, the mind shining forth among passions with love for God and neighbor. The length of one curtain will be, etc. In the length of the cur-

tains, is represented the longsuffering patience of the holy Church; in the width, the breadth of charity is expressed, which not only loves God and neighbor, but also usually receives the enemy who hates it with open arms of its sweetness, and commends its persecutors to the Lord on bended knees in prayer, saying: Lord, do not hold this sin against them (Acts VII). Four cubits aptly represent this breadth, because there are four books of the Gospels, in whose examples and words of our Lord Redeemer, we are taught how this charity is to be maintained. Four virtues, in the exercise of which the same charity is practiced, that is, temperance, fortitude, justice, prudence, so that charity, uncorrupted in God, and whole, may be preserved, which is of temperance; may not be broken by any hardships, which is of fortitude; may not serve any other, which is of justice; may be vigilant in discerning things, so that deceit or trickery may not gradually creep in, which is of prudence. But the length of the curtains was twenty-eight cubits, which is a number that is four times seven, and the number seven, because of the day of the sabbath, usually symbolizes the eternal rest of the saints. Therefore, the length of the curtains is extended in four sets of seven cubits;

because through faith and the keeping of the evangelical doctrine, and through the exercises of the spiritual virtues we have spoken of, the longsuffering patience of the holy Church tends to eternal rest. There is also another mystery in the number twenty-eight, equally pertaining to the number seven. For if you are willing to count all the numbers from one to seven in full order, you will complete twenty-eight; for one, and two, and three, and four, and five, and six, and seven, make twenty-eight. Because, therefore, in the parts of the number seven, the number twenty-eight is found, rightly the length of the curtains is contained therein, because the faith and patience of the saints, distinguished by the variety of virtues, in all things which it does or suffers, expects not the glory of human favor, but the happiness of heavenly rest. Hence it is that a psalm of this number is titled in the completion of the tabernacle, which is understood to be sung entirely about the perfection of the holy Church, especially in what is said in it: Worship the Lord in His holy court. And again: And in His temple, all shall say glory (Psalm XXVIII). For appropriately, psalm twenty-eight is inscribed about the completion of the tabernacle; because indeed in this is the perfection of the Church, which is a pilgrim in this world, that through faith and good works, it tends to the rest of the world to come. And properly it follows:

All the tents shall be made of one measure. For although the curtains differed from each other by varying embroidery, they were all of the same measure in length and breadth. This is because the chosen ones, though they possess differing gifts according to the grace given to them, have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Five curtains are to be joined to each other, etc. Josephus (*Antiq.* III, 6) narrates that the tablets of the Covenant were inscribed with the Decalogue so that each tablet contained five words. Therefore, it is fitting that the ten curtains, which when joined together completed the beauty of the tabernacle, were divided in due time so that five remained together on each side. By observing this, the ministers of the holy places and the people of God would be reminded of the law that must always be observed, which, though contained in ten words on two tablets, was divided into five on each tablet.

Indeed, concerning this interpretation, we can also speak of the number of the curtains as twice five, noting that the followers of God signified in either testament. The first five, which protected or constituted the front and foremost part of the tabernacle, represented the type of the ancient people of God, who fulfilled the precepts of the law in the sacrament of circumcision, sacrifices, and diverse observances of the ceremonies according to the letter. The latter five curtains, which covered or even constituted the rear of the tabernacle, designated us, who after the coming of the Lord in the flesh, keep the books and sacraments of the law spiritually, as He revealed and granted. And indeed all the curtains were of one workmanship, depicted with the same colors, yet five were mutually joined; because all the worshippers of both testaments believed in one and the same God, served with the works of one and the same piety and chastity, but each people performed their distinct parts in the celebration of the sacraments. For the sacrament of the Lord's passion, by which we are both redeemed, was celebrated by them in the flesh and blood of the victims, and by us in the offering of bread and wine: they believed and confessed the future birth of the Lord in the flesh, His preaching, operation of miracles, temptation, passion, burial, resurrection, ascension, coming of the Holy Spirit, faith of the Gentiles, whereas we believe and confess all these things now accomplished and no longer to be done.

Nevertheless, at the time when the tabernacle was being erected, all the curtains were joined together; because the whole beauty of the Catholic

Church extends from the beginning to the end of the age, surely the connection of the ten curtains, as one, adorns the tabernacle of the Lord. Loops of hyacinth on the sides and tops, etc. We have said that hyacinth, because it is of a sky-like color, is suitable to signify heavenly goods. Therefore, curtains are connected with each other by loops of hyacinth when the sole hope of heavenly beatitude unites all the hearts of the elect around the world in one and the same devotion. These loops are aptly called as such, because they were to be placed not only on the sides of the curtains, but also on the tops, that is, at the extreme ends of the corners. For the life and operation of the saints are directed towards perfection by the straight path of common intention, but also the very beginning of good conversation, which is carried out through the confession of faith and the reception of heavenly sacraments, is not diverse from one another, but all are equally and indissolubly connected by the grace of truth. Also, we all share the common certainty of the end of temporal life with the same hope, when we close our eyes in death in such a way that, having first received the viaticum of the heavenly mystery, we quickly trust that we will be found in true life and remain in it forever.

This passage fits what is commanded of the children of Israel in the Book of Numbers, that they should make fringes for themselves on the corners of their garments, placing on them ribbons of hyacinth. Indeed, the children of Israel have fringes and ribbons of hyacinth on the corners of their garments when the elect, and those who desire to see God, work to clothe themselves in acts of justice in such a way that they do not place the end of these actions in the praise of mortals, lest it should be said of them, "They have received their reward" (Matthew VI): but rather they seek in them the judgment and eternal rewards of the heavenly ruler. Hence, it is immediately added in the book by way of explanation: "When they see them, they shall remember all the commandments of the Lord, not following their own thoughts and eyes, which lead them to unchastity through various things." We should also use these words in the explanation of loops of hyacinth, so that we say that curtains are joined by such loops so that the children of Israel, having these things before their eyes, were reminded of heavenly commandments, and we, now reading these things, may remember that we, living this life as children of eternal promise, are separated from each other by times and places: but in heaven, there is a homeland that will unite its cit-

izens, gathered from the four winds of heaven, in an indivisible society forever.

It will have fifty loops on each curtain, etc. We read in the law that the fiftieth year is called the jubilee (Leviticus 25), which means a time of release or initiation, in which all people were to rest from all the labor of the land, and all debts were to be forgiven. And in the New Testament, we know that the grace of the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth day after the resurrection of the Lord (Acts 2), and consecrated the beginning of the nascent Church by His coming. From this, it is evident that this number can rightly symbolize either the grace of the Holy Spirit or the joy of future blessedness, to which one is brought through the gift of the same Spirit, and in whose reception alone one truly rests and rejoices. And fittingly, the curtains had fifty loops by which they were fastened to one another; for it is only by the gift of the Holy Spirit that the elect are joined together in the bond of peace, which is the bond of perfection: not from any other hope but the future hope and memory of the society and peace which makes the servants of Christ, separated by times or places in this life, to be harmonized together with piety. It is also well said that the curtains had loops on each side, so that each curtain would embrace the curtains next to it on each side as if with outstretched arms embracing from here and there.

For it is indeed necessary that all the faithful, both those who preceded us in Christ and those who followed, be embraced with the outstretched arms of sincere piety; and those who taught us in Christ, and those whom we ourselves taught by Christ's granting, we should all venerate with one affect in Christ. For in this way, we must hasten to see the face of our Creator by living rightly, so that we do not abandon our fellow traveler but strive to reach together before the sight of the divine glory: for the individual curtains were so directed by the support of the boards towards the heights, so shined within the heights with the varied flowers of their own embroidery, that they did not abandon the curtains that were raised with them to the heights or shone while placed on high: just as we ought to help our fellow faithful progressing with us in the service of God, with admonishments and examples, and in whatever virtue we have been able to advance, we should similarly treat our companions in the same virtue with worthy veneration. Therefore, loop meets with loop so that one might be fit to the other when the just are bound to each other with a mutual and equal quality of virtues.

You shall make fifty golden rings, etc. This passage is explained more fully in the subsequent sections where it states: And he cast fifty golden rings to fasten the curtains' loops, so that one tabernacle would be made. Therefore, the number fifty signifies the true governance in the Holy Spirit; and because a circle appears to have neither a beginning nor an end, and gold is more precious than other metals due to its brightness. What is expressed by the fifty golden circles, if not the perpetual brightness and shining eternity of the highest tranquility? And the rings grip the loops of the curtains so that one tabernacle is made from all, when the glory of the heavenly kingdom thus infuses pure minds of the faithful, that with such a glue of saving inspiration, one Church of Christ is made perfect from both peoples, rather from all the elect.

CHAPTER 2.3

Eleven Cloths of Goat Hair and Eleven Cloths of Cilicia, etc. This passage is repeated in the following: "And he made eleven cloths of goat hair to cover the roof of the tabernacle. Thus, the cloths by which the tabernacle is covered represent the leaders of the holy Church, through whose diligence and labor the dignity of the same Church is protected and continually fortified with care, lest, evidently, the life and faith of the elect be corrupted by heretical seduction, defiled by the wickedness of false Catholics, tainted by the filth of tempting vices, or drawn to sorrow by the lack of temporal supports. The more they diligently gird themselves to sustain or repel the assaults of incoming temptations, the greater freedom they grant the subjects in serving the Lord, and they provide the appearance of shining within, like curtains, while they endure the storms of afflictions outside, like cloths. It is right that these cloths are also mentioned as cilicia made from goat hairs, and that there are eleven of them; because indeed, holy preachers, the higher they are in merit, the humbler they ought to be in spirit, according to the wise man's saying: "The greater you are, humble yourself in all things" (Eccle. III). Eleven, indeed, surpasses ten but does not reach twelve, that is, the apostolic number, and signifies transgression of the Decalogue law. And in the eleventh psalm, the prophet laments that the holy ones have failed and the sons of men have exchanged truths for vanities and deceits, saying:

"Save me, O Lord, for the holy one has failed," etc., subtly indicating with this number that such men of double tongue and heart neither keep the legal precepts of the Decalogue nor can receive the apostolic grace of the Gospel.

Cilicia, furthermore, is the garb of penitents, as testified by the psalmist, who says: "But when they were troublesome to me, I clothed myself with cilicium" (Psal. XXXIV), that is, I assumed the habit of penance and humility, with which either I would calmly endure the wrath of my persecutors more lightly or even mitigate it. For if goats, or their hairs or skins, always represented the stench of sinners and not at times the humility of penitents, the animal itself would not be counted among the clean, nor would it be said in praise of the spouse: "Your hair is like a flock of goats" (Cant. IV). Thus, the cloths, which hint at holy preachers, are both cilicia and eleven; because the more earnestly they purify hearts by faith, the more they discover in which to blame themselves. Hence, they humbly confess: "For in many things, we all offend" (James III): and "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John II). However, the following words mystically declare the perfection of their hearts, by saying:

The length of one covering shall be, etc. Behold, here you have the number ten, not eleven, in length, and this multiplied by three: which plainly suggests the virtue of those who complete the decalogue of the law in the faith of the Holy Trinity, which operates through love: with which indeed in this life no higher perfection can be attained. You also have the width of four cubits, which signifies the breadth of sincere charity, that is, the one that is both commended and given to us in the Gospel through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the coverings of the tabernacle cover the roof, and these are made of the hair of goats, but having thirty cubits in length and four in width; because those highest preachers who protect the life of the faithful by their exhortations, intercessions, daily care, vigils, fasts, and their own nakedness, humbly admit themselves to be sinners in contemplation of the supreme purity. Nonetheless, as far as the measure of human perfection reaches, they appear pure and exalted among men of the world.

The measurement of all coverings will be equal, etc. There will be one measurement of all coverings because, undoubtedly, there is one faith in which the entire Church is saved, and one and the same eternal life to which it hastens. Hence, those who entered to work at different times in the vineyard of the Lord are all rewarded with one denarius. Thus, the division of coverings into five and six can be understood as we have explained above regarding the divisions of curtains; namely, that they designate the teachers of both Testaments. For five coverings are aptly compared to the ancient teach-

ers of the people of God; either because they preached only the sacraments of the Mosaic law, although they also preached the mysteries of evangelical truth, or because they lived in the five ages of the world. The doctors of the New Testament can be taken from the six coverings without inconvenience; because they spiritually comprehend all that divine Scripture records as done or spoken in the six ages of the world to aid and exemplify their preaching; because they openly proclaim to their listeners that the Lord's passion, through which the world was redeemed on the sixth day, is to be believed and confessed, and they testify that they can be saved only through this sacrament. Therefore, it is rightly commanded that the sixth covering be doubled at the front of the roof, for the confession and imitation of the same Lord's passion.

For it is not enough for believers to be baptized and consecrated only in the confession of the Lord's death and resurrection if each baptized person does not also strive, as much as possible, to live continually in the likeness of the Lord's death, and by suffering for Him, to be assimilated to Him, so that they may also deserve to be partakers in His resurrection. According to the letter, he calls the front of the roof the entrance of the tabernacle: where, as we briefly said above, it is commanded to place not boards, but pillars and a beam stretched from the corner of the boards to the corner; and therefore, as far as the form of the work itself is concerned, a doubled covering was more necessary there, where the solid firmness of the wall was absent. But mystically, the sixth covering is doubled at the front of the roof when all who enter the holy Church are initiated in the faith and sacraments of the Lord's passion, understanding that they must always live by imitating it as well. For in the entrance of the sanctuary, the sixth covering is, as it were, doubled for us when we are consecrated by the sacraments of the Lord's passion and instructed by His examples. Thus Peter speaks of the reception of the sacraments: "He has regenerated us into a living hope, according to His great mercy, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1). He speaks of the imitation of the passions:

"Since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same resolve" (1 Peter 4). Make fifty loops along the edge of one curtain, etc. These, as we explained above concerning the curtains, can also be understood here; namely, that the remembrance of the heavenly rest, which is usually expressed by the number fifty, unites the hearts of the saints with the bond of

peace. Or, if it pleases you to hear something new, since the coarse woolen cloths designate the humility of eminent men; because they desire more to remember their own sins than to boast of their virtues, they are more affected by the virtues they have not yet attained than by those they have already achieved. The number fifty of the loops or clasps can signify the humility of their compunction. For the fiftieth psalm is the psalm of repentance. And rightly so; because the gift of repentance is granted only by the generous giving of the Holy Spirit, the gift of forgiveness to the repentant is bestowed only by the action of that same grace of the Holy Spirit. And fittingly, the fifty loops or clasps join the curtains together; because no virtue bonds faithfully into the unity of charity more than humility. For the more one perceives oneself to be weak, the more earnestly one seeks the help of a neighbor to be strengthened. And rightly so, the clasps are made of bronze; because it is known that this metal is very vocal, for indeed the humble conscience of the just has a great voice before God. Hence, that Davidic poor man, when he was troubled, did not shout in the ears of men but poured out his prayer in the presence of the Lord: "Lord, hear my prayer," he says, "and let my cry come to you" (Psalm 101).

What remains in the coverings prepared for the roof, etc. In order that these things may be fully understood, it is necessary to discuss more broadly the entire arrangement of the tabernacle itself. We have said that the walls of the tabernacle, which consisted of boards and columns, had a length of thirty cubits, a width of ten, and a height similarly of ten. Therefore, if anyone wished to encircle the house in width with a cord, for example, from the base of one board on the southern side, to the base of the board opposite on the northern side, it is evident that the same cord would need to be thirty cubits in length, that is, having ten cubits of upward stretch on the southern wall, ten others straight across between the walls, and ten more of downward stretch on the northern wall. Similarly, if you wanted to extend the cord along the length of the house, from the bases of the columns upwards, and along the entire length of the house to the western wall, and then down to its bases, the cord will have fifty cubits in length, namely, ten cubits of upward stretch beside the columns, thirty cubits straight along the length of the house, and another ten cubits of downward stretch beside the boards of the western wall. Therefore, with these things considered, look at the meas-

urements of the curtains with which the house was to be covered, and how they could match the aforementioned measurements.

There were ten curtains, each having a length of twenty-eight cubits and a width of four, which, when joined together and set as one, filled the tabernacle with forty cubits in its width. So, hang the curtains, each having a length of twenty-eight cubits, and place them in the house whose transverse measure is thirty cubits, and you will see that the curtains will have ten cubits in equivalence between the walls; however, in the ascent or descent beside the walls, they will have nine cubits. Thus, it happens that the tops of the curtains cannot touch the ground but will be one cubit higher than the ground. Likewise, you will see that the curtains have thirty cubits in equivalence along the length of the house; but in the ascent or descent beside the eastern and western sides of the house, they have five cubits. Therefore, the same lateral top of the curtains does not reach the ground, but is five cubits higher than the ground. Hence, it is necessary that those five cubits of the curtains, which remain with the ceased walls, be brought together on the eastern and western sides, and joined mutually, so that the curtains cover the house all around, except for one cubit near the ground. This about the curtains. Furthermore, the coverings had thirty cubits in length and four in width; and because they were eleven conjoined along their sides, they filled forty-four cubits. Therefore, place these also in the house:

and since the length of the coverings matches the cord by which you measure the house transversely, it happens that their tops reach the ground. For they will have ten cubits in equivalence between the walls, and also ten cubits in both ascent and descent on each side. And this is what the Scripture says, that one cubit would hang on one side and the other on the other, which is more and protects both sides of the tabernacle in the length of the coverings. For the tabernacle properly calls the very making or conjunction of the curtains, which the coverings extended by one cubit from the southern side of the house, and the other from the northern. Hence, they reached the ground, because these had thirty cubits in length, while those had two less. Again, the measure of the coverings along the length of the house was extended to forty-four cubits, having thirty cubits in equivalence, from the front of the house to the top of the boards on the western side, and seven cubits hanging from the front of the house, and similarly seven hanging on the western side. And so it was that the length of the goats' hair curtains on

the western side exceeded the measurement of the inner curtains by two cubits; for indeed the curtains coming from above, as we have mentioned before, covered five cubits of that western wall, and left three cubits untouched. And this is what is now said:

"And the surplus that remaineth in the curtains prepared for the roof, that is, one curtain, with which thou shalt cover the back part of the tabernacle. For half of the curtain, in width it is two cubits, with which namely the back part of the tabernacle was covered, that is, the curtains which were properly called the tabernacle, because, as we have said, the last curtain extending two cubits downward passed beyond them. Similarly, the curtains coming from above covered only seven cubits of the western wall: however, the remaining three cubits, which were left bare, did not suffer the injuries of the weather to the ground; but the seven-cubit curtains drawn together from each side, which remained beyond the walls, firmly covered the back of the house down to the ground. Nor could these only reach each other and, like the curtains, touch in the middle of the wall; but because they were of seven cubits, they exceeded the middle of the wall by two cubits on each side and were joined together by overlapping each other: which we think should be understood in exactly the same way on the eastern part of the house, and therefore it was previously commanded that the sixth curtain be folded at the front of the roof. We have endeavored to explain this very difficult matter briefly, as we seemed to have understood it, being ready to learn more correct things about it, if anyone wills to teach us. In all these things, however, the clear sense of allegory is evident.

For the goats' hair curtains protected the linen curtains, both from above and below and on every side: and so that those within might shine freely with their beauty, these kept them immune from all external injuries of storms, rains, and heat: for indeed the perfect ones of the holy Church's purpose are diligent in circumspectly watching over the life of the faithful committed to them, so that they may lack neither the supports of the flesh nor the aids of the spiritual life. And let the doctrines of heretics and the bad examples of the immoral Catholics be kept away. Let the saving doctrine be present, by which strengthened, they may be able both wisely to repel the words of those who teach evil and patiently to endure the deeds of those who inflict evil upon them. Let their heavenly life be present, by which confirmed, they may use their tongues silently as if always by living reading. For

the goats' hair curtains ward off rains, resist storms, prevent the heat of the sun, and strongly drive away all external adversities, so that the beauty of the curtains inside remains unblemished: when Augustine neutralizes all that could disturb the faith, the poison of heretics: when Gregory explains the temptations of the ancient enemy that attack good morals: when Cyprian strengthens the weak with pious exhortations lest they falter in martyrdom:

when other venerable bishops and teachers keep at bay the temptations that could disturb the Church, and with diligent investigation foresee whatever contributes to their salvation, so that everywhere the religious conduct of the faithful may be safe, freely studying virtues with a pure heart, and shining with outstanding deeds in the sight of their Creator, and may also be able to focus the eye of their mind on His contemplation. Truly, because among the holy preachers those are worthy of the greatest honor, who, besides serving in the office of preaching and governance of people, also shed their blood for Christ, it is rightly added:

CHAPTER 2.4

The third and fourth covering of skins. You shall make another covering for the tabernacle of rams' skins, etc. The holy doctors are sometimes accustomed to be referred to by the name of rams, because they are the leaders of the Lord's flocks. Hence beautifully the Psalmist says: Offer to the Lord, he says, sons of God, offer to the Lord the sons of rams (Psalm 127). Which is to say openly: Offer to the Lord, O angels of God, to whom the care of this office is delegated: offer to the Lord in heaven the spirits of the faithful, who by the imitation of life and faith have merited to become sons of the blessed apostles. Hence it is that the sixth station of the people of God, having set out from Egypt, is called Elim, which means rams, in which were twelve fountains of water and seventy palm trees: so that both by name and appearance it bore the figure of the apostles and apostolic men. The rams' skins are dyed red for covering the roof of the tabernacle, when the apostles, or apostolic men, do not cease to persist in the word of teaching even to the passion of martyrdom: so that they may more safely protect those subjected to the dangers of impending temptations, while they themselves do not flee from suffering persecution for righteousness even unto death.

The tabernacle of the Lord is covered with rams' skins dyed red, and defended from the injury of tempests, when holy preachers strengthen the hearts of the weak by the example of their passion and patience, lest they fail

in the pressures of tribulations. And as among the chief members of Christ and the Church, sacred virginity holds a prominent place, it is fitting that after the varied beauty of the curtains, after the protections of the saints' covers, after the red-dyed rams' skins, there is still added another covering of hyacinth skins. For hyacinth is of heavenly color: and the skin of a dead animal is a portion and sign. And what is signified by the hyacinth skins, unless the virtue of those who, having mortified all the enticements of carnal lust, live a heavenly life on earth, and, placed among men, imitate angelic purity: and that which in the future time of immortality is promised to all the elect, because they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God (Matt. 22), they strive to anticipate even while retaining mortal flesh? Hence, rightly, such great virtue receives a great reward, for it is declared by the prophet: Thus says the Lord to the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, and choose what I delight in, and hold fast my covenant; I will give them in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than sons and daughters:

I will give them an everlasting name which shall not be cut off (Isa. 50). Of which place and name, the evangelist John, who was one of themselves, reports hearing them singing a new song before the throne of God (Rev. 14), which no one else could sing. And immediately he adds: These are those who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins: these are they who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Therefore, the hyacinth skins, rightly, hold the highest place in the house of God, and the heavenly color has chosen a seat closest to heaven, so that choirs of virgins, following the Lamb with special closeness of soul and body, and singing hymns of praise to Him, may be designated. Well, indeed, it is said of the curtains and coverings that even though placed high up, they would hang down to the ground, even though the curtains could not reach all the way to the ground. The columns and boards of the tabernacle, even though erected high, had bases placed on the ground on which they stood. But of the red-dyed and hyacinth skins, it is said that they cover the roof above, but it is not added that they would be turned down to the ground; because other types of virtue seem to have something in common with those who are still held on the earth:

but the contest of martyrdom, and the honor of virginity dedicated to God, as if suspended from the lowest and earthly things, are specially demonstrated to be connected with the citizens of heaven. For the martyr,

placed in torments, intends nothing else with his whole mind than to quickly leave behind all things that are in this world, and the world itself, and, freed from all pains, to come to see the Creator of the world, and to possess the joys that are beyond the world. And celibates, while they transcend the common law of human kind, which said: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, with a view to a greater reward, rightly choose for themselves a seat higher than other faithful, indeed higher than the world itself, and thus live in the Church so that they surpass the social conversation of the Church by the honor of their more sublime merit. Hence rightly John writes of such: That these were purchased from among men, firstfruits to God and to the Lamb (Rev. 14). Rightly such are called in the Latin language either virgins, as distinguished by virtue; or celibates, as blessed with heavenly life, that is, imitating the life of the citizens of Heaven on earth.

CHAPTER 2.5

The boards of the tabernacle. You shall make standing boards for the tabernacle, etc. Shittim wood, from which the tabernacle was made, is of a nature exceptionally resistant to decay, of notable whiteness and lightness, and differing only in size from white thorn wood. Hence Jerome sometimes in the Book of Hebrew Names, but also in other works, interpreted shittim simply as thorns. For example, Abel shittim, mourning of thorns. However, this kind of wood is not easily found except in the deserts of Arabia, where the tabernacle was built. Therefore, Greek or Latin translators could not assign it any other name than the Hebrew one, since they had no knowledge of it; though some, trying to express its nature, translated it as incorruptible wood. The boards of the tabernacle thus designate the apostles and their successors, through whose preaching the Church was spread throughout the world. For the width of the boards represents the expansion of faith and sacraments, which before lay hidden in one Israelite people; but by their ministry, it reached the fullness of the entire world. Although, correctly, the width of the boards can also be understood to mean the widening of the hearts of the saints, by which they are elevated to despise the world and long for heavenly things, through which they joyfully love not only friends in God but also enemies for God's sake. Finally, let us see one of the boards of the tabernacle, namely the Apostle Paul, how he indicates that he is expanded in both ways.

He speaks of internal, that is, heart's widening: Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged; you are not restrained in us, but you

are restrained in your own bowels. As a response to this, widen yourselves also (2 Cor. 6). He also speaks of the expansion by which he used to serve the progress of the tabernacle, that is, the holy Church: So that from Jerusalem round about as far as Illyricum I have fulfilled the gospel of Christ (Rom. 15). Such boards were made from shittim wood, that is, of thorns. Indeed, thorns according to the Lord's word are the cares of this world, deceitful riches, and pleasures (Matt. 13, Mark 4). But the pricks of sins are also fittingly compared to thorns. Therefore, it is written: Thorns grow in the hands of the drunkard (Prov. 26), that is, sins are in the works of the foolish. Because holy preachers strove to purge themselves from the pricks of vices and to strip away all worldly cares and pleasures, so that they might be free-minded to expand in the love of God and neighbor, and to run to preach the word far and wide; it is rightly said that the boards of the tabernacle are made from wood of thorns: they are made from thorns, but from those which had entirely shed all prickly thorns and shone with pure whiteness.

For even the saints, shining with virtues, though they themselves are conceived and born in the sin of the first transgression, are also subject to that general condemnation said to Adam when he sinned: The earth shall bring forth thorns and thistles for you (Gen. 3); but by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, they are stripped of all pricks of sins and are apt for the construction of His house by a worthy exercise of virtues. The individual boards were ten cubits in length, etc. The length of the boards is height, which was ten cubits; because the holy teachers tend towards perfection through the observance of the Decalogue of the law; because they labor in Christ's vineyard for the perception of the daily denarii, that is, they insist on the intention of the word of doctrine, so that they may restore the image of their Creator and King in themselves, which Adam lost by sinning, with His blessing, so that they may rightly receive His name again by living rightly, which they lost by sinning. For it was customary for the name and image of the king to be contained in the denarius. Also, the fact that the denarius got its name from being completed in ten coins appropriately fits the state of our future blessedness, which is perfected in the true love of God and neighbor. For God is often represented by the number three because of the Trinity, which He is, and man by the number seven; because the body is made up of the four well-known elements. The soul, that is, the substance of the inner man, is usually comprehended in Scripture by a threefold distinction. Hence,

we are commanded to love the Lord with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength. Therefore, it is fitting that the boards, by which the entire tabernacle is held upright and standing, have ten cubits in height;

because the teachers and rulers of the holy Church serve God with the intention that they may be worthy to see Him immortal and blessed in eternity with both soul and body; constantly urging all their listeners to this end of life, both by word and work, and striving as it were to lift them up. The fact that these boards had a width of a cubit and a half, the full cubit represents the perfection of good works; the half cubit that remains signifies the beginning of divine knowledge: because the righteous indeed in this life can perfectly attend to almsgiving, devote themselves to prayers, discipline themselves with fasting, and endeavor in other religious acts of this kind. Meanwhile, we know God through faith, but we hope for full knowledge of Him in the future, as God Himself and our Lord Jesus Christ says: "If you remain in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth" (John VIII). Again, to the Father He says: "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John XVII). Hence, the Apostle also says: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. Shall we labor in part for Christ, insist on the word of preaching in part, serve in good works in part" (I Cor. XIII)? Therefore, the elect have a full cubit of good works in this life;

but they have a cubit of blessed reward in part, insofar as they can anticipate with heavenly desires the joys of an eternal kingdom and the presence of their Creator. They will then be blessed by the completion of this cubit, when the word is fulfilled, which He promised to all His chosen people in the end, saying: "I will deliver him and glorify him, I will satisfy him with long life, and show him my salvation" (Psalm XC). On the sides of the boards two tenons shall be made, etc. The tenons on the sides of the boards signify the strength of humility in the minds of the just, through which they are joined together in brotherly charity. For as each of them with a contrite and humbled heart prepares a place in themselves for the love of their neighbors, and by the worthiness of piety and devotion they present themselves to their brothers to be loved, just as all the boards of the tabernacle are coupled together by the joint of the tenons. And indeed, when the tabernacle is erected and the regular arrangement of the boards is orderly placed, the figure of the tenon is not seen. However, the firmness of the stable wall shows how greatly

the boards are united to each other; because certainly, the humility of the hearts of the saints, by which they are joined to each other, cannot be seen by men externally, but what it works inside is plainly evident to everyone from the very peaceful state of the holy Church. Through which a marvelous dispensation of divine grace is achieved, that we, upon whom the ends of the ages have come, also love with sincere affection those who were faithful at the beginning of the age, and we embrace them in the bosom of our love no less than those who live with us in the present, and we also believe that we should be received by them through the embrace of charity.

But that it is commanded that two tenons be made in each of the boards, that is, on both sides of them, this can be understood figuratively in two ways, so that we preserve the inviolate rights of charity towards our brothers both in prosperity and adversity, proceeding with the armor of righteousness, following the example of the Apostle, from the right and the left, and holding within our arms both the greater and the lesser, that is, those who have preceded us in Christ and those who have followed, all of one and the same love, we strive towards the heights of perfection. It follows:

CHAPTER 2.6

On the position of the boards of the tabernacle. There will be twenty boards on the south side, etc. The length of the tabernacle is not specifically stated; but it is implied by the fact that its walls were made of twenty boards, and these are said to have had a width of one cubit and a half each. For twenty cubits and twenty half-cubits will make up a total of thirty cubits, which Josephus also writes was the length of the tabernacle. And this number fittingly encompasses the length of the tabernacle because there are three virtues in which the perfection of the holy Church principally consists, namely faith, hope, and charity: which are multiplied by ten to complete the number thirty, when good works are joined to the virtues of the mind, which are contained in the Decalogue of the law, so that no one might think that faith, hope, and love of God could suffice without the execution of works. The fact that the number of boards is twenty also contains a great mystery of the saints' perfection; for four fives make twenty. And since the Mosaic Law is comprised in five books, and grace and truth of the New Testament in the four volumes of the holy Gospel, it is fitting that the holy doctors are expressed by the number twenty; for by a wonderful consensus of truth, they

reveal and complete the secrets of the law manifested in the Gospel, and declare that the sacraments of the Gospel were prefigured in the law.

And while they teach that the Old Testament is elucidated in the New and made more manifest in broader sense, and that the New is foreshadowed in the Old and pre-signified by various revelations of types, they demonstrate that in the breadth of their discourse, both the number of four multiplied by five and five multiplied by four are indicated. The bases that supported the boards, however, are the words and books of the law and the prophets, by which the apostles and evangelists proved that the things they wrote and preached were true and divine. Hence it is often repeated in the Gospel: Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet (Matthew 1), and: But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled (Mark 14). And Peter, giving testimony about the Lord, added: And we have the more sure word of prophecy, to which you do well to take heed (2 Peter 1). Indeed, well are two bases placed under each board, to show the consensus of prophetic testimony in all that the apostles said. Or certainly, two bases are placed under each board at the two corners, so that, with the corners well supported, the entire board can rightly and steadfastly stand; because the beginning and end of all apostolic and evangelic discourse is prefigured in the prophetic writings.

The entire life of the apostles and their successors, from the beginning of faith to the end of the present life, is found to be included in the mystical pages of the Old Testament. Well too are these bases made of silver, on account of the brightness of the heavenly word: For the words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times, etc. (Psalm 12). On the second side also... there will be twenty boards, etc. The southern side of the tabernacle, which faced the south, symbolizes that ancient people of God, who, having long since received the light of legal knowledge, used to burn with love for their Creator. But the second side, which faced the north, represents the multitude of nations, which did not cease to lie in the darkness and cold of unbelief until the time of the Lord's incarnation. Of their calling, the Lord beautifully speaks through the prophet: "I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold." Which is plainly to say: "I will say to the people of the nations who have long been cold without faith, Give of your children, who will come to the faith of my confession and love. I will also say to the Israelite people, who already enjoyed the light

of my knowledge, Do not withhold the nations from being received into the lot of election. I will say to Cornelius and his household, Receive the faith and baptism of Christ. I will say to the Jews, Do not compel the believers from the nations to be circumcised, for those dedicated by the font of baptism, faith and confession of truth suffice for salvation. Both sides had boards of the same number, measurements, and workmanship; because it is indeed the same faith, hope, and charity preached to both peoples by the apostles, both are called to the same promised kingdom of heaven, both receive the general precept of the Savior: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16), that is, to both the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Where it is also added without any distinction: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved."

To the western side... six planks, etc. Josephus (*Antiq.* III, 7) writes about the tabernacle that it had ten cubits of width; he also writes that the planks were lifted four fingers from the ground. From this it seems to be understood that the bases of these planks were made of such a height. He again says about the chapter we proposed, and about the bars of the planks, thus: "Nine cubits of the posterior wall were made by six planks, to which two other planks are joined, made of half a cubit, which they placed as corners like the larger planks. Each plank had golden rings; prominent on the outer faces, fixed like certain roots in order, facing each other around, and through them, gilded bars were inserted, each having a size of five cubits, and they were for the joining of the planks, and the head of each bar entered into the head of another bar, like in the manner of a shell: and behind the walls positioned in length there was one row, going through all the planks, by which both sides of the wall were held together, in joints made and inserted together. This was so diligently done so that neither by winds it was moved, nor by another cause the tabernacle was disturbed, but it was kept immovable in secure quiet. This from the text of Josephus. But according to the sense of the allegory, the western side, which receiving both walls, completes the building of the tabernacle;

rightly designates the completion of the whole holy universal Church, which is perfected with the end of this world, up to which faith and correct operation of both peoples will persevere, as if the length of the twin walls reaches. For it is not credible either that before the time of the Lord's incarnation there were ever lacking those who believed from the nations, or

now, although heavily condemned for their unbelief, the people of the Jews, there are some from them, though very few, who exiled among the Christians, come daily to salvation by believing. If anyone dares to deny this, we should say what cannot at all be denied, namely that spiritual teachers and interpreters of both Testaments, who, according to the word of the Lord, bring forth from their treasure new and old, will remain in the holy Church until the end of the age. And appropriately, the tabernacle is completed on the western side, where the sun closes the day and all the stars usually set; because of, namely, either the demise of each of the chosen, or the general end of the whole age. For it is as if the sun sets for him, who from this temporal light through the darkness of transitory death, migrates to the joys of light and eternal life.

Just as the sun of the entire Church sets in the west, so in truth it rises in the east with passing darkness, when the life of this present world is ended at the coming of the Lord, then the true morning of the world to come, the true day of eternity will appear to the righteous. And because then, while the righteous reign with the Lord, the reprobate perish forever; it is rightly said of this side of the tabernacle in the following, that it looked toward the sea. The Red Sea is in this way represented, in which Pharaoh with his army was submerged, and from which Israel was saved by the Lord, ascending to Mount Sinai, where he built the tabernacle. Therefore, the western side of the tabernacle looks to the sea, when the holy Church, crowned after the perfection of works, in Christ freely gazes upon the vices or punishments of the impious, which He helped them avoid, as Isaiah testifies, who says: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I am making, stand before me says the Lord, so shall your descendants and your name stand. And shortly after: "And they shall go out, and see the corpses of men who have rebelled against me. Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched" (Isa. 66).

Indeed, the waves of the deep, bitter and turbulent sea, can also symbolize the sins by which the reprobate in this life are badly delighted and perish, and also the abyss of future perdition, when in the last judgment they will be thrown into eternal fire with the devil. Nor should it be overlooked that when the tabernacle was built on Mount Sinai, it had the Red Sea to the west; but when it was brought into the promised land by Joshua and placed in Shiloh, it had the Great Sea in the same direction. From this we can mys-

tically understand that the saints, serving the Lord in this life and making a tabernacle for Him in their hearts, disdain with a fixed mind the haughty boast of the impious, just as something soon to set; and in the future country placed with the Lord, they gaze upon their perpetual punishment without any interruption of their own happiness; so that they give greater thanks to Him, not only because they enjoy the good things He granted, but also because they observe the evils from which He delivered them. However, well the western side of the tabernacle, or that which is said to look toward the sea, consisted of six boards; either because the number six often expresses the perfection of good work, since the Lord completed the adornment of the world in that number, created man in its beginning, and in its number restored humankind by His passion;

or because the six ages of this world are, in which we must perfect ourselves with good works, so that we can come to eternal rest in the future and the glory of the resurrection. For the fact that again another two boards, except for the first six, are commanded to be erected at the back corners of the tabernacle, to receive those coming from the eastern side and join the wall of the western side; this pertains to the reward of future life, which is secure after the labors and times of this world. Which is divided in two ways: into the Sabbath, that is the rest of the holy souls after the dissolution of bodies, and into the glory of the resurrection, the reception of incorruptible bodies. Both allocations of reward, common to both peoples, never end. For the rest of the souls, with the time of the resurrection coming, receives no diminution, but rather an increase, and this union of immortality, of our flesh and spirit in heaven, remains always inviolate. However, it is well said of the same boards:

And they shall be joined together from bottom to top, etc. Because, indeed, the whole life of the elect, with one and the same faith and charity, tends towards the heavenly; it arrives at one and the same end of divine vision, in one and the same voice of true doctrine all the speech of the holy preachers agrees. For indeed the joint of the boards would gape apart if what one prophet or apostle had said, another would deny. But because the harmonious speech of divine utterances erects the structure of the Church, indeed one joint fits together all the boards of the tabernacle and does not allow them to be separated from one another. To the two boards... a similar joint shall be preserved, etc. The corner boards are joined to the wall boards in

every way, because the glory of the future rest and immortality is most firmly connected to our present conversation through faith, hope, and charity: in fact, the present state of our conversation endures stable and unshaken because it believes, hopes, and loves the rewards of the future compensation; because frequently by the assistance of the heavenly citizens, it is restrained lest it might fall by the turbulent blasts of impure spirits. And these boards, which either designate the perfection of our good action or the future rewards for good deeds, are supported each by two bases; because all these things also the holy prophets predicted with a harmonious voice would be for the confirmation of the evangelical and apostolic preaching.

CHAPTER 2.7

The bars and rings of the boards of the tabernacle. You shall make bars also of acacia wood, etc. The five bars, which hold the boards of the tabernacle together, are the five books of the Mosaic law, by whose protection the holy Church is marvelously safeguarded against every impulse of the evil spirits of those who tempt and lead into sin. And this is on either side, because not only did the letter of the law instruct the former people of God in faith and good works, but it also instructs us, serving God in the time of the new testament, spiritually understood by the same letter, with greater sweetness of grace, and in the present, it establishes us in faith and the exercise of virtues, and in the future, it kindles in us hope for perpetual reward. Bars of the same number are also on the western side, because the same completion of good work, when we depart from the flesh toward future rewards, is proclaimed to us by the law well understood. Hence, to the rich man asking and saying: Good Teacher, what must I do to have eternal life? the same Good Teacher replied: If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments (Matthew 19). And He did not adjoin to him anything other than the commandments of the law:

And you shall gild the boards themselves, etc. The gilded boards of the tabernacle gleam brightly when every life and every word of the holy preachers exhibit the light of heavenly wisdom, and nothing in them is seen but the honor of virtues. But the golden rings, through which the bars held the boards in place, signify the very beatitude of heavenly life; which, because of its glory of brightness, is rightly compared to gold, and because of its eternity, is rightly compared to a circle. Hence the Apostle speaks of it: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (II Tim. IV). However, each board

had five rings; not because the distinction of the heavenly homeland is five-fold, but because the same perpetual brightness and clear eternity of that kingdom are contained in Genesis, in Exodus, in Leviticus, in the book of Numbers, and in Deuteronomy. And five golden rings were fixed into each board of the tabernacle, because the hearts of the just, greatly expanded through love, read in all the books of Mosaic law not only the correction of works, but also the perpetual light of heavenly retribution.

And you shall cast for them golden rings, etc. The bars hold the boards in place through the golden rings, when the words of sacred utterance, through the promise of the heavenly kingdom, confirm the state of the holy Church; so that the more it learns the certainty of perpetual remuneration, the less it fears the disturbances of the world. Furthermore, it is aptly added concerning these bars: Which you will cover with golden plates. The poles are covered with golden plates when the words of the divine law, which seem to be strong according to the literal sense and most suitable for confirming the life of the faithful, are shown to possess a higher understanding, that is, one shining with evangelical clarity. For example, to give a single testimony: when we read the history of Saint Noah, how he was miraculously preserved with his own in the ark from the flood that destroyed the wicked; it is clear to all in that God, loving justice and hating iniquity, knows how to rescue the pious from temptation, and to punish the wicked with just severity. Therefore, such reading is like the poles of the incorruptible tabernacle of the Lord, because the minds of the faithful, fixed on the words of true wisdom, are fortified against the incursions of temptations. But as if the wooden poles were covered with golden plates, when the same reading is shown to be full of more sacred mysteries through spiritual understanding, the ark is understood to signify the Catholic Church, the water of the flood to signify baptism: clean and unclean animals, to signify the spiritual and carnal members in the Church: the smoothed and pitch-covered wood of the ark, to signify teachers strengthened by the grace of faith: the raven going out of the ark and not returning, to signify those who fall into apostasy after baptism:

the olive branch brought into the ark by the dove, to signify those who, though baptized among heretics, because they have the fatness of chastity, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, deserve to be introduced into Catholic unity: the dove going out of the ark and not returning, to signify those who, freed from the flesh, fly to the free light of the heavenly fatherland, and will

no longer return to the labors of earthly pilgrimage. Thus, the poles of setim wood are surrounded by gold, when the most firm testimonies of sacred Scripture prove to be clear through mystical interpretation, with these and similar heavenly and spiritual senses. And you shall erect the tabernacle according to the pattern, etc. The pattern of the tabernacle was shown to Moses on the mountain, because, dwelling in secret with the Lord, he saw the sublime life of angelic purity and immortality; in imitation of this he was commanded to establish human life on earth, to the extent that it is possible for mortals to imitate, so that with their example we might attend, on earth, to mutual love for God, divine praise, unanimous peace, sincere chastity, and other such virtues, and thereby deserve to be their companions in heaven, according to the promise of the Lord, saying: But those who are considered worthy of that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; for they cannot die anymore; they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:35-36). Moses indeed showed us an example of angelic life, which he saw in the mountain of contemplation, through legal precepts, by the observance of which, we, too, raised from the earth, might be able to reach the company of angels in heaven. The same example of a more perfect life and blessed reward was also presented to us through the figure of the tabernacle and the priestly and Levitical service which he describes. The tabernacle is erected according to the pattern shown to him on the mountain when the elect, to imitate the angelic purity, which he merited to contemplate in secret, compose their work and mind. Thus far it has been expounded concerning the south, north, and west walls of the temple, as the Lord has given; but in what follows, the pattern for the east side will also be shown. But first, the Scripture has judged it right to intimate the middle wall which separated the holy of holies from the former tabernacle.

CHAPTER 2.8

On the veil and columns of the tabernacle and the mercy seat above the ark. You will make a veil of blue, etc. This veil, by which the tabernacle was divided in the middle, is placed according to Josephus so that twenty cubits of its length extended to the first house, and ten pertained to the second. This is entirely in accordance with the measurements of the temple, which was later made by Solomon. Since it was sixty cubits in length and twenty in width, a third part of its length, that is, twenty cubits, was allocated to the inner

house, that is, the Holy of Holies, so that the length and width of the inner house were one. Thus, the inner part of the tabernacle had a similar length and width, that is, ten cubits. But what the same veil symbolically represents, the Apostle to the Hebrews clearly declares, where he also expounds this in an allegorical sense: why the priests indeed always entered the first tabernacle, performing the services of sacrifices, but in the second, only the high priest once a year, not without blood, which he offered for his own and the people's ignorance. This veil is interpreted as the sky. But the fact that the priests entered the first tabernacle daily throughout the year with sacrifices speaks of the state of this life:

where the saints serve the Lord without interruption, daily atoning for the errors of their fragility, without which they can by no means exist in this life, with daily sacrifices of good works, with daily libations of their tears, as true priests of God and Christ. The high priest, who entered the Holy of Holies once a year with the blood of the victims, is understood to be the great high priest to whom it was said: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110). Who, having been offered once for our sins, himself as both the priest and the offering, through his own blood entered into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God for us. But that the same veil was woven of blue and purple and double-dyed scarlet and fine twisted linen, with beautiful variety, who cannot see, even according to the letter, how it corresponds to the beauty of the heavenly vision? For if you consider the beauty and flames of the stars, the various forms of the clouds, the very iris drawing a thousand various colors in the opposing sun, do you not seem to note paintings of colors in the sky far more numerous and beautiful than those woven into the veil of the tabernacle? Moreover, the four columns before which this veil was hung are the celestial powers of the hosts, illustrious with four distinguished virtues, which we have also mentioned above, that is, fortitude, temperance, prudence, and justice.

These virtues are indeed preserved differently by us in the labors and toils of this life, and differently in heaven by angels and holy souls. For there, the present rule appears to be subject to justice. And this is truly immortal justice; to prefer or equal no good to God, prudence: to adhere most firmly to God, fortitude: to take no delight in harmful defect, temperance. Here indeed, what is called justice in helping the wretched, what is called prudence in guarding against snares, what is called fortitude in enduring troubles, what is

called temperance in restraining wicked delights, will not be there where there will be no evil at all. But these columns are well made of shittim wood, either because angelic spirits are by nature incorruptible and immortal, or because being created without sin, they always preserve the unblemished purity of their condition. Regarding which it is aptly continued:

Those same (columns) indeed will be gilded, etc. For the columns are gilded, before which the veil will be hung; because placed within the veil of the heavens are the virtues of the angels, clothed with the grace of the highest brightness. They have golden capitals, because the mind by which they are ruled is illuminated by the presence of divine knowledge and vision. And they have silver bases; because their entire nature specially subsists on this, as if on a foundation, to chant hymns of praise to their Creator, to declare the will of the same Creator to us still wandering on earth, as if placed outside the veil, to their fellow citizens. Whence also, rejoicing with their praises from the earth, we are accustomed to say diligently, as if in a voice of exhortation: Bless the Lord, all his angels, powerful in strength, who do his will (Psalm 103). For in the Scriptures, the splendor of wisdom is often shown by gold, and the brightness of words by silver.

The veil shall be hung on the rings, etc. Rings, which appear to have neither beginning nor end, are sometimes used in sacred Scripture to symbolize eternity. Fittingly, the veil, which represents the heavens, is said to be hung by rings; either because it was in the eternal counsel of Divinity when the world was created, in which the heavenly nature holds the first and foremost place; or because the firmament of the heavens was made in such a way that its creation would never be undone. For when the Lord said, "Heaven and earth will pass away" (Matthew 24), it is to be understood of the ethereal heaven. About this Jeremiah says, "The stork in the heaven knows her appointed times" (Jeremiah 8). For that heaven will perish by fire in judgement, which was destroyed by the flood, as attested by Peter, who said, "The heavens were of old and the earth, standing out of water and in the water, by the word of God, by which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth that are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement" (2 Peter 3). Within this veil of the temple was placed the ark of the covenant; because the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who alone is privy to the secrets of the Father, after his passion and resurrection

from the dead, ascending above the heavens of the heavens, sits at the right hand of the Father. By this veil, the sanctuary and the holy of holies are divided; because the Church, consisting of holy angels and men, partly still sojourns in the lower places, partly reigns in the eternal homeland on high, with the veil of heaven still dividing and separating its citizens from each other.

And you shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony, etc. Fittingly, the mercy seat is said to be placed above the ark; because the mediator between God and men is particularly given by God the Father to be the atonement for our sins. Hence Paul also says, "Jesus Christ, who died, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." The table outside the veil, and opposite the table, the lampstand, etc. The table and the lampstand of the tabernacle symbolize the temporary benefits of God, by which we are presently refreshed and illuminated, so that, being comforted and assisted by these in the meantime, with the increasing grace of merits, we may be able to enter to eat the bread of angels in the heavens and to see the true light of the world. These are both outside the veil; because in this life only, we have need of either the holy Scriptures and doctors or the other sacraments of our redemption: but in the future age, where the Lord will openly declare the Father to us, that is, will openly show the Father to us, and where, as John says, we will see Him as He is (1 John 3); there will no longer be a need for an external aid of salvation, with God Almighty dwelling inwardly in His elect, illuminating like the light of life, and satisfying like the bread of life, whom He exalts with eternal happiness, introducing them into the joy of His kingdom. We have said above that the southern side of the tabernacle signified the ancient people of God, who first received the light of divine knowledge and the fervor of divine love: but the northern part of the same tabernacle indicated the Church gathered from the Gentiles, who had remained longer in the darkness and the shadow of death.

Hence, by a proper distinction, the lampstand, which is placed in the southern part, can insinuate the grace given to the former people; while the table which stood in the northern part signifies the benefits of God granted to us. It is rightly said that the lampstand is placed opposite the table, because in truth the Scriptures of the law and the prophets in all respects look towards the grace of the gospel; namely bearing witness to it, and signifying that they are to be revealed by it in spiritual sense.

CHAPTER 2.9

Description of the curtain at the entrance of the tabernacle and its columns. You shall make a curtain at the entrance of the tabernacle, etc. Having completed the narration about the veil that divided the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies, he returns to explain about the eastern side of the sanctuary, which seemed to have been omitted for a time when he described the other sides, namely the southern, northern, and western sides. Therefore, the curtain at the entrance of the tabernacle, woven with beautiful variety of colors, is the adornment of the primitive Church, glorious with different flowers of virtues: about which Luke writes: Because the multitude of believers were of one heart and soul, and there was no separation among them; nor did anyone say that anything he possessed was his own, etc. (Acts IV). For it had blue, because it used to think of heavenly things and lead a heavenly life on earth. It had purple, because it was ready to die for Christ. It had scarlet twice-dyed; because it burned with love for God and neighbor. It also had twisted linen; because it rejoiced in bodily continence and chastity.

And you shall gild five columns of acacia wood, etc. The columns by which the tent was suspended are the holy teachers, of whom Luke subsequently adds: And with great power the apostles gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord (Acts 4:33). The stronger their minds are raised to the heavens, the more firmly they suffice, by teaching, to lift others to the love of heavenly things. Just as the apostles and apostolic men can rightly be depicted by the boards, due to the breadth or doctrine with which they go into the whole world to preach the Gospel to all creation; or the love which they extend not only to friends but also to loving even their enemies, and to pursuing with prayers and benefits those who hate them: so too, because of the invincible strength of their hearts, and their ever-raised intention to the heavenly, they are not inconveniently figured by the name and craftsmanship of the columns, as the apostle attests, who says: James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars (Galatians 2:9). These columns, truly, are well made fivefold because of the same number of the books of the law, with which it is necessary that the holy teachers unite their word of preaching, and especially those who established the primitive Church, which, gathered from the people of the Hebrews, knew only to be established by the authority of the Mosaic law, when as yet the evangelical and apostolic Scriptures did not shine throughout the world.

But these same columns are rightly ordered to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold, to signify that the holy preachers must be inwardly entire in the weakness of heart, and failing in no way, and must be visibly conspicuous in the brightness of deeds. Or certainly, the columns of acacia wood are gilded when the same teachers always teach that the strength of their actions must be protected by divine aid, when in all that they do they seek the glory of the Father who is in heaven; when in all that they speak, they rejoice to sound Christ, saying: For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord (2 Corinthians 4:5). Of whom it is aptly added: Of which the capitals will be golden, and the bases bronze. The golden capitals indeed signify Him, of whom the Apostle says: And all things hold together in Him, and He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning and the firstborn from the dead (Col. I). Nor should it seem inappropriate for the one head of the Church, Christ, to be represented by the five capitals of columns; for there were as many capitals as there were columns: because indeed the same Lord Christ is the head of all the saints, remaining whole in Himself, always equal and indivisible, but distributing the grace of His Spirit to each of the elect according to their capacity to receive. Whence not only to the whole Church generally, but also to each of its members individually, it can be appropriately declared with confidence: Now therefore my head is exalted above my enemies around me (Psalm XXVI). It is fittingly in conformity with the significance of this head that the same column capitals are commanded to be made of gold, and not gilded like the columns and boards, because all the saints have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit and heavenly grace, but He Himself was full of grace and truth: and as His forerunner said of Him: For God does not give the Spirit by measure. For the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand (John III). The bronze bases, however, are the prophets, whose testimony confirms the word of the apostles.

And it is fitting that they are bronze, either because of the unsurpassable confidence of the prophetic mind or because their word, even as the world grows old or passes away, can never be consumed by any age. For the Lord did not come to abolish the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them. For the columns of the tabernacle have bronze bases; they have golden capitals, because the apostles and apostolic men were confirmed in faith by the words of the prophets, and were elevated by the desire to see the face of their Creator

among the heavenly ones. Again, golden capitals but bronze bases; because whatever they received from the Lord by His heavenly authority, they learned that all these holy mysteries had been foretold by prophetic utterance. Indeed, since we are speaking of the eastern side, it seems opportune to recall some exposition about that unique bar, which we have said was stretched from the angle of the boards to the angle of the other wall and held all the stability of the walls, lest it be shaken by force and impulse of storms and be bent here and there. It is written in the following sacred history where it is told that Moses completed all that the Lord had commanded.

CHAPTER 2.10

The bar that reached from one corner to the other. (Exod. XXXVI.) ... Another bar that went through the middle of the boards, etc. This bar, therefore, is to be believed to have stretched from the top of the first board to the top of the board on the other side, over the ten cubits of the width of the tabernacle, firmly set upon the boards at either end so that even the part of the tabernacle that consisted not of boards but of columns would be no less fixed than the others, even if driven by the wind. If you also desire to know the sacrament of this bar, it clearly signifies our Redeemer, who reached from corner to corner; because, having first chosen the Jewish people, He extended himself to save the multitude of the nations. Hence, just as in the prophets He is rightly called the cornerstone, so also in the law He can rightly be called the corner bar (Isa. XXVIII). He is indeed the cornerstone, for the temple that is built for God with living stones; He is the corner bar, for the tabernacle that is built for Him from incorruptible woods, that is, from the souls of the chosen free from the stain of corruption.

CHAPTER 2.11

The description of the altar of burnt offering and its vessels. (Exod. XXVII.) You shall make the altar of acacia wood, etc. This altar, which was specifically called the altar of burnt offering, signifies the hearts of the chosen, which are consecrated by His gift to offer to God sacrifices of good works. It is fittingly commanded to be made of acacia wood; because it is proper for the hearts and bodies in which the Spirit of God dwells to be clean and incorrupt. It has five cubits in length and as many in width, for when anyone faithfully exercises all the senses of their body in the length of patience and

in the width of charity; that in all their seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, they should always remember to be devoted to the divine service, according to the Apostle's words, Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. It also has three cubits in height, for these same hearts of the chosen tend towards the heavenly by faith, hope, and charity.

The horns, however, on the four corners, etc. The altar of burnt offerings has four corners, because the holy Church is extended across the four regions of the world, which, because of the one heart and one soul of the entire multitude of believers, is rightly designated by the figure of a single altar: from which altar, indeed, four horns are made, when the hearts of the just are fortified with the four virtues often mentioned before. About which, in the praise of wisdom, it is said: "For it teaches sobriety and prudence, and justice and virtue; than which nothing is more useful in the life of man" (Wisdom VIII). These horns are produced from the altar itself, when the defenses of virtues are not superficially displayed and shown to the faces of men by the faithful, but are generated from the innermost root of their hearts for God as witness. There are four horns at the four corners of the altar, when, in all the ends of the world, the Church, with spiritual virtue potency, stands inviolable against all the snares of the enemies, indeed becoming stronger against all those attacking it. The altar is covered with bronze, when the virtue begun by the faithful is held firmly with perseverance to the end; for, because the metal of bronze usually endures incorruptible for a long time, virtue of perseverance is rightly designated by this.

If anyone is troubled, literally, how the wood of the altar could remain unburnt so close to the fire, let him accept the response of the blessed Jerome to this question. He said, the wood of the altar, which is from the woods of paradise, is not burned by nearby fire, but is made purer. And it is not surprising to believe this about the sanctuary and the inner parts of the temple and the incense altar, since even asbestos, which is a kind of wood or has the appearance of wood, becomes cleaner the more it burns. And you shall make pots for his use, to receive the ashes, etc. The various vessels of the altar, or the different persons of the faithful, or certainly we should understand the diverse actions or thoughts of the same people disposed for the service of their Creator. And indeed, first, it is prescribed to make the pots to receive the ashes. The ash of the sacrifices, which must be taken in great mystery, is

attested to by the ash of the red heifer sprinkled; which also, according to the witness of the Apostle, sanctified those who were defiled for the purification of the flesh (Hebrews IX); in which he himself understands the prefigured sacrament of the Lord's passion. Moreover, the time and acceptance of Christ's passion are designated by the burnt ashes, which, purifying us perpetually, save us. Therefore, the burning of the red heifer intimates the mystery of the already completed passion, by which we are cleansed daily from our sins, having been preserved for the purification of the impure. Because therefore all the sacrifices and victims which were burned on the altar figuratively announce either the Lord's passion or the devotion of his saints burning with the flame of charity; the ashes of the holocausts rightly express either the completion of the Lord's passion or certainly the perfection of the virtue of the just;

since they, offered whole in the service of God through the fire of the Holy Spirit, have deserved to finish good works and to be taken into eternal life to receive the rewards of those works. To make this clearer, let us see what Moses says about the ashes of the holocaust: This is, he says, the law of the holocaust: it shall be burned on the altar all night until morning. The fire shall burn from the same altar. The priest shall be clothed with a linen robe and linen breeches. And taking up the ashes, which the consuming fire has burned up, and placing them next to the altar, he shall change his garments, putting on others, and carry them outside the camp; and in a very clean place, he shall let them be consumed down to the embers. Moreover, the fire on the altar shall always burn (Leviticus VI). Therefore, the holocaust shall be burned on the altar, when in the heart of any elect person, who has vowed himself whole, namely in flesh and heart, to God, a good work is performed by the fervent fire of charity. This continues through the whole night until morning, when someone, throughout the span of this life, up until he is taken from the body and deserves to see the morning of the future age, does not cease to insist on good works. The fire shall burn from the same altar;

because we should only burn with that charity which the Lord bestows upon his Church through the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Aaron's sons, because they wanted to offer strange fire to the Lord, not that which had once been given from heaven, were immediately killed by celestial fire; because anyone who performs heavenly works not with the intention of heavenly reward, but out

of a desire for temporal favor or gain, is struck by the sentence of heavenly wrath. The priest shall be clothed with a linen robe and linen breeches: the priest who offers the holocaust is the Lord; because in us he customarily kindles the fire of his charity and through this makes the sacrifices of our good actions acceptable to him. And doing these things, he is clothed in linen garments; because to excite us to works of virtue, he proposes to us the examples of his incarnation, passion, and death, which have often been said to be signified by linen. And the same priest takes up the ashes, which the consuming fire has burned up, and places them next to the altar, when the Lord puts an end to labored works, neither allowing the righteous taken from this life to strive further for eternal life, but commands them to receive the crown of righteousness in eternal life. For placing the ashes next to the altar, he shall change his garments, when recalling to the righteous the good they have done, he no longer shows them the need to imitate his passion;

but he puts on other garments, those of which he himself speaks in the Gospel: Truly I tell you, he will gird himself and have them recline (Luke XII); that is, he will prepare himself for eternal reward, and make them rest in eternal peace. Clothed in other garments, he will carry the ashes outside the camp, when ready to reward the labor of his elect, the Lord makes whatever good they had done in this life already visible in that life. Nor is it out of place to understand the entry into eternal life by means of the location outside the camp, since the Lord also says: Whoever enters through me will be saved; and will come in and go out and will find pasture (John X). And the Psalmist: The Lord will guard your coming in and your going out (Psalm CX): namely the entry, into the life of the Church; and the going out, into that where the pastures of eternal satisfaction are found. Therefore, it is not inappropriate to understand the position outside the camp in the sense of that life, especially since it is said to be a very clean place, which in this life it is clearly impossible to be. Therefore, the very clean place outside the camp is the state of the righteous souls taken from this life and rejoicing in another life.

In which place certainly the ash of the holocaust is consumed down to the embers, when where the merit of good works is repaid, all labor is wholly and perfectly consummated; according to that of the Apocalypse of Saint John, who, after speaking of the reward of the saints, said: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with mankind, and he will live with them, and they will be

his people, and the Lord himself will be with them as their God (Apocalypse XXI); immediately he mentioned the removal of all labor and added: And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away (Ibid.). And because the labor of good works ceasing, the very charity through which they were performed will never cease, but indeed will burn more fervently, when he himself, whom we love, will be seen forever: it is rightly added, The fire on the altar shall burn perpetually. And shortly after, It is a perpetual fire, which shall never fail from the altar. Therefore, with the holocaust consumed down to the embers, the fire shall never fail from the altar; because, with every kind of labor perfectly consumed, only charity will perpetually and never extinguishably burn. We have said these things more extensively on the law of the holocaust because of the pots of the altar, which were ordered to be made to receive the ashes of the sacrifices.

Pots then receive the holy ashes, when faithful believers either contemplate the examples and sacraments of the Lord's Passion with a devoted mind for their own virtue, or certainly observe diligently the departure of the preceding just ones, who, after great struggles for the Lord, having completed their course, now rejoice endlessly in the reward they have received, so that, considering the virtues of their predecessors, they themselves may become great, according to the Apostle's command, saying: "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13). After the pots, tongs, forks, and fire receptacles were commanded to be made. It is to be believed that tongs were made to tend the fire on the altar. Hence, they rightly designate the holy preachers, who usually ignite in us the fire of charity, as if on God's altar, through their exhortations. For these, like the dual teeth of tongs, arrange the logs on the altar to ignite this fire: when they teach us with the consonant pages of both Testaments, and place the words of truth in our hearts, which are more inflamed with the desire of eternal things. Or certainly, with tongs having a double iron, priests tend the altar fire, when in everything that holy preachers teach, they imbue us with the virtue of twin charity, and with this grace, they instruct us to burn and shine at the same time.

Forks, which are called *creagrae* in Greek, were used in the ministry of the altar to bring forth the cooked meats of the sacrifices from the cauldrons and bring them to those who were to be refreshed by them. The use of these

also suitably represents holy preachers, whose ministry is to refresh the souls of the faithful with the word of faith, and according to the rule of apostolic discretion, to offer to still immature disciples the rational, sincere milk of simple doctrine, but to the more mature, solid food of loftier doctrine (1 Peter 2). For whoever knows how to summarize and adopt the sacraments of Christ, these are as if they are satiated, being refreshed by the meats of the saving sacrifice (Hebrews 5). And since it is the duty of spiritual teachers to discern very diligently which mysteries ought to be entrusted to each person to hear, Moses was rightly commanded to make forks for the priests, with which they might arrange the meats of the sacrifices as befitting, some indeed offered to men to eat, but others left to be consumed by the altar fires: because there are some in God's words which He deigns to reveal to our humility, granting them for our refreshment at the feast; likewise, there are others of such profound depth, which only the knowledge of the Holy Spirit can comprehend, but entirely surpass the measure of our capacity.

Moreover, fire receptacles were assigned to carry the holy fire from the altar of burnt offerings to the altar of incense every evening and morning, for the placing of incense; these also clearly hold the figure of teachers, who, as if carrying the fire from the altar of burnt offerings to the altar of incense, teach their hearers to always progress from virtue to virtue, and with increasing merits gradually penetrate the higher and inner secrets of divine vision. But also all who, seeing the fervent hearts of their neighbors, are quick to imitate, become as if fire receptacles; because they strive to ignite in their own minds the flame of the heavenly sacrifice, which they observe in their brethren. All these things are made of brass, when the devotion of the faithful perseveringly attends to obeying divine precepts; or certainly, when the devout faithful, with a clear voice, exhort others to do what they themselves rightly perform, and as frequently said, both for the enduring nature of their incorruptibility, signify the perseverance of the faithful's minds, and because of the clarity of sound, the voice usually represents the teachers.

CHAPTER 2.12

Description of the grating of the altar of burnt offerings, rings, and garments. The grating also, in the manner of a brazen network, etc. The altar was commanded to be made hollow, as is more clearly taught later. But having a grating in the middle of it, throughout, distinguished in the manner of a network, on which the flesh of the victims to be burned would be

placed; and underneath it, a hearth where wood arranged would burn, always ready to consume the holocausts placed above it. For there was a door in the eastern wall of the altar against the hearth, through which wood could be thrown to feed the fire, or coals and ashes could be removed, as we have seen expressed in the painting of Senator Cassiodorus, which he himself mentioned in his exposition of the Psalms: in which he also made four feet for each altar, both of the holocaust and of incense. We believe he learned this, as well as the arrangement of the tabernacle and the temple, from Jewish teachers. Thus, the altar of God has a grating in the middle, prepared to receive holocausts; for the elect prepare a place for the Lord in the innermost affection of their hearts, where they may place their devout thoughts. It has a hearth underneath the grating, in which it receives the wood and fire of the holocausts;

because the same hearts of the elect prepare a receptacle within themselves for the hearing of heavenly words, by which, heated or even inflamed by the gift of the Holy Spirit, they may offer grateful vows of devout thoughts to God. For the priest places the wood of the hearth on the altar, when any teacher instills into the yearning and eagerly seeking minds of the faithful the testimonies of the holy Scriptures, by which they may be more confirmed in faith and love. He also adds fire to the wood, when he teaches that the understanding of the word and the efficacy of pious operation should be sought from God. And the wood burns on the altar, when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us. And this fire consumes the holocaust placed upon it, when all the things we have disposed to do well, through the grace of the Holy Spirit granting it, are rendered acceptable to God by the power of love. Hence it is well commanded that the grating, which carries the holocausts, be made in the manner of a network: so that through its frequent openings, the fire placed underneath may freely penetrate to consume all parts of the offerings. Thus indeed it is altogether necessary, that we should by no means harden our hearts, nor close them like the Pelagians against the grace of God; but diligently open them, and as though with many doors opened at once, earnestly pray;

that in all the good things which we begin or desire to do, as though through each piece of its offerings, He may deign to illuminate us with His mercy and to kindle us in His love. For the Pelagians, who presume they can accomplish some good without the grace of God, do not place a brazen grat-

ing like a network over the sacred fire on the altar of their heart; but rather interpose a solid wall between themselves and the fire of the Holy Spirit, lest they should ever be warmed in love. Now the four brazen rings, which are commanded to be made through the corners of the altar, are the four books of the Gospels, which are aptly compared to rings, because they promise an eternal crown of life to their hearers. They are aptly brazen; because their sound has gone out into all the earth. They are aptly placed at the four corners of the altar, to confirm the Church of the faithful spread throughout all parts of the world by the word of faith and truth. They are aptly fixed under the hearth of the altar, to lift the minds of the humble by the safeguard of their consolation.

You shall also make poles for the altar, of acacia wood, two, etc. The poles by which the altar was carried are the teachers, who are accustomed to carry the holy Church, while they strengthen the faith and sacraments of truth, either preaching to those who did not know, or confirming in those who already knew and had accepted. Since they do not preach their own words, but those of Jesus Christ, not following cunningly devised fables, but making known to the world the power of our Lord as revealed in heavenly oracles. The poles, to carry the altar, are fittingly sent through rings; for carrying the altar of the Lord with poles through rings is to encourage faithful hearts with the words of the gospel, which neither heaven nor earth passing away can alter. There are two poles, so that the word may be preached to both peoples, namely Jewish and Gentile. This is also supported by the following words, where it is added:

"They shall be on either side of the altar, etc." For there will be teachers who summon both Judaea and the Gentiles to the same grace of faith with united voice and action. Or certainly, the poles will be on either side of the altar for carrying, when holy preachers teach the minds of the faithful, in both prosperity and adversity, to maintain unwavering virtue, so they are neither lifted up by prosperity nor troubled by adversity. Not solid, but hollow and empty, etc. Therefore, the altar was commanded to be made not solid, but hollow and empty, so that it might have ample room to receive either the sacred fire and the wood for the fire, or the holocausts to be consumed by the fire. Following this example, if you wish to be an altar of God, empty yourself and rid yourself of all contagions of worldly things, so that the wood of heavenly words and the sacrifices of virtues will have sufficient space

in you. And you may receive the flame of the Holy Spirit, by which the same sacrifices are consecrated to the Lord, and brought to a firm conclusion of perfection. Appropriately, it is added in the conclusion:

As it was shown to you on the mountain. For all those things that Moses marked out for us to be made mystically in the construction of the altar and the entire tabernacle, he first saw in that heavenly conversation, in which he remained with the Lord for forty days, being done by the tireless and perpetual observation of the heavenly citizens. For it is not to be doubted that he could have seen before the throne of God that most holy altar which Isaiah deserved to see, full of the living coals of inner charity, and the holy tongs (Isaiah VI); which the same prophet saw, and with one of which an angel took a coal from the altar to purge his lips and by the grace of the same Spirit, with which the angels are inflamed to love God always in heaven and humans on earth, sins are forgiven, and the gifts of virtues are granted. Therefore, the altar is commanded to be made hollow and empty, as it was shown to Moses on the mountain; because just as the angels and the spirits of the just are empty of sins in heaven and full of piety and justice, so we ought to avoid evil and do good on earth according to our capacity. The same thing, as we are taught to do by the open exhortations of heavenly words, so also by the mystical figures of the tabernacle, its vessels, and its ceremonies.

CHAPTER 2.13

The Court and Vessels of the Tabernacle. You will make the court of the tabernacle, etc. Just as the Holy of Holies signifies that part of the Holy Church which is in the heavens, and the first tabernacle typically announces the perfect life of the faithful dwelling in this world; so also the court of the tabernacle, which was outside, indicates the first rudiments of beginners. Hence, the tent curtains of the same court were well made of twisted linen; because the first care for beginners is to curb the allurements of the flesh and spirit, as the Apostle, speaking of the sons of adoption, adds: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (II Cor. VII). For linen, as often mentioned, comes green from the earth, but once pulled from the earth, it is dried, beaten, cooked, twisted, and through great and long exertion, it is transformed from green to white in color. Similarly, our flesh, to attain the virtue and beauty of chastity, must be subdued by strict fasting, prayers, vigils, and all the labors of continence, by which we can dry up its natural and almost innate delights

and arouse it to the dignity of virtue we desire. Linen is twisted so that it cannot easily come apart, when not only the luxury of the flesh is restrained, but also the entire memory of it is uprooted from the depths of the heart.

One side will be a hundred cubits in length, etc. It is established that the number one hundred, which in the counting of fingers is transferred from the left to the right, sometimes in the Scriptures has the figure of heavenly life, which is just as the right hand is preferred over the left and thus is deservedly preferred over the present life. The mystery of this number is frequently found in divine writings. Noah completed the building of the ark in the hundredth year; because the holy Church, which the Lord builds in this interim life, He perfects in the future. Isaac, the son of promise, is born to Abraham at one hundred years old; because the blessing of the inheritance which is promised to all the families of the earth in his seed will be returned in the future and heavenly fatherland. He himself sojourns for one hundred years in the land of promise; because we who are made sons of Abraham through faith must lead a life in the present Church as sojourners in the hope of the heavenly inheritance. Therefore Isaac sowed in Gerar, which is interpreted as sojourning, and found in the same year a hundredfold; because whatever good things the sons of promise do while sojourning in this life, as soon as they depart from the body, they receive in the heavenly life.

In this figure, the seed of the Gospel word, which fell on good ground, produced a hundredfold fruit, and he who leaves temporal goods for Christ and for the Gospel receives a hundredfold in the present, and in the future age, eternal life—that is, the joy of brotherly society now in the hope of heavenly life, and then in itself the life of the heavenly kingdom. Therefore, one side of the tabernacle is a hundred cubits in length; because all who belong to the members of the Church must necessarily take upon themselves the labor of patience and temporary continence for eternal life in the heavens. However, the columns by which these tents are raised high are holy teachers, who lift the hearts of their listeners, extracted from earthly contagions, to desire heavenly things. And these faithfully extend, as it were, the garment of the Lord, so that nothing in them may be duplicitous; but with a simple and pure intention before the Lord, they may shine like byssus tents. The columns were of brass but overlaid with silver, as is manifestly said later. Of brass indeed, for the perseverance of virtue, or for the sound of preaching itself. But overlaid with silver, because they sound nothing else than the

word of God. Whose clarity is often figured by silver, showing by no other means in their actions than the observance of divine words. They were not only overlaid with silver but also had their entire capitals of silver;

which is proper to teachers, to subject themselves wholly to the words of Sacred Scripture, meditating on them, preaching and acting upon them. For just as our members cannot subsist and live without the head, so those who esteem divine words as their life never cease to bear them in obedience and exalt themselves in humility. And what else in the brass bases of the columns should we understand than the beginning of wisdom, the fear of God? About which the son of Sirach says: "The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord. Where he also beautifully adds, "Its branches are long-lived"; because surely the various offshoots of virtues, which proceed from the fear of God as the work and engravings of the columns from the bases, will never lack the fruit of their reward. Why there were twenty columns on one side of the court has already been explained above, where it was commanded that boards of this same number be made on one side of the tabernacle.

Similarly, on the northern side along the length there were tents of a hundred cubits, etc. The same things are repeated about the northern side, which had already been set forth about the southern side; because the proclaimers of both Testaments lift us up to the heavenly realms with a harmonious voice; even if they had ceremonies of the sacraments differing according to the reason of the times, indeed in this time of the New Testament, whoever from either people attains to salvation, not only have the same faith, confession, and operation, but also the same sacraments for the cleansing of sins and the reception of heavenly life, in the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. In the width of the courtyard which faces westward, etc. The width of the courtyard, which faces the setting sun, where after the daily labor is completed, sleep of the night and grace follow, rightly signifies that time when, after the cessation of actual life after death, the rest of the elect and eternal reward follow. Finally, those who labored in the vineyard of the supreme father of the family, when evening came, received the rewards of their labor; because indeed each of the righteous, when they reach the end of this life, then obtain the entry into true life. Hence in Revelation, John: I heard a voice from heaven saying: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Rev. XIV). From now on, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors. For this rest, the western side of the courtyard rightly had the tents

along fifty cubits, and ten columns; for the number fifty usually signifies the fiftieth year in the law, which was wholly consecrated to freedom and remission, for which reason it was also commanded to be called the jubilee (Lev. XXV). For "jobel" means releasing or changing. The number ten is also understood to designate the same heavenly rewards, where human nature in both its substances is immortally elevated, rejoicing in the presence of the divine vision. For God is Trinity. Our body consists of four elements. Our inner man is comprehended by the number three, since we are commanded to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength.

And when our four are eternally joined to the holy vision of the Trinity, according to that of the Psalmist: But for me, to adhere to God is good (Psalm LXXII), this is, indeed, the number ten, which the cultivators of the Lord's vineyard receive as a reward for the completed labors of the day: because, therefore, the holy preachers, having finished this life, promise us the presence of our Creator, and eternal rest; by these promises, they also raise our desires from the appetite for lower things to seek the heavenly, as on the western side of the courtyard the tents of fifty cubits in length, raised by ten columns, are lifted up. In that width of the atrium which faces to the east, etc. That width of the atrium, which faces to the east, signifies the beginning of our good conversation, which starts from faith. Which, because of the first reception of heavenly grace, is rightly said to face the east, according to the saying of the blessed Zacharias: "The dawn from on high has visited us: to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1). In which region there will indeed be fifty cubits; because at the very entrance of conversion, all who are catechized are taught to hope for the remission of sins and eternal rest. For the number fifty also pertains to the remission of sins. Hence, in the psalm of the same number, repentance, confession, and the forgiveness of sins are described; so that he who had sinned against the Lord, and done evil in His sight, by acknowledging his iniquity, is washed clean by Him against whom he had sinned, and made whiter than snow, and again receives the joy of the salvation of God, that is, of the Lord Jesus, whom he had offended, and is strengthened by His chief Spirit, so that he might not fall again. Therefore, the width of the eastern atrium has fifty cubits, when the first confession of faith rejoices in the remission of sins, and in the hope of future rest and peace in Christ.

Finally, in the creed of the apostles, we confess to believe in the holy Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh. Which the universal synod of later Fathers wished to express more fully, saying: "I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins; I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Therefore, by the fifty cubits of the eastern region, the beginnings of believers are generally designated, who are celebrated in the remission of sins and the hope of future blessedness. However, immediately another particular distinction is introduced, which, when well considered, refers to the same end. It follows: In which the fifteen cubit curtains shall be assigned to one side, etc. For the fifteen, which consist of the number seven and eighty, rightly designate the joys of eternal life, which, beginning with the sabbath rest of souls, is perfected in the resurrection of bodies. For the Lord, resting in the tomb on the seventh day of the week, rose from the dead on the eighth, that is, after the seventh day of the week. Moreover, the columns with their bases on the side of fifteen cubits represent holy preachers, excelling in faith, hope, and charity, firmly positioning their minds in the stability of the fear of God. Also, as you enter the courtyard of the tabernacle, you have on each side curtains of fifteen cubits suspended by three columns; because whoever proposes to learn the sacraments of faith by entering the holy Church, whether they direct their mind's gaze to the Synagogue or to the Church of the nations, in either portion of the faithful they will find teachers strong in faith, uplifted in hope, fervent in charity, and founded in the fear of the Lord, promising to their listeners the rest of blessed souls and the resurrection of immortal bodies. They, like the curtains of twisted byssus, suspend in themselves, teaching their listeners by their own example to seek what is above, not what is on earth, and to keep their whole spirit, soul, and body blameless for the day of the Lord.

At the entrance of the court, there shall be a screen of twenty cubits, etc. There are four columns at the entrance of the court; for no one can enter the unity of the holy Church except through faith and the sacraments of the Gospel, which are contained in four books. Hence a beautiful custom has grown up in the Church, that for those who are to be catechized and initiated into the Christian sacraments, the beginnings of the four Gospels are recited, and they are diligently instructed about their figures and order at the opening of their ears; so that they may know and remember from then on

who and how many are the books by whose words they ought to be educated in the faith of the truth. In this entrance, a screen of twenty cubits is also commanded to be made, which is the same number as four times five. And there are five most notable senses of our body: namely sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Therefore it is fitting that at the entrance of the court, the screen of twenty cubits is suspended on four columns; because all who enter the holy Church ought to conform both their faith and actions to the rule of the Gospels; so that, avoiding carnal enticements, they subject all the senses of their body to divine commands.

For not only is this screen supported by four columns, but in its length, it also has the number five multiplied by four, when any humble and pious listeners finding faith, are not only imbued with the words of the Gospel but also desire to lead an evangelical life themselves, spending all the senses of their body in obedience to charity. And rightly is this screen at the entrance of the court, not like in the rest of the court, made of twisted fine linen, but of four most noble colors, namely blue and purple, and double-dyed scarlet, along with twisted fine linen, made with embroidery work; because the outward appearance of the Church indeed shines beautifully for those who are catechized, but its dignity and virtue will appear much more splendid to those who merit to enter it through the sacrament of baptism. For no one suddenly becomes supreme, but we must necessarily progress gradually from lesser things to more perfect things. We have often said that blue signifies the hope of heavenly goods, purple the endurance of temporal evils, double-dyed scarlet the fervor of perfect love, and twisted fine linen the restraint of carnal pleasure. These colors, which are interwoven with embroidery work, when each virtue of the faithful is more clearly seen by the association and, as it were, by a certain kinship with neighboring virtues. Although also the individual aforementioned colors may correspond to individual persons of the chosen; for instance, if someone deserves to contemplate heavenly things more deeply, he is blue;

another, because he suffers more for justice, he is purple; this one, who burns with more fervent love for God and neighbor, he is double-dyed scarlet; that one who shines especially in the integrity of virginal flesh, he is twisted fine linen. And while the righteous in one and the same faith and evangelical piety rejoice in each other's virtues, they decorate, as it were, the screen at the entrance of the court of the Lord, woven with the beautiful di-

versity of alternating colors. All the pillars of the court round about shall be dressed with plates of silver, etc. He more diligently emphasizes what he had said; so that he may zealously remind the reader that no one among the teachers of truth, namely the pillars of the heavenly court, can be considered; who has not learned to have invincible patience amidst adversities like bronze, who has not taken care to adorn and fortify himself everywhere with the observance and proclamation of heavenly words, as if with plates of silver, who has not striven to subject himself to divine precepts with all subjection, as if under a silver head; who has not stood firm in the fear of God, as it were on a bronze base.

In length, it shall occupy one hundred cubits, etc. The Church has one hundred cubits in length; for it raises its arms to good works for eternal life. Fifty cubits in width; because it hopes for eternal rest in the grace of the Holy Spirit; which was designated by the number fifty, when He deigned to consecrate Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth day of the Easter feast, by His coming. The height shall be five cubits according to the number of our bodily senses; because then each one will receive according to what he has done in his own body, whether good or bad. But in the court of the house of the Lord, the figure of only those who have done good in the body is expressed, for which they deserve to be brought into the rest of perpetual life; who now shine in the works of righteousness which they perform with a pure body and heart, like twisted linen, and then in the same body elevated in the glory of immortality, they rejoice forever in the rewards of righteousness. But in the evangelical parable, mention is made of both parts together, where five virgins, who came to the bridegroom with works of light, immediately enter with him to the wedding; five others, who practiced works of chastity without a pure mind, are repelled with their darkness, cast far from the doors of the kingdom (Matt. XXV). For there were five and five, because each was judged according to what they had done in the flesh.

Therefore, the entire length and width of the court are stretched out by hundreds and fifties of cubits. It has five cubits of height; because it is necessary that we who have the promise of rest and the heavenly homeland, cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit; and not only cleanse from defilement but also perfect sanctification in the fear of God; so that at the appearing hour of the promised reward, we may deserve to rejoice not only in spirit but also in flesh in the love of God. For which reason, for

the cleansing of both our substances, that is, of both soul and flesh, in the fear of God, what was said above is repeated to be more diligently committed to memory: It shall be made of twisted linen, and it shall have bronze bases. And then it is added: All the vessels of the tabernacle for all its uses, etc. The vessels of the tabernacle for all its uses and ceremonies are prepared, and these vessels are men of the Church serving the Lord in different merits and ranks; all which vessels are commanded to be made of bronze, as often said, a representation of that mystery; so that if anyone is struck by adversity, he may persevere to the end, nor lose the promised salvation due to idleness; or, so that he may not fear to openly confess the faith he has learned, even when enemies oppose him, but also remember to diligently declare the gifts he has received to his friends. For bronze is sonorous and naturally enduring for a long time. The pegs, he says, of the tabernacle or the court were made so that fixed at the top of the columns, they would project outward, and with ropes of the veils or tents placed on them, lifting them thus, they would suspend them from the ground. By the construction and position of these, the tongue of the learned, which touches the hearts of listeners by preaching and uplifting them by touching, can not unreasonably be designated. Ropes indeed are sometimes used to designate sacred Scripture. Hence it is written: "A threefold cord is not easily broken. For Scripture, interpreted in historical, allegorical, and moral senses, cannot be corrupted by the perversity of heretics or pagans.

But these tents or veils, so that they could hold the ropes, necessarily had rings or hooks at their tops into which these ropes were inserted. And you, if you wish to be a tent of God, prepare in your heart a receptacle for His words, so that you can be elevated to heavenly things. Let the ropes of the tents be placed on the pegs of the columns, so that, being thus spread out and raised, they complete the beauty of the tabernacle. Let the holy preachers commit divine words to the hearts of the faithful and remind them to be raised from lowly things by their example. Let the tents or veils, spread by ropes and raised up, show the marvelous glory of their work, which they could not show when folded. Let the faithful demonstrate the breadth of good works, the beauty of mind and inner grace which they received from the Lord's gift; so that those who see their good works may glorify the Father who is in heaven: and say, "How lovely are your tabernacles, Lord of hosts! My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord" (Psalm 83).

BOOK III

CHAPTER 3.1

Description of the oil offering for the lamp. (Exodus XXVIII.) Command the children of Israel to bring you oil, etc. Once all the ornamentation of the tabernacle was arranged, the light of the lamp was also provided, so that its admirable beauty might be illuminated, just as during the day by the sunlight, so also at night by the flames of the lamps; so that no place of darkness could ever creep into the house of God, nor could any shadowy hour appear. According to the mystical senses, what the light of the lamp signifies, the Lord declares in the Gospel; who, after saying through a parable: Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a lampstand, so that it may shine for all who are in the house; immediately added openly: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works (Matthew V). Therefore, the lamp shining in the house of God are the works of the righteous, which illuminate the minds of those who observe them by their examples. But it should be looked at more diligently that for the lamp to be able always to burn in the tabernacle of God; indeed, the children of Israel are commanded to offer oil, while Aaron and his sons are ordered to place the lamp itself. What, then, is this distinction, that the people offer oil for nourishing the light in the house of the Lord, and the priests arrange the lamp?

Unless perhaps this is figuratively commanded, that the faithful and religious listeners bring hearts prepared for obedience to faith; while the teachers administer the fire of the heavenly word through preaching, so that they may be illuminated to recognize and inflamed to love God. By the richness of the oil, by which weary and weak limbs are refreshed, and the grace of light is provided, the internal love of the mind, and the work of mercy are often designated. Hence the Psalmist: But I, like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God, have trusted in the mercy of God forever and ever (Psalm. LI). As if he were plainly saying: Because I have shown the fruit of mercy to the needy, I also have hoped for the grace of mercy from God to be repaid to me forever. Therefore, let the children of Israel offer oil, and let Aaron and his sons arrange the lamp with the brought fire, so that it may burn in the tabernacle of God. Let humble listeners offer the devotion of a pious mind, and let the teachers through the ministry of speech instruct them in the secrets of heavenly knowledge; being regularly established, they may burn with the

fire of charity in the sight of their Creator, and show the light of good action to men outside. It should be noted, however, that the children of Israel are not commanded to offer oil indiscriminately, but with distinction, oil from the olive trees is prescribed;

and it is further added, pure and beaten with a pestle. Oil may indeed be made from nard, from radish, from nuts, or from wood, and other different kinds of species, but no oil is allowed to be offered to the tabernacle of God except that which is made from the wood of olives: just as no other fire than that which comes down from heaven ought to burn in the holy lamps, or to be kindled on the altar of God: for the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit. Therefore, let the children of Israel offer oil for the lamp of God, not any kind but from olive trees, and this pure and beaten with a pestle. Let good listeners offer to spiritual teachers a pure conscience, and one fruitful in the grace of charity, cleansed by the diligent examination of any stain of wickedness; which alone, with the intention of pleasing and serving the Lord, delights in hearing His word. Let Aaron, with his sons, offer not strange fire, but fire sent from above to light the lamp; just as to accomplish the holocausts, and to offer fragrant incense, let teachers proclaim not their own word, but the Lord's, declaring with confidence: "For we are not, as many, corrupting the word of God, but from sincerity, but from God, we speak in Christ, as before God" (II Cor. II). They use this fire to illuminate the hearts of the listeners with the knowledge of faith;

this to perfect and dedicate to God the holocausts of their good works; this to kindle the incense of holy prayers. It is well said: "That the lamp may burn always in the tabernacle of the testimony; because in the holy Church, the light of preaching must never be wanting, nor should the pure humility of listeners, who willingly receive it, indeed, and diligently seek it. It is well added: "Outside the veil which is spread over the testimony. For we do not need the lamp of Scriptures within the veil of heaven, where is the ark of the Lord, and the Cherubim of glory overshadow the propitiatory, that is, the hosts of the heavenly army proclaim with a harmonious voice the glory of the incarnate Son of God, whom God has set forth as a propitiation for our sins. It follows well: "And Aaron and his sons shall place it; because it is not for everyone to preach the sacraments of faith to the people, but only for those who are proven to belong to the sons of the high priest, namely our Lord and Savior, both by the purity of faith and the execution of good

works. But whoever either deviates from the purity of faith by wrong doctrine, or defiles the integrity of known and kept faith by the wickedness of evil deeds: such a one, even if he seems to have preeminence in the name or person of a priest, will nevertheless hear from the Lord:

"Why do you declare my statutes, and take my covenant in your mouth? You indeed hate discipline," and the rest (Psalm XLIX). Such ones James also withdraws from the position of the lamp of God, that is, from the word of preaching with kind exhortation, saying: "Do not become many teachers, my brothers, knowing that you shall receive greater judgment" (James III). That particular judgment which we have long forewarned with the voice of the Psalmist. It is well further added: "And it shall shine before God until the morning. For when the night of this world has passed, and the morning of the future world has shined, of which the prophet says: "In the morning I will stand before you, and I will see" (Psalm V), we will no longer need the lamp of books, as the true light of the world, which the prophet speaks of: "But for you who fear my name, the Sun of righteousness shall rise" (Malachi IV), will appear and illuminate us.

The worship will be perpetual, etc. And this clause, like the preceding ones that have been said about the tabernacle and its vessels and utensils, should be understood and explained more in a spiritual sense than a carnal one. For how could the worship of the priestly office be perpetual according to the letter, where both the priesthood itself and the tabernacle in which it was conducted, and the people for whom it was conducted, have long since ceased to exist? Hence, it is clear that this word is to be fulfilled in the holy Church, where, with teachers succeeding each other in order, and listeners of the truth together, there will never be lacking spiritual sons of Israel who offer gifts of piety in the house of the Lord, and sons of Aaron, that is, of our true priest, who will minister to them the light of the word, until the end of this world's state is completed, and the very tabernacle of God, that is, the entire multitude of the elect, being transferred to the heavenly kingdom, there will no longer be men to be instructed by men, since God will be all in all.

CHAPTER 3.2

On the Priesthood of Aaron and his sons. (Exod. XXVIII. "Bring near to you Aaron your brother, etc. After the construction of the tabernacle is described, consequently, the priests, who will minister in it, are ordained. Their

ordination and attire rightly match the priests of the Church: so that everything that shone brightly externally in the priestly garments there, this shines spiritually high within the minds of our priests, this shines gloriously in their actions, surpassing the merits of other faithful. Hence it is aptly commanded to Moses, to bring near to him Aaron his brother with his sons from the midst of the children of Israel, to minister in the priesthood before the Lord. For it is necessary that whoever is to be promoted to a higher degree in the holy Church should apply themselves more diligently to the law of God, that is, attach themselves to the observation of divine commandments with a more keen mind than others. This is what it means for those who are to perform the priesthood to be brought near to Moses from the midst of the children of Israel, that is, the leaders and teachers of the holy Church, transcending common life with the unique height of their mind, and attentively considering what the law speaks generally to all the chosen, and what it speaks specially to the few more perfect, that with a higher excellence of merits, they may reach higher rewards.

For when it is commanded that his brother Aaron be ordained into the priesthood with his sons, what else is mystically commended to us but that all who are chosen for the office of a teacher should cling to the meditation of the divine law with such zeal and love that they seem to be connected to it by a kindred bond? Nor does the fact that the first sons of Aaron, after their ordination, perished by heavenly fire when they offered strange fire before the Lord deviate from the meaning of our miserable times; where some priests and teachers, sadly a grave and grievous enough thing to say, assume the place while preferring the fire of desire to the fire of divine love, and are taken up by the fire of divine vengeance. Their perpetual damnation is temporally figured by the death of Aaron's sons. Although the more excellent figure of mystery, how the tabernacle with its ornaments and vessels designates the holy Church, distinguished by the most beautiful variety of virtues or faithful persons: so also the high priest of the same tabernacle holds the figure of the true pontiff Jesus Christ, who offered himself as a sacrifice and offering to God for us in a scent of sweetness. Who can also rightly be called the brother of Moses: for who is more connected to another by the bond of brotherhood than Christ to Moses, law to grace, the New Testament to the Old?

since even Moses himself gives such testimony about him, saying to the people he taught: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your people and from among your brothers; you shall listen to him. And a little later on behalf of the Lord: "I will raise up a prophet for them from the midst of their brothers, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth" (Deut. XVIII). Whose admirable works, which no one else did, are rightly compared to the attire of Aaron adorned with wonderful variety, or certainly Aaron's manifold garments signify the entire assembly of the chosen adhering to Christ in various distinctions of persons and merits, as the Apostle testifies, who says: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. III). When thus in the person of Aaron we accept figuratively the Lord and Savior, what else do the sons of Aaron, who are also anointed into the priesthood, signify but the apostles of Christ, their successors, and all the teachers of the faithful? These things indeed can be primarily taken concerning the Lord; but it is more fitting for us to look at those things which pertain to the signification of our pious conversation in the Lord, and which regard the correction of our morals. It follows:

CHAPTER 3.3

On the priesthood of Aaron and his sons. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, etc. The holy garments of Aaron which Moses made for him are the works of justice and holiness, which the Scripture commends to teachers of the sacred law, and of which it also shows examples to be imitated by those who have preceded in Christ. The wise of heart, whom God filled with the spirit of wisdom to make these same garments, are the prophets and apostles, and other teachers of the truth, who very clearly show us how priests should live and how ministers of the altar ought to teach, either by the example of their actions or by the word of exhortation. Concerning whom is that statement of the Apostle to Titus: For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not arrogant, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for gain; but hospitable, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as taught (Titus 1).

But these are the garments which they shall make, etc. How each of these is made will be explained more fully in the following. However, the breast-piece of judgment is the ephod; the tunic and the tight linen garment, that is, the undergarment, cover the whole body, the turban adorns the head, and

the belt closely fits the tunic and the ephod to the body. To these six garments, a seventh and eighth are added below, namely, the linen breeches to cover the flesh of nakedness, and the golden plate on the turban, which with the inscription of the Lord's name stood out higher than all the others. He calls the tight linen garment such because it clings to the body and was so tight with confined sleeves that it had no fold at all. It also descended down to the shins, hence it was called *poderes* in Greek, that is, reaching to the ankles. The high priest was accustomed to wear these eight types of garments during the time of sacrifice. Among them, four were also granted to priests of lower order, namely, the linen breeches, the tight linen garment, the belt, and the turban. For it was fitting that the higher one was distinguished in rank, the more they should shine with admirable acts of virtues. Everything is made of gold and precious colors; because nothing lowly or sordid should appear in the speech or actions of the priest; but everything he does, all he speaks, all he thinks should be glorious before men and splendid in the sight of the inner judge.

CHAPTER 3.4

Concerning the Ephod. "They shall make the ephod of gold," etc. Since we are accustomed to carry burdens on our shoulders, what is signified by the ephod of the high priest, if not the labors of good works, which he should constantly bear before the Lord? It is fittingly commanded that the making of the ephod be first discussed, because anyone who is to be promoted to the priesthood and the leadership of God's people, his works must first be known so that when this, which is evident to all outwardly, is seen to be irreproachable, the integrity of his heart and the sincerity of his faith may also be examined in due time. The ephod, therefore, which the high priest wore on his shoulders, should be taken as that evangelical burden of which the Lord said: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. XI). Explaining this more clearly elsewhere, he said: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Mark VIII). Meanwhile, the same ephod is made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet twice-dyed, and fine twisted linen. Clearly, in the vestment of the priest, the understanding of wisdom should principally shine forth before all else. To this understanding, blue is added, which shimmers with a sky-like color; so that through everything he penetrates by understanding, he does not seek lowly favor but

risers to the love of heavenly things; lest, when he feeds incautiously on his own praises, he should be deprived even of the understanding of truth itself.

Gold and blue are also combined with purple, so that the priestly heart, along with the highest things it preaches, hopes also to keep in itself the suggestions of vices, thwarting them as if by royal power; so that it may always aspire to the nobility of inner rebirth and sustain the habit of heavenly kingship in its morals. Although, as often said above, in the purple color, the shedding of blood for Christ or the endurance of various pressures can be understood. For this indeed is the cross, which following the Lord we are commanded to bear daily. Hence rightly such a feature shines upon the shoulder of the priest among others, to teach him always to be prepared to suffer adversities. To gold, blue, and purple is added twice-dyed scarlet, so that all the virtues may be adorned with charity before the eyes of the inner judge; that all which glitters before men, may be ignited by the flame of inner love in the sight of the hidden judge. This charity, by which he loves both God and neighbor, shines as if colored with a double dye. But when the mind is directed to the precepts of charity, it undoubtedly remains to be mortified by abstinence. Hence twisted fine linen is also added to twice-dyed scarlet. For fine linen, of a shining appearance, arises from the earth. And what is signified by fine linen, if not the gleaming decorum of bodily chastity? For this beauty of the ephod is connected to the earth, because chastity is brought to the perfect brilliance of purity when the body is wearied by abstinence.

Concerning the scarlet that flashes like fire, this can also be said not inappropriately; because it is perhaps commanded to be twice-dyed, because fire usually has a twofold power: to burn and to shine. It is fitting for the prelate to imitate its nature in the word of saving doctrine, to both illuminate with the knowledge of science to those desiring it and to burn away the rust of sins in the contemptuous by reproving them. When he exposes the sweet mysteries of Scripture, or the miracles, or the parables of the Lord in the Gospels to his listeners, he seems to showcase the brilliance of light in his vestment. But when he strikes the proud with the memory of eternal punishment, he shows, as it were, the terror of consuming flame to those watching. For no one speaking to the people should focus solely on reproving the crimes of the wicked, or solely on revealing the secrets of Scripture, lest he be listened to with less willingness by discussing only the correction of sins, or benefit them less by revealing only the hidden mysteries whom he should

correct. But when he tempers his speech with both, by uncovering the sweetness of heavenly secrets to his listeners and urging the correction of morals through which they can become partakers of these, the high priest, as it were, shows in his vestment the brilliance of twice-dyed scarlet.

He will have two joined edges on each side of the summits, etc. About this, it is said in the following: He made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple. And a little later: And two edges joined to each other on each side of the summits. From this, it seems likely that with the garment folded, the edges of each part were joined on each side from top to bottom; so that half of the garment would appear outward to the eyes of those looking, while the other half would be hidden inside; but the edges of both joined, would descend to the extreme corners below. In which what else should we understand typically, if not that when we show good works outwardly to our neighbors, we should keep the same intact inwardly before the Lord? Lest ever the perfection of pious action should follow lesser purity of thought, or that which appears to be the perfection of an imperfect work, the intent of the mind should leave part solitary. But just as the two edges of the ephod are joined to each other, while we show all good outwardly, we act inwardly with a pure and simple intention of pleasing God. And this is on both sides of the ephod so that we may always serve our Creator with consistent action and thought in both adversity and prosperity. For the shorter edge leaves the longer one, and with discordant measurement, they cannot come together as one, if we are seen doing good externally for eternal reward, but are inwardly entangled with the intention of pleasing men, seeking human favor more than the rewards of invisible life.

And the very texture and all the variety of the work will be of gold, etc. Not in one part of the ephod was there gold, in another part blue, in another various other colors, but all colors were certainly interwoven with the gold itself throughout; because indeed in the priestly action some great virtues should never at any time be lacking, but always luminous with the gold of wisdom, always lifted up to the heights with the blue of hope, always courageous against the battles of vices with the purple of the heavenly kingdom, always inflamed with the double-dyed scarlet of dual love, always shining with the twisted fine linen of chastised flesh the priest or teacher of the faithful should be. You will take two onyx stones and engrave them, etc. For three reasons Aaron always carried the names of the patriarchs on his

shoulders during sacrifices, just as he also bore them on his breast; namely, that he might remember to imitate the faith and life of the patriarchs, that he might be mindful of the twelve tribes which were born from them in his prayers and sacrifices; that the same people, seeing the names of their fathers written on the garment of their priest, might be careful not to turn away from their merits and incline towards the contagion of errors. For this is what is meant by the command: And you shall put on both sides of the ephod a memorial for the children of Israel. Now also the high priest bears the names of the patriarchs on the ephod when any teacher or bishop of the church considers the deeds of preceding fathers in all that he does, striving to direct his life in imitation of them and to bear the burden of evangelical perfection. These names of the fathers were fittingly ordered to be engraved on precious stones; for precious stones are indeed the works of spiritual virtues. And the priest bears precious stones on his shoulders, and the names of the fathers inscribed on them, when he himself becomes admirable to all for the brilliance of his good works, and teaches that this brilliance was not newly invented by him, but passed down by the ancient authority of the fathers.

And he bears these on his shoulders for a dual reason: that he may humbly walk, submissive to the commandments of the Lord, and that he may always set before his hearers the celestial, whether by his own examples or those of the fathers, to follow. It is fitting that these stones were commanded to be set in gold and surrounded; for gold represents understanding, as previously mentioned, or certainly charity, since charity surpasses all other virtues as gold does other metals. The stones are set in gold and surrounded when the operation of virtues is inspected all around by pure understanding so that nothing vicious can lie hidden or remain foul within them; when these virtues are so bound by the bond of charity that they can never fall from their position through any change in circumstances, nor can they ever be removed from the habit of the priest through the torpor of a slackened mind. It is well said next:

And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord, etc. For the priest, on behalf of remembrance, bears the names of the fathers on both shoulders, when, diligently considering at all times the life of the preceding saints, he is always adorned with the virtue both in adversities and prosperities, so that according to the voice of Paul: Walking by the weapons of righteousness on

the right and on the left, striving only for what is ahead, he is not diverted in any way to the lower side of love (II Cor. VI). And you shall make hooks of gold, etc. The hooks he mentions were skillfully affixed in the upper corners of the shoulder-plate. However, the little chains he adds were not on the very shoulder-plate but rather seemed to have been attached to the breastpiece, that is, in its upper corners through golden rings, so that when the high priest would wear it, the little chains that hung from the breastpiece could be attached to the hooks of the shoulder-plate, so that both would be securely connected to each other in their position. It is more clearly written about this later: They also made in the breastpiece chains closely linked together of pure gold, and two hooks and as many gold rings. Furthermore, they put the rings on both sides of the breastpiece, from which hung the two golden chains, which they inserted into the hooks that stood out in the corners of the shoulder-plate. The figure of them will be better discussed in the explanation of the breastpiece.

CHAPTER 3.5

On the Rational. “You shall make a breastpiece for making decisions, the work of a skilled craftsman, etc. “The work of a skilled craftsman,” means the work of many kinds. Just as perfection of works was in the ephod, so in the breastplate of judgment that covered the priest’s chest, expressing the purity of his heart and mind. And appropriately, after the ephod follows the breastplate of judgment; so that, when someone appears innocent in hands before men, he strives even more to stand pure in heart before the sight of the supreme judge, striving diligently so that whatever he does or judges externally towards others, all should shine approved by the rule of internal reason and pleasing to his Creator. Also, the priest is commanded to carry the breastplate of judgment on his chest, because the ruler must always discern good and evil with a subtle examination, and thoughtfully consider what fits with whom, when, and how. The breastplate was made double so it could more easily bear the weight of the stones. But this doubling of the garment on the typical priest’s chest advises us that the reasoning of our examination must be approved by the invisible inner judge, and never deservedly despise human opinion externally. Or certainly, we bear the double breastplate of judgment on our chest, when both the matters of the faith of truth and the invisible life that we speak or think about stand firm in reason;

and also, those things we do visibly or plan to do are equally proven to be balanced by the judgment of just discretion. But having the measure of a handspan in a square indicates the indefatigable and perpetual effort of a pious intention. For he who measures something with a hand certainly shows the greatest effort with his fingers spread out, so that he can fully hold the measure he seeks without a doubt of scruple. Hence, deservedly, just as an operation is expressed by the hand, so by the handspan itself is expressed the inflexible striving of good operation, while each one strives to extend his right hand in all the signs of virtues he can achieve. And it is well that the same breastplate is commanded to have the measure of a handspan both in length and in width; because whether the mind's desire raises in the length of eternal life, or inclines its affection in the width of charity towards the care of the neighbor, it is necessary that the priestly heart should remain neither sluggish nor lazy in any aspect, but always extended with burning zeal to comprehend the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

And you shall set in it four rows of stones, etc. This positioning of different gems on the breastplate symbolizes the multiple operations of various virtues, which, arranged in a harmonious series, must always appear in the heart of the priest. Furthermore, each stone is inscribed with the names of the fathers, while the rector, inspecting the life of the saints, diligently examines which works of virtues they flourished in most; and he strives to collect all these by meditating within the hidden parts of his own heart and to express them through his actions. For it is not without a certain reasoning of the sacrament that both garments are adorned with precious stones and inscribed with the names of the fathers; such that the names are inscribed on the ephod on two stones of the same kind, whereas on the breastplate they are inscribed with twelve names of different kinds. But the fact that the fathers are engraved on precious stones of one and the same kind clearly signifies that the one faith in God, the same love, and the common hope of heavenly life fill the hearts of all the fathers. However, the fact that the same names are inscribed on stones of different kinds figuratively declares that there is a multiple variety and grace of good works, by which the aforementioned faith, hope, and love of the saints are confirmed and shine forth.

That there are four rows on the breastplate, each having three stones, what do they typically indicate to us, except that in the virtues distinguished in four, we should hold firmly the principal faith in the Holy Trinity

without deceit? For the priest has four rows of gems on his breast when everything he contemplates is circumspect with prudence, firm with fortitude, exceptional with justice, and secret from all evils with temperance. But the same rows have three gems when the same prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance are consecrated by faith in the Holy Trinity. For since our life in the present consists of faith and upright action, the priest aptly carries four rows of gems on his breast, so that he may be paramount in action. But to be chaste with sincerity of faith along with actions, he has three gems in each row, so that to all who look upon him, he shows both the confession of true faith and examples of good action, so that they too, by imitating the right faith and action, may deserve to become members of the high priest. Surely, in the varied decor of stones, we can take the manifold brightness of the priestly act and thoughts, as well as the spiritual gifts of virtues and the miracles of healings. Concerning which the Lord himself says to the apostles: Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons (Matt. X). And again: These signs will follow those who believe:

in my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them (Mark XVI). Indeed, whether this or that, or both are designated, rightly the number twelve is prescribed for the breastplate, so that we may know that the actions and miracles of those who follow the unity of apostolic faith, doctrine, and charity are accepted by God. Otherwise, if anyone speaks in tongues, if anyone distributes all his goods to the poor, if anyone gives his body to be burned, if he does not have the unity of catholic charity, it profits him nothing (I Cor. XIII). Rightly also, the two onyx stones on the ephod were sculpted with the same number of twelve fathers, to signify that the doctrine and faith of the apostles will be beneficial to both peoples, that is, of the Jews and of the Gentiles. Accordingly, the Lord openly promised through the prophet to the same intellectual Jerusalem, that is, to His Church, saying: You will break forth to the right hand, and to the left; and your seed will inherit the nations (Isa. LIV). Moreover, the onyx is said to be of a reddish color, having little fiery spots surrounded by white zones; who would not see that this designates either the ardor of charity or the light of knowledge accompanied by the belt of chastity?

The priest carries the names of the fathers inscribed on stones of this kind when, following the example of previous righteous ones, he devotes constant

effort to charity, chastity, humility, doctrine, and other works of virtues. And this on both shoulders, so that whether someone is from the Jews or from the Gentiles, he may always behold the brightness in the teacher of truth and piety by which he himself may progress to better things. You will make chains on the breastpiece, etc. The order of the work, as it seems to us, was as follows. There were two hooks placed above on the two corners of the ephod, and two corresponding rings on the two upper rings of the breast-piece. From these hung two golden chains, which, at the time of dressing, were inserted into the hooks that stuck out from the corners of the ephod, as is more clearly written in the following, so that the ephod and the breast-piece were mutually connected. The description of their upper connection thus far has been described. Now follows concerning the lower one, which was below the armpits. The scripture continues: You will also make two golden rings, etc. This means: And on the borders, which are opposite the ephod; does not mean on the borders of the ephod, but on those borders which are opposite the ephod, that is, on the borders of the breastpiece, which indeed are borders opposite to the ephod. For those rings that were on the outermost and lowest corners of the breastpiece had corresponding rings on each side of the ephod, to which they were joined by binding ribbons. About which it is subsequently added:

Likewise, two other golden rings, etc. Opposite the face of the lower joining; because he had previously spoken of the upper joining, which was above the shoulders. Between these joinings indeed, the difference was that the upper was made with small chains, but the lower was made with binding ribbons. Hence it is aptly added: And the breastplate shall be fastened by its rings to the rings, etc. However, it is not to be thought that both garments were terminated at the same time. For the rationale, which had the measure of a palm in height as well as in width, was not sufficient to cover much more than just the chest. The ephod, however, extended down to the girdle, as is very clearly shown in the latter parts, where it is written: These were joined together both before and behind, so that the ephod and the breastplate were mutually connected, tightly bound to the belt, and more strongly joined by rings, which were smeared with a blue ribbon, lest they become loose and fall apart from each other. These things have been said about the literal connection of the ephod and the breastplate. But because, as it has often been said, the ephod pertains to the consummation of good works, and

the breastplate pertains to the signification of pure thoughts, the connection which associates them with each other rightly signifies that industriousness of mind by which the intellect and faith of learned believers are joined with their actions. For the skillful joining remains, so that the breastplate and the ephod cannot be separated from each other, because the ruler precedes with such erudition and zeal of work that he leaves nothing imperfect of the things he knows must be done; he deprives nothing of the things seen to be right from the virtue of rectitude through carelessness of heart.

For the garments of the priest fall down and move from each other if either the honor of good work is stained by deficient heart's keeping, or the integrity of pure thought is not followed by the perfection of action. But lest these can be dissolved from each other, the priest must have two chains made of pure gold on the breastplate, that is, the continuation of chaste and unfeigned love firmly fixed to his heart; which never allows his hands and tongue to dissent from the purity of right thinking. And rightly two, so that he may proceed rightly adorned in both those things which pertain to the worship of divine service, and in those that pertain to the aid of fraternal necessity. And indeed the work of charity is openly expressed through golden chains; for just as a chain is woven together from many strands of gold, so charity is perfected through manifold operations of virtues. Which indeed the Apostle explains: Charity is patient, is kind: charity does not envy, does not act wrongly, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, does not seek its own, is not easily angered, does not think evil, does not rejoice in iniquity; but rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Cor. XIII). Let her also have golden rings, from which the same chains hang;

that is, the constant memory of perpetual and never-ending glory in the heavenly homeland, from which only by memory it is customary to be made, so that the eternal bonds of glory can remain with us. She had two hooks protruding in the corners of the ephod, to which chains are fastened, that is, in the very beginning of every good action, she should have a firm intention pleasing to God, which is suitable in all respects for receiving and bearing within itself the love of God and neighbor; so that whether any favorable or adversarial things occur, she never loosens the most beneficial bonds of pious devotion. This means that the priest has hooks on both shoulders, to hold the chains of the breastplate; and whether in prosperity or

in the challenging events of things, he bears a firm desire to please God, and with this intention of zeal is strengthened in the love of Him and neighbor simultaneously. The hooks of the ephod, therefore, are fitted to the golden chains, which are offered from the top of the breastplate; whenever what the mind rationally tastes from the internal light of charity, shortly, the eagerness of good work embraces it willingly, lest sooner the most beautiful habit of the breastplate from the priest's breast falls off, if the unyielding hook of good work does not take hold to retain it. Let also the chains themselves be substituted as an aid by hyacinth-colored lives, by which each habit of the priest is mutually joined;

that is, the very strong bindings of heavenly desire, which inserted into golden rings, bind the ephod with the breastplate, when by the received light of the eternal homeland, we breathe towards that ineffable glory; certainly, so that we may deserve to enter it, with ever harmonious faith and life, by work and profession, we strive to serve the Lord in the tabernacle of the present Church. But as the ephod was bound tightly with a belt, as is more clearly indicated in the following, where the high priest was clothed; and he says that he laid the ephod, which he secured tightly with a belt fitting it to the breastplate; who cannot see that the most faithful guardian of good works is the virtue of continence? concerning which the Lord in the Gospel says: Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning (Luke XII). Loins evidently girded by continence; lamps burning by the operation of virtues.

And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment, etc. It is always indeed necessary for the priest to carry the memory of the fathers in his heart; but especially then, when about to minister before the Lord at the altar, in order that as the ministry is more sacred, with that much more diligent effort, purifying himself wholly, adorning his mind and body with all industry, he looks to the examples of the saints; and being a diligent imitator of them, he strives to present himself fit in the sight of the divine. Likewise, Aaron carries the names of the children of Israel on his chest as a perpetual memorial before the Lord, when any faithful prelate never ceases to have care for those he is set over; but always fortifies their life by exhorting, reproving, and consoling, striving to commend those being strengthened and guarded to the Lord frequently in prayers.

And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the doctrine and the truth, etc. Therefore, the doctrine and the truth were imposed in the breastplate of judgment either inscribed in letters, or by the mere sacrament of the name, so that the priest, clothed with the same garment, would remember that he was consecrated by the received priesthood for the studies of doctrine and truth to be sought, not for managing and examining secular affairs; so that what shone outwardly as a type in the garment might truthfully gleam expressed inwardly in the heart. Likewise, the doctrine and truth were placed in the breastplate, to clearly symbolize that the garment not only clothed the legal priest, but also foreshadowed the Gospel, or indeed the Lord himself, of whom it is written: For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1). Or certainly his apostles, indeed all proclaimers of the same grace and truth.

And he bore the judgment of the children of Israel on his heart, etc. The priest bears the judgment of the children of Israel on his heart in the sight of the Lord, when he discusses the causes of his subjects solely with the intention of the internal judge, so that he does not mix any humanity in what he dispenses in the divine position.

CHAPTER 3.6

The Tunic of the Ephod. Make the entire tunic of the ephod of blue. The tunic is called that of the ephod, since a not insignificant part of it was covered by the ephod, distinguishing it from the interior tunic, which was linen. Of which the same is mentioned previously, saying: "These are the garments which they shall make; a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a checkered tunic." The inner tunic was of linen, or byssus, known to be the noblest type of linen. The outer tunic was entirely of blue, admitting no color at all of any other kind. By its uniform appearance, the priestly life, as it should be, is clearly taught: that is, continuously fixed on heavenly desires alone, and having conduct according to the Apostle in the heavens, and from there eagerly awaiting the coming of its Savior (Philippians 3). This tunic, as well as the byssus, reached down to the feet; whence both were called by the Greeks "*poderes*," to show that nothing base or sordid should remain in the priestly life, but that everything he does, as if with an ethereal color most beautiful, should cover all his members from head to toe with the grace of virtues. Again, the priest is clothed in a full-length blue tunic, to be reminded not only to begin celestial work, but also to persevere in it to the end for all who

wish to be saved. For to be clothed with a blue tunic down to the feet is to persist in good works until the end of his life, as the Lord commands and promises: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2). And thus, because we shall reach the perfection of good action only by an unfatigued purpose, if we begin it with a fixed intention of heavenly reward, it rightly follows concerning the same tunic:

In whose middle above there shall be an opening, etc. Indeed, the opening of the blue tunic has a very strong edge, and woven from itself, so that it is not easily torn, since the beginning of our good action is supported by the strong root of divine fear, and is proven to be fortified against all the snares of the ancient enemy. Such an edge clothes and adorns the priest's neck all around, when it provides the ruler with great confidence in speaking to his subjects and preaching heavenly things, because he has not only lived rightly in the course of his life but has also begun the very beginning from uprightness, after the example of the blessed prophets Samuel, Jeremiah, and John, who filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit from infancy were set apart into the order of teachers. For the voice is in the neck, and therefore the proper use of speaking is expressed through the neck. Moreover, it is fitting because it was commanded that the edge of the opening be made woven all around, that it was immediately added: As it is usually done on the edges of garments. For just as works are to garments, so the very completion of works can not inconveniently be figured by the edges of garments.

Or rather the edges of garments are our last concerns, by which each of the faithful, when they are compelled to finish this life, anxiously strive to cleanse themselves from all stain of evil more intently than usual, with fear and trembling, lest they, brought before the strict judge, are expelled for the filthy habit of vices, and thrust into eternal darkness, but rather appear clothed, as the elect of God holy and beloved with compassion, kindness, humility, modesty, patience: above all these things, charity, which is the bond of perfection. And therefore truly the wedding garment, which in his banquet, that is, in the holy Church, our King and Judge delights to find. Therefore, the priest's blue tunic has a woven edge in the opening, as is usually done on the edges of garments; when each deserving teacher begins the work of virtues with such great perfection, as scarcely anyone else, laboring for a long time, ever reaches: with such fear of service at every hour, walking with the Lord his God, as the prophet's word says (Mic. VI), as scarcely any-

one on the point of death, about to enter into the last judgment of his Lord, is able to have. But because the entire perfection of the priest consists in works and the doctrine of truth, as blessed Luke says in his gospel, describing it, he made a discourse on those things which Jesus began to do and to teach (Acts I); it is rightly added:

Down to the feet of this same tunic all around, etc. Indeed, at the feet of the tunic are made, as it were, pomegranates and bells in a circle, when the priest reaches such a height of a God-devoted life that nothing in him can be seen but splendor and grace, and, so to speak, the varied flower of good works: nothing but the most pleasant sound of these is heard when he opens his mouth. For as many grains are covered inside the pomegranate by one peel outside, the manifold operation of virtues covered on all sides by the one shield of charity is rightly designated by the pomegranates. Moreover, the same image of pomegranates is made from blue, and purple, and twice-dyed scarlet, and, as found later, even from twisted byssus; which four colors often suggest the diversity of virtue. Among them, bells are mingled in the middle, when the works of the priest are never separate from the sound of the word he speaks; nor does the sound of the tongue disagree in the face of adversities from the correctness of the work. Hence it is beautifully added:

So that there is a golden bell, etc. Golden bells are indeed inserted into the blue tunic of the high priest, and are surrounded on every side, when all his speech resonates with the clarity of the heavenly light, and the same sound, as if firmly fixed in the blue tunic, is commended to the minds of the listeners by the sublimity of his works. And double pomegranates are placed around each bell, and double bells around each pomegranate, when all that he speaks is confirmed by good deeds and more deeply fixed in the hearts of listeners, and all that he does is shown by the discernible sound of his speech to be rational. It well follows: And Aaron will be clothed in it for the office of ministry, so that the sound may be heard, etc. For when a priest enters or exits, he will die if no sound is heard from it; because he incurs the wrath of the hidden judge against him if he proceeds without the sound of proclamation. But if we wish to heed the words of Josephus, who says that there were seventy-two bells and pomegranates on the priest's tunic, this suits the figures of mysteries; so that as he was commanded to bear the apostolic number on his shoulder and chest, he would also have the number of the seventy-two disciples assigned around his feet. It is certain that just as the number of

twelve apostles initiated the grade of episcopal dignity, so the seventy-two disciples, who were also sent by the Lord to preach the word, marked by their election the grade of lesser priesthood, now called the presbyterate. Hence, their number was figured at the lower part of the priestly garment, while the former was figured at the upper part. For it was fitting that those who were to be greater in rank in the body of the high priest, that is, in the Church of Christ, would have a higher place in the garment of the typical priest.

But if anyone also wishes to interpret mystically the numbers of both orders, Aaron bore the twelve gems on his chest to signify the future time when the faith of the Holy Trinity would be preached to the human race in all parts of the square world; or certainly, as we taught above, he bore twelve gems, that is, three times four, to remind all teachers always to have and to commend to their disciples the works of justice encompassed principally by the four virtues, together with faith in the truth, which is in the Trinity. He also carried seventy-two golden bells, with as many pomegranates, to show mystically that the same faith and operation of justice would lead the whole world from the darkness of errors to the true light. For three days and nights have seventy-two hours. And because this visible sun traverses all parts of the world in seventy-two hours, both above and below, in three circuits; rightly is this number of bells and fruits of various colors put on the priest's tunic, to figuratively teach that the Sun of righteousness, Christ, would illuminate the whole world, and provide it with the gift of true faith, which is in the recognition and confession of the Holy Trinity, and of good works, which are in the flourishing and splendor of various virtues. We can certainly also understand figuratively expressed in the number of twelve gems of the breastplate that the same Sun of righteousness would fill all our times and all parts of our world with His light;

in the example of the worldly sun, which customarily traverses the zodiac circle over twelve months and encompasses the whole world. And this having four rows of three stones each in the breastplate suits the order of the turning year, which is distinguished into four seasons by three months each. The year in the Scriptures calls the whole time of our salvation, during which we contend for eternal retribution, as the Savior Himself testifies, who, according to the word of Isaiah, was sent to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of retribution (Isa. 61), and the Psalmist sings of the same

year, saying, "You crown the year with your bounty" (Ps. 64). Those to whom He has given in the present the kindness of right faith and works, He will give on the day of retribution the crown of everlasting blessing.

CHAPTER 3.7

Golden Plates. "And you shall make a plate of pure gold, etc. The golden plate on the forehead of the high priest, on which "Holy to the Lord," or "Holy of the Lord" as it is called in the following words, was engraved, was more sacred than his other garments. And rightly so, because just as divine power surpasses everything that it created, it was fitting that His name, surpassing the other attire and ornament of the high priest, should eminently lie above and, as sanctifying everything, hold a prominent place on his forehead. It signifies the very confidence of our profession that we carry on our forehead, each saying with the Apostle: "But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6). And rightly, this one thing is made of pure gold in the whole attire of the high priest, to show the purity of heart or body, in which we ought to conceal or carry the mysteries of our redemption. Or certainly, the priest carries on his forehead the inscribed gold "Holy of the Lord," to mystically indicate that we must so venerate and embrace the passion of our Lord and Savior, through which we were redeemed, as to know that the glory of His divine majesty, through which we were created, must equally be confessed in Him: thus confessing the death of humanity assumed by Him, so that we may soon declare the same humanity has risen from death into eternal glory.

However, "Holy of the Lord," which is ordered to be engraved on the plate, signifies His holy and venerable name; which among the Hebrews is used to be written with four vocal letters, that is, whose interpretation in their language is ineffable, not because it cannot be said, but because it cannot be comprehended by the sense and intellect of any creature. And because nothing can be said worthily enough about Him, therefore it is most rightly called ineffable, according to that of the Apostle: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts" (Philippians 4). And the Psalmist says: "Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unfathomable" (Psalm 145). And it was appropriately written with four letters of the Lord's name on the forehead of the high priest; evidently because of the significance of the four parts of the Lord's cross, which we were going to carry on our foreheads, that is, the upper part, right, left,

and lower part. Also, we carry "Holy of the Lord" engraved in gold on our foreheads, when purified from the filth of vices that we had from the first parent, we receive in ourselves the image and likeness of our Creator, to whom we were created; and we do not conceal having received this in secret, but make it openly known to all people and proclaim it with our voice, according to that of the Apostle:

"Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Corinthians 15). He explains this more clearly speaking to the Colossians, saying: "But now you also, put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth, do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (Colossians 3). Of this "Holy of the Lord" also John writes in Revelation: "I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand having His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads" (Revelation 14). Further describing the brightness of the heavenly homeland, he says: "And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads" (Revelation 22). Therefore, since all those who follow the Lamb, that is, all the faithful, ought to have the most holy name of reverence in the very forefront of their profession, how much more necessary is it for those who, having received the priesthood and spiritual authority, have been chosen as leaders of the Lord's flock, to show an example of virtue to all in themselves? However, the plate, which contains "Holy of the Lord," is bound with a blue ribbon to the high priest's tiara;

as with the hope of heavenly goods, which the blue signifies, we are strengthened in faith, and we strive the more ardently to keep either the sacraments of our redemption or the immaculate image and likeness of our Creator and Redeemer, knowing well that there is no other way of salvation. The figure of the tiara will be spoken of in its proper place in what follows. But, because a priest of such industry should be of such merit with God, who can correct and admonish the sins of the people by his exhortation, reproof, and counsel, and with his prayers cleanse them, it is rightly added: And Aaron shall bear their iniquities, etc. For the high priest bears the iniquities of the subjects, that is, he carries them out and removes them by teaching

him or them repentance for the offenses, or by entreating grace from the righteous judge for the penitents. He does this with the gifts and offerings that they offered to the Lord and sanctified, when for good works worthy of the fruits of repentance, that is, alms and other works of righteousness which they have done, he absolves the penitents from the guilt of the crimes they once committed. Indeed, this is to be done according to divine instruction, both mystically figured in the attire of the high priest and manifestly taught in the words of holy Scripture. But, alas, how differently some prelates act, who wish to receive, or rather exact, gifts or presents from the people and care nothing to labor for their iniquities to be carried out and punished and for them to receive pardon, although they ought to receive temporal gifts from their subjects for this reason alone, that by preaching they have corrected them from error and led them to the way of truth, after the example of the first teachers of the holy Church, who confidently said to those from whom they received temporal support: If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things? (1 Cor. 9:11) Truly, however, each prelate or minister of the word can only labor effectively for the subjects, either by preaching the word or by praying to the Lord, if his mind is always endowed with the memory of the divine name, it is aptly added:

And it shall be always upon his forehead, etc. For if the plate inscribed with the name of the Lord is always upon Aaron's forehead, the Lord will be merciful to the sons of Israel; because when the teacher has faithfully submitted himself to divine service with a pure mind, immediately even the subjects, inflamed by his examples and admonitions, strive themselves to live rightly and to merit the grace of the inner beholder.

CHAPTER 3.8

The fine linen tunic and tiara. You shall bind the tunic with fine linen. This is the inner tunic, which he calls the straight tunic. But why it is called the straight tunic and commanded to be bound with fine linen was explained above, and now it is to be added that soldiers usually have tunics, which they call shirts, so fitting to their limbs and close to their bodies, that they are prepared either for running or for directing missiles in battle, holding a shield, wielding a sword, and whatever necessity may require; as also Joab is read to have had when he killed Amasa (2 Samuel 20), specifically tight to the measure of his stature. Thus, priests also, prepared for the service of God,

wear this tunic, so that, having the beauty of garments, they may move swiftly as if they were naked. This tunic, because it reached down to the feet like the hyacinth tunic, was also called *poderis*, that is, reaching to the feet, in Greek, whose mystical meaning is obvious: since it is established that linen or fine linen signifies the continence and chastity of our body, as often explained above, priests have the straight linen or fine linen tunic, when they keep the purpose of continence not slackly and weakly, but with such utmost intent, that flesh desires nothing of war against the spirit, nor does spirit wage war against the flesh. They have a tight tunic, when the soul, desiring and fainting completely, their heart and flesh equally exult in the living God in the courts of the Lord. This line is not only tight, but also *poderis*, that is, descending to the feet, since continence is not forcibly imposed on a single member, but delightfully accomplished throughout the whole body. For this linen must bind the hands and arms of the priest, so that they do nothing but what is useful; the chest, so that it thinks nothing vain; the stomach, so that in desiring more than necessary delights, it does not presume to offend God with gluttony; and also the members subject to the stomach, so that by wanton behavior, they corrupt all the beauty of the priestly habit; the knees, so they do not become sluggish in the persistence of prayer; the shins and feet, so they do not run towards evil.

Therefore, let the priest first be clothed with the tight tunic, so that he restrains his body from wicked deeds and his mind from perverse thoughts. Then let him take the hyacinthine, so that after the restriction of salutary continence, he may equally beautify his body and soul with the habit of spiritual virtues. But since there are five senses of the body: sight, taste, smell, hearing, and touch, of which the first four are specifically of the head, and the last is common to the whole body; this tunic, which we have said properly denotes both the continence of touch and justice. Following this, how the innocence of the other four senses should be cared for, or their sanctification acquired, is shown by the figurative attire of the high priest, when it is said: And you shall make a fine linen tiare. For the tiare, which was also called *cidaris* and *mitra*, covered and adorned the head of the high priest; so that with this garment he might be reminded to keep all his senses consecrated to God, neither allowing his eyes to see vanity, nor his ears to willingly hear reproach against his neighbor, nor his mouth to speak evil, nor his tongue to devise deceit; or that his heart might not be weighed down with

gluttony and drunkenness, nor his sense of smell embrace a bed sprinkled with myrrh, aloe, and cinnamon of a harlot. Rather, his eyes should see righteousness, his ears be inclined to hearing words of wisdom, the words of the Lord should be sweeter than honey and the honeycomb to his mouth, as long as breath remained in him, he should not speak wickedness, nor depart from his integrity. Care should also be taken for the fifth sense, which is common to the whole body, so that the prophetic saying might be fulfilled: "Depart, depart, go out from there, touch nothing unclean" (Isa. 52). And as the Apostle admonishes: "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). But how this tiare was made, Josephus teaches (*Antiq.* 3,2), saying: "Upon his head he wears a cap in the form of a small roll or helmet, which extends over the top of the head, and slightly exceeds the middle of the vertex;

and it is such that it appears to be made of linen fabric, having straps which are folded and often connected, and do not easily come undone. Moreover, Josephus narrates that another larger covering was added to this cap, which covered the whole surface of the head: perfectly fitted, so that it would not fall off while the priest was busy with sacrifices; but he does not show what color it was. And this indeed is about the cap of the lesser priest. Concerning the tiare of the high priest, he testifies in this way: The high priest has a cap made similarly to that of the other priests, and another sewn from blue variegated material. Moreover, a golden crown is placed around it, made three times, above which rises in the middle of the forehead, as a kind of little golden chalice similar to the herb which among us is called "acharo," and which the Greeks call Hyoscyamus. And a little later, having described the marvelous variety, he added, saying: However, it has flowers similar to plantain, and the entire crown is engraved with these flowers, from the back of the head to each temple; in the front, however, it does not have this, but there is a golden plate, on which the sacred letters of God's name are inscribed. Holy Scripture seems to remain silent on this second veil and the golden crowns of the high priests. However, it briefly mentioned the crowns in the following passages, saying:

They also made tunics of woven work for Aaron and his sons, and turbans with their little crowns of fine linen (*Exod.* XXXIX). But it did not say of what material they were made. For when it says, "And turbans with their little crowns of fine linen," it could be understood that both were made of

fine linen, if Josephus did not identify the crowns as golden, who, with the Temple still standing, and the legal observance celebrated, being of priestly lineage, could very easily know all the manner of priestly attire, not just by reading but also by seeing it. However, whether the little crowns were of fine linen or golden, since it is known that they were made with the turbans, let us briefly speak of the figure. Priests have turbans with little crowns of fine linen, who thus guard their sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch in the beauty of chastity, hoping to receive the crown of life which God promised to those who love Him for this same watchfulness. For he who strives for continence or good works in such a manner that he neglects to seek the eternal rewards of recompense, indeed seems to have a linen turban on his head, but he does not have the little crowns; because evidently, he shows the image of virtue before men but does not find the reward of virtue with the Lord. Therefore, whether the little crowns were golden, signifying the clarity of perpetual light;

or whether they were of fine linen, figuratively announcing the immortality of our body itself, which will be eternal. And rightly the priest wears crowns placed additionally with his linen robes so that he may continually meditate on eternal rewards in his own continence, and in the sanctification of continence or good operation, at the same time promise the same joys of heavenly beatitude to those who listen; lest by placing the burden of labor without the hope of recompense, he may make the yoke of Christ harsh and His light burden severe to his listeners, and difficult. While the Lord thus commanded the making of the turban, He added: And the belt, the work of an embroiderer. About the making of this belt, it is more clearly written later. The belt they made of twisted fine linen, blue, purple, and twice-dyed scarlet, the work of an embroiderer. This belt, as Jerome writes from Josephus, is woven in the likeness of the skin of a snake, which it sheds in old age, so roundly woven that you would think it a longer purse. It was woven under a covering of scarlet, purple, blue, and linen thread for beauty and strength, and so distinctly adorned with artistic skill, that you would think the various flowers and gems were not woven by the hand of an artisan, but added. It had a width of four fingers, which belt the high priest specifically used, and with it the blue tunic and also the ephod were fastened. For in the following it is clearly said of the conjunction of the ephod and the breastplate: These were joined together both before and behind, so that the ephod and the

breastplate were mutually knitted, fastened tightly to the belt and more strongly coupled with rings; which were joined by a blue ribbon, so that they did not loosely flow and move from each other. Nor is there any doubt that the belt or girdle, to which the ephod was fastened, also bound the blue tunic, which was also called the tunic of the ephod; for all things that have been said so far pertain to the attire of the high priest. Next, the belts and other garments of his sons are also consecutively explained, when it is said:

Furthermore, you shall prepare linen tunics for the sons of Aaron, as well as belts, etc. Whether these belts had to be made with embroidered work or of a single color is not specified. Therefore, we must first discuss the belt of the high priest, which was made of those four noble and God-worthy colors; for it was fitting that the high priest should have such a one, whom it was always proper to gird with exceptional virtues. The high priest appropriately walked girded with the varied bloom of shining colors, because just as anyone else must be girded with the diligence of restraint, so that the flesh, rebelling against the spirit, may not disturb the inward peace of the mind; so also must the high priest and the teacher of the faithful, with every desire of the mind or body already subdued, be surrounded by the very glory of virtues. So that, according to the example of that flower which sprang from the root of Jesse, the Lord's Savior may have righteousness as the belt of His loins and faith as the girdle of His reins.

As for the linen tunics, belts, and tiaras, which were commanded to be made for the sons of Aaron for glory and beauty, what they commend to us in terms of internal beauty and glory can very easily be understood from the things explained above. For priests wear linen tunics when they dedicate their entire body to the whiteness of chastity. They gird their tunics with belts when they guard the same purity with vigilant custody of the mind, lest the neglect of that purity should make them more slack in the practice of good works, and lest by boasting of chastity, they lose the merit of chastity itself. For he who walks wearing a long tunic without a belt, the tunic becomes loose, and leaving the body exposed, it gives space for winds and cold to enter; and it hinders progress by tripping the feet, or even becomes a cause of falling for those who walk. In this way, indeed, the chastity of the flesh often deprives some of the chastity of the heart, as they care less diligently to insist on good works the less they perceive that the custody of chastity is

worth nothing without the addition of other good deeds, which, however, when joined with good deeds, achieve great glory for the possessor.

Finally, the virgins' foolishness availed them nothing, as their bodily chastity did not help because, when the bridegroom came, they lacked the light of inward purity. Let the sons of Aaron therefore be girt with linen tunics, that they may have chastity. Let priests be girded with belts, so that this chastity may not be slack and negligent; lest the wind of pride provides entry to the mind, lest with iniquity increasing, their love grows cold, lest the presumption of their boasting hinders the progress of good works, lest, with the course of virtues obstructed, it becomes polluted by the filth of earthly desire, and ultimately drives its own author to ruin through pride. After being girded, let priests also take tiaras on their heads, so that after vigilant and cautious custody of bodily chastity, the same custody and carefulness may be kept for sight, hearing, taste, and smell in a manner worthy of God.

CHAPTER 3.9

Breeches. And you shall clothe your brother Aaron with all these, etc. Aaron and his sons were to be clothed with all these; but with the distinction that Aaron himself was to use them all, while his sons were to use only the last three specifically assigned to them, as it is said: Moreover, for Aaron's sons you shall make linen tunics, and belts and caps for glory and adornment. But what follows: You shall make also linen breeches, etc. This pertains to both Aaron and his sons alike, as the very words clearly demonstrate; and thus it is that Aaron himself is clothed with all eight garments that are mentioned—namely, linen breeches, linen tunic, blue robe, ephod, breastplate, belt, turban, and golden plate. His sons, however, use only four of these, namely, the breeches, linen tunic, belt, and turban. But since the others have been discussed above, these breeches, which are commanded to be made to cover the nakedness of the flesh, properly symbolize that portion of chastity which restrains the desire for marital intercourse, without which no one can assume the priesthood or be consecrated to the ministry of the altar—that is, unless he either remains a virgin or dissolves the ties of matrimonial union.

This particular virtue, indeed, is commanded by no law of God to anyone, but must be voluntarily offered to the Lord out of devotion, as He Himself says concerning this: Not all can accept this saying (Matt. XIX). Yet He immediately invites those who can with a kind exhortation, saying: He who can accept it, let him accept it. And shortly afterwards, He promises those same

people who leave behind wives or other relatives and the ties of this world for His sake a reward a hundredfold in this life and eternal life in the age to come. Therefore, it is certainly by the grace of distinction that Moses is commanded to clothe Aaron and his sons with this garment, as it is said: And you shall clothe your brother Aaron and his sons with all these. But He says: You shall make linen breeches to cover the nakedness of their flesh. They themselves, He says, shall cover the nakedness of their flesh; you shall make the breeches for the high priest and his sons; you shall teach the rule of chastity; you shall inform those who are to perform the priesthood that they must abstain from the marital embrace. Nevertheless, no one shall be forcibly imposed upon with the yoke of this kind of continence; but whoever wishes to become priests and serve the altar shall of their own accord cease to be servants of wives.

When they have accomplished this, and once they agree to be ministers of the sanctuary and altar by adopting the intention of continence, there will be the divine law, which, imposing the rest of their priestly attire as suitable, will abundantly instruct how they should live or teach, rejoicing in their voluntary devotion and adding to them the ornaments that befit the priesthood—wisdom, patience, gentleness, mercy, spiritual zeal, humility, the fear of the Lord, and other such virtues. Otherwise, they die guilty of iniquity. For indeed, the surest death of the soul is incurred if anyone, living in luxury, presumes to usurp the priestly grade for himself. This sense is affirmed by the subsequent words of the Lord, which, moreover, He adds shortly thereafter: And when you have washed the father and his sons with water, etc. For here, neither is anything about the undergarments to be taken from Moses prescribed: where it is clearly evident that Aaron and his sons had first clothed themselves with this type of garment, and thus came to Moses to be washed, clothed, anointed, and consecrated by him. It is also noted that when Moses was about to consecrate them, he first washed them with water and then placed upon them the attire of the sacred order; for it is necessary that whoever is to be promoted to the office of the altar, be cleansed at the time of dedication with a flow more abundant than usual, whether of tears or compunction, so that the cleaner he approaches to receive the degree, the more perfectly he may fulfill what he has received. Moreover, in this washing, the baptism of the sacred font might be understood, if it were appropriate: that one elected to the priesthood should then

first be washed with the water of baptism for the remission of sins, and not that the Apostle would contradict such an ordination, saying: "Do not ordain a neophyte, lest being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. But the high priest, clad in sacred vestments, is straightway anointed with the oil of consecration, so that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the consecration may be perfected;

not that we can possess the virtues which these garments signify without the grace of God, but because the greater aid of grace must be bestowed by the Lord where one is elevated to a higher degree or placed over the governance of more people. Meanwhile, it should be noted that although Aaron is said to be dressed in eight vestments in this book of Exodus, it seems that a ninth, namely, the belt, is added in Leviticus, by which the linen tunic was girded before the blue robe was put on. Thus, it is written: "And when he had washed them, he clothed the high priest with the linen garment, and girding him with the girdle, and putting on him the blue robe; and over it, he placed the ephod, which he attached with a belt fit to the priestly breastplate" (Leviticus VIII). But how this was done is clearly evident from the things explained, an intellectual figure of the garment.

CHAPTER 3.10

Concerning the four colors of priestly garments, the four elements, and the consecration of priests. Indeed, because we have briefly touched upon the priestly attire, following the sayings of the fathers, we thought it noteworthy that those four distinguished colors of which it was made are fittingly compared to the elements of the world. Byssus or linen corresponds to the earth, because it is born from it; purple to the waters, because it is dyed from marine shellfish; hyacinthine and scarlet to the air and fire due to the similarity of color. And scarlet was twice dyed, because fire is endowed with a twin power, namely of shining and burning. The Hebrews say that the high priest carried the figure of all elements in his attire because he was to intercede in sacrifice not only for Israel but for the whole world. To which, perhaps not incongruously, we may add that in each human being is contained the figure of all the elements: fire in heat, air in breath, water in moisture, and earth in the very solidity of the limbs. Hence, also, man is called microcosmos in Greek by physiologists, that is, a smaller world. And if you inquire what gold signifies in the same attire according to this understanding, understand it as the rational virtue of the inner man. Hence also, 'Holy to the Lord' is in-

scribed on it: because by this alone can anyone ascend to the knowledge of their Creator.

For this reason, the Apostle says, Christ dwells in our hearts through faith in the inner man (Eph. III). Therefore, the Scripture shows us the high priest of the Old Testament thus clothed, so that the high priest of our time might know to intercede for the whole human race, especially for those who have known the truth and bear the mark of that faith on their forehead, admonished by the Apostle saying: I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and all that are in authority (I Tim. II). If we understand the Lord the Savior in the high priest whom Moses consecrated, it is right that in his attire he has the figure of the whole world and of man. For he is, as the Apostle says, the brightness of glory and the image of the substance of God the Father, upholding all things by the word of his power. He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world: he is the priest forever, adorned with all the ornaments of holiness, not which he deserved by being born in the flesh through the exercise of labor, but which he wholly received incarnate in the womb of the Virgin through the coming grace of the Holy Spirit (Heb. I). Of his priesthood, beautifully commending intercession for us, the Apostle says: But he, because he continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood;

wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them (Heb. VII). He also equally commended the garments and ornaments of virtues, adding: For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Who truly had the golden plate on his head, on which 'Holy to the Lord' was inscribed; because he came in the name of the Father, saying: I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and he who sees me sees the Father (John XIV). Thus far, the habit of Aaron and his sons is designated by heavenly oracle as it should be. It also follows the manner of consecration by which they themselves, or the tabernacle with all its furnishings, ought to be dedicated. Evidently, by offering to the Lord a calf, etc., all these things symbolically demonstrate that solely through the priests are consecrated both the devotion of good works and the purity of faith, as well as the grace of divine enlightenment. For who does not know that the immolation and blood of those animals prefigure the death and the sprinkling of the blood of our Lord, through which we are

both absolved from sins and confirmed in good works? The Apostle teaches what mystery of the Savior the unleavened breads contain, saying: Therefore let us keep the feast not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Moreover, the cakes and wafers are anointed or sprinkled with oil; so that we might be reminded to have works not only chastened from the leaven of malice and wickedness but also worthy of divine sight with the richness of charity. Or certainly, we offer a small cake sprinkled with oil for our consecration to the Lord, when all that we do grows rich in the devotion of our heart through the internal grace of the Holy Spirit. We offer wafers anointed with oil, when we also show to men externally, without doubt as an example of living, that what we do is spiritual. By these offerings, our consecration is perfected when through good works and pure thoughts, we acquire for ourselves the merit of holiness granted by the Lord. After fulfilling the commands of this consecration, Aaron and his sons, the Scripture returns to also taking account of the making of the altar of incense, on which the same Aaron was to offer daily incense.

CHAPTER 3.11

Description of the Altar of Incense. (Exod. XXX. You shall also make an altar to burn incense, etc. If the altar of burnt offering, mentioned above, generally signifies the life of the just, who daily crucify their flesh with its vices and desires, and offer it as a living sacrifice to the Lord; what does this altar made for burning incense signify, except the special life of certain perfect ones? For it is not in vain that on the former altar the flesh of animals was burned, while on this one incense was burned; because on that altar were figured those who do not walk according to the desires of the flesh, but, as if sacrificing these to the Lord, dedicate all the senses of their body to His will through the fire of the Holy Spirit: whereas on this altar is expressed the type of those who, with greater perfection of mind, having extinguished and lulled all the allurements of the flesh, offer only the vows of prayers to the Lord: having nothing of the flesh to contend with, nor any consciousness of sin to disturb and terrify them, but desiring to come and appear before the face of God by the shedding of sweet tears. Hence this altar is appropriately placed inside near the veil and the ark, while the other is placed outside before the tabernacle; because those evidently shine before the holy Church as examples of virtues to all;

while these, with the higher fervor of desire, even though still detained bodily, draw near to the contemplation of future blessedness. Fittingly, the former is commanded to be covered with bronze, while this one with gold: for bronze is more resonant and durable than other metals; while gold, though it falls short in sound, surpasses bronze in splendor. Clearly, therefore, the bronze altar, on which the flesh was burned, and the blood of the victims was poured, represents those who, having subdued and as if sacrificed the pleasures of the flesh to God, perseveringly pursue the path of truth which they have once begun, and also frequently proclaim this path to others by the word of preaching. The golden altar, on the other hand, is fittingly adapted to those who are more illuminated by the grace of heavenly brightness; but who, less than others, disclose by speaking what sweetness they taste internally in the secret contemplation of the face of God: they are less capable of expressing in words the sweetness with which they are internally refreshed in the hidden presence of God. Fittingly also, the altar of incense excelled as much in the brightness of its metal as it was smaller in measure; because the holier some are in the Church, the fewer they are. Fittingly, from the same setim wood, which we have said resembles white thorn and is incorruptible, it is commanded that both altars be made:

because assuredly there is one steadfastness of unfeigned faith, with which the hearts of all the elect should be fortified, and prepared to receive the fire of love and to offer sacrifices of virtues to God: because the Apostle speaks generally to both the small and the great, saying: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. VII): which is to say, in other words. Let us cut off and remove from ourselves the thorns of vices and the stings of titillating pricks, which the soil of our body has been accustomed to produce for us out of the sin of the first transgression, and diligently hewing them away with a certain ax of careful chastisement, let us strenuously cultivate both our inner and outer man, who may become worthy, upon receiving the fire of the Holy Spirit, to offer a sacrifice of virtues in the sight of his Creator. Fittingly, the same fire was not dissimilar, which in this altar consumed the victims, and in that one burned the incense; because assuredly there is one spirit, which enlivens the minds of all the faithful with varying grace of gifts.

But the altar of incense was square, having one cubit in length, and another in width, but two in height, to the long-suffering patience, as dis-

cussed in the exposition of the altar of burnt offerings, the width pertains to the abundance of love, the height pertains to the sublimity of hope, through which, in the endurance of temporal labors, and in the cheerfulness of sincere love, we rejoice with a pure mind. One cubit in both the length and the width of the altar, signifies when the highest and most perfect men in the Church, with a view to nothing other than eternal retribution, both bear temporal evils calmly and by charity bestow whatever good they can upon their neighbors. Likewise, because love is patient, it is kind. Patient, namely, to tolerate the injury inflicted by a neighbor; kind, so that to him whose adversities it tolerates, it also provides acts of mercy when needed. Fittingly, it is commanded that the altar of incense be made square in length and width; to signify that the mind of the perfect, united in mutual virtues, can equally love a brother and bear with him, and as much as it can endure his trouble with patience, it can also bestow upon him benevolence through the love of its own piety. But it has two cubits in height, because the elect hope to receive a double reward in the future life, namely, one of the rest for their souls, when, putting off this corruptible and mortal body, they will enter the heavenly kingdom;

the other, when receiving the same body incorruptible and immortal, they will rejoice more perfectly in the presence of their Creator, with the promise of the prophet fulfilled, which says: "In their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them" (Isa. LXI). Horns proceed from it, etc. Horns often in Scriptures are accustomed to designate the eminence of faith and virtues: through which we must blunt and overcome the attacks of the ancient enemy confronting us, saying with the prophet to the Lord: In you we will knock down our enemies with a horn (Psalm XLVIII). He who soon declared about which horn he said, by adding: And in your name we will scorn those rising against us. Conversely, sometimes the wars of vices, which attempt to conquer us, are accustomed to be indicated by the name of horns. Which both are briefly encompassed by the Lord through the prophet saying: And I will break all the horns of sinners, and the horns of the just will be exalted (Psalm XLVII). Hence, well in the law only animals of the horned kind are decreed to be clean and edible for the people of God. Indeed, it is established that animals which chew the cud and split the hoof are also horned; so that it may be shown mystically that only those can be incorporated into the Church of God with spiritual union, who by the strength of

faith are proven invincible against the wars of vices. However, horns proceed from the altar of incense itself, when the chosen do not show the works of virtues to the face of men superficially, but exercise them from the internal root of the mind with a fixed and immovable affection.

But hypocrites, as if having horns borrowed from elsewhere, have the appearance of piety, but deny its power. To whom that fable of Aesop aptly fits, which tells of a crow adorned with peacock feathers carried off in bundles, vainly boasting of its beauty, indeed almost stripped of all the feathers and its life by the burning jealousy of the peacocks. The altar is vested with purest gold, when the perfect ones shine with the true light of internal wisdom, when in all they do, the splendor of charity, as if the glory of daily habit, is displayed, when they always show to those seeing or hearing them that they possess the memory of perpetual clarity, when they manifest that they consider and seek the kingdom of God and His justice above all. And well it is commanded that both the grate of the altar and the walls and horns be vested with gold. The grate indeed was inside in the middle of the altar prepared undoubtedly to receive incense. But the walls appeared outside, the horns themselves standing out higher outside with special eminence. The grate is gilded, when the grace of Christ shines through faith in our interior man. The walls are gilded, when the same grace of the Lord's love is extended outward through good works.

And the horns are gilded, when the very confidence of the strength of the just, by which they have learned either to endure opponents of truth bravely through patience, or to refute or correct wisely through wisdom, sparkles with the brightness of internal light in all things. And because such ones can rightly say: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness (II Tim. IV), it is fittingly added. And you shall make for it a gold crown all around. For indeed, a golden crown is made all around the altar of incense when the saints, remembering what they have done for us, await their eternal rewards. And the crown is fittingly made all around the altar, so that it may be shown that everything they have done is worthy of heavenly reward: nor should anything remain in such persons that, after the release of the flesh, ought to be chastised by purgatorial fire. Likewise, the altar of incense has a gold crown all around also in those who, though they are lesser in merits and dare not openly declare, still have a certain reward laid up for them

for their good fight and kept faith, yet whatever they do, they act with the intention of pleasing God and with the hope of receiving the same heavenly reward. It follows:

And two golden rings under the crown, etc. Indeed, in these rings by which the altar was carried, just as it was above in the altar of burnt offering, the ark and the table were set forth, the books of the four Gospels can not inappropriately be understood, by whose faith and doctrine the saints are carried and uplifted from earthly thoughts; through the desert of this life, by daily progress in good works, they are borne to the heavenly homeland. However, because it is clearly commanded there to make four circles, namely two on one side and two on the other, but here with the number four not explicitly mentioned, two rings are made on each side: it is certain that there the number of evangelists is more plainly evident, while here also some other spiritual mystery, which mainly concerns the love of God and neighbor, is present. For the altar is surrounded by golden rings on each side; because the heart of the elect is confirmed on both sides by the love of God and neighbor. Which is well compared to rings, because prophecy will be done away with at the end, knowledge destroyed, tongues will cease, but love will never cease. There are, however, two rings on each side; because each commandment of charity is distinguished by a dual virtue. For the love of God is perfected through the sincerity of faith and purity of life (Hebr. II); for without faith it is impossible to please God, and faith without works is dead (James II).

Both are embraced by one verse when the prophet says: "But the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab. II); clearly insinuating that one will come to life only if he has the works of justice along with the faith of truth. Similarly, brotherly love consists in dual virtue, namely of patience and kindness, as the Apostle testifies, saying: "Charity is patient, is kind" (I Cor. XIII). Hence also the Lord says, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you" (Luke VI); teaching patience in forgiving debts, and the grace of kindness in giving what is necessary. In one, so that we may bear the inconveniences of others strongly: in the other, so that we may joyfully offer our goods to others. Therefore, the altar has two rings on each side, with the dual perfection of charity, the holy ones are girded both in honor of their Creator and in care and service to their neighbor. And into these rings gilded poles are inserted, so that the altar may be carried, when they receive with the pre-

pared bosom of the mind the most illustrious sayings of the preceding Fathers, by which they are lifted more and more from earthly things to the love of eternal goods. For that such men in both mind and merit approach heavenly things is also mystically signified by the following words, when it is said:

And you shall place the altar opposite the veil, etc. For the Ark, as has been explained in its place, represents the Lord Savior, the veil that hung before the Ark signifies heaven itself, into whose heights the Lord entered after conquering death; so that, as the Apostle says, He might now appear in the presence of God for us (Hebrews 9). And the altar stands opposite the veil that is before the Ark, just as every intention of the just is directed towards entering the heavenly kingdom. It stands before the propitiatory, which covers the Ark, as they approach the vision of their Creator with purity of mind, and although enclosed, still conduct their conversation in heavenly places.

CHAPTER 3.12

On burning incense on the altar. And Aaron shall burn incense upon it, etc. It is known that incense or thymiama signifies the power of prayer, as the Psalmist says: "Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight" (Psalm 140). And in the Apocalypse of John, he saw the saints holding golden bowls full of incense. Which he immediately explained by adding: "Which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev. 5). And since Aaron, as mentioned above, signifies both the high priest specifically, namely, the Lord Savior, and also the priests of our order: Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on this altar in the morning, whether when the Lord Himself enlightens the hearts of the faithful with a new beam of His grace, urging them to the sweetness of prayer, or when the participants of His priesthood by diligent exhortation stir the faithful to beseech the face of their Creator. The priest also burns incense not only in the morning but also in the evening. Incense is burned in the morning so that at the beginning of every good deed, which we intend to do by the inspiration of God, we may invoke His aid by which we may bring it to completion. And in the evening, so that when we finish what has been well begun, we may return vows of gratitude to Him from whom we received it, for the gifts He granted. Or certainly, because in the morning and with the sun risen, we clearly see everything around us;

but when evening comes, with uncertain sight we are veiled in darkness. Therefore, we need the light of a lamp to see what we wish. Those sacraments

of our Redeemer or words, which we can clearly recognize even according to the order of human reason to the extent we are able, we now see as if in the day. But in whatever things human reason fails, but the authority of Scripture alone is to be followed by us, there, as if in the night, the eye of our understanding is darkened. But the lamp of God's word helps our feet, lest they stumble and stray from the path of truth. Hence Peter, speaking of the sacrament of the Lord's faith, said: "And we have the more sure word of prophecy, to which you do well to attend, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts" (2 Peter 1). Therefore, it is well said: "And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it in the morning when he dresses the lamps, he will burn it, and when he lights them in the evening. For Aaron burns incense on the altar in the morning when the Lord inflames the hearts of the faithful to the grace of compunction in those mysteries of truth which they are now able to understand.

He burns it in the evening when he lights the lamps, when He teaches from those things which they cannot yet grasp, because they also know these sacred things, as much as they are undoubtedly divine, to love the heavenly where all secrets are revealed. And the incense is fragrant and sweet when touched by sudden divine compunction, they find it sweet to be alone with tears and prayers. It is well followed by: Perpetual incense will burn before the Lord, etc. Because it is indeed necessary that the soul, after prayer and weeping, should not turn to idle words or deeds, but should keep itself in the same vigor of devotion which it received in prayer, even after the prayer is finished; according to the example of Anna, of whom it is said while praying: And her countenance was no longer changed in different ways (1 Samuel 1). You shall not offer incense of another composition upon it. In the following parts of this volume, from which spices this incense ought to be composed are specifically named: namely stacte and onycha, galbanum of good odor, and pure frankincense, all of which pertain to the signification of eternal goods which must primarily be sought from the Lord. Therefore, incense of another composition than what the Lord has prescribed shall not be offered upon the golden altar; because those who pray should seek nothing else from the Lord than what He has commanded and promised to give; and we should believe nothing about Him other than what He has taught.

A sacrifice is not to be offered upon it, etc. For all these things pertain to the outer altar, which designates the life of those beginning and still placed

in progress. For the life of the righteous perfect ones is of such great sublimity that nothing carnal, which they might have to sacrifice to the Lord, can be found in it. And indeed the libations of wine are known sometimes to designate the great virtue of spiritual grace, that is, whether it be the cup of doctrine, or the chalice of passion, or the fervor of principal love, or the very perception of the Holy Spirit, or something of this kind. But whenever the wine of libations is offered with the flesh of victims, it certainly designates according to the tropological exposition the sanctity of those who still have something of carnal desires, which are contrary to the purity of the spirit, and which ought to be burned by the fire of the Holy Spirit on the altar of the heart. However, the perfect righteous, who can say: "My heart and my flesh have failed, God of my heart, and God is my portion forever"; as if, with the cessation of the libations of victims, which pertain to the outer bronze altar, they offer only inward on the golden altar the fragrances to the Lord of heavenly desire; because, being made more secure about the remission of sins, they lament only for the delayed entrance into the eternal kingdom, and with the sweet flow of tears they water their bed every single night. Of this very altar, it is still well said:

And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns, etc. For indeed our High Priest offered His blood once a year for the sin of the whole world. In that specific year, of which He speaks through Isaiah: To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Isa. 61); that is, in the whole time in which He deigned to unite the Church to Himself. He also gave to each of the believers once the washing of the holy font, in the mystery of His blood, to loosen the bonds of sins, and with the beautiful diversity of all kinds of figures. The pontiff indeed was commanded to offer atonement on the horns of the altar in the blood of the oblation once a year, but daily to burn fragrant incense upon it; because the Lord and our Savior, who daily renews His faithful by the grace of inner compunction, redeemed them once overcoming death by the sacrifice of His blood. Those faithful, who are usually accustomed to wash away daily sins with daily prayers and tears, once by the sacrament of His passion rejoice that they are freed from all sins. Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of the altar, because He Himself not only lived among men and prayed for men; but also now sitting at the right hand of the Father in the heavens, He intercedes for us, and dwelling in the hearts of the chosen

through faith, while He stimulates them to pray, He is rightly said to make atonement.

Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of the altar, when the Lord commends His chosen ones to the Father, by the memory of the virtues which they performed. Hence, as if touching the horns of the golden altar, He speaks of the devotion of the disciples: Whom You gave me out of the world, they were Yours, and You gave them to me, and they have kept Your word. Now they know that all things You have given me are from You (John 17). For whom, even praying, He added: I pray for them, not for the world, but for those You have given me, for they are Yours (Ibid.). And because for the merits and intercessions of eminent men, the Lord often has mercy on our weakness, it is rightly added: And he shall propitiate upon it in your generations, etc. For Aaron propitiates upon the altar of incense when, on account of the righteousness of the saints whom we seek as intercessors and patrons for ourselves, the Lord is propitiated. Finally, when Hezekiah was besieged by enemies and called for his help, he said: "And I will save this city and protect it for my sake and for the sake of David my servant" (IV Kings XIX). Likewise, Moses, interceding for the sinning people, made remembrance of the fathers and, as if pleading upon the horns of the altar, sought to placate the Lord: "Let your anger rest," he said, "and be merciful toward the iniquity of your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by yourself, saying: 'I will multiply your offspring like the stars of the sky'" (Exod. XXXII). Indeed, we can interpret these altars in such a way that we accept the bronze one, on which the flesh was burned and the blood of the sacrifices was shed, as representing the whole church of this time, in which no one is without sin, even if his life on earth were only a single day. There is no one born carnally from the sin of Adam's transgression who does not need to be reborn in Christ, and his spirit purified by fire. The golden altar, however, signifies the Lord himself, who in a miraculous and ineffable manner took true flesh from Adam, but was truly free from the sin of Adam's flesh;

just as both altars were made from the same kind of wood, but not both were covered with gold. On this altar, nothing carnal was offered but only incense was burned; for the Lord, pouring out prayers or tears, did this not for his own sins, of which there were none, but for our salvation. For just as the ark placed within the veil signifies the God-man sitting at the right

hand of the majesty in the heights, so too, the altar placed outside the veil but near its entrance can figuratively express the same Mediator of God and men, who indeed conversed among men humanly, but by the power of his divinity penetrated the innermost heavens. The incense altar stood in the sanctuary, where the lampstand and table were; because the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John I). The ark stood within the veil; because the same Lord Jesus, after his passion and resurrection, was taken up into heaven and sits at the right hand of God. Upon whose horns of the altar Aaron intercedes in the blood that was offered for sin, and propitiates upon it, those who pray for the people of God, or for their own ignorance, the priests, trusting to be helped and saved by the only-begotten Son through the sacrament of his passion, as the Apostle instructs and says: "Through him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God" (Hebr. XII), that is, the fruit of lips confessing his name.

This can also be suitably accepted of all the elect, that is, members of the high priest, who pray to the Father in spirit and truth. To which altar better than this does it apply what is said: "Holy of holies shall they be to the Lord," of which the archangel said to the virgin mother about the one to be born into the world: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, etc. (Luke I). Described thus far is the making of the incense altar; there still remains the description of the bronze basin, in which the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle; but one command of the Lord is preemptively mentioned, which we also should briefly touch upon and explain as best we can.

CHAPTER 3.13

On the price for the souls of individuals, the numbered people. When you take the sum of the children of Israel, etc. David had forgotten this command, when he numbered the people, and thus brought a plague upon that people by numbering them. However, in a spiritual sense, the sum of the children of Israel represents the sum of all the elect, whose names are written in heaven. And each gives a price for their souls to the Lord, when they exhibit to Him the service of diligent servitude in good works. Otherwise, there will be a plague upon them when they have been counted; because, without doubt, perpetual vengeance awaits those who, associated nominally with the number of the faithful, refuse to offer the perfect works of faith to the Lord. And it is said of such: They will not give to God their appeasement, nor the price of the redemption of their soul (Psalm 48). For the redemption

of a man's soul is his riches (Proverbs 13), as Solomon says: whether temporal, namely, when he has distributed them and given them to the poor, so that his righteousness remains forever; or spiritual, that is, the justice he has done, either by showing mercy to the poor, or by doing other good deeds. But everyone who advances to the name will give a half-shekel, that is, ten obols; which can be understood by us as nothing other than the observance of the Decalogue law.

For whoever knows how to understand this rightly has recognized that all the fullness of faith and work, and the promise of future reward, is contained in it. Indeed, in the first three, the love of God, in the following seven, the love of neighbor is comprehended; and as the Apostle testifies: Love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13). But also another sacrament, by no means to be passed over, is contained in the same number ten. For the name of Jesus among the Hebrews begins with the letter Yod, among the Greeks with iota; both of which in their respective nations are the sign of the number ten. And they offer ten obols as a price for their soul to the Lord, who, believing in Jesus Christ, bring forth the sign of His name, which begins with the number ten, on their forehead and profession. And perhaps for the grace of this sacrament the Lord testifies in the Gospel that one iota cannot pass from the law (Matthew 5); because the power of the Decalogue, which is contained there, and the faith of His name, which is mystically signified there, can never be corrupted by the perturbation of the unfaithful.

Whoever is counted in the number from twenty years old and above, shall give the price. The number twenty signifies the conjunction of both Testaments, namely, the law which is written in five books, and the Gospel, which is four; for four times five make twenty. Therefore, anyone is counted in the number of the people of God from twenty years old; because he is worthy of the fellowship of the elect, who, having spiritually understood the decrees of the law, aided by the grace of the Gospel, fulfills them according to his measure and capacity, and awaits the eternal rewards in heaven promised by the same grace. The rich shall not add to the half shekel, etc. Because whether one is great in merits and perfect, or still tender and placed in the progress of virtues, the same law of the Decalogue is imposed on all, by which they love God and their neighbor.

And the money received, which is collected from the sons of Israel, etc. The money received from the sons of Israel is brought as a memorial before

the Lord, when whatever good we do is kept in eternal memory with our Creator and Judge; so that from what we have offered to Him, by the fruits of good works, He may deign to be propitious to us. And the same money is kept for the use of the tabernacle, when the habits and acts of subsequent believers in Christ are confirmed by the good deeds of the righteous; and the lesser ones strive to become such as they know those to have been, whom they recognize as reigning with the Lord. Indeed, it is to be noted that the aforementioned money was to be given not according to the assessment of the people, but according to the measure of the temple. For the measure of the temple is the disposition of the divine law, which the Lord commands to be kept in His Church, and whose observance He promises eternal rewards in the future. However, if anyone tries to serve God according to the pleasure of human will, he who does not offer the money of his devotion according to the measure of the temple, with a rejected and cast away offering, will be struck by the punishment of the final reprobation.

CHAPTER 3.14

Description of the bronze laver. The appearance and rim, etc. This laver or basin, as it is called in the following passages, can principally be understood as the water of baptism; through whose washing it is necessary for all who enter the gates of the Church to be cleansed. But since it was placed between the tabernacle of testimony and the altar of holocausts, and since the same priests were commanded to wash in it twice daily, that is, morning and evening, when they entered the altar to offer incense to the Lord, and because we can only be washed once with the water of baptism; this laver commends to us the washing of contrition and tears, which we always need, especially when we approach to minister the heavenly mysteries. For the altar of holocausts, on which the flesh of the victims was burned to the Lord, signifies the extinguishing of carnal desires by the fire of the Holy Spirit; but the altar of incense signifies the purity of those who, having subdued the allurements of the flesh in every way, and pacified the struggle with vices, shed tears out of expectation and desire for the heavenly entrance. Rightly, then, is the laver placed near the altar of holocausts, in which the washed priests may enter the tabernacle and burn incense to the Lord. For the state of tears and contrition is distinguished in two ways; first, it is necessary for everyone converted to the Lord to implore pardon with tears for the sins they have committed.

If this is accomplished over a long time with the fitting fruits of repentance, it remains that, made more secure by the acceptance of pardon for sins, they must already come with longing desires to the time when they may deserve to see the face of their Creator among the most blessed choirs of angels. He who truly does this does not at all tolerate without tears either the length of this life or the delay of that one, saying of this life: Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged! I dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar (Psalm 119), that is, with those who wander in the darkness of errors and crimes; which the name Cedar signifies, he already longing for the joys of perpetual light: the more I thirst for the heavenly homeland, the more I dread the proximity of the wicked, among whom I converse as a sojourner. Saying again of that life: My soul thirsted for the living God, when shall I come and appear before the face of God (Psalm 42)? This thirst, which he could not bear without tears, the following words declare: My tears have been my bread day and night. As if he were openly saying: The longer I am deferred from seeing the face of God, for whom I ardently thirst, the more sweetly I am refreshed with the bread of tears, which I shed in his memory. Therefore, the altar of holocausts suggests the tears of penitents for the sins they have committed.

The altar of incense expresses the weeping of those rejoicing in the good works they have completed with the Lord's help; and desiring the rewards which they trust they will receive from the Lord as their remunerator. This weeping indeed excels the former as much as gold excels bronze, as much as the holy of holies, where the ark of the Lord was, is known to have surpassed the first tabernacle, in which the lampstand and table of the Lord stood. After the altar of burnt offering, the basin was placed, in which those who entered the altar of incense would wash: for no one becomes the highest suddenly, but with advancing merits, each person ought first to overcome the battles of vices, and then, with compunction of tears, humbly beseech their Creator, to be able to shed sweet tears for the entrance into the kingdom, who previously shed bitter tears for fear of punishments. But what is more fitting than to take the base on which the same basin was placed as the very desire for the kingdom and heavenly life? Certainly, it is for this cause that even perfect and highest men daily wash themselves in a fountain of tears; and though they cannot yet fully see the joy of inward peace, at least through sighing they taste it. For that in this laver, placed between the tabernacle and

the altar, the tears of the perfect are symbolized, the very words testify, in which it is said:

And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet in it. For no one of the people was permitted to wash there; but the high priest and his sons, namely the priests of lower rank, were commanded, showing that with great men, as their life is more perfect, so also their compunction is loftier. We do not say this, as if only the ministers of the altar could or ought to have such compunction; but mindful of the words of the blessed apostle Peter, who speaking to all the faithful about the cornerstone, which is Christ, said: And you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. II). And what John says in Revelation: Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ (Rev. XX). We urge all the faithful to be counted under the mystical name of priests, as members of Christ, namely the eternal priest. The blessed apostle Paul also shows what sacrifices they should offer, saying: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Rom. XII). Therefore, Moses set this laver not only for the ministers of the sacred altar, but also for all perfect individuals in any rank; because the law of God generally preached the grace of saving compunction to all the faithful.

If we want to take the great high priest, our Lord Savior, in the person of Aaron, it is also clear that he was washed with the water of this basin before entering the altar to offer; for before he offered the incense of His most holy body on the altar of the cross for our salvation, He also wept for our love, as was well known in the resurrection of Lazarus. It is well added: That they may offer incense to the Lord, etc. For the death of the spiritual soul is truly to be feared, and eternal, if anyone chosen for the ministry of the altar neglects to render the incense of prayers to God. Death is to be feared, if anyone presumes to enter the holy mysteries without the special cleansing of compunction, and to handle the holy things of the Lord with common hands. Therefore, let them wash their hands and feet in the water of the bronze basin, and thus approach the altar. Let them wash their deeds and steps with tears, and then extend their hands to touch the mysteries of Christ, and place the steps of their feet in the courts of the Lord. I equally consider this commandment to be for those who are to be cleansed by receiving these

same sacraments, that they first examine, winnow, and purify their deeds and thoughts with more careful diligence, and thus proceed to partake of the sacraments of faith, lest they deserve to hear that saying of the Apostle: For anyone who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord (I Cor. XI); that is, not discerning the food of the living bread from the common food with a cautious and diligent mind. These things about the basin and the approach to the altar can also be very usefully taken in this way; although principally that altar signifies the internal vows of spiritual prayers. But it must be more diligently considered what is added in the conclusion:

It will be a perpetual statute for him, etc. For even if the basin, or altar, which Moses made is taken away, if the priesthood which he established is changed to the new priesthood of the Church, nevertheless the legitimate washing and spiritual incense remains perpetual in the life of the faithful; which was typically signified by the incense of that altar, and the water of that basin; just as many other things, which the law commanded to be done or warned to be observed perpetually, have ceased to be observed literally; but according to typological understanding will never cease to be spiritually observed by the saints, as the one who did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it testifies: Because one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law until all things are accomplished (Matthew V). For our humility also pertains to that seed, about which it was said: Because it will be a perpetual statute for him and for his seed through generations; not indeed by being born from the line of Aaron, but by believing in him, in whom Aaron with his saints of that age believed; about whom it was promised to Abraham, Because in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis XXV). Mentioning these families, Isaiah says: All who see them will recognize them; because these are the seed which the Lord has blessed (Isaiah LXI).

P A R T T H R E E

On the Temple of Solomon

The building of the temple, read as a picture of the Church.

On the Temple of Solomon

THE VENERABLE BEDE

AD 673–735

This book follows the account of the building of Solomon's temple in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and reads each detail of the building as a picture of the Church. It is sent to Acca, bishop of Hexham, with a letter, and it ends with the finishing of the work on the house of the Lord.

LETTER TO ACCA

The vessel of election and teacher of nations exhorts us to the reading of divine words, bearing true witness with his voice that whatever has been written has been written for our instruction, so that through patience and the consolation of the Scriptures, we may have hope (Rom. XV). There he declares that in order to obtain the hope of heavenly goods, we must have patience and regard for the consolation of the Scriptures. Namely, patience, so that whatever adversities may arise, we may bear them with a humble and submissive mind, as if they were scourges inflicted by a just judge and merciful father; either for the glory of virtues and the increase of merits, if we the just and innocent are afflicted; or for the correction of morals, if we are entangled in vices. The consolation of the Scriptures is to be sought, so that by frequent meditation on them, we may recall to memory how much those supreme fathers, and the illustrious lights of the Church, often endured the affliction of darkness in this present life, how much glory with the Lord they rightfully received in the future life for their piety and patience, and how much incorruptible praise and renown they also left among all the faithful in this life, as Scripture says (Prov. X): The memory of the just is with praises, and again (Eccli. XLIV): The bodies of the saints are buried in peace; and their names live through generations and generations. Also, the apostle James (James V):

Behold, we call blessed those who have endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the outcome of the Lord. It is not for

nothing that he added, after speaking of the hardships of the just: And you have seen the outcome of the Lord; because he who lived without fault here did not depart from here without a scourge; he who appeared in the world to heal the sick and raise the dead chose, in order to teach us the example of patience, to leave the world through the weakness of death. Hence, the Psalmist, having said (Psalm. LXVII): Our God is the God of salvation; immediately adds, in admiration or rather in astonishment: And the Lord God has the ways out of death. Therefore, through patience and the consolation of the Scriptures, let us have hope, also of consoling ourselves after our afflictions and pressures, since we too have endured patiently in tribulation, and have recalled to mind their actions, who both by the merit of justice have far surpassed us, and have endured far greater struggles of adversity than we have. Indeed, they often suffered persecution from the unjust because of the justice in which they excellently shone, so that they might receive, along with the exercise of justice, the crown of invincible patience, and moreover, leave behind with glorious perseverance the preordained footsteps for all who follow them.

However, we are often chastised by the mercy and providence of our Creator for our transgressions, so that, returning to our conscience with healthful compunction, we may diligently punish with tears what we have committed through deceiving allurements and negligences; and thus corrected by the Lord's assistance, we may deserve to belong to the hope of life and to the fellowship of those who, though innocently afflicted, were just. For we also find this in the consolation of the Scriptures, because the Lord blessed all those who fear Him, both small and great (Psalm 113), and declared that in the house of His Father there are many mansions for us. With this consolation now, my most beloved bishop, I daily alleviate the present anxieties of temporal matters, and am not in doubt that you are sublimely encouraged to see the good of the Lord in the land of the living, transcending the evils of men who reign in the land of the dying, as one abundantly supplied not only with the pages of divine writings, but also with their pious expositions, which the venerable Scripture of the fathers has left us. However, since new things sometimes delight more, it seemed to me good to send to your holiness a little work that I recently composed allegorically, following the footsteps of great commentators on the creation of the temple of God, for your perusal.

The more you, being intent on its reading, discover the many mysteries of Christ and the Church embedded in the ancient pages, and the greater the gifts of God which you see promised there, either given to us in the present or promised for the future, the lighter and less concerning you will judge all the vanities and adversities of fleeting things, and the prosperous; following the example of the blessed John, who was banished by a wicked emperor to the confines of a very small island, but was immediately introduced by the pious Creator, through the Spirit, to contemplate those infinite secrets of the heavenly mansions. And where he was thought by deceived enemies to be bereft of the support and company of friendly men, there he deserved to enjoy the vision and conversation of angelic friends. Taught by them, he learned ever more and more to scorn the allurements and bitterness of the world, the more sublimely he beheld those things, which by their greatness and eternity are far more to be feared and loved. Farewell always, my most beloved, and intercede for us.

CHAPTER 1

That the construction of the tabernacle and the temple represents one and the same Church of Christ. The house of God which King Solomon built in Jerusalem was made as a figure of the holy universal Church, which is being built daily by the grace of the peaceful king, that is, our Redeemer, from the first chosen one to the last one who will be born at the end of the world. This house partly still journeys from Him on earth, partly, having evaded the hardships of pilgrimage, already reigns with Him in heaven, where, after the final judgment is completed, it will fully reign with Him. To this house belong the chosen angels, whose likeness is promised to us in the future life, with the Lord saying: "But they who are counted worthy of that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Matthew XIX). To this belongs the Mediator Himself, between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, bearing witness Himself when He said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John II). The evangelist, explaining this, added: "But He spoke of the temple of His body. The Apostle says about us: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (II Cor. VI).

Therefore, if He became the temple of God through assumed humanity, and we are made the temple of God through His Spirit dwelling in us, it cer-

tainly stands that the material temple held the figure of all of us and Himself, that is, the Lord and His members which we are. But of Himself, as the uniquely chosen and precious cornerstone laid in the foundation, and of us as living stones built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, that is, upon the Lord Himself (Ephesians II). This will be better revealed from the considered order of the temple itself, so that in some respects the figure pertains to the Lord Himself, in some respects to all the elect, in some respects it describes the undefiled happiness of the angels in heaven, in some respects the invincible patience of men on earth, in others it shows the help given by angels to men, in others it demonstrates the struggles of men rewarded with angels. The same spiritual house of the Lord is also signified by the tabernacle once made in the desert by Moses (Exodus XXV). But because that house was in the journey to the land of promise, whereas this one was built in the land of promise itself and in the city of Jerusalem; that one, so that it might be transported frequently from place to place by the ministry of the Levites and finally brought into the land of promised inheritance;

this one, so that it might stand with an inviolable foundation always constructed in the royal city itself, till it fulfilled the given role of heavenly figures; in that could be figured the labor and exile of the present Church, in this the future rest and blessedness. Or certainly because that was made by the sons of Israel only, but this by proselytes and gentiles also, in that can be symbolically expressed principally the fathers of the Old Testament and the ancient people of God, in this, however, the Church gathered from the gentiles. Although the building of both houses, thoroughly examined in a spiritual sense, is shown in multiple ways to indicate the daily labors of the present Church, the eternal rewards in the future, and the joys of the heavenly kingdom, and the election of the first Church from Israel, and the salvation of all nations in Christ. Therefore, intending to discuss, with the Lord's help, the construction of the temple, and to seek in the material structure the spiritual dwelling of God, it seems appropriate to say something first about its workers, who and where they were from, and about the building material itself. For the Apostle testifies that these are pregnant with spiritual mysteries, saying, "All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our instruction" (I Cor. X).

CHAPTER 2

How Hiram, King of Tyre, Assisted Solomon in His Work. The historical account in the Books of Kings narrates that Solomon, intending to build a house for the Lord, sought assistance from Hiram, king of Tyre, who was always a friend of David and had also begun to establish peace with Solomon after he obtained the kingdom. He found Hiram readily willing to assist him in all things, to the extent that Hiram provided him with artisans, wood, and gold as needed. In gratitude for this kindness, Solomon annually provided him with many measures of wheat and oil for his household (1 Kings 5). There is no doubt that Solomon, whose name means "peaceful," both by his name and the very peaceful condition of his reign, signifies the one of whom Isaiah says: "His dominion will be multiplied, and his peace will have no end" (Isaiah 9). Hiram, whose name means "living on high" in Latin, symbolically represents the Gentile believers who are glorious in both faith and life. There is also nothing to prevent considering that Hiram, being a king and assisting Solomon with royal power in the building of the house of the Lord, typically denotes the rulers converted to the faith, through whose aid the Church is often assisted, nobly augmented, and strengthened against heretics, schismatics, and pagans by their princely decrees.

Therefore, Solomon sought help from Hiram in the work of the temple because, when the Lord came in the flesh to build for Himself His beloved house, the Church, He intended to choose assistants from not just the Jews but also from the Gentiles. For from both peoples He took ministers of the word. Hiram sent Solomon cedar and fir wood cut from Lebanon to be placed in the house of the Lord because the converted Gentiles sent to the Lord men who were once renowned in the world but, cut down by the axe of the Lord's admonition, were now cast down and humbled from the mountain of their pride. Being instructed according to the standard of evangelical truth, they are placed in the building of the Church according to their merit or time. He also sent artisans as philosophers converted to true wisdom, who by right were appointed to rule over the peoples by virtue of their teaching, offered by the Lord to the nations. Such was Dionysius the Areopagite in the times of the apostles, such thereafter was the sweet teacher and most steadfast martyr Cyprian, and many others. He also sent gold, which is accepted in the same significance, as it undoubtedly signifies men distinguished by wisdom.

For all these offerings the nations expect from the Lord the gifts of heavenly grace, namely the wheat of the word of God, and the oil of charity and anointment, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

It aptly corresponds to the matters of the Church that Solomon urgently says to Hiram for the aid of the sacred work: "So command that cedars be cut for me from Lebanon, and my servants will be with your servants. Indeed, the servants of Hiram, who cut the cedars from Lebanon for Solomon, are the teachers chosen from the nations, whose duty is to correct those who rejoiced in worldly matters and glory, subduing their pride and transferring their will to the service of their Redeemer. Solomon's servants were with those servants, laboring together in the mentioned work; because the first teachers from the nations needed to be instructed in the word of faith by the apostles themselves, who had learned from the Lord, lest if they began to teach without teachers, they would be teachers of error. Therefore Solomon wanted Hiram's servants to cut timber for him from Lebanon, because they were more skilled than his own servants at cutting. And for this reason, he wanted his own servants to be present, to show the cutters what size the timbers should be. The figure of this matter is evident, as unquestionably the apostles, who were privileged to hear the word of the gospel from the Lord, knew how to preach it more precisely to others; but the gentiles converted from error and transformed to the truth of the Gospel knew the errors of the gentiles better, and as they knew them more precisely, they learned how to refute and nullify them more skillfully.

Indeed, Paul knew the mystery of the Gospel better, which he learned through revelation, but Dionysius could better refute the false doctrines of Athens, whose errors and all the arguments he had known since childhood. To this understanding corresponds aptly what follows: "For you know that there is no one among my people who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians. For there was no one among the people of the Jews, where the Lord physically taught, who knew so skillfully to refute the errors of the nations, as the gentiles converted to faith, and made Christians from the nations. For the Sidonians and Tyrians, being people of the gentiles, are rightly taken in figure to represent the gentiles.

CHAPTER 3

How many workmen Solomon had in the work of the temple. How many servants our Solomon has sent into this work is indicated in the following

mystical speech: "Solomon chose workmen from all Israel, and the number was thirty thousand men, and he sent them to Lebanon ten thousand by month in rotation, so that they were in their own homes for two months. First, it should be noted that Solomon did not choose workers from all of Israel in vain, nor was there any portion of the people from which worthy men were not chosen, because now they are not to be chosen from one tribe of Aaron's priesthood, but they are to be sought from the whole Church, who are sufficient to build the Lord's house either by their example or by their teaching, and wherever they are found, they are to be immediately promoted to the office of teachers without any respect of persons. When such men are ordained to instruct the unfaithful and call them into the fellowship of the Church, they are nurtured as brave and chosen men to fell the materials for the temple in Lebanon. Indeed, the number of thirty thousand, in which these woodcutters were counted, can be aptly referred to the figure of those who are perfected in the faith of the Trinity, which is especially fitting to teachers. But because thirty thousand were so ordered that ten thousand labored in the holy work each month, we must consider the sacrament of the number ten more carefully.

Ten thousand men from Israel are sent to cut wood for the work of the Lord, because whoever are to be ordained as teachers and instructors of the ignorant must both observe the ten commandments of the law in all things themselves and teach their hearers that they must be observed, and must always hope for and intimate to their hearers the rewards in heaven, which are usually figured by the denarius. Furthermore, the three months during which the rotation was imposed on each group of cutters typically announce the perfection of the three virtues of the Gospels, namely almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. When the Lord said in the Gospel, "Take heed that you do not do your righteousness before men, to be seen by them" (Matthew 6); in the continuation of the same sentence, he mentioned nothing other than almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, which are to be done not for the display to men, but for the glory of the internal observer alone, otherwise they would remain void of the fruit of eternity. By these words, he clearly taught that all the fruits of virtues are insinuated by these three, as if by branches springing from the one root of charity. For by almsgiving is comprehended all that we work benevolently towards our brothers to fulfill the love of neighbor.

Through prayer, we join ourselves to our Creator in all things through internal compunction.

Through fasting, we guard ourselves from the contamination of sins and the enticements of the world, so that with a free mind and chaste body, we may constantly adhere to the love of our Creator and our neighbor. And these are the three months of the temple workers. For since a month is completed by the fullness of the days of the lunar cycle, through it the fullness of each one's spiritual virtue is shown, in which the mind of the faithful is daily illuminated by the Lord, as the moon is by the sun. One month during which wood was cut for the work of the temple means almsgiving, that is, the work of mercy by which we labor for the salvation of our neighbor, that by progressing well they may arrive in the unity of the holy Church, by teaching, correcting, spending temporal goods, and showing examples of life. The other two months, during which they were allowed to remain in their own houses and attend to their own needs, represent prayer and fasting, by which, besides the efforts towards the needs of our brothers externally, we inwardly turn our mind to the Lord to care for our own salvation. And since they alone perfectly care for either their own or their brother's salvation, who humbly submit to the insight of divine grace, it rightly follows: And Adoniram was over such a levy. For Adoniram, who is called "My Lord is exalted" in Latin, insinuates none better than the Lord Savior, whom he imitates by name.

And now Adoniram is placed over the temple workers so that by his provision it is duly ordered, in which months each should go out to work, and when they should return again to care for their own house; since the Lord and our Savior, with His familiar illumination, informs the minds of holy preachers to discern when it is fitting to undertake the work of building the Church by preaching or performing other works of piety; and when it is again appropriate to return to examine their own conscience, as if to inspect their own house, and render it worthy of the heavenly visitor and inspector through prayers and fasting. Therefore, Solomon had seventy thousand who bore burdens, and eighty thousand hewers in the mountain, besides the chiefs who numbered three thousand three hundred, overseeing the people and those who did the work. He calls hewers of stones stonemasons. The same hewers of stones and wood also figuratively designate the holy preachers, who labor with the word of God on the minds of the foolish, and strive

to transform them from the baseness and deformity in which they were born, and responsibly render them suitable for the unity of the faithful, that is, for edification.

And both wood and stones are cut in the mountain, and the hewn and prepared materials are transported to the mountain of the house of the Lord, showing that all men are born on the mountain of pride, because we have derived the origin of our flesh from the transgression of the first man, which pride caused. Whoever, by the grace of God, are preordained for life, are cut down through catechizing and receiving the sacraments of faith, and are transferred from the mountain of pride to the mountain of the house of the Lord, because they are rescued from the power of darkness to the summit of virtues, which is in the unity of the holy Church. It should be noted, however, that these workers were so distributed that part were cutting stones in the mountain, and part were carrying burdens. For there are diverse gifts of the Spirit, and some have greater constancy in speaking and rebuking the unruly, some are gentler for consoling the faint-hearted and uplifting the weak, and some are endowed with the gift of both virtues meeting for the work of the Lord; such as those whom the Apostle speaks to, saying: "Admonish the unruly, comfort the faint-hearted, support the weak, be patient with all. But the officers who were over each work are the authors of the holy Scripture, by whose teaching we are instructed in all ways how to teach the ignorant, rebuke the contemptuous, how we should bear one another's burdens to fulfill the law of Christ.

And the more anyone labors in supporting the needs of others, or in correcting their faults, the more certain future rewards he expects, whether of the rest of souls after death or of the blessed immortality of the bodies. Hence rightly the aforementioned workers are said to be seventy thousand and eighty thousand. Seventy, for the sabbath rest of souls; for the seventh day is consecrated for rest. Eighty, for the hope of resurrection, which preceded on the eighth day, that is, after the sabbath in the Lord, and is also hoped to come for us on the eighth day and in the eighth age. The chiefs, however, were three thousand three hundred, accurately signifying the faith of the holy Trinity, which the holy Scriptures preach to us. And if, instead of three thousand three hundred chiefs, it is written three thousand six hundred in the book of Chronicles, it refers to the same perfection of those noble men. For since the Lord completed the adornment of the world in the

number six, rightly in it the works of the good are frequently figured; and because holy Scripture, with the faith of truth, teaches us to have works of justice, rightly it is testified that the chiefs of the temple were three thousand six hundred. Nor should it be passed over that these seventy and eighty thousand burden bearers and stonemasons with their chiefs were not from Israel, but from proselytes, that is, strangers dwelling among them. For it is written in the book of Chronicles:

"Solomon counted all the men who were aliens in the land of Israel, after the number which David his father had counted, and they found one hundred fifty-three thousand six hundred, and made seventy thousand of them bearers of burdens," etc. Proselytes were called in Greek those who, having come from other nations, by accepting circumcision, had entered into the faith and fellowship of the people of God. Therefore, the workers of the house of the Lord were from the children of Israel, from proselytes, and from the Gentiles. From the children of Israel, namely, thirty thousand were sent to cut cedars from Lebanon. From the proselytes those of whom we were just speaking, stonemasons. From the Gentiles, Hiram himself and his servants, who cut wood from Lebanon with the servants of Solomon. Indeed, every kind of man, by which the church was to be built, preceded in the building of the temple. For Jews, proselytes, and Gentiles converted to the truth of the Gospel, construct one and the same Church of Christ, whether by living rightly or by teaching.

CHAPTER 4

Of what kind of stone the temple is made. And the king commanded that they should take large, precious stones for the foundation of the temple, etc. The foundation of the temple is mystically understood as nothing other than what the Apostle shows, saying: For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid, which is Jesus Christ (I Cor. III). Who, therefore, may rightly be called the foundation of the house of the Lord, because (as Peter says) there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts IV). Into this foundation, large and precious stones are taken, when eminent men by their deeds and holiness adhere with intimate holiness of mind to their Creator, so that the more firmly they place their hope in Him, the more strongly they suffice to guide the lives of others, which means to bear the breadth. Thus, the stones which were placed in the foundation of the temple to bear the entire building are properly the

prophets and apostles, who received the word and sacraments of truth, whether visibly or invisibly, from the wisdom of God itself. Hence, we who strive to imitate their doctrine and life according to our capacity, are said by the Apostle to be founded upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. II).

But also, generally, all the perfect ones, who have learned to adhere faithfully to the Lord Himself and to bear strongly the necessities of their brethren imposed upon them, can be indicated by these large and precious stones. These stones are rightly ordered to be first squared and then placed in the foundation. For every square thing, whichever way it is turned, is accustomed to stand fixed. To which figure indeed the hearts of the elect are likened, who have learned to stand in the firmness of faith such that by no adversity of occurring events, nor even by death itself, can they be inclined from their uprightness of state. Such teachers the Church has received abundantly, not only from Judea but also from the Gentiles. Hence, it is fittingly added about such large, precious, and squared stones: Which the builders of Solomon and the builders of Hiram dressed. Precious stones are dressed, indeed, when the chosen believers, by the instruction and diligence of the saints, leave behind whatever harmful and vain elements they have within themselves, and before the sight of their Creator, they show only the rule of inherent justice, as the form of squaring. The stones, however, were worked upon not only by Solomon's masons but also by Hiram's masons, because from both groups of God's people there were some who by the right of their eminent teachers also became teachers, and as it were, squared them to prepare the lifting of the building to the house of the Lord.

For not only Jeremiah and Isaiah and the other prophets from among the circumcision but also the blessed Job with his sons, who were from the Gentiles, provided to the teachers of the following age the highest example of life and patience and the greatest proclamations of salvific doctrine, so that with unnecessary words, acts, and thoughts cast aside, they would become worthy and fit to bear the burden of the Holy Church. Moreover, the Giblites prepared wood and stones for building the house. Giblos is a city of Phoenicia, mentioned by Ezekiel, saying, "Thy wise men, O Tyre, became thy pilots; the elders of Gebal and its wise men" (Ezek. 27), in lieu of which in Hebrew it is Gobel or Gebel, which means 'defining' or 'bordering'. This term aptly suits those who prepare the hearts of men for the spiritual build-

ing, constructed from the virtues of the soul. Thus, indeed, their listeners are able to teach faith and works of justice, while they themselves, having been first educated by the holy scriptures, have learned diligently the sure definition of truth, what faith is to be held, and the path of virtues to be walked. For one who ignores the discernment of the Catholic faith claimed the office of doctor in vain. Nor do they build a sanctuary for the Lord, but rather ruin for themselves, those who try to teach others a rule which they themselves have not learned.

In building the house of the Lord, first it is necessary to cut the wood and stones from the mountain; because those whom we seek to instruct in the faith of the truth, we must first teach to renounce the devil and be released by being reborn from the lot of the first transgression in which they were born. Then we must seek precious and large stones, and place them in the foundation of the temple; so that we remember, having rejected former conduct, to examine their lives and morals in all things, to set them as an example for our listeners to imitate, whom we know to particularly adhere to the Lord through the virtue of humility, whom we see to endure immovable as if squared against all incursions of temptations with invincible mental stability, whom we recognize as precious and large by reputation and merit. After such significant and great stones are composed in the foundation, the house must be built with carefully prepared woods and stones, and placed in proper order, having been formerly abstracted from their original situation or root: because after the rudiments of faith, after laying in us the foundation of humility following the example of eminent men, a wall of good works must be added upwards, as if by superimposed layers of stones, by walking and progressing from virtue to virtue. Or certainly the large, precious, squared stones of the foundation are the first, as I said before, teachers of the churches, who heard the word of salvation directly from the Lord.

The subsequent orders of stones or woods are the successive priests and teachers of their time, by whose preaching and ministry the Ecclesia building grows or is arranged with virtues. Moreover, the color of the stones with which the temple was made is clearly stated in the book of Paralipomenon, with David speaking to Solomon, showing him the expenses for the temple which he had prepared: "I have prepared every precious stone and Parian marble in abundance. But Parian marble says white marble, such as that island is accustomed to produce; whence the poet says: Olearon, and snow-

white Paros, and the scattered Cyclades across the sea, and we read the frequent straights stirred by the winds. Therefore, he calls Paros snow-white, because it sends marble of the whitest kind: moreover, it is one of the Cyclades, with which stone Josephus indicates the temple had been made, saying: "He raised the temple to the ceiling, constructed from white stone, its height was 60 cubits and one hundred" (Book VIII Antiquities 3); nor is the meaning of the mystery hidden. For it is clear to anyone that the white marble from which the house of the Lord is constructed signifies the clean action of the chosen ones and a conscience purified from every stain of corruption. Such as the wise architect wished them to be, placing them as precious stones adorned with gold and silver upon the foundation of Christ: "Beloved," he said, "let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, completing holiness in the fear of God."

CHAPTER 5

When and where the temple was built. Thus it happened in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, etc. What is said in the fourth year, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month of King Solomon over Israel, is the intended meaning. In the fourth year of King Solomon, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month. The second month, however, is called May: for April, in which the Passover is celebrated, was the beginning of months among the Hebrews, the first of the months of the year. From this it is plainly evident that immediately, after the Passover was completed, he began to build the house for the Lord, and the people, consecrated by the mystical solemnity, set their hands to the mystical work. There is also a mention of the exodus from Egypt when the tabernacle began to be built, so that the reader may be reminded of how many years elapsed between the construction of each house, and may recognize the spiritual sacrament of this total period. For four hundred and twenty make four hundred and eighty. Four, however, are aptly suited to the evangelical perfection, because of the number of the evangelists themselves. One hundred and twenty pertain to the teaching of the law, because of the same number of years as the lawgiver.

In this number, too, the grace of the Holy Spirit was received by the early Church, clearly showing that those who use the law lawfully, that is, recognizing and embracing the grace of Christ in it, are rightly filled with the grace of His Spirit, by which they become more fervent in His love. We have

also said that by the tabernacle which Moses and the children of Israel made in the desert, the synagogue was meant; but by the temple which Solomon and the children of Israel, with the help of proselytes and Gentiles, constructed, the church of the Gentiles can be designated. The worship and religion of the tabernacle remained for four hundred and eighty years, and then the temple began to be built, because the scripture of the Old Testament abounds with such perfection that if anyone understands it well, it contains within itself all the mysteries of the New Testament. Many of the fathers of the Old Testament lived with such a pinnacle of perfection that they should in no way be considered inferior to the apostles and apostolic men. The tabernacle remained with the people of God until the construction of the temple, for four hundred and eighty years, that is, one hundred and twenty multiplied by four: for from the time of the giving of the law of God until the incarnation of the Lord and the time of revealed grace, there have never been lacking men who, established in the law, observed the evangelical perfection in mind and work;

nor was there a lack of scripture that intimated the grace of the New Testament in the Old with prophetic sayings. But the fact that the house of the Lord began to be built in the fourth year of King Solomon can be mystically referred to as occurring after the completion of the dispensation of the Lord's incarnation, written in the four books of the Gospel, sent down from Heaven by the Holy Spirit, and the structure of the church began. And the fact that it was begun in the second month can be referred to the choice of the Gentiles, who received the building after Israel was first. Hence the second month was granted in the law for making the Passover to those who were unclean because of a soul or who were far away and could not come in the first month to make the Passover. In which we are most clearly designated, who were unclean because of the death of our soul, and still far off from the people of God, unable to keep the first Passover, which was made in the flesh and blood of the Lamb. But today we celebrate the second Passover, made in the body and blood of our Redeemer, by whom we have been sought and cleansed. As for the place where the temple was built, it is more clearly shown in the book of Chronicles, where it is written:

And Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, which had been shown to David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Chron.

3). Therefore, the house of the Lord is built on the mountain, in the vision of peace, because the church, expanded throughout the world, stands firm in one and the same faith and in the fellowship of Catholic truth. For God is not in the division of minds, but His place is made in peace, and His habitation in Zion (Psalm 75). It is built on the mountain, namely on the Lord the Savior Himself, about whom Isaiah says: "In the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established at the summit of the mountains" (Isaiah 2). And He says about Himself in the Gospel: "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5). He is indeed the mountain of mountains, who, though He arose from the earth through the origin of the flesh He assumed, surpasses the power and sanctity of all earthborn beings by the summit of His unique dignity. Certainly, on this mountain the city or house of the Lord is erected, for if our hope and faith do not take root in Him, they are nothing.

This mountain is rightly called Moriah, that is, the vision, because He deigns to see and help His chosen, who labor in this present life, preserving them for the eternal vision of His glory. For He is the place where Abraham offered his son Isaac to the Lord and, by the devotion of his obedience, deserved to be seen by Him, from which it also received its name. Hence, the Lord says: "Take your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of vision, and offer him as a burnt offering" (Genesis 22). For the land of vision, in Hebrew, it says the land of Moriah. And because the sacrifice of Isaac prefigured the Lord's Passion, it is rightly that a temple is built on the place of the same sacrifice; for by faith and the mysteries of the Lord's Passion, the church, dedicated, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. About this mountain, it is well added: "Which was shown to David his father. For it was shown to David, as well as to the other prophets, that the Lord would come in the flesh, who would cleanse the church called from the Gentiles from sins through the sacraments of His own Incarnation, and would consecrate it as a faithful and beloved house for Himself. It is well, however, added: "In the place which David had prepared. For David had prepared a place for the Lord by singing, and the other prophets by prophesying, truly to Solomon, in whom the house would be built;

for they established the hearts of their hearers in the faith of the truth, diligently admonishing them to receive the Son of God coming in the flesh with a faithful and devoted mind. Hence, the Lord, about the peoples pre-

pared to believe in Him, says to His disciples: "Lift up your eyes, and see the fields, that they are already white for harvest; and he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together" (John 4). As if He were saying with other words about the building of the temple: "Lift up your eyes, and see the place, for it is now ready for the building of the house of the Lord. And he who builds by teaching receives wages, and gathers precious stones into eternal life, that both he who prepares the place and he who builds may rejoice together"; that is, the prophet predicting the coming of the Lord and the apostle proclaiming His coming both obtain one reward together. The same place was well in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, for the church is customarily designated by the term threshing floor, as John says about the Lord: "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor" (Matthew 3:12). Ornan, who is interpreted as illuminated, was a Jebusite by nation.

By nationality, he signifies the Gentiles, but by name shows those same Gentiles to be enlightened by the Lord and transformed into sons of the Church, to whom the Apostle rightly says: "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8). Jebus is the same city as Jerusalem. And Jebus indeed means trampled; but Jerusalem means the vision of peace: in which, as long as Ornan, a Gentile, reigned, it was called Jebus. When David bought the place of the burnt offering in it, and Solomon built the Temple of the Lord in it, it was no longer called Jebus, but Jerusalem; for surely the Gentiles, as long as they remained ignorant of the divine worship, were trampled upon and mocked by unclean spirits, following as they were led towards mute idols. But when the grace of their Creator regarded them, they immediately found both the place and name of peace within themselves, with the Lord saying about them: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). Therefore, when Ornan still had the kingdom in this city, it was called Jebus; but when he sold the place of his threshing floor with the oxen and threshing sledges to King David, it received the name Jerusalem; for while the Gentiles persisted in their obstinacy, they were trampled upon, as vile and abject, by malignant spirits.

But when they learned to sell all their possessions and offer them to the true King, they could no longer be trampled on by demons and vices but became more composed of the inner peace which they had with their Creator.

CHAPTER 6

Of what measure it was made. The house which King Solomon built for the Lord had 60 cubits in length, etc. The length of the house signifies the long-suffering of the holy Church, by which in the exile of this pilgrimage patiently tolerates all adversities, until it reaches the homeland it expects. The width intimates charity, by which, with the breadth of the heart opened, it rejoices to love not only friends in God but also enemies for God's sake, until the time comes when, with its enemies converted or utterly destroyed, it rejoices with friends alone in God in peace. The height proclaims the hope of future remuneration, by the consideration of which it willingly despises all lowly things, whether they allure or oppose, until, surpassing both, it alone deserves to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living; hence the length of the house is aptly comprehended by the number sixty cubits. For the number six, in which the world was made, usually designates the perfection of good works. And it is necessary for us to bear the distresses of our pilgrimage with patience, so that by the merit of good operation we may be able to enter the promised homeland when it appears. The width is determined by the number twenty, on account of the double aspect of charity, by which we love God and our neighbor.

The height by the number thirty, on account of the faith of the holy Trinity, who is [which is] one God, in the vision of whom all the desires of our hope are suspended. Thus six pertains to the perfection of work, two to the love of God and neighbor, three to the hope of divine vision. Each of these numbers is rightly multiplied by ten because it is only through faith and the observance of the Decalogue of the law that either our patience is healthfully exercised, or charity is beneficially kindled, or hope is sublimely carried off to eternal desires. It should be noted here that the 30 cubits of height did not reach to the roof of the temple but to the lower ceiling: for it is clearly written in the book of Chronicles that the height was 120 cubits (II Chron. III). The mysteries of which will be more aptly treated later, when the order of reading reaches the middle and third chambers. There was a portico in front of the temple 20 cubits in length, according to the measure of the width of the temple, and it was 10 cubits wide in front of the face of the temple. Of this portico, it is written in the book of Chronicles: But the portico in front of the house was extended in length according to the meas-

ure of the width of the house, 20 cubits. Thus it is evident that this portico was made on the eastern part of the temple.

For the temple was oriented to the east, just as the tabernacle, and it had the door of the portico facing the east towards the door of the temple, as the Jewish historian Josephus very clearly teaches: so that the rising equinoctial sun, with the lines of its rays directed through the three doors, namely of the portico, the temple, and the oracle, could shed light upon the Ark of the Covenant (*Antiq.* l. VIII, c. 3). Because the temple designates the holy Church, the portico which was in front of and closer to the temple usually received the sunlight; what is more fitting than to consider that it typifies that part which preceded the times of the Lord's incarnation? in which the patriarchs and prophets are included, who were the first to receive the rising Sun of Righteousness in this world, and they bore witness to the Lord being born in the flesh, either by living, preaching, being born, or dying. Therefore, the door of the temple is the Lord; because no one comes to the Father except through Him. Hence, elsewhere He says: I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved (*John X*). The door of the portico is the prophetic word, which guided those entering by a straight path to the door of the Lord; because it proclaimed the grace of the Lord Savior, by which He was to redeem the world. Therefore, the entire construction of the portico signifies the faithful of that time.

Accordingly, the door in the portico symbolizes the teachers, who illuminated others with the light of life and opened the gate of entry to the Lord. And rightly there is one door because of the consonant faith and love for the truth among all the saints; which portico, according to the width of the temple, was twenty cubits long, because the ancient just awaited with much patience and long-suffering the time when the Lord, manifest in the flesh, would bring the new grace of the Gospel to the world, not themselves having received the promises, but seeing and greeting them from afar. Therefore, they equaled the length of the temple in their own length, because with the long-suffering of a devout mind they desired the expansion of the Church in the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; although they were as yet separated by time from the sacraments of the Lord's incarnation, they were nevertheless near in faith and proclamation. In the very front part of this most sacred portico were the blessed proto-martyr Abel, Seth, Enoch, and the other just ones of the original world; in its innermost

part and almost near the mystical wall of the temple, the parents of the Lord's precursor, Simeon, Anna, and others occupied a place. And although they merited to see His birth, they could not reach the hearing of His doctrine and the perception of His sacraments.

This portico was well ten cubits wide, because such as these, even if they had not yet received the words or mysteries of the Gospel, which were to be delivered through the Lord; nevertheless, they kept the commandments of the Decalogue, which they received, with a heart enlarged in perfect love of the Lord.

CHAPTER 7

On its windows and panels around. And he made windows for the temple with oblique latticework. The windows of the temple are holy teachers and spiritual ones in the Church, who, being spiritually elevated, are permitted to see the heavenly secrets more clearly than others. When they reveal publicly to the faithful what they see in secret, it is as if the oblique lattice windows, which were wider inside, receive the sunlight; because it is necessary for anyone who perceives the light of higher contemplation, even for a moment, to immediately broaden the embrace of their heart by greater diligence in chastening and preparing for higher deeds. And he built chambers around the wall of the temple, in the walls of the house, around the temple and the oracle, and made lateral chambers around it. The upper chamber had a width of five cubits, the middle chamber six cubits, and the third chamber seven cubits in width (Matt. IV). These chambers in the Gospel, where the Lord was tempted by the devil, were called the pinnacles of the temple. And we read also that James, the brother of the Lord, an apostle, was lifted to the pinnacle of the temple, from where he preached to the people (Hegesippus, l. V). However, whether it was customary for teachers to sit in these chambers to make sermons to the crowd below, we do not find anywhere in the Scriptures.

Therefore, the reason for the sacrament is clear, because these three chambers represent the three degrees of the faithful, namely those who are married, those who are continent, and virgins, distinguished indeed by the height of their profession but all relating to the house of God and adhering to it with a fixed mind in the same faith and truth. Where it is beautifully said, the upper chamber had a width of five cubits, the middle six, the third seven. Therefore, the upper chamber was narrower than the others, the

middle wider than the upper, but narrower than the lowest, because an exalted profession of virtue should uphold a higher way of living. For whoever has renounced the bond of marriage and consecrated their virginity to the Lord should also display manners worthy of virginity. They should abstain from idle talk, anger, strife, slander, indecent attire, feasting, drinking, contention, and jealousy; and on the contrary, they should devote themselves to holy vigils, prayers, divine readings, psalms, teachings, and almsgiving, as well as other fruits of the Spirit, such that they hold the state of future life in their profession where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven. They should strive to imitate this state, as much as possible for mortals, in the present. But the lowest chamber had a greater width, because it is not said to the married: "Go, sell what you have and give to the poor"; but, "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.

You shall not commit murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness," and so on (Matt. XIX). The continent hold a middle place, inferior to the virgins but superior to the married. Their most glorious portion built the primitive church in Jerusalem, where it is written by blessed Luke, "The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul," and so on (Acts IV). History testifies that most of them had left their wifely embraces, as it mentions in the story of Saint Stephen, where it calls the women of the same religion, not wives, but widows of them. Each floor had walls around it, that is, little towers, so that no one standing or sitting on the same floors could fall to the lower levels (Acts VI), which we read happened to King Ahaziah in Samaria. Truly, these walls are fittingly designated as the daily defenses of divine protection towards us. Concerning which the Psalmist says: "The angel of the Lord shall encamp around those who fear him, and deliver them" (Psalm XXXIII). Indeed, King Ahaziah of Samaria ascended to the upper room, he who had separated himself from the house of David, but fell through the lattice;

because even if heretics or schismatics seem to ascend some height of good action, since they do not have the bond of Church unity, as if protected by open and unstable walls, they always relapse into the depths of vice, while, deprived of divine aid, they perish in the pride of their stubbornness. It is explained by what skill these aforementioned floors are attached to the walls of the temple when it is added: "He placed beams around the house on

the outside, so they would not be attached to the walls of the temple. Therefore, the beams that fortified and adorned the house from the inside were so long that their ends projected outward: indeed, in the lowest order seven cubits, in the middle six, in the highest five. And on these ends of the beams the floors were placed, not attached to the temple walls, but positioned next to the walls, on the beams that extended from the walls. Who then are designated as the beams of the house, which carry the floors, if not preachers? While themselves holding a high and honorable place in the church of God, they lift the weaker and more fragile away from the desire of the lowly by their preaching, and elevate them to desire and hope for heavenly things. They also help by their intercessions, so that they may persist in their endeavors. We read in the book of Chronicles that the beams of the temple, like its other interiors, were covered with gold.

There is no doubt that this was so, the parts of the beams which were inside the temple were covered with gold plates, but the parts that were visible outside were not gilded, showing the appearance and shape of the cedar itself, on which the floors were laid. Therefore, what part of the beams protruded outward signifies the life of the saints, which could become known to us below. What shone gilded inside the temple metaphorically signifies the clarity with which they rejoice in the heavenly homeland in the sight of their Creator. This clarity of the golden beams was visible only to those who had entered the temple, because how great is the abundance of the sweetness of God, which he hides for those who fear him, and those who perfectly hope in him, only those who have merited to enter the heavenly kingdom know. Yet, when we see or read about the life, sufferings, and teachings of the saints, we are motivated by their example, as if we are lifted up from the earth by the ends of the beams that appear outward, because although we still cannot perceive the internal glory of the saints, from what we have been able to see outwardly, we faithfully adhere to the lofty members of the Church. We can also understand these things about the saints still in this life, whose purity of love, with which they shine in the hidden parts of their hearts before the Lord, we cannot see.

Yet, from what they show outwardly by speaking, acting, or suffering, we find help for our salvation. The house, however, when it was being built from hewn stones, etc. These things properly belong to that part of the church which, after the labors and struggles of this age, will have deserved to

be introduced to eternal rewards. For there only the perfect and spotless, and those chastened from every stain of iniquity, enter. For nothing defiled, making an abomination and falsehood, will enter that city, as John wrote in the Apocalypse. Hammer and axe, and every tool of iron, are not heard, because here we are beaten with adversities, and we are exercised by the discipline of truth, that there we may be arranged in places according to our merit, and with chastisement ceasing, by the glue of love alone, by which we are bound to one another, we may be enriched by being filled with one spirit. However, although it is said: Noah was a perfect man in his generations, and blessed are the spotless in the way, and such like, no one can truly be perfect and without blemish, as long as he walks in the way of this life. For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin. Nevertheless, according to the manner of this time, those are called perfect and spotless, who will then truly be perfected, when, released from the bonds of the body, they reach that immortal beauty of the house of the Lord, and ascend to the place of the tabernacle of His glory, and only the perfect and spotless, and those chastened from every stain of iniquity, will enter that city.

CHAPTER 8

On the ascent or structure of the middle and third tabernacle. The door of the middle side was on the right side of the house, etc. Some, misunderstanding this place, think that the door of the temple was on the south, not paying attention that if Scripture had wanted to signify this, it would not say in this way: the door of the middle side was on the right side of the house, but rather simply, and the house had a door to the south. Now, however, it signifies something far different. The right side of the house, indeed, refers to the southern side of the temple. In whose eastern part the door was made at the very corner, near the ground. Entering in, they immediately ascended gradually to higher places, having a way of ascent through the very inner sides of the wall, until by such a journey they reached the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third. This is undoubtedly the case, although Scripture does not say so, because ascending in this way they had very frequent windows from the south, by the light of which they could make the journey surely and without stumbling. This place indeed specifically regards the body of the Lord, which he took from the Virgin. For the door of the middle side was on the right side of the house, because when the Lord died on the cross, one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear.

And rightfully on the right side of the house, because the holy Church believes that his right side was opened by the soldier. Where the evangelist also used an apt word, not to say struck or wounded, but opened, as if the door of the middle side, through which the way to heavenly things would be opened to us. Accordingly, he added: And immediately blood and water came out. Water with which we are washed in baptism, and blood with which we are consecrated in the holy chalice. Through this door, we have an ascent into the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third; because through the faith and mysteries of our Redeemer, from the present conversation of the church, we ascend to the rest of souls after death, and again from the rest of souls on the coming day of judgment to the immortality of bodies as if to the third chamber with a higher advancement, from which we will live forever in great happiness of both, namely body and soul. Which journey was indeed done invisibly, so that only those who entered knew it, although those outside also saw the door itself, because indeed the acts of the faithful in this world, and the celebrations of the sacraments can also be seen by the reprobates; but the secrets of faith and the grace of intimate love none recognize unless through these things the Lord as a guide leads to heavenly things. For whoever says he knows God, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar.

It should be noted that the height of 30 cubits, mentioned above, reached up to the middle chamber. Additionally, another thirty cubits were added up to the third chamber, reaching the portico that surrounded the temple from the south, north, and west, as we learn from the account of Josephus. Then, up to the top of the temple roof, another 60 cubits were counted, thus the total height of the house, according to the book of Chronicles, was completed at 120 cubits. The portico, which was in front of the temple to the east, according to the testimony of the aforementioned volume, had the same height in cubits. The book calls the porticoes we mentioned around the temple, storehouses and chambers. Moreover, David gave his son Solomon the description of the portico and temple, and the storehouses, and upper chambers, and inner rooms in the sanctuary and the house of atonement. He also mentioned the outer houses that were beyond the court of priests around the temple when he immediately added: "And also all the courts and rooms around for the treasuries of the house of the Lord, and the treasuries of the holy things. The fact that the entire height of the temple was 120 cubits

refers to the same mystery, that the early church in Jerusalem, after the passion, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord into heaven, received the grace of the Holy Spirit in this number of men.

For fifteen, which consists of seven and eight, is sometimes referred to as a signification of future life, which is now carried on in the rest of the souls of the faithful and will be completed at the end of the world in the resurrection of immortal bodies. The fifteen taken in a triangular number, that is, when all its parts are counted, make 120. Therefore, the number of one hundred and twenty appropriately signifies the great blessedness of the elect in the future life. Aptly in this, the third chamber of the house of the Lord is consummated, because after the present labors of the faithful, after the rest of the souls is received in the future, the full happiness of the whole church will be completed in the glory of the resurrection. To this mystery it also pertains, as we have said, that the Lord, rising from the dead and ascending to heaven, sent the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire to this number of men, who made those who were separated by the diversity of languages have a common speech in the praise of God. For the church also, rising from death in its own time, and ascending to heaven in corrupted flesh, will be fully and perfectly illuminated by the gift of the Holy Spirit, when according to the promise of the apostle God will be all in all.

Then there will be a complete union of languages in all to proclaim the great deeds of God because in harmonious mind and voice, everyone will praise the glory of the divine majesty, which they will see present.

CHAPTER 9

That the walls are covered with cedar and the floor with fir. And he built the house, and completed it, etc. The ceilings are panels, which, arranged and decorated with great beauty, are affixed with beams to the lower part. And because the house of the Lord was made with three floors, it undoubtedly had three ceilings. But what more fitting can we believe is signified by the ceilings than the more elevated righteous ones in the holy church? Whose work and teaching, set forth as an example to all, preeminently stands out as if higher up, and who, through their intercessions and exhortations, protect the minds of the weak, so they do not fall in temptations. These ceilings, appropriately, are described as being made of cedar. For cedar is a tree of entirely imperishable nature, of pleasant odor, bright appearance, driving away and killing serpents with its burning scent. These attributes suit those who

are perfect, whose patience is invincible, their fame of virtues is outstanding, their presence is most pleasing to all good people, their authority is most steadfast in overcoming and refuting those who resist the truth, who in this life and in the next shine with singular eminence above other saints.

And he built a platform over the entire house, etc. It signifies little towers that were made around the highest part of the roof of the house, lest anyone reaching higher spots might suddenly fall down. Moses commanded this to be done in every house that anyone would build. He said, "When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you do not bring bloodshed on your house if someone falls from it. These platforms or little towers are called side structures above; where it was said, "He built platforms around the wall of the temple, on the walls of the house, around the temple and the oracle"; immediately it was added, "And he made sides around it. In these sides, indeed, we understand that divine protections are designated, which assist us daily, laboring still in this world and striving towards higher things as much as we can, so that we do not fail. We should understand this place according to its form, but with the distinction that in this life, amid frequent temptations from the enemy or obstacles from our own frailty, we are defended by the constant gift of divine grace so that we do not fall. In that other life, however, which the highest roof of the temple, as we have taught above, signifies, we are so fortified by the grace of present protection that we neither wish to sin anymore, nor can we, nor are we affected by any fear of death, pain, or tempting adversary.

Concerning the present helps from the Lord, as from the sides of the platforms, the Lord Himself says, speaking of His people: "He called upon me, and I will hear him and glorify him. But concerning the future grace with which that heavenly city is illuminated, the prophet says to the same city: "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem," and so forth to: "He makes peace in your borders. But this platform is rightly remembered to be five cubits high in the roof of the house of the Lord, because in that homeland, the presence of divine brightness fills us so that our sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch have nothing sweet except to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength; and to love our neighbor as ourselves. And he covered the house with cedars. Here it refers to the very highest roof of the house, that is, the platform that was placed on top of the highest beams. The temple, like the tabernacle, did not have a peak at the top but

was flat, as it is customary for all builders in Palestine and Egypt to construct houses this way. But this very framework, with which the house and ceilings are covered, signifies the eminent men in the glory of resurrection, and those who attain the pinnacle of virtue with unparalleled sanctity; of one of whom it is said: Among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist (Matt. XI).

If you wish to know the magnitude of his comparison, hear what the Angel said to his father: He will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke I). And he built the walls of the house inside with cedar panels, from the floor of the house to the top of the walls, and covered the ceilings with wood. The inside of the house was lined with cedar. For externally the stone itself, of which it was made, shone with such brilliance as if it were covered with a white stone. According to mystical senses, the walls of the temple are the people of the faithful, from whom the universal Holy Church consists, whose expansion through the world the width of the walls indicates, and the hope and all intention directed towards heavenly things the height indicates. Or certainly the height of the wall, which consists of the orders of stones placed one upon another, designates the state of the present Church; where the elect, all built upon the foundation of Christ, succeed in order over the course of times in succession, supporting one another, fulfill the law of Christ, which is love. For as those who are now taught by preceding teachers, in turn teach others, as in orders laid upon one another like living stones in the house of God, they are carried by the steadfastness fixed by others, so that they themselves suffice to carry others unto the last, who will be born at the end of the world, the righteous;

who, as if placed at the top of the house of God, are taught and carried by others, but do not have those they would teach, or whose frailty they should tolerate; who indeed are covered with cedar panels within, when the hearts of the faithful overflow with the love of virtue. For as we have taught above, the nature of cedar typically denotes perfect men; so also in appropriate places, it not unjustly designates the height of virtues by which that same perfection is attained. But all things are covered with wood, from the floor of the house to the top of the walls, and to the ceilings, when the elect from the rudiments of faith to the perfection of good action, and up to the entry into the heavenly homeland, do not cease to labor in good works, as from the first just to the last, in the consummation of the age, all strive for virtues, by

whose merit they can rightly declare, for we are a pleasing aroma of Christ to God in every place. And he covered the floor with pine boards. This is more fully explained in the book of Chronicles, where it is written: He also spread the floor of the temple with the most precious marble, laid with great beauty (2 Par. III). Whence it is evident that he did not place the pine boards, with which he covered the floor, on the ground;

but first spread it with marble, and then placed the boards on top, and added gold over these two, as is read in the following: For just as the height of the wall rising on high, and reaching up to the ceilings, signifies the progress of virtues by which the elect attain to the heavenly kingdom, or certainly the very choirs of the elect succeeding one another through changing times, so the equality of the floor justly demonstrates their concordant lowliness, by which, placed in temporal life, they interact socially with one another as dictated by love. For that floor, laid with the most precious marble, with great beauty, and the same marble soon covered with pine boards; for indeed the life of the just must first be fortified in the heart with the firmness of faith, and then adorned in work by the breadth of spiritual virtues; otherwise, what benefit would the decoration of the most precious marble covered by wood boards have, if it did not silently signify something mystical, and teach that the amplitude of good works must be supported by the strength of undefiled faith? Pine, because of its height and durable strength, not inappropriately signifies the mind of the elect, despising the lowest desires of the mind, always intent on heavenly contemplation, and excelling in the virtue of patience. The gold panels, which are placed over the marble and pine boards, is the breadth of charity itself, from a pure heart and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith;

which, as gold is more precious than the other metals, so it shines with singular light among the other virtues in the temple of God. Hence well does the Apostle, when he enumerated many goods of virtues, which must be kept by those humble in heart, as the ornament of the floor, saying: Clothe yourselves therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, with compassion, kindness, humility, patience, meekness, bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if anyone has a complaint against another: even as Christ forgave us, so also should you do (Coloss. III); suddenly, as if adding the covering of gold from above, he subjoined: Above all, have charity, which is the bond of perfection.

CHAPTER 10

On the specific measurement of the temple itself and the oracle. He also built with cedar boards of twenty cubits, etc. He speaks of the western rear side of the temple. For the temple had an entrance from the rising of the sun, and the interior house from the setting, which is the Holy of Holies. But when he says that the boards, which separated the interior house from the exterior, were built from the floor up to the upper parts, he does not mean up to the ceilings which were thirty cubits suspended high from the floor, as said above, but only up to twenty cubits in height, as it is clearly read in the following. The remaining part above the boards was open and empty up to the ceilings of ten cubits in height, and twenty cubits in length, according to the width of the house, through which naturally the smoke of the burning incense used to ascend into the Holy of Holies and penetrate to cover the Ark of the Lord (Heb. IX). In this distinction of the house of the Lord, a mystical figure is revealed, and with the apostle explaining, it is as clear as light, because the first house, into which the priests always entered, completing the duties of sacrifices, represents the present Church, where we daily offer sacrifices of praise to the Lord, attending to pious works.

The inner house, which was made at the back part of the temple, is the life promised to us in the heavens, which is indeed more inward compared to this current life of our exile; for in the presence of the highest King, the perpetual celebration of blessed angels and humans takes place there. Hence it is well and rightfully said to the deserving servant: Enter into the joy of your Lord (Matt. XXV). But it is later in time, because after the labors of this present age, we are led to enter it. The boards, however, which divide both houses from each other, are the barriers of heaven, whose opening we daily long for, and, as much as the Lord grants, with constant piety, we knock until they open and we are allowed to enter: where, even if we are not yet permitted to enter before the dissolution of the bodies, we nonetheless have an open door to the divine mercy, through which we may send ahead the incense of our prayers, almsgiving, fasting, and other works. Hence it is that the cedar wall of the interior house had a door in its upper parts throughout the whole length, through which the smoke of the incense would enter; because the eyes of the Lord are open over His house day and night, and His ears attentive to the prayers of His servants, and this through the entire width of the Church spread throughout the world.

The altar of the incense, which indeed stood in the exterior house but near the door of the interior house, was a type of the perfected just ones, who, though retained in the world by their bodies, are wholly lifted to heavenly things with all desire, and, like incense, emit rising smoke into the Holy of Holies, for burning with heavenly love, by frequent calls of prayers, they knock at the ears of their Creator. And it finds the door widely open with the smoke of incense above because the more pure each one is on earth, and as if residing closer to the heavenly homeland, the sooner they receive all that they ask for from the Lord. Moreover, the inner house was made 20 cubits long, because of the mystery of the twin love, of which we spoke above, which in this meanwhile life illuminates the minds of the elect to the greatest extent, but in that homeland, when the works of other virtues cease, it alone reigns perpetually. Furthermore, the temple itself was 40 cubits, in front of the oracle. We said the temple itself typified the Church; whence it was rightly 40 cubits: this number is often placed in significance of the present labor of the faithful, in the same way that fifty is in the significance of future rest and peace. For the precepts are contained in the number ten, through the observance of which we arrive at life. Equally, ten signifies that very eternal life which we desire and labor for.

The world, too, is quadrangular, in which we fight for acquiring that same life. Whence the Psalmist, seeing the Church to be gathered from the nations, said: He gathered them from the regions, from the rising and setting of the sun, from the north and the sea (Psalm 106). Ten multiplied by four makes forty. Hence the people, liberated from Egypt, exercised many labors in the desert for forty years, in the figure of the present Church, and at the same time was refreshed with heavenly bread, and thus finally arrived at the long-promised homeland. For it is tried in temptations for forty years, to denote the bearers of the Church, who sweat to observe God's law throughout the world: it is fed with manna from heaven for those same forty years, to show that the very sufferings which the Church endures are to be alleviated by the hope of heavenly reward, that is, eternal beatitude: where those who now hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled; and as the same Church sings to its Redeemer God: But I shall appear before you in righteousness; I will be satisfied when your glory is manifested (Psalm 17). Thus, the people of God are both afflicted by adversities and refreshed with manna; so that the word of the Apostle is fulfilled: Rejoicing in hope, patient

in tribulation (Rom. 12). In this figure, our Lord also fasted for forty days before his death in the flesh (Matt. 4):

he also feasted with his disciples for forty days after his resurrection in the flesh, appearing to them with many proofs, and speaking of the kingdom of God, and eating together. By fasting, he showed our labor within himself, but by eating and drinking with his disciples, he showed his consolation within us. By fasting, he seemed to cry out: Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing and drunkenness, and the cares of this life (Luke 21): but by eating and drinking, he seemed to cry out: Behold, I am with you all the days, even to the consummation of the age (Matt. 28); and again he said: I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you (John 16). For while we tread the way of the Lord, we both fast from the emptiness of this present age and are refreshed by the promise of the future, not setting our heart here, but feeding it on high there.

CHAPTER 11

That the whole house may be adorned with cedar and gold. And the whole house was adorned internally with cedar, etc. We have spoken about cedar, that it signifies the insurmountable beauty of virtues. By this wood, the whole house of the Lord is adorned internally when the hearts of the righteous shine with the love of good works alone. The house of the Lord has carvings and crafted joinings in cedar boards when each of the elect connect themselves to each other with the most beautiful bond of charity; so that although the multitude of the faithful is innumerable, yet they are rightly said to have one heart and one soul for the fellowship of common faith and love (Acts 3). For the carvings, which were placed at the joinings of the boards so that one panel was made from all, are the offices of charity, by which holy brotherhoods are connected to each other and composed into one house of Christ throughout the whole world.

This house also has prominent engravings when the saints do not hide their works of virtues clandestinely, but manifestly present them to everyone, showing how they live and what they do as examples of living, just as the apostle Paul did, who not only showed how much he excelled by preaching Christ to the Gentiles and suffering for Christ, but also declared in his letters to the Churches how many dangers he endured for Christ and how many revelations he was elevated by Christ, who did not hesitate to say to his

listeners: Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ (1 Cor. 11). What else does he show in the house of the Lord but prominent engravings, since he provided himself as imitable to all by the singular height of his virtue? Everything was adorned with cedar boards, and no stone could be seen on the wall. And the stones of the wall or pavement, the boards, and the gold, all signify the life of the saints in the Church. However, when they are placed together with distinction: the living stones are the saints, glued together in one and the same rule by the strength of faith; the cedar or fir boards are the saints connected by the breadth of various virtues, according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit in one and the same faith; the gold plates are the eminent saints, having the charity of knowledge, and rejoicing together with this most pleasing splendor. The blessed apostle comprehended these three in one sentence, saying:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power, but faith which works by love (Gal. 5). The stone held the figure of invincible faith, the cedar of fragrant action, the gold of transcendent love. The stone wall is adorned with cedar boards when the profession of faith is adorned with good works, lest it be judged idle or dead without works. But because the law was written on stone, the doctrine of the Gospel was confirmed by the wood of the Lord's passion, hence the people were circumcised with stone, we are consecrated on the forehead by the sign of the cross. Not incongruously, the stone walls of the temple and the pavement of precious marble can bear the type of those who lived faithfully and perfectly in the law; the cedar or fir boards can indicate the just of the New Testament, who, willing to follow the Lord, deny themselves, and taking up their cross daily, follow him. And since the common glory of the supernal reward remains for the just of both times, a threefold appearance of gold plates is joined to the stones and precious wood. Nor should it seem contradictory, what we said above, that the portico which was in front of the temple bears the figure of the faithful of ancient times; but the temple itself, of those who came into the world after the time of the Lord's Incarnation; and furthermore, that the inner house figures the joys of the heavenly kingdom, which are given to both the righteous;

now let us say that the stone walls designate the ancient people of God, the cedar boards the new, and the golden plates, the rewards of both in heaven, since the same temple walls, both in the portico, and in the temple itself,

and in the Holy of Holies were equally made of stones, wood, and gold. For the repetition of the same figures in diverse matters is manifold. But this must also be said, that there were many, both under the law and before the written law, who served the Lord lawfully, not killing, not fornicating, not stealing, not bearing false witness, honoring father and mother, and loving their neighbors as themselves. These belonged to the stone walls of the portico. There were others, who with greater perfection, having left the business of the world, and taken up their cross, followed the Lord, who, as the Apostle says: "experienced ridicule and beatings, moreover bonds and imprisonment, were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. XI). Those who led an evangelical life before the manifested times of the Gospel, what did they shine with, except as cedar boards in the portico before entering the temple? Both of whom, since the same heavenly kingdom receives them in common, although in distinct mansions, are adorned with gold internally, like the portico of the temple after the stones and cedar.

However, there are many at this time, who content with the legal precepts that we have mentioned above, believe it sufficient for themselves if they may deserve to come to life. There are others who striving for perfection, having sold all that they have, follow the Lord, mindful of his promise, in which he foretold not only life, but also a special honor to be given to such in the resurrection: "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. XIX). These pertain figuratively to the walls of the temple made of white stone, those to the cedar boards, both awaiting from the Lord the rewards of eternal light, as if golden plates with which to be adorned. In the hidden places of the temple there are precious stones, there are boards of aromatic wood, both covered with gold; because both those who walked undefiled in the law of the Lord, and those who received perfectly the grace of the Gospel, equally enjoy eternal life. Moreover, he had made an oracle in the middle of the house in the inner part, to place there the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

This was previously explained preemptively, that the oracle, that is, the sanctuary of the Holy of Holies, would signify the mysteries of the heavenly

homeland, with the ark of the covenant representing the Lord Savior, in whom alone we have a covenant of peace with the Father; who after his resurrection, ascending into heaven, placed the flesh which he assumed from the virgin at the right hand of the Father. Furthermore, the oracle had twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in height. It signifies the cedar wall, which separated the oracle, that is, the Holy of Holies from the outer temple, as we also said above. Therefore, the oracle, where the ark was, had twenty cubits in length and breadth and height, that is, in a square; because in that heavenly homeland, where the eyes of the saints see the King in his beauty, only the charity of divine and fraternal grace shines through all; which is also established by the present words, when it is said: "And he covered it and overlaid it with pure gold"; which is plainly to say, that the walls of the heavenly city are filled with the grace of charity.

CHAPTER 12

How the altar of the oracle is covered with cedar and gold. He also covered the altar with cedar. He refers to the altar of incense, which was before the oracle, about which it is added a little later: But he also covered the entire altar of the oracle with gold. From this it is understood that the same altar was indeed made of stone, covered with cedar, and then overlaid with gold. This typically signifies the life of perfected righteous men, who are as if placed near the oracle; because having forsaken lower delights, they devote all their care solely to the entrance of the heavenly kingdom. Hence it is fitting that on this altar no flesh of victims was burned, but only incense; because such men do not need to still slay the sins of the flesh and the enticements of thoughts within themselves, but they offer only the scents of spiritual prayers and heavenly desires, through the fire of eternal love in the presence of their Creator. What stone, cedar, and gold signify in this altar can be easily understood from those things which were said earlier. He also covered the house before the oracle with purest gold, and affixed the plates with golden nails. We have said that the house before the oracle holds the type of the present church, where we so burn with the love of our Redeemer that we are not yet able to see Him face to face.

Hence this house was aptly covered with the best gold, but was separated by an intervening wall from the oracle. For it is called an oracle when either divine or angelic speech is granted to men with the revelation of some

secrets. Hence it is fitting that the oracle is made in hidden places, that is, in the inner house, because in the heavenly homeland both the vision and speech of angels, and the very presence of God will be revealed to us; according to what the Truth itself promises to those who love Him, saying: But he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him (John XIV); and again: The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in proverbs, but will tell you plainly about My Father (John XVI). Therefore, the house before the oracle is covered with gold, because the perfected righteous in this life, where they can neither hear nor see the Father plainly yet, adorn their faith and the work of justice with divine love, through which they may deserve perfect vision and full knowledge of God. The golden plates with which the house was covered are the various acts of piety which pure love displays in the service either of its Creator or of fraternal necessity.

The golden nails with which the plates were affixed are the very precepts of charity or the promises of eternal glory, through which, in the practice and pursuit of virtue, we are kept from failing, by the grace of Christ given. Hence it is well written about these nails in the Book of Chronicles: But he also made golden nails, so that each nail weighed fifty shekels (2 Chronicles 3). For the number fifty is often used in the Scriptures to symbolize the remission of sins, the grace of the Holy Spirit, and eternal rest. This is because the fiftieth Psalm is one of penance and remission, the fiftieth year is the jubilee year, and on the fiftieth day after Easter, the Holy Spirit came and consecrated the primitive Church. Additionally, each nail, which fastened the golden plates to the walls of the house of the Lord, was made of fifty shekels, symbolizing that the divine words, by which we advance in the love of good works and are preserved, promise us the forgiveness of sins, the grace of the Holy Spirit, and eternal rest in the future. These are the nails of love. There are also other nails of fear, by which beginners, not yet reaching perfection, mortify the enticements of carnal vices and pleasures. These are the words of truth, whose instruction teaches us to crucify our flesh with its vices and concupiscences, which the prophet desired when he said: "Crucify my flesh with the nails of your fear, for I feared your judgments" (Psalm 118).

When he reached perfection, he spoke of the nails of love: "But as for me, it is good to be near God" (Psalm 73). And there was nothing in the temple that was not covered with gold. He also covered the entire altar of the oracle

with gold. Previously it was stated about the altar, but these things are more fully explained in the book of Chronicles, where it is shown that the porch, which was before the front of the temple, was gilded on the inside, and the upper chambers were also covered. Here the mystery's figure is evident: the whole Church, both in this age and the future, abounds in the gift of charity, surpassing other virtues that are pleasing to God and, singularly, appears prominently. The porch before the temple was gilded because the fathers of the Old Testament pleased God through charity. The temple was gilded because this same charity of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who was given to us. The inner house was gilded because in the heavenly homeland, charity alone reigns. But there more truly and securely, for God Himself, who is charity, is seen; there more certainly, for the Mediator between God and men, who alone is privy to the Father's secrets, is always beheld like the Ark of the Covenant. That the upper chambers are also covered with gold refers to the same meaning.

Just as the inner house of the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was, signifies the life of the saints in the presence of their Creator and Redeemer, as the Psalmist says: "You hide them in the secret of your face from the disturbance of men" (Psalm 31); so too, the upper chambers signify the same life being in the heights, that is, in heaven, and not in this world, as the Apostle says: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

CHAPTER 13

On the construction of the Cherubim. And he made two Cherubim in the oracle, etc. Cherubim, as the prophet Ezekiel clearly declares, is a term of angelic dignity, and in the singular is called Cherub, in the plural Cherubim. Hence, the Cherubim figures made in the oracle can aptly be understood to represent the angelic ministries, which always attend their Creator in the heavens. These are rightly said to be made from olive wood, because angelic powers, anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, never wither away from the love of God. For they, together with us, partake of Him of whom the prophet says in praise of Christ: "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions" (Psalm 44). They are figuratively made from olive wood because He who created them filled them with heavenly wisdom. Hence, they are called Cherub, which in Latin is interpreted as

“multiplied knowledge” or “multitude of knowledge. They are ten cubits in height because they enjoy the tenfold measure of eternal life, having the inviolable image of their Redeemer within them, preserving holiness, righteousness, and truth perpetually as they received from their first condition. A denarius indeed consists of ten obols and is accustomed to contain the name and image of Caesar. Therefore, the figure of the heavenly kingdom excellently fits, where the holy angels always remain in the image of their Creator, to which they were made, and the elect humans receive back His image, which they lost by sinning.

For we know, he says, that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). One wing of a cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub was five cubits, that is, having ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other wing. When wings are placed in the figure of holy men, they signify their virtues, by which they always soar to the heavens and delight in having their conversation in them. However, when wings are placed in the signification of angels, what is more fitting than the grace of their perpetual and unfailing happiness, by which they always persist in their Creator’s ministry in the heavens? Or certainly because they are endowed with the lightness of spiritual nature, so that wherever they wish, they reach almost as if flying, and they are depicted with wings here, and shown to the prophets with wings. It is well said that one wing of a cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of a cherub was five cubits; because angelic virtues keep the law of God, which is described in five books, with tireless devotion, namely by loving God and their Lord with all their strength, and loving neighbors as themselves. For the fullness of the law is charity. Their neighbors are both the angelic spirits among themselves, and the elect humans as their equally fellow citizens.

Hence, each wing is said to be of the same measure, because they desire our company ascending to God with the same devotion they love each other in God. Thus, together, the wings complete ten cubits as the angels rejoice in their Creator’s presence in the exercise of twin charity. The second cherub was also ten cubits, the same measure, and there was one work in the two cherubim. There were two cherubim made to signify the fellowship of the same charity, about which we speak, because charity cannot exist among less than two. Hence, the Savior took care to send two disciples to preach, so that he might silently teach that the virtue of love must be held above all works

by those who proclaim the word of faith. The two cherubim were of one measure and work, because there is no disparity of wills or thoughts in that upper country, where all are equally enlightened and glorified by the vision and presence of God. And he placed the cherubim in the midst of the inner temple. The cherubim extended their wings, and one wing of the cherub touched one wall, and the wing of the second cherub touched the other wall. The other wings touched each other in the middle of the temple. It is clear from these things which have been said why the cherubim are placed in the midst of the inner temple, whose abode is always in the heavens.

The cherubim extended their wings as if to fly, because angelic spirits always have their minds ready for the service of the divine will. But that one wing touched the wall, and the wing of the second cherub touched the other wall, pertains to the administration of charity which the angels show us. That the other wings touched each other in the middle of the temple expresses that grace of love by which they embrace each other. It follows well, "He also overlaid the cherubim with gold," because the Creator exalted their nature with immortal love, and filled their minds with the true light of love and humility. It is certainly noteworthy that when Moses made the tabernacle, he also made two golden cherubim, which he placed on the atonement cover, which was above the ark. Solomon, however, added two others, greater ones, which he placed in the temple, under whose wings he placed the ark in the middle with the atonement cover and the former cherubim. Thus it happened that there were two cherubim indeed in the tabernacle, but four in the temple. Both pertain to one and the same meaning. But the work was splendidly repeated and through Solomon, to be typically taught, that the Church, multiplied through the Incarnation of the Lord, should broadly expand the sublimity of the heavenly citizens to the nations. Therefore, they praise the Creator for the gift of blessedness granted to them, so that they also rejoice about our rescue and introduction to the same blessedness.

For they extend their wings toward each other over the ark, when they refer to the praise of the Lord Savior any good they have received. They extend their other wings to the walls of the oracle, when they rejoice in seeing holy men among them and touch them as if with the tips of their wings, exulting that they have been companions and imitators of their purity in this life. Moreover, they touch the two walls equally with their wings, because they have the faithful of both peoples, namely Jews and Gentiles, as co-pos-

sessors of the heavenly hall with them. Not that there is any local distinction between the two peoples in that country, but because the joy of internal blessedness is greater due to the fellowship of united brotherhood. Therefore, the cherubim extend their wings to each wall of the oracle, because rejoicing in the heavenly country, they also delight in the vision of the just of both peoples, encouraging praise of their Creator through their glory. Not only do the heavenly hosts rejoice in the happiness of those righteous men whom they have with them inside, but they also show diligent care for us, who are still placed outside and cry to the Lord from the depths. Hence it is well written about the same cherubim in the Book of Chronicles: "They stood with outstretched feet, and their faces were toward the outer house.

The cherubim stood with outstretched feet because they never deviated from the path of truth on which they were placed as soon as they were created. The angels have their faces toward the outer house because they desire to bring us, rescued from this wretched pilgrimage, to their fellowship. Thus, they stood with outstretched feet, extended their wings to the gold-covered walls of the oracle, and had their faces turned toward the outer house, because the angels keep their perpetual innocence, rejoice in the blessedness of holy souls in heaven, and do not cease to assist the elect whom they still see as pilgrims on earth, until they also bring them to the heavenly country. For all are ministering spirits, sent to serve for the sake of those who inherit salvation. The two cherubim can also symbolize the two Testaments; indeed, the cherubim were made in the oracle, because in the counsel of divine providence unfathomable and incomprehensible to us, it was decreed before the ages when, and how, and by what authors, sacred Scripture would be composed. They were made of olive wood because through men of mercy, whose works of piety have not been lacking, through men enlightened by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the divine books have been written. They were made of olive wood because they give us the light of knowledge, helped by the flame of God's charity, which is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

They were ten cubits high, because they proclaim that God should be served through the observance of the Decalogue; and they show that those who serve God faithfully will receive the reward of the eternal kingdom. They have twin wings, which declare that the Testaments have always aimed for the heavens with tireless resolve through both hardships and prosperity;

because this is what they demonstrate should be done by their listeners. One wing of a cherub is five cubits, and the other wing of a cherub is also five cubits; because in the entire variation of passing days, the saints extend all the senses of their body in service to their Creator, always having their eyes on the Lord, desiring to hear His voice of praise, and to recount all His wonders, holding His words sweet in their mouths, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, running in the odor of His ointments, and as long as there is breath in them, and the Spirit of God in their nostrils, not speaking iniquity with their lips, nor uttering foolishness with their tongue. And so, advancing through the armor of righteousness on the right and on the left, they come to the reception of the heavenly denarius, which the supreme householder promised to the cultivators of His vineyard. And in the two cherubim there was one work, because the writers of both instruments served God with the same chastity of work, and the devotion of charity, proclaiming with one and harmonious voice and faith.

And indeed, the New Testament narrates the events of the Lord's incarnation, passion, resurrection, ascension, the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, and the multifaceted tribulation of the Church; the Old Testament rightly understood, truly proclaimed these things as to be done. Therefore, the coming of the Antichrist, the end of the world, the day of the final judgment, and the eternal glory of the good, and the punishment of the reprobate, both Testaments confirm with concordant truth. Therefore, the inner wings of the cherubim touching each other over the ark signify that both Testaments agree with equal attestation concerning the Lord. Likewise, with their outer wings, one touches one wall, the other the other wall, because the Old Testament was specifically written for God's ancient people, but the New Testament was for us who came to faith after the Lord's Incarnation: and we are rightly compared to the second wall, that is, the northern, to whom, after the cold and darkness of idolatry, the light of truth was given to know. For although the early Church flourished greatly from the Jews, and all Israel is believed to be saved towards the end of the world, yet many faithful of this time are gathered from the Gentiles to receive the sacraments of the Gospel; to whom also it has been divinely granted to know with the eyes of their hearts revealed, that the letter of the Old Testament is full of the mysteries of evangelical grace.

The cherubim have their faces turned to the outer house, because the divine books were made for us who still stand outside, not in reality but in hope being saved; because their writers, now reigning with the Lord, and praising Him in the heavens, care for our salvation, and intercede with His mercy for our errors. The cherubim are surrounded by gold, because the authority of the Testaments is confirmed by the illustrious works of their writers. With the manifest knowledge of divine Scriptures spread through the world and the internal glory of the heavenly hosts (for both the cherubim, as we have said, signify both angels and Testaments), many began to be converted to the faith and abound in good works, whence it is aptly added:

CHAPTER 14

As the walls are sculpted, and the pavement is covered with gold. And he sculpted all the walls of the temple around, etc. All the walls of the temple around are the peoples of the holy Church, which, being placed on the foundation of Christ, have filled the circumference of the whole world, and the building of faith begun, with the daily addition of new members as if by the addition of precious stones, does not cease to grow. These walls are sculpted with various carvings, when to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith in the same Spirit, to another the grace of healings in one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. And when we come to those virtues which we can all possess—charity, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continence, and the other fruits of the Spirit—what are they but the carvings of the walls of the temple, since they are the ornaments of the hearts of the people of God. The same walls are also sculpted with a lathe, as the faithful with a ready mind are strong to do all things which the Lord has commanded, to endure all things which He permits, saying from the heart at all events that occur: "I will bless the Lord at all times" (Psalm 34);

and "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; I will sing and give praise to the Lord" (Psalm 56). They are sculpted with a lathe when they apply themselves so much to virtues that they can be turned aside from their course by no dangers of surrounding things, nor by any enticements. Because the lathe excels in speed above other arts, and sets a rule for itself by which it

completes its work without error, rightly by this the holy life of the saints is signified, which is always ready for the service of divine will and has learned to fulfill it without deviation from long practice in virtues. Wherefore the holy Church, admiring the virtues of her spouse and Redeemer in the Song of Songs, said: "His hands are golden, full of hyacinths" (Cant. 5). His hands are indeed golden, because appearing in the flesh, the sanctities and miracles which He willed, without any delay of dallying, without any winding of errors, the power and wisdom of God accomplished. They are full of hyacinths, because what He commanded to be done outwardly by word, He inwardly granted to be more fully accomplished by divine power. They are full of hyacinths, because He referred all the things that He did to the glory of the Father, because by the works which He did, He raises our minds to seek the heavenly things.

Therefore, all the walls of the temple around are carved with various engravings and turned with a lathe, as the Church throughout the world devotes itself with prompt devotion to the execution of spiritual virtues without any error whatsoever, where it is well said: And he made on them cherubim and palm trees, and various pictures, as if they were protruding from the wall, and coming out. For Solomon makes cherubim on the walls of the temple when he grants his chosen ones to direct their lives according to the rule of the Holy Scriptures, in which there is a multitude of knowledge. He makes cherubim when he teaches them to imitate, as far as their capacity allows, the chastity of angelic life in this world, which is especially done by vigils and divine praises, by sincere love of the Creator and neighbor. He makes palms when he impresses the memory of eternal retribution in their minds, so that they may less turn away from the summit of righteousness, which they always have before the eyes of their heart: he makes various pictures, as if protruding from the wall, and coming out, when he grants the faithful the many works of virtues; for example, the bowels of mercy, kindness, humility, patience, modesty, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, but above all these, to have charity, which is the bond of perfection.

And when these virtues have come into such a habit among the chosen that they seem to be naturally implanted in them, what else are the pictures of the house of the Lord protruding as if they were coming out of the wall? For they no longer learn the words and works of truth from others extern-

ally, but rooted and prepared from the depths of their hearts, they bring forth what is to be done or taught. And he covered the floor of the house with gold inside and outside. Inside and outside, in the oracle and in the very temple, he signifies. But we have said above that the evenness of the pavement signifies the humble concord of holy brotherhood; where there are Jews and Gentiles, barbarians and Scythians, free and slaves, nobles and ignobles, all boast that they are brothers in Christ, that they all have the same Father who is in heaven. For no one may doubt the most concordant humility of the heavenly citizens. Therefore, Solomon covered the floor of the house with gold inside and outside, because our peaceful King has perfectly and fully filled both the angels and the souls of the righteous in heaven with the gift of love, and has set apart from the vileness of other mortals those wandering in this world as citizens of the same heavenly homeland with the seal of love: In this, he said, all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13).

CHAPTER 15

On the entrance of the temple or oracle. And at the entrance of the oracle he made doors of olive wood, etc. What he had first said: He made doors of olive wood, this same thing he seems to have wanted to explain more clearly when he added: And two doors of olive wood; for there was one entrance to the oracle, but the same entrance was closed by two doors. And again, when they were unlocked, it was opened, just as the temple and the porch in front of the temple had no longer a single entrance; certainly for a determined mystery, because one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one entrance is to be hoped for into the present Church through baptism, one into the heavenly kingdom through works of faith. For as there was one entrance to the oracle, this is testified by what is written below about the ark: And when the poles were extended, and the tops of them appeared outside in the sanctuary in front of the oracle, they did not appear further outside (1 Kings 8). Where it is plainly shown, unless I am mistaken, that there was one entrance to the oracle, and this made opposite the ark, which was in the middle of the same oracle; the entrance doors of which can be taken by different significations in many ways. For they clearly designate the angelic spirits, by whose ministry we are introduced into the habitation of the heavenly homeland;

and equally of apostolic men, who hold the figure of the apostles, to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given; who, having received

from the Lord the power of binding and loosing, admit the worthy within the gate of the kingdom, and, by excommunicating or anathematizing, eliminate the rebellious impure and proud from the entrance of eternal life. But also the works of justice, by whose merit one arrives at the heavenly kingdom, can be rightly typified by doors through which one entered into the holy of holies; as it is written in the book of Wisdom: The keeping of the laws is the perfection of incorruption, and incorruption brings one close to God. The desire for wisdom leads to the everlasting kingdom (Wisdom 6). To all these things, it aptly agrees that the same doors are made of olive wood, because indeed both angels and perfect men show themselves glorious in the house of God by the fruit of mercy and works of light; moreover, all the chosen open the entrance of the heavenly homeland for themselves through the weapons of light and piety. However, there are two doors, since both angels and holy men love God and their neighbors; nor can the gate of life be entered except through this double love; or because the same gate of life is opened to both faithful peoples, namely Jews and Gentiles.

They have posts of five cubits, because not only the souls of the chosen are received into the hall of heaven, but in the judgment, they will also open its doors to bodies adorned with immortal glory. For there are five senses of our body, which we have mentioned above: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Or certainly, each post of the tabernacle is made five cubits, because the entrance of the celestial homeland is opened only to those who have been diligent in serving the Lord with all the senses of their body and mind; of the body, namely when they perform something for Him through those senses; of the mind, when they soberly, justly, and devoutly think about those things they decide to do through the senses of the body. And he carved on them cherubim, and palm trees, and very prominent engravings, and covered them with gold. Γλυφῇ in Greek is called sculpture in Latin. But all these things with cherubim placed in the decoration of the walls of the temple, set forth according to our comprehension. No need to laboriously establish that those entrusted with the care of the faithful and to whom the keys of the heavenly kingdom have been given, ought to strive with all diligence in the works of virtue which the Church exercises in her saints and perfect ones throughout the world, so that they may excel in good action as much by merit as they preeminence others in rank.

For they possess, in themselves, the angelic life represented by the cherubim, as much as is possible for mortals, both in mind and in deed. They also have the images of palms when they constantly meditate on the gifts of heavenly rewards with unshaken intent. For the palm is the ornament of a victorious hand. They have very prominent engravings, when they reveal to all who observe the most certain signs of good works which no one can interpret to the left. And all these works are covered with golden plates, since, as often said, the brilliance of love especially outshines other virtues in the great members of the Church. The words of the days relate that a veil was also added to these doors. He made the veil, it says, from azure, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, and he wove cherubim into it. This was done for the sake of decoration, so that along with the gilded walls, the silk itself would gleam. But in the signification of the same mystery, to which the doorways before the ark and the entrance of the oracle were attached; so that as the doors were opened at appropriate hours, so too the veil would be revealed whenever those who were to enter the holy of holies would come. Therefore, the diligent revelation of this veil signifies the opening of the law and the heavenly kingdom which was granted to us through the incarnation of our Lord and Savior.

From this it is also evident that when He was baptized, the heavens were opened to show that through baptism, which He consecrated for us, we ought to enter the gate of the heavenly homeland. And when He died on the cross, the same veil was torn in two from top to bottom to clearly teach that the legal figures had then come to an end, and that the truth of the Gospel and the heavenly mysteries, and the entrance to heaven itself, were not only to be prophesied and figuratively signified, but were already then to be made plainly open to all who passed from the world in the faith of the truth from the beginning of the world to that time. For on the fortieth day after the resurrection of the Lord, they all ascended to heaven with Him, and with every covering removed, they received their places in the Father's house according to their merits. But at the same time, the entrance to that heavenly city and the house of the Father was laid open for us who were still to come. In truth, no one ascends to that city unless through the internal desires for eternal good things, by faith and the sacraments of the Lord's passion, through the fervor of sincere love, by mortification of carnal desire, and with daily help from the angels.

Hence it is rightfully remembered that the same veil, under which one entered the oracle, was made of azure and purple, scarlet, and fine linen, and the cherubim were also woven into it. For azure, which imitates the color of heaven, is aptly compared to desires for heavenly things; purple, which is made from the blood of shellfish and bears the appearance of blood, rightly signifies the sacrament of the Lord's passion, by which we must be initiated, and which we should imitate by carrying our cross. Scarlet, which gleams with a red color, aptly expresses the virtue of love, of which the disciples who walked with the Lord said in wonder: "Was not our heart burning within us while He was speaking to us on the way and explaining the Scriptures to us? (Luke 24:32). Fine linen, which is derived from the green shoot of the earth, and through the long labor of craftsmen loses its green and gets to a white appearance, fittingly implies the chastisement of our flesh, of which the Apostle Paul figuratively orders the innate moisture to be dried, saying: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). To what grace of whiteness this should lead is shown by the same Apostle saying: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Cherubim are woven into the veil, made of the same four excellent colors, for in all that we piously do, by the protection of angels, we are defended by the Lord. Cherubim are woven into the veil when in good actions we continually use the multitude of knowledge, always looking to the divine words; and lest we stray from the path of virtues, we guide our steps by their contemplation. He made doorposts for the entrance to the temple from squared olive wood, and two doors from pine wood on either side; and each door was double and opened holding itself together. Just as the entrance to the oracle, leading to the ark of the Lord surrounded by cherubim, signifies the entrance to the kingdom of heaven, wherein we hope and desire to be introduced to the vision of our Creator and the heavenly citizens, the entrance into the temple typifies the beginnings of our conversion to God when we enter into the present Church. One signifies our entry into faith, the other into vision. Therefore, the doorposts of this entrance were aptly made square for the four books of the holy Gospel, whose doctrine instructs us in the faith of truth, or for the four principal virtues: prudence, fortitude,

temperance, and justice, upon which, as on a most firm foundation, the whole structure of good deeds rests. Prudence is that by which we learn what we should do and how we should live.

Fortitude is through which we fulfill what we have learned to be done, virtues which the prophet briefly encompasses in one verse, saying: "The Lord is my light and my salvation" (Psalm 27:1). Light, indeed, to illuminate what we ought to do; salvation, to strengthen us to accomplish these deeds. Temperance, by which we discern that we are not found more or less devoted to prudence or fortitude than is just. And since anyone who uses prudence, fortitude, and temperance without any contradiction is proved just, the fourth virtue after prudence, fortitude, and temperance is justice. The two doors that lead into this entrance are the love of God and neighbor; they are said to be made side by side because they look at each other, so that one cannot be had without the other: For everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And everyone who loves Him who begot also loves Him who is begotten of Him (1 John 5). And as it says again: For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4). Hence, rightly, the outer door is understood as brotherly love, and the inner as divine love, because the former comes first in time, the latter is more sublime in dignity. And through the former, one enters into the latter, because from the love of neighbor, one learns how the Creator should be loved.

Both doors were double and opened by holding each other, because in each kind of love we must observe two things primarily. In the love of God, it is necessary to have faith in truth and purity of good operation. For without faith it is impossible to please God; and faith without works is dead; moreover, in the love of brotherhood, patience and kindness must be preserved, as the apostle Paul says: Charity is patient, is kind (1 Cor. 13). Patient, namely, to endure the troubles and injuries of neighbors; kind, indeed, to forgive from the heart and to do good to those whose injuries it endures. Such charity the Lord wanted us to have when He said: Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you (Luke 6). Forgive the injuries of those harming you, give acts of mercy to those whom you forgive their injuries. He desires us to spend such love, who commanded us to say in prayer: Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matt. 6). However, both doors were double, and each type of

love is performed in a twin manner. Both holding each other opened, because the virtues are joined and cannot be divided from each other. For neither faith without works, nor good works without faith, can be pleasing. Nor, indeed, is it sufficient to endure injuries if one despises ministering necessities to the one he tolerates when he could;

nor is it enough for one who has the world's substance to give from it to a needy neighbor if he does not sincerely from the heart forgive the troubles inflicted on him. What is said about both doors holding each other opened does not designate the separation of spiritual virtues from each other; rather, it indicates that through their conjunction, the entrance of the holy Church is more open to us, such that the more we abound in them, the more truly we are joined to the assemblies of the saints. Just as also the division of the Red Sea, through which the people of God escaped the pursuing Egyptian, did not signify the division of the one baptism, but rather the opening, through which, with all sins extinguished, we pass to the shore and wilderness of virtues; or certainly, the door which holds each other opens when through the ministry of the preacher it is discerned what properly pertains to the knowledge of faith and what to the chastity of living, both of which, however, cannot be separated from their connection; how near to each other are enduring the evils of neighbors and commending our goods to them, when these most certainly remain indissoluble in the one and the same heart of the perfect. It is indeed noteworthy that at the entrance of the oracle there are said to be two doors, but these are not said to be double;

in the temple, that is, in the entry of the former house, there were two doors, each of which was double, because in the present church it is necessary for us to enter and lead a life in such a way that we preserve the love of God and neighbor through faith and action, through patience and kindness. But in future life, where we will see God and neighbors in the light of eternal happiness, certainly with the same twofold love, without any labor at all, indeed in great rest, we will enjoy the multitude of divine sweetness. Therefore, fittingly the entrance of the inner house had two doors, but simple ones here. For faith is not necessary there, where all things which we now believe and hope for will be seen in manifest light; works are not necessary there, where we will be rewarded with the perpetual reward of those things for which we labor here; patience is not necessary, where no one inflicts anything adverse; generosity is not necessary, where no one needs what is useful.

These things about the form of the doors we have discussed according to our ability, following the footsteps of the Fathers; indeed, according to the form of the work, for the sake of beauty, it was provided that in one and the same entrance of the temple there should be two doors.

It was necessary that the walls of the house, which were twenty cubits in height, should also have some thickness, on the outermost part of which the doors were fixed, so that each door might be equal to the wall, and whether someone was inside or outside the temple, looking at the door, it might seem to them to be a continuous wall through all things. Similarly, the cedar wall, being twenty cubits in length and height, also had to have a substantial thickness. Therefore, in the entrance of this too, two doors were made, so that from either side, that is, inside and outside, the door would be equal to the wall; and because the door had the same paintings as the wall, the wall, continuously extended through all things, might truly seem to be one, presenting one form of beauty, representing another aspect of the mystery. But what follows, having described the doors of the temple: "And he carved cherubim and palms, and very eminent engravings, and covered all with golden plates, with work squared by the rule," has been explained above, because paintings or carvings have been made both in the walls of the house, and in the doors, and in the inner parts of the Church. The figure's reason is clear why the first door of the temple and the inner one should receive the same paintings and carvings, the same cherubim: because the sublime and the perfect captivate the same sublime secrets of faith, hope, and charity.

And whatever all the elect fully perceive in the divine vision in heaven, those beginning in catechesis are also instructed and taught through their own, so that initiated into the holy mysteries, they may someday arrive at grasping those things which they have piously believed.

CHAPTER 16

On the courts of the house of the Lord. He built the inner court with three courses of polished stones, etc. He briefly mentions the inner court and seems to entirely leave out the outer court. However, in the Chronicles, both are mentioned, where it is written: He also made the court of the priests and the great basilica, and doors in the basilica that he covered with bronze (1 Peter IV). Therefore, the inner court, which is called the priests' court because the priests and Levites ministered there, was surrounded by the temple on all sides, but from the east, where the entrance to the temple was, it was much

farther away from the temple than from the other three sides, because undoubtedly in that direction, that is, before the temple, the ministries of the saints were carried out. There the bronze altar for offering sacrifices to the Lord, the ten lavers for washing these same sacrifices, and the bronze sea for washing the hands and feet of the priests when they entered to minister were located. This court had a height of three cubits, as Josephus narrates, so that it would prevent foreigners from entering the temple and spell out that only priests were allowed. And there was a door to the east, up to which the people inserted their sacrifices and offerings, to be received from there by the priests and carried to the altar. Concerning the outer court, which the Chronicles call the great basilica, Josephus writes thus:

Outside this temple, he built another hall, made in a quadrangular scheme, erecting the greatest and broadest colonnades; and he placed high and wide gates at the four parts of the world, each facing the four winds at the corners, where he set bronze doors (Book VIII). And a little later: Into this sanctuary came all the peoples, who had purification and observance of the laws. These colonnades Cassiodorus the senator, in the *Pandects*, as he himself recalls in his exposition of the Psalms, distinguished in a threefold order. Namely, he placed the first order outside the priests' court on all sides in a square; the second likewise outside the innermost colonnades, all around in a circle; the last similarly all around the earlier colonnades in a circuit. Thus, the temple was fortified on all sides with a threefold structure of buildings, with a marble pavement under the open sky between each building's interiors, that is, those looking toward the temple, made between the columns, the outer ones being solid. Thus, it was made that the entire structure of the temple was reasonably distinguished by the variety of gradations. For when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, the priests were purified in the temple itself; in the priests' court, the unpurified priests, along with the Levites and singers, in the innermost court of the greater basilica, the purified Jewish men standing and praying under the open sky if it was clear; if it was stormy, they would retreat to the nearest colonnades;

in the outer court, the purified Jewish women; and in the farthest court, the Gentiles and Jews who had recently come from the Gentiles up to the sixth day of purification. We have taken care to briefly note these things as they were depicted in Cassiodorus's picture, learning thus from the ancient Jews, and not wishing that a man so learned would propose something to be

read as an example which he had not previously known to be true. These are the places mentioned by the supreme Psalm of degrees, which begins thus: Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God (Psalm 134). In its porticoes, Jeremiah and other prophets, in these the Lord and the apostles preached the word to the people. In one of these, the Lord was sitting teaching when the adulterous woman was brought to him for judgment by the testing Pharisees. In these, he found those buying and selling oxen, sheep, and doves; and he drove them out with their merchandise from the temple. In these, Peter and John, finding a lame man, healed him, and led him inside to pray. In these, all the multitude of the people prayed when the angel appeared to Zechariah at the altar of incense and taught him about the birth of the Lord's forerunner.

However, these courts with their porticoes could not hide the view of the temple from those seeing from afar, because the place where the temple stood was much higher than where the porticoes were built. For Josephus writes thus: "The farthest structures of the courtyards, though they were erected at four hundred cubits, nevertheless reached up to the summit of the mount on which the temple was built" (Ibid.); we believed these details of the temple's destruction should be conveyed to the diligent reader. Truly, in them, whatever the Holy Scripture chose to report, we seek the figures of mysteries, while we simply use the rest through knowledge of history. Therefore, the building of the temple inside the priests' courtyard represents the life of the perfected in the holy Church and the lofty men, namely those who by the excellence of virtues draw near to the Lord and tend to show others the way of salvation by word and deed. For a priest in Latin received his name from providing sacred guidance to inferiors. By this name in Scriptures, mystically, not only the ministers of the altar, namely bishops and priests, are considered, but indeed all who by the height of a righteous conversation and the eminence of saving doctrine, benefit not only themselves but also many others, while presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. For the apostle Peter was speaking not only to bishops or priests but to the entire Church when he said:

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession" (1 Peter 2). The ancient people of God were also distinguished with this honor of dignity as He said to Moses: "Thus you shall say to

the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel" (Exodus 19). And shortly after: "And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The great basilica, which was outside the priests' courtyard, where the whole multitude of the people used to worship or converge to hear the word, figuratively indicates the life and manners of the secular in the holy Church, to whom the Apostle says: "And I, brothers, could not speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to people of the flesh, as to infants in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid food" (1 Corinthians 3). This is well represented by the great basilica, because without any doubt, the number of such people in the holy Church is much greater than that of the perfected. But as much as they excel in number, they fall short in merit. Hence this great basilica aptly, though it accommodates many, does not allow them into the interior of the gilded temple, not to the altar's duty, nor even into the priests' courtyard because those who are fleshly and still weak in the churches, though devoted to God for the merit of chaste faith and piety, yet far from equaling those who confidently proclaim:

"For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed" (Romans 15). And again: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4). Indeed, the crowd approached up to the courtyard of the priests and brought their sacrifices to the door, which were received by the priests and presented at the altar, and they observed. Even into the temple, when it was opened, they directed their sight from afar, yet they did not have the ability to enter the courtyard of the priests; however, they cried out to the Lord from below, for even the simplicity of the fleshly in the Church is not despised by the Lord when they faithfully offer what they can of piety's vows. For they direct their sight from afar to the temple of God, when they eagerly rejoice in learning and imitating the life of the high, and those whom they cannot follow by imitating virtue, they embrace with the affection of pious veneration. They see the sacrifices of the priests consumed by the sacred fire on the altar, because they recognize the great rewards of works graciously received from the Lord through the Holy Spirit.

They also bring their own sacrifices to the court of the priests to be offered to the Lord by them, while they perform good deeds that prevail, strengthened by the exhortation of the elders and the learned, and com-

mended by their intercession. They also then offer their own sacrifices to the priests to be commended to the Lord through them, when, out of the highest regard for merit, they give to the saints in need of the necessities of this world, which they themselves abound in, prompted by the admonition of the Lord who says: "Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings" (Luke 16). And, he says: "And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward" (Matt. 10). And thus, the same sacred fire of God consumes the sacrifices of both when the Lord deems the alms of the rich, by which they have ministered to the saints, worthy of His condescension and reward, along with the great virtues of the same saints. Therefore, the multitude of believers, who, having left their possessions, serve the Lord with one heart and soul, is itself the temple of God and the place within the court of the priests consecrated especially to Him.

Furthermore, the great basilica and those praying in it around the court of the priests in a circle, symbolize those who at that time believed from the Gentiles in Syria, Antioch, and other provinces and cities, to whom the apostles and elders in Jerusalem imposed no greater burden than to abstain from what had been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from fornication. Yet they desired that the offerings be used to sustain the poor among the saints in Jerusalem, so that by ministering their material goods to them, they might become partakers of their spiritual benefits. Barnabas and Paul, with their companions who received their offerings and brought them to Jerusalem, are the priests who, receiving the offerings, carried them to the altar of the Lord to be consecrated, because the devotion of those offering demanded that the saints pray for them. Therefore, the court, which was placed between the place of the laity and the priests, signifies that division in the holy Church, whereby those who are carnal, though just beginning to walk in the way of righteousness, are separated from the height of the perfect, not by the choice of election, but by the magnitude of their merits. For the carnal believe they suffice if they have faith, hope, charity, and the purity of works.

But the perfect have these as well, and in addition, they labor in preaching the word, give all their goods to the poor, attend to vigils, fasts, hymns, and spiritual songs, devote themselves to sacred readings, endure persecutions

and dangers for justice, and execute all other things which Paul boasts of having accomplished with his companions, with prompt devotion of mind. Hence it is properly mentioned that the court of the priests was built with three rows of polished stones and one row of cedar wood. For the three rows of polished stones are faith, hope, and charity. And rightly polished, because it is certainly necessary to learn the skill by which each one may discern what to believe, what to hope, or what to love. The one row of cedar wood is good operation exhibited without the corruption of dissimulation, without which additional support faith, hope, and charity cannot be true. For it has been said often that cedar wood, due to its pleasant scent and the incorruptible power of its nature, signifies the perseverance and fame of pious actions. To this court all the elect ascend, who, with faith, hope, and love, and good works, seek to please God. The perfect transcend this high grace of merits when they progress to such a pinnacle of virtues that they can say to their listeners: "Be imitators of us, as we are of Christ" (1 Cor. 4); and they glory and say: "Do you not know that we are to judge angels, how much more, matters pertaining to this life?"

(1 Cor. 6).

CHAPTER 17

In how many years the temple was built. The house of the Lord was founded in the fourth year, etc. The sense of the allegory is evident as to why the house of the Lord was built in seven years, because indeed the holy Church is constructed from chosen souls throughout the whole duration of this age, which is accomplished in a circuit of six days, and with the end of the age, it also brings its own growth to an end. Or certainly it is built in seven years because of the signification of spiritual grace, through which the Church only perceives itself as being the Church. Isaiah enumerates the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isa. XI), without which no one can either become faithful, or maintain faith, or merit the crown of righteousness by faith. But for the fact that in the seventh year, and in the eighth month of this year, the house of the Lord was completed in all its work and in all its utensils, it pertains to the future age and the day of judgment, when the holy Church will reach such a state of perfection that nothing more can be found to be added to it. For then it will have what the pious suppliant desirously sought from the Lord, saying: Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us (John XIV).

For it is well known that the day of judgment is often typically expressed in Scripture by the number eight because it follows this age which runs in seven days. Hence, the prophet gave the psalm a title for the eighth, which he sang out of fear of the same severe Judge, beginning thus: Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor chasten me in your wrath, etc. (Psalm VI). But a not-to-be-dismissed question arises, as to how it is said that the house of the Lord was completed in the eighth month in all its work and in all its utensils, when in the following sections it is read that its perfection and dedication were completed in the seventh month. It is not, however, incredible that Solomon, having built the temple indeed in seven years, completed it in the eighth month of the eighth year, or that he perfectly delayed the dedication until the seventh month of the ninth year. Wherefore it seems more likely that the house was built in seven years and seven months, so that in the same seventh month the solemnity of the dedication was celebrated, and on the twenty-third day of that month, as the words of the days narrate (II Chronicles VII), Solomon dismissed the people to their tents, and thus after one week, with the eighth month approaching, the house of the Lord was found completed, and in all its works, and its dedication previously completed.

Unless perhaps we ought to think that after the temple was dedicated, something of the tools for its ministry was still added, up to the entrance of the eighth month, with the king hastening that in the seventh month, which was entirely solemn, the temple might be dedicated; and thus both will be found true, namely that the temple was completed in the eighth month in all its work and tools, and was dedicated in the seventh month. Moreover, King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre, the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, his father being a Tyrian, a craftsman in bronze, full of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, to do all works in bronze. When he came to King Solomon, he did all his work (I Kings VII). This was done for the sake of mystery. For the Tyrian craftsman whom Solomon took as a helper signifies the chosen ministers of the word from the nations; indeed this craftsman is beautifully said to be the son of an Israelite widow. In this person, sometimes the present Church of the time is figured, for which her man, namely Christ, having tasted death, rose again, and ascending into the heavens, left her meanwhile wandering on the earth. Nor is it necessary to labor in explaining how the sons of this widow are holy

preachers, since all those chosen individually confess themselves to be sons of the Church, since of the same preachers of the new testament it is specially promised, the prophet saying:

"Instead of your fathers, sons are born to you, you will make them princes over all the earth" (Psalm 45). Hiram did all the work for Solomon; for surely the holy preachers, while they faithfully attend to the ministry of the word, certainly do the work of God, because by speaking outwardly, they open the way of truth to those whom He inwardly enlightens for eternal life. "I (said) planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (I Corinthians 3). He made the work out of bronze, because the diligent instructor seeks to entrust the word to those who wish to receive it piously and to preserve it perseveringly, and who also strive rightly to spread more widely by preaching to others whatever they have learned. For it is known that the metal of bronze is very durable and extremely sonorous.

CHAPTER 18

On the brazen columns. And he made two brazen columns, etc. These are the columns of which Paul speaks: James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision (Gal. II). With these words, he appears to explain the mystery of the material columns and what they prefigure, and why two were made. They signify the apostles and all spiritual teachers, strong in faith and work, and raised to the contemplation of heavenly things. There are two of them to introduce both Gentiles and the circumcised into the Church through preaching. They stood in the porch before the doors of the temple, and adorned its entrance marvelously with their beauty and elegance from both sides. The door of the temple is the Lord, because no one comes to the Father except through Him; and as He says elsewhere: I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved (John X). The columns placed on either side before the door represent the ministers of the word showing both peoples the entrance to the heavenly kingdom, so that whether someone comes from the light of legal knowledge or from the severity of paganism to faith in the Gospel, they have those ready who can show them the way of salvation by word and example. Certainly, since about these columns it is written in the book of Chronicles:

And he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left (II Chron. III), therefore two columns were made and

placed so as to teach us that in both prosperity and adversity, the entrance to the heavenly country must be kept before the eyes of our mind. From this we know that Paul, indeed the most excellent column of the house of the Lord, earnestly exhorts us, using the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left by his and his followers' examples, so that neither delighted by prosperity nor broken by adversity, we should deviate in any part from the royal road of life, by which we must go to the promised inheritance of the heavenly country (II Cor. VI). It is noteworthy in this sentence of Chronicles, which I have cited, that the same porch of the temple was also called the vestibule of the temple; and that what we read in the prophets: The priests were praying between the porch and the altar should be understood as between the vestibule and the altar. Well, each column is remembered to have a height of 18 cubits. For three times six make eighteen. And it is clear that three pertains to faith because of the Holy Trinity, and six to operation, for in that number of days the world was made. And three are multiplied by six when the righteous, who lives by faith, accumulates the knowledge of pious belief by the execution of good deeds.

For a column before the doors of the temple is eighteen cubits high when any distinguished preacher openly declares to all that we cannot reach the joys of the heavenly life except through faith and works of righteousness. Although this can also be understood more deeply, the name Jesus among the Greeks begins with this number. For the first letter of the name Jesus among them signifies ten, the second eight. And fittingly, the columns of the house of God are eighteen cubits high, because holy teachers, indeed all the chosen ones, aim to live well to deserve to see their Creator face to face. For they will have nothing more to seek when they have reached Him who is above all. And the line of twelve cubits encircled each column. The line of twelve cubits is the rule of apostolic institution, which indeed encircles each column when any teacher sent to preach whether to Jews or to Gentiles, ensures to do and teach what the holy Church received and learned through the apostles. For if anyone wishes to live or preach differently and either despises the apostolic decrees or prefers to establish new things on his own whim, such a one is not a column fit for the temple of God, because while he disdains to follow the apostolic statutes, he does not comply with the line of twelve cubits because of either the narrowness of his laziness or the gross bulk of his arrogance.

The Lord surrounded the columns of His temple with these lines when, sending his disciples to teach and baptize all nations, he said: "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28). Therefore, he who observes and teaches all that the Lord commanded the apostles, neither adding anything nor omitting any part of it, is indeed a column in the house of God, which is the Church, and the firmament of truth, such as the apostle Paul admonished Timothy to be. However, since without knowledge of the Scriptures, the life or speech of teachers cannot be firm, it is aptly added: "He also made two capitals to be placed on the tops of the columns, cast in bronze. One capital was five cubits high, and the other capital was five cubits high. For the tops of the columns, that is their uppermost part, are the hearts of the faithful teachers, whose devoted thoughts to God direct all their works and words just as the head directs the members. Moreover, the two capitals, which were placed on these heads, are the two Testaments, to whose meditation and observance the holy teachers are wholly dedicated both in spirit and body. Hence, it is fitting that each capital had five cubits height, because undoubtedly the Mosaic Law is comprised of five books, and the entire series of the Old Testament is encompassed by five ages of the world. The New Testament, indeed, preaches nothing else to us than what Moses and the prophets had foretold to be preached through it.

Hence, the Lord said to the Jews who adhered futilely to the letter of the Old Testament and spurned the grace of the New: "If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe also in me; for he wrote of me" (John 5). For Moses wrote of God both figuratively and explicitly when he recounts the promise made to Abraham by the Lord, that in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed; and when he himself says to the sons of Israel: "For the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. Him you shall hear according to all that he will speak to you. The voice of the Father from heaven reminded the disciples of this prophecy when, with the Lord appearing to them in glory, between Moses himself and Elijah, on the holy mountain, it thundered, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Luke 9). Therefore, with the admirable harmony of divine operation, and first the grace of the New Testament was hidden under the veil of the Old, and now the sacraments of the Old Testament are revealed by the light of the new, as if the capital of each column is five cubits high, because evidently it is manifest that in the Old Testament,

whose sacraments are either prefigured in the five books of the law or are fully comprehended in the five ages, the grace of evangelical perfection is also implanted.

Thus it comes about that a distinguished preacher, whether sent to the Jews or to the Gentiles, confirmed by the harmonious testimony of divine utterances, preserves the contest of faith and the rectitude of work without error, and knows to bring forth from his treasury things new and old when teaching. Not only do the Testaments sing in harmony with one another in the relation of the divine sacraments, but also all the elect contained in the books of the same Testaments, endowed with one faith, are connected with each other by the same love. Whence it is aptly added about the construction of their capitals: And as if in the manner of a network, and chains wonderfully intertwined with each other, each capital of the columns was cast. Which in the book of Chronicles is thus written: And also like little chains in the oracle, and he placed them on the tops of the columns (II Chronicles III). For the appearance of the chains, the likeness of a network in the capitals, is the variety of spiritual virtues in the saints, about which it is sung to the Lord in the Psalms: The queen stood at your right hand in a gilded garment, surrounded with variety (Psalms XLIV); that is, clothed in the garment of shining love, surrounded with the variety of different charisms.

Or certainly, the manifold interweaving of chains and the expansion of the network signifies the multifarious persons of the elect, who by faithfully listening to and obeying the words of the holy preachers adhere to them, as if the little chains placed on the tops of the columns offer to all who gaze upon them the miracle of their connection. These chains indeed are wonderfully intertwined with each other, because it is wholly by the miraculous grace of the Holy Spirit that the life of the faithful, both in places and times, and in rank and condition, and in sex and age, although greatly separate from each other, is nonetheless united by one and the same faith and love. For this fraternal union of the just, separated by places and times, is made by the unification of spiritual gifts, as is shown by the following words, when about the construction of the capitals it is added: Seven nets of verses in one capital, and seven nets in the other capital. For by the number seven, the grace of the Holy Spirit is accustomed to be designated, as John attests in Revelation; who when he said he saw a Lamb having seven horns and seven eyes, immediately added by explaining: Which are the seven Spirits of God,

sent into all the earth (Apoc. I). Which the prophet Isaiah more clearly explains, when speaking of the Lord to be born in the flesh:

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him (Isa. XI). Therefore there were seven nets of verses in each capital, and the fathers of both testaments received the grace of the one and same sevenfold Spirit to be the elect. And he made the columns and two rows around the circumference of each network, to cover the capitals. There were indeed two rows of networks around the capital, but each row ran with a sevenfold number of verses, until, having circled around the capital, it returned to itself, as if forming a circle. This figure of the sacrament is not hidden, for why there are two rows of networks, when it is evident that the virtue of love is of twin distinction, when we are commanded to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. But each of those rows has seven nets of verses, because neither can God be loved without the grace of the Holy Spirit, nor the neighbor. For the truthful saying remains, because the love of God is poured into our hearts, not by our merit, but by the Holy Spirit who is given to us.

Where the love of God is, there indeed the love of neighbor is also poured into the hearts of the faithful, because surely one cannot be had without the other. But these networks were made to cover the capitals, that is, to surround them all around, because the whole page of Holy Scripture, when rightly understood, sounds of the grace of love and peace in all things. For indeed the capitals of divine utterances are the bonds of mutual affection. And capitals are covered with network, when sacred utterances, so to speak, are proven to be restored everywhere by the gift of charity. For even in those things which we do not understand in the Scriptures, charity is widely manifested. Moreover, concerning these networks or capitals, it is rightly added: Which were above the tops of the pomegranates. For pomegranates, whose nature is to enclose many seeds within a single outer rind, aptly represent the holy Church, which customarily encloses innumerable groups of the elect within the safeguard of one catholic faith. However, it can also designate the justice and morals of each individual, who, like many seeds encompassed within one rind, takes care to surround with firm custody of faith and hu-

militate the many marks of spiritual thoughts and virtues, lest they possibly dissolve.

And quite fittingly, the capitals of the columns were surrounded in a circle by pomegranates, because it is necessary for the holy teachers to recall the lives of the faithful predecessors to memory, and to continually fortify their actions and words with their examples in every part, lest they err by living or teaching otherwise than the rule of those forebears holds. Just as therefore the admirable connection of the networks signifies the unity of the faithful, which is in the bond of peace, so also the pomegranates typically announce that same unity, which binds countless peoples throughout the world in one rule of catholic faith. Or indeed the admirable connection of the networks manifestly demonstrates the clear concord of all the faithful; the position of the pomegranates expresses the inward virtues of the soul, which cannot at all be seen by others, namely patience, humility, kindness, modesty, and the like. And as the beautiful outer appearance of the fruits is seen, but the multitude of seeds enclosed within is not visible, so the pious work of the saints is shown openly to all, but the grace of faith, hope, and love, and the other inner spiritual goods cannot be seen. Accordingly, when it was said of the networks that they cover the capitals which were above the tops of the pomegranates, it appears according to the order of that work that the pomegranates were made around the capitals at the lower part, and from the same pomegranates arose the networks, by which the capitals were in some part covered.

And the figure of the mystery is clear, because networks were attached above the tops of the pomegranates, which pertain to almost one significance either of persons or of spiritual virtues. For we know that virtues are born from virtues, and that the saints walk from virtue to virtue, until the God of gods appears in Zion. Hence also the Apostle says: Knowing that tribulation produces patience, and patience produces experience, and experience produces hope (Romans 5:3-4). But even in the very universal assembly of the elect, the just persons succeed one another in various ways, and the lesser rejoice to faithfully adhere to the footsteps of the greater and their predecessors, and to their sayings or writings, lest they might possibly fall into error. Therefore, the networks are placed above the tops of the pomegranates, when the concord of charity is added to perfect deeds. And when both gifts of virtue, namely operation and charity, are added, the life

of the saints shines forth clearly, as the concatenation of the networks is superadded to the circle of pomegranates in the capitals of the column. And because all the gifts of present virtues look towards the glory of eternal remuneration, which is promised and ministered to us by the Gospel, it is aptly added: But the capitals which were above the heads of the columns were made like the work of lilies in the vestibule, four cubits high.

What is signified by lilies, but the brightness of the heavenly country, and the pleasantness of paradise resplendent with the flowers of immortality? What is signified by four cubits, but the evangelical sermon, which promises us the entrance into that eternal beatitude and shows the way by which it is reached? When therefore the holy teachers show us the promised thresholds of the heavenly kingdom in the four books of the holy Gospel, as it were, the heads of the columns display in themselves the work of lilies of four cubits. Where it ought to be noted according to the letter, because when the work of the lily is mentioned in the capitals of four cubits, it did not add whether of width or height, and it was left to the reader's judgment whether it should be understood in height or in width. But it is evident without any doubt, because the column, which a rope of twelve cubits encompassed, had four cubits of girth. For every circle has as much space in diameter as it has three times in circumference. Accordingly, the brazen sea, because it had a diameter of ten cubits, as it is read later, consequently had thirty cubits in circumference. However, because it is said that the work of the lily was four cubits, whether it signifies width or height, nonetheless, the rationale of the figure is clear, because not otherwise than through the Gospel did that most desired voice sound to the world, saying: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2).

What follows: And again other capitals on the tops of the columns above, according to the measure of the column, opposite the networks; according to the measure of the column, it says, of such a height as the column was, whose height, however, is not narrated. These capitals, however they were made and of whatever size they were (for Scripture does not explicitly state their measurements), appear to resemble lilies; from their construction, if we wish to inquire about any mystical meaning, they can not inappropriately signify that sublimity of the perpetual kingdom which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him. After the lilies of four cubits, other capitals are set upon

them, the height of which is not mentioned, because we read much about heavenly beatitude in the Gospel; such as the pure in heart will see God, they will be equal to the angels of God, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, they will no longer die, where Christ is, there also His servants will be, He will manifest Himself to them, He will proclaim openly about the Father to them, the joy of His vision will be taken away by no one. But the very nature of these things that we have spoken of, the status and way of life of the heavenly country itself, is known only to those who have deserved to enter it, its citizens.

Hence, the construction or height of these capitals above the lilies is fittingly considered incomprehensible by earthly beings, by which the quality of the heavenly habitation is suggested; about which it is least disputed that all there enjoy the common happiness of divine vision, each one more elevated according to the purity of heart's eyes with which they see Him. For He who said: "He blessed all those who fear God, the small with the great", also said: "For You will render to each one according to his works" (Psalm 113). Therefore, the common blessing of all the elect will be there. Nevertheless, according to the distinct quality of works, there are many mansions of the blessed in the one and same eternal house of the Father in heaven: which I think is mystically meant in the construction of these columns, when it is said: "And again there were other capitals on the tops of the columns above, according to the measure of the column, opposite the nets". For the capitals are made above, according to the measure of the column, when the holy teachers, rather all the just, following the footsteps of the same doctors, receive the rewards of heavenly retribution, according to the merits of holy operations. Also, the capitals are made opposite the nets, because according to the measure of the love with which the holy brotherhood is united in this life, they will be united in the fellowship of the heavenly citizens in the presence of their Creator in heaven.

However, since the same fellowship of heavenly citizens is granted to the faithful of both peoples, it is fittingly added: "There were two hundred pomegranates in rows around the second capital". We have said that the pomegranates hold the type of the whole holy Church; and the number one hundred, which first reaches the right hand, sometimes is a figure of eternal blessed life. This number of pomegranates is doubled around the second capital, to mystically denote that the people of both testaments are to be united

in Christ to be led into the crown of eternal life. This figure corresponds to what is written about the apostles fishing after the Lord's resurrection, when they saw Him standing on the shore: "For they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits, dragging the net full of fish" (John 21). By two hundred cubits, the disciples drag the net full of large fish to the Lord, showing the effect of His resurrection on the shore; when holy preachers commit the word of faith to both Jews and Gentiles, and lead the elect of both peoples, extracted from the waves of the present age, to the glory of future peace and immortality. Therefore, the circumference of the second capital has two hundred rows of pomegranates, when the sublimity of the heavenly kingdom collects the elect of both peoples in one summit of blessedness. And he set up two columns in the porch of the temple.

When he set up the right column, he called it by the name Jachin, that is, firmness. Similarly, he set up the second column, and called its name Boaz, that is, in strength. The right column, as we have said above, expresses the figure of the teachers who established the primitive Church in Jerusalem; the second, those who were appointed to preach to the Gentiles. Or certainly, the right column signifies those who prophesied the coming Lord in the flesh; the second, those who testify that He has already come, and redeemed the world by His blood. And aptly, both columns were considered by a similar name, when one was called firmness, the other in strength; that the one strength of faith and work might be shown to be in all teachers, and the inertia of our time might be noted, where some teachers, priests, wish to be seen and called columns of God, though they have nothing at all of firm faith to despise the pomps of the world, and to desire invisible good things, nor strength to correct, nor industry at least to understand the errors of those over whom they have been set.

CHAPTER 19

Concerning the brazen sea. He also made a molten sea, etc. This molten sea was made in the form of the saving laver, in which we are cleansed for the remission of sins. For the priests washed themselves in it, as the words of the days openly testify. Moreover, it is clear that all who are chosen are typically called priests in the Scriptures, because they are members of our Lord Jesus Christ, the high priest. And rightly does Scripture attribute the name of "sea" to this vessel, namely, in memory of the Red Sea, in which a form of baptism first appeared through the destruction of the Egyptians and the liberation of

God's people, as the Apostle expounds, saying: "For all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. The sacrament of baptism, on the other hand, secures for us purity of life in this world and promises us the glory of eternal life in the future (I Cor. X). Both of these are signified in this brazen sea by one statement, as it is said to be ten cubits from lip to lip. For the Lord expressed in the Law all that we should do in the ten commandments. Likewise, He marked the reward of the good works with the number ten, with which He foretold to be given to those laboring in the vineyard. Therefore, the sea was ten cubits from lip to lip;

for from the first baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to the last, who is to believe and be baptized at the end of the world, the entire chorus of the faithful ought to enter the one and the same way of truth and hope for the common crown of righteousness from the Lord. It was round in circumference, as the universal globe, in the circle of life, was designated to be cleansed from the stain of sins; concerning which it is well added: Its height was five cubits because indeed whatever we sin by sight, whatever by hearing, whatever by smell, whatever by taste, whatever by touch, all this is remitted to us by the grace of God through the washing of the life-giving fountain. But the remission of past sins is not sufficient unless each one endeavors to persist in good deeds from henceforth; otherwise, the devil, who had departed from the man, if he sees him to be idle from good works, returns more abundantly and makes the latter state of that man worse than the former. Hence it is aptly added: And a line of thirty cubits compassed it round about.

By the line, indeed, the discipline of heavenly precepts, by which we are bound from our lusts, can be aptly signified, with Scripture bearing witness, for a threefold cord is not quickly broken, because indeed the observance of God's commandments, which is established in the hearts of the chosen by faith, hope, and love of divine retribution, cannot be broken by any obstacle of temporal things. And the line encompasses the sea when the sacrament of baptism which we have received, we strive to confirm by pious deeds, which line is aptly said to be thirty cubits. For five times six makes thirty. By the number six, in which God made man when he did not exist and when he had perished recreated him, our good action is also rightly figured. And six are multiplied by five to reach thirty when we humbly subject all the senses of our body to divine commands. We can also mystically accept this marine

number of thirty in another way; because three times ten makes thirty. And humanity after the flood filled the breadth of the whole world from the progeny of Noah's three sons. For indeed, the descendants of Shem occupied Asia, the descendants of Ham Africa, and the descendants of Japheth Europe and the islands of the sea.

And since the mystery of baptism, along with the performance of good works and the hope of heavenly rewards, was meant to be ministered to all nations, it is fitting that a cord of thirty cubits encircled that sea in which the wave of baptism was symbolized. But it is also to be noted that the Lord, having thirty years of age, came to the Jordan to be baptized by John. Since by His baptism, which the thirty-year span received, He consecrated the water of the saving washing for us, it is fitting that the sea, which symbolized our baptism, was encompassed by a cord of thirty cubits; so that it might be signified that the baptism dedicated to the remission of sins for all of us who believe in Him comes from the gift of Him who underwent baptism without sin. And the sculpture below the brim encircled it, measuring ten cubits around the sea. There were two rows of sculpted oxen. When it was previously mentioned that a cord of thirty cubits circled the sea, and now it is added that a sculpture below the brim measured ten cubits around, it is clear from both accounts that the basin was expanded and spread like a lily, being fitted from a circumference of thirty cubits at the brim to ten cubits. However, a sculpted ox is one that mimics some histories of events.

Hence, rightly through the carved oxen that encircled the sea, examples of prior times are designated, which it is necessary for us to diligently observe in order to see by what works the saints pleased God from the beginning, by what obstinacy the wicked persisted in their crimes, and by what great iniquity the reprobates perished for their crimes; how at the beginning of the nascent world Cain was condemned for the malice of envy, Abel was crowned for the merit of righteousness, Lamech cursed for adultery and murder, Enoch brought back to paradise for his grace of piety; how after the flood Ham was detested by his father for impiety, Shem and Japheth, due to reverence, were granted perpetual blessings, Abraham was made the heir of the divine promise due to the merit of faith, the rest of the multitude of nations was left in ancestral infidelity; how, with the Lord coming in the flesh, Judea was repelled for the crime of perfidy, and the gentiles were brought back to salvation through the grace of faith; and such other things which,

when diligently and piously considered in both Testaments, greatly benefit any zealous people. And perhaps for this reason, two orders of carved oxen were made in the brazen sea, so that those imbued with the font of baptism might diligently heed the histories of both Testaments. Therefore it was ten cubits around, so that anyone committed in these histories to the divine commands and entirely attentive to heavenly rewards might be seen and imitated. It follows well:

And it stood upon twelve oxen, out of which three looked toward the north, and three toward the west, and three toward the south, and three toward the east. For we understand, from the teaching of the Apostle, that oxen should be understood as the apostles and evangelists, indeed all ministers of the word, as the Apostle explains the commandment of the law which says: You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain. Is God really concerned with oxen (Deut. 25)? Or is it surely said for our sake? It is written for our sake, because whoever plows should plow in hope, and whoever threshes should thresh in expectation of reaping (1 Cor. 9). Thus, the twelve oxen are the twelve apostles and all who have taken up their place in governing the Holy Church; who indeed carry the sea over themselves when the apostles and their successors diligently fulfill the duty of evangelizing that has been imposed on them with prompt devotion. And three looked toward the north, and three toward the west, and three toward the south, and three toward the east, when they preached in all parts of the world the faith of the Holy Trinity. For the apostles were chosen as twelve, that is, four times three, by that mystery, so that they might baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, preaching the faith and confession of the Holy Trinity to the four corners of the world.

The words, actions, and passions of these apostles and their successors can be easily discerned in the present by observing or by reading; but what glorious reward awaits them in the future, we are not yet able to see. Hence it is aptly said: Whose hind parts were all hidden within. For indeed, the hind parts of the oxen are all hidden within; because the eternal reward which the holy preachers will receive is already determined in the judgment of the internal arbiter; but for us, who are still outside, it remains altogether hidden. However, this cannot remain hidden to anyone who receives the baptismal washing for salvation, and who must have life, faith, hope, and charity; without these three virtues, no one can operate anything, nor enter into life.

Hence it is rightly added: The thickness of the basin was three inches. The thickness of the basin in the sea is the firmness of virtue in baptism. And this thickness is three inches, as it is fortified by the strength of faith, hope, and love during the reception of baptism. It is also shown that it can be profitable to the recipients only if the firm certainty of these virtues strengthens the mind and actions of the recipients. The washing of baptism is received and celebrated in the example of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection from the dead; according to what the Apostle explains: For all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.

Therefore, we were buried with him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, surely we will also be united in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom. 6). This is also signified in a typological manner by the figure of the bronze sea when it is subsequently added: Its rim was shaped like a cup's rim, resembling the petals of a lily. By the cup's rim, the taste of the Lord's Passion is expressed; by the petals of the crossed lily, the revealed brightness of His Resurrection is conveyed. For indeed, the Lord, about to undergo His Passion, prayed to the Father, saying: Father, if You are willing, take this cup away from me (Luke 22). The lily, with its pleasant fragrance and white color on the outside and golden hue inside, aptly represents the glory of His Resurrection, which manifested both the immortality of His body to His disciples outwardly and the divine luminosity of His soul inwardly. The opened lily can also fittingly represent the Mediator between God and humans crowned with glory and honor after His Passion. Before His Passion, He was as a lily still closed, shining with the miracles He performed as a clear human;

after His Resurrection and Ascension, He revealed Himself as an outstretched lily to the citizens of the heavenly homeland, showing in His assumed humanity the power of divine splendor that He had with the Father before the world existed. Therefore, in the Song of Songs, He wished to designate Himself with the term lily, saying: I am a flower of the field and a lily of the valleys (Cant. 2). Thus, the rim of the sea, where the priests washed, was like the rim of a cup and the petals of an opened lily; because the lifesaving washing, by which we become members of the High Priest, sanctifies us in the faith of His holy Passion from all the stain of sins, and purifies us to

enter into the vision of His eternal glory: in this washing, indeed, both peoples, that is, of circumcision and of the foreskin, are made one in the Lord through faith, hope, and love, as He Himself attests, who preached circumcision saying among other things: And I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold, and I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. There shall be one flock and one Shepherd (John 10). What was symbolically prefigured in this sea as well; for it follows: It could hold two thousand baths. For the number of a thousand in Scripture is usually set for the signification of perfection; because indeed the number ten squared makes a solid. For ten times ten makes a hundred.

This figure is indeed squared but still full. But that it may rise in height and become solid, a hundred multiplied by ten makes a thousand. Surely by this number, stable and insuperable, and as if squared, the conscience of the just is designated. For wherever you turn it, a square stands. Thus the mind of the chosen knows not to be inclined from the state of its rectitude by any occurrence of temptations. But bath is a measure of the Hebrews, which they call bath, having three bushels. It is also ephah, which they call epha. But ephah pertains to the measure of dry fruits, wheat, barley, legumes; while bath is for liquid substances, wine, oil, water. Therefore, baths, which are a measure of a certain norm, signify works of equity and justice, with which those who are baptized for the remission of sins need to be instructed. And the sea held a thousand baths, when the water of baptism cleansing the Jewish people transferred them to the heavenly kingdom. And it also received another thousand, when even crowds of nations, reborn from the same font and confirmed by works of justice, were made partakers of the same perpetual kingdom. It is certainly to be noted in this place that there are those who think it is prohibited by the law of God to carve or paint likenesses of either men, or any animals or things in the church or on a wall or in any other place, because it is said in the Decalogue of the law:

You shall not make for yourself a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth (Exodus 20). They would not think this at all, if they recalled Solomon's work to memory, who made palms and cherubim with various carvings inside the temple; on its pillars pomegranates and networks; on this bronze sea twelve oxen and chased figures, and also on the bases of the lavers, as it is read later, he made lions with oxen, palms, axles, and wheels, with

cherubim and a variety of painted forms; or certainly if they considered the works of Moses himself, who by the command of the Lord, first made cherubim on the mercy seat, and afterwards a bronze serpent in the desert, by looking at which the people were saved from the venom of fiery serpents. For if it was permitted to exalt a bronze serpent on wood, which the children of Israel looking upon might live, why is it not permitted to portray to the memory of the faithful the exaltation of the Lord Saviour on the cross, by which He conquered death, or other of His miracles and healings, by which He miraculously triumphed over the same author of death, since the sight of these often provides great compunction to those who look upon them, and even to those who are ignorant of letters, as if displaying a living reading of the Lord's History? For painting is called in Greek ζωγραφία, that is, living writing.

If it was allowed to make twelve bronze oxen, which bearing the sea turned towards the four quarters of the world in groups of three, what prevents us from painting the twelve apostles, as they went forth teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; designating as if by living writing before the eyes of all? And if it was not against the law to make chased figures in a circle of ten cubits on the same sea, how will it be thought contrary to the law if we carve or paint in panels the chased figures of saints and martyrs of Christ, who through the keeping of the divine law deserved to attain to the glory of eternal retribution? But if we more diligently attend to the words of the law, it will perhaps appear that it is not forbidden to make images of things and animals, but it is absolutely prohibited to make these for the sake of idolatry. Finally, when the Lord was about to say on the holy mountain: You shall not make for yourself a graven image, nor any likeness, He preceded it by saying: You shall have no other gods before Me; and then He added: You shall not make for yourself a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; and He concluded: You shall not bow down to them, nor serve them.

By these words it is openly declared that those likenesses are prohibited to be made by all, which the impious are accustomed to make in the worship of strange gods, and which the wandering gentility discovered for the purpose of worship and adoration. Otherwise, simply making these has, as I believe, been prohibited by no letter of the divine law; otherwise, even the Lord,

when tempted by the Pharisees about paying tribute to Caesar, in which they said the name and image of Caesar were expressed, would not have responded thus: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Matthew 22); but rather correcting their error, He would say: It is not lawful for you to make the image of Caesar by the striking of your gold, because such sculpture is prohibited by the divine law; nor would He have said this, when shown the coin of tribute, if the image of Caesar on it had been deformed for the sake of idolatry, and not more for the judgement of royal power.

CHAPTER 20

On the ten bases and lavers. And he made ten bronze bases, etc. In many and various ways, the same sacraments of our salvation are prefigured. For the same apostles and apostolic men, who are signified by the oxen bearing the sea, are also signified by the bases, which were prepared for bearing the lavers, just as the lavers themselves bear the type of the same spiritual washing, of which the sea also bore the type. For as the words of the days narrate, they washed in them everything that was to be offered in the burnt offering (2 Chronicles 4). Therefore, the burnt offering of the Lord can be generally understood as the whole multitude of the elect, who, according to the voice of the forerunner, were baptized by Him in the Holy Spirit and fire. Therefore, just as the priests who were washed in the sea represent those who are made partakers of the high priesthood through baptism, which is in the Lord Jesus Christ; so also the burnt offerings most openly signify their figure, since they are filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit through the washing of baptism. For the victim is washed in the laver when a believer is sprinkled with water; but it is offered as a burnt offering when, through the imposition of the bishop's hand, he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. When Philip the evangelist preached in Samaria, what did he do but wash the Lord's sacrifices in the laver of the temple?

But because the Holy Spirit had not yet descended on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, it was as if the washed sacrifices had not yet reached the fire of the most sacred altar; but when Peter and John, who had been sent there, laid hands on the baptized, and they received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues, the sacrifices had now reached the altar's fire to become a burnt offering, which in Latin is called "totally consumed," because indeed, the grace of the Holy Spirit filling

their conscience made them fervent with divine love. And because ten bases were made to carry the lavers, it could mystically be interpreted that the ministers of the vital washing support those they nurture with their voice by the work of their example to the joys of eternal blessedness, which is often figured by the number ten. But because it is distinctly written about those lavers in the following that five of them were placed on the right side of the temple and five on the left, the mysteries of the number five must be considered more closely in them. For on both sides of the temple are the bases of the lavers, so that the grace of the sacred font might be shown to both peoples of God.

And there are five on each side, so that just as in the exposition of the sea, which we have already said to be five cubits high, so also in the five bases of the lavers, it is typically shown that all that the faithful committed through the five senses of the body is to be remitted through the washing of baptism. Therefore, just as in one sea placed upon twelve oxen the unity of baptism is expressed, which was to be preached to the whole world through the apostles, so also through the two orders of the lavers it is mystically shown that the Gentiles and the Jews were to be gathered into one fellowship of faith through the wave of baptism. For even if sacrifices were washed in twin lavers, some on the right side of the court, and some on the left, they were all consumed by one fire of the altar to become a burnt offering; because whether one receives the washing of Christ in the part of the circumcision or in that of the foreskin, all are sanctified by one Spirit to be made sons of God. Hence indeed the Apostle says, "But you received the Spirit of adoption of sons, in whom we cry: Abba Father. "You received," he says, "one Spirit, in whom all sons of adoption are made; in whom indeed we cry, Abba Father; evidently Abba for those of us who came to the faith from the Hebrews;

Father, for those of us from among the gentiles, invoking one and the same Father God in various tongues due to the diversity of nations, on account of the one Spirit's gift. But it is easy to understand that the bases were each four cubits in length, four cubits in width, and three cubits in height. For the length pertains to the patience of long-suffering, the width to the expansion of love, and the height refers to the hope of heavenly reward. Moreover, there are four principal virtues on which the whole structure of the virtues depends: namely prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice. Therefore, the bases' length and width were of four cubits, because the holy

preachers, whether enduring worldly adversities and the length of exile and present labors without, or enlarging their heart in the eternal exultation of their Creator's love and that of their neighbors, always care to devote themselves to the virtues, prudently discerning between good and evil, courageously enduring adversities, tempering the heart from the desire for pleasures, holding to justice in action. The height of the bases, indeed, is of three cubits when through the exercise of virtues, which they practice with patience of evils and love of good things, they strive with continuous intention to reach the vision of the Holy Trinity. The work of the bases itself was pierced, and with sculptures between the joinings.

The joinings seem to refer to those by which the plates of the laver itself were joined together to one another, so that from four or five plates one base would be made. It is revealed what kinds of sculptures these bases had between these joinings, that is, on their sides, front and back, on the right and left, and above too, by the addition which says: Between wreaths and garlands, lions, oxen, and cherubim, and similar joinings above. Therefore, those surfaces of the bases were not flat but carved all around with mystical figures; because the minds of the saints, indeed their entire conduct, displays virtue's grace in all things, and no hour passes for them without being filled with pious works, words, or surely meditations. They have indeed sculpted wreaths when they pant with unfailling desire for the entrance of eternal life. And they have garlands when, amid the desires for life that is above, they never dissolve the bonds of brotherly fellowship that is near. They have lions between the wreaths and garlands when they thus raise their mind to hope for celestial things and their heart to love their neighbors so that they delay not to show the fervor of severe rebuke to sinners entrusted to them. They have oxen with the lions when they exhibit that same rebuke of correction with the spirit of meekness;

when in the fervor of correcting they never cease to revolve the discernment of right action for speech, never ceasing to ruminate on the words of divine reading in their mouths. Indeed, blessed Stephen, evidently the excellent base of the Lord's temple, appeared to show the fierce teeth and claws of the lion when he said to his persecutors, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? (Acts VII), and so on. However, while he spoke this, he showed how much tenderness and, so to speak, bovine meek-

ness he carried in his heart when, kneeling, he prayed for those same persecutors raging up to his death, saying: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them. But because neither the hope of eternal things in heaven, nor the love of neighbors on earth, nor the fervor of biting zeal, nor the kindness of compassionate moderation can be had without the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, it is fittingly remembered that cherubim are sculpted between the wreaths and garlands, the lions and oxen. For it is known that cherubim hold the type of sacred Scripture, whether because the two cherubim on the mercy seat of the ark, in the figure of the two Testaments harmoniously singing of Christ, or because their very name signifies the multitude of knowledge.

The more earnestly anyone applies himself to the reading of the pages of divine words, the more necessary it is that he fears the judgment of the internal witness or judge in everything he does or judges, lest in judging the sinners he does too much justly, or again by pardoning without the restraint of just discretion, incurs the wrath of the just Judge. For he who adds knowledge, also adds labor (Eccle. I). Hence, here too, besides the sculptures of cherubim, it is fittingly joined: And on the lions and oxen, as if there were reins hanging made of bronze. For reins hang upon the lions and oxen, when holy teachers, both in the severity of strictness by which they judge sinners, and in the mildness of gentleness by which they forgive the penitent, fear the judgment of their Author, lest they themselves, by unjustly binding, may justly deserve to be bound by Him whose judgment cannot err. And there were four wheels on each pedestal, and bronze axles, and to the four parts were there little shoulders cast underneath the laver, looking towards each other. The four wheels are the four books of the Gospels, which are most aptly compared to wheels, because just as the rolling of a wheel runs swiftly wherever it is driven, so the evangelical word, with the help of the Lord, quickly filled the whole world through the apostles.

Just as a wheel lifts the chariot placed upon it from the earth, and carries it where the charioteer directs, so evangelical preaching suspends the minds of the elect from earthly desires to heavenly aspirations, and, raised thus up, it leads them to the growth of good works or to the ministry of preaching, wherever the helping grace of the Spirit wills. For it says further on: For such were the wheels as are accustomed to be made on a chariot. And we read concerning the saints: The chariots of God are tens of thousands, thousands of

rejoicing ones (Psal. XLVII). What therefore does it mean that the wheels of the bases are likened to chariot wheels, except that one and the same Gospel word makes some of them whom it instructs into the chariots of God, and others into bases? Whoever among the doctors used to be sent far and wide into the world to evangelize the word were indeed the chariots of God, and very swift ones, because running through all, they led God to the hearts of the believers. But those who, remaining in one place, announce the word of salvation to their neighbors and drive them to the bath of life, which is celebrated either in baptism or in the contrition of tears, are like the bases of the temple, which carry the lavers for washing the offerings. For they so bestow the ministry of salvation on the faithful whom they oversee, that they do not undergo the labor of running far to acquire new peoples.

Therefore, the wheels of the bases are similar to the wheels of the chariots, because the same books of the Gospels send these teachers forth to preach the faith of truth, and command those others, already initiated into the heavenly sacraments, to remain with the doctors to further confirm the faith. The four wheels supported the base of the laver when the Gospels ordered James, the brother of the Lord, to stay in Jerusalem to strengthen the Church. The wheels placed under them were prepared to run when the same Gospels willed that Paul and Barnabas should travel everywhere to preach to the Gentiles. The wheels set under the base lifted the laver of the temple from the earth, when in our recent times blessed Pope Gregory, fortified with the evangelical words, ruled the Roman Church. The same wheels, attached to the chariot of God, stood far apart when the most reverend Fathers Augustine, Paulinus, and their other companions, confirmed by the same evangelical oracles, came to Britain at his command and entrusted the word of God to peoples long unbelieving.

If, therefore, the bases of the lavers are the holy teachers who minister to us the bath of life, and the four wheels of the bases are the four books of the Gospels, what are the axles of the wheels that bear the bases, but the hearts of the same teachers who, intent diligently on the precepts of the Gospel, lift themselves from the desire of lowly things, just as axles attached to the wheels lift the base higher from the ground? But the little shoulders placed before the wheels, lest they might slip from the axles, are the proclamations of the prophets, by which the evangelical and apostolic Scripture is confirmed, lest it might perhaps come into doubt for any of the readers. Hence

the Apostle Peter, speaking about the Lord, says: And we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention (II Petr. I). All the evangelists and apostles also used to make mention of the Law and the Prophets in what they wrote. Thus, Mark says: The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet; and Matthew: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet (Marc. I), and similar things. It is well said that the little shoulders, which were placed in four parts under the laver, were looking towards each other, because indeed all prophetic Scripture is in agreement with itself, as it is composed by one Spirit.

There were four little shoulders per base, namely according to the number of wheels, not because there are only four prophetic books, but because in all that the prophets and Moses spoke, they bore testimony to the words of the four evangelists, so that from the agreement of both, one faith and love of Christ might confirm the hearts of all of us. Moreover, the mouth of the laver inside was at the top of the head, and what appeared outwardly was of one cubit, it was all round, and had one and a half cubits in length. The basin's lip measured one cubit, symbolizing the unity of confession and faith by which all are baptized in the confession of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. And this lip was at the top of the head (Ephesians IV), to teach us that through baptism, the path to the heavenly kingdom has been opened. The basin itself had the width of one and a half cubits, signifying the perfection of the work and the beginning of contemplation. For the whole cubit in the basin represents the perfection of good action, undoubtedly possessed by Job, of whom the Lord said to the ancient tempter: "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is no one like him on the earth, a simple and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil" (Job I)?

The other cubit stands for divine vision, which in some part is granted to the faithful in this life, as to Job, who, after overcoming the adversary, said while speaking with the Lord: "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You" (Job XLII); as the Lord appeared face to face to Moses; as He was seen by Isaiah seated on the throne of the kingdom surrounded by heavenly citizens with due praise; as He often appeared to other prophets; as to blessed Stephen at the moment of his martyrdom, when the

heavens were opened and the glory of God was revealed; as to Paul, who was shown the mysteries of the entrance into paradise and the third heaven. But all these are in a very small part, compared to the glory to be revealed in the future. Therefore, after the cubit of good action which can be perfected in this life by the saints, begins the cubit of heavenly contemplation, which in the future life will certainly be completed in all the chosen. This measure of one and a half cubits was found not only in the basins but also in the wheels and their bases. For it is written in the following: "One wheel had a height of a cubit and a half. And a little later: "And on the top of the base, there was some roundness of one and a half cubits, so made that a basin could be placed on top.

The measure of the basin was indeed one cubit and a half because we are washed in the font of life by that faith, so that through works of righteousness we may deserve to enter eternal life, although we cannot be without sin while we live here. Indeed, we can taste the sweetness of the heavenly life partly, and love it in this interim life, but we cannot fully see it in any way. The wheels also measure one and a half cubits, because the study of the evangelical reading shows how those who want to be perfect should live; it demonstrates hope for eternal reward in the present, and promises that the quality of that reward will be revealed and granted to us in the future. The bases also measure one cubit and a half in width at the top, where the basins would be placed, because the eminent teachers and ministers of the saving bath shone perfectly in this life through their works, but they enjoyed the light of contemplation in part, thus they say: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. In this way, he made ten bases, from a single mold and measure, with similar carvings. He also made ten bronze basins (I Cor. XIII). Why the bases were made, and an equal number of basins placed on them, has already been said.

As to the fact that there was one mold, one measure, and similar carvings for all the bases and basins, this was not done to signify the equality of all the merits of the teachers; rather, it was done because there is one faith of the Gospel by which they are instructed, one sacrament of baptism by which they are washed, and one and the same Spirit by whom all the elect are consecrated, although they have different gifts in that Spirit, who distributes to everyone as He wills. Each basin held forty baths. The number forty regularly

holds the type of great perfection, because four times ten makes forty. Ten are the commandments in which all our actions set forth in divine law are included; four are the books of the Gospels, through which the entrance to the heavenly homeland is opened to us by the dispensation of the Lord's incarnation. And because all who belong to the mystery of sacred baptism must show the fruit of right action with faith and the sacraments of the Gospel, each basin, in which the holocausts were washed, appropriately held forty baths. As for what follows: "And it was four cubits either in height or in width," the meaning of the mystery lies clearly herein.

For one basin was four cubits either because of the holy books of the Gospel, in which the form of baptism is set forth, or because of the four cardinal virtues, with which every faithful person, if they are not a faithful person in vain, should be instructed; or certainly because of the four regions of the world to which the bath of salvation is administered, as the Psalmist says: "Whom He redeemed from the hand of the enemy, He gathered from the regions, from the rising and setting of the sun, from the north and the sea" (Psalm LXXVII). As was said above: "And it was one and a half cubits; and whether it signified height or width was not specified, it seems that it is meant to be understood as the breadth of the basin. From the measurement (if I am not mistaken) of the base on which it was placed, each laver is most easily inferred, which is thus described: At the summit of the base was a certain roundness of one and a half cubits, so fashioned that the laver could be placed on top. The width of the base of the lavers was one and a half cubits, and the capacity of the lavers themselves held four cubits. But whether it is in height, or in length, or in both, let him say who knows. And he established ten bases, five on the right side of the temple, five on the left.

The right side of the temple and the left are not within the temple itself, but before the temple to the east, namely in the inner court, which was properly called that of the priests. Five were placed on the right side of the temple for the Jews, who from ancient times used the Sun of righteousness for the teaching of the law; and five on the left for us, who for a long time with a blind heart adhered to the servitude of him who said: "I will set my throne on the north": which is plainly to say: I desire to rest in those hearts which I consider to be alien from the light of truth and the flame of divine charity. And the sea was placed on the right side of the temple, toward the East, to the South. And this too was placed in the same court toward the East. But

when he says: On the right side of the temple, this is what he repeats by saying Toward the South. For those entering the court from the East, turning was first to the South, where the sea in the very corner stood, prepared for the priests to wash; then as they progressed inward, the lavers for washing the sacrifices were encountered, placed on both sides; within these was a bronze base five cubits in length; and five cubits in width, and three cubits in height, on which Solomon stood dedicating the temple;

then going further, the altar of burnt offering faced the south of the court; then the portico of the temple or the vestibule, in which were bronze columns around the door of the temple. Therefore, placing the sea on the right side of the temple signifies that we through the washing of baptism ought to attain the heavenly kingdom, which is rightly figured by the term "right. For he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. For where both the right and the left are taken in a good sense, either Judea and the Gentile world, as we said above in the interpretation of the bases; or the present life of the Church and the future, or the joy of the saints and sorrow, or something of this kind; but where absolutely the right is placed in a good sense, it often indicates eternal joys. But placing the sea toward the east has almost the same significance, namely that through the washing of the sacred font the splendor of internal clarity is opened to us. That it is toward the southern side of the court signifies that the faithful through the reception of the Holy Spirit are accustomed to be kindled to the fervor of true charity. For the fervor of the southern sun is accustomed in the Scriptures to signify the ardor of love and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, through whom the same love is diffused in the hearts of the elect.

CHAPTER 21

That the vessels of the house of the Lord were made in the region of the Jordan. All the vessels... were of brass, etc. Appropriately, the vessels of the house of the Lord were cast in the region of the Jordan, in which river our Lord deemed to be baptized, and by being dipped in its waters converted the element of water for us into the washing away of sins, because all the baptism of the faithful, by which they are consecrated to the Lord, is celebrated by the example of that baptism by which He sanctified the waters. Rightly, therefore, the vessels of the house of the Lord were made in the region of the Jordan. For we cannot otherwise become vessels of election and mercy unless, looking to His baptism which He underwent in that river, we also strive to

be washed in the life-giving stream. It should be noted, however, that the same vessels are said to have been made not only in the region of the Jordan but also in its plain region; signifying the multiplication of the faithful, which was to be throughout the breadth of all nations, fulfilling the prophecy which says: "The fields shall rejoice, and all that is in them" (Ps. 95). Similar to this is what the same Psalmist says of the mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, from which many came to the faith: "Lo, we heard of it in Ephrathah, we found it in the fields of the wood.

For we hear in Ephrathah, that is, in Bethlehem, the mysteries of the Lord, revealed through the prophets about the Virgin, who was from the same city, from the fruit of her womb, Christ was to come in the flesh. We found them in the fields of the wood because they were revealed throughout the breadth of the nations across the world, we ourselves have known them, we have seen them, we have become participants in them. Therefore, the king cast the vessels of the house of the Lord in the plain region of the Jordan because the Lord filled the baptism of salvation, through which He made vessels of mercy, throughout the breadth of the world. Clayey earth, from which were made molds for casting the vessels of the house of the Lord, can better than sacred Scripture, from which we receive the rule of good living, be understood? For just as clay hardened by fire exhibits the form of the vessels of the Lord, showing how great and what kind they ought to be made, so the Scripture presents us with the rule of righteousness to follow, and the examples of the saints, who endured invincibly in the fire of tribulations, as a model for us to follow in all things.

If we aspire to be chosen and precious vessels in the house of the Lord, just as molten bronze enters the molds of clay so that the vessel may become fit for heavenly services, so also we, being healthily humbled and softened by the flame of divine love or even human adversity, enter the way of the fathers by doing good, that we may gain the rewards of the fathers by running well. For it is not always necessary for us to be fitted to the rules of good actions, but when the good action is completed, the palm of blessed recompense is to be hoped for, because the vessels were not always kept enclosed in clay molds; rather, when they had reached perfection, they were brought to light, the bonds of the molds broken, and placed in the temple of the Lord each in their own place. We say this, not because the works of the saints are ever to perish, but because once they have received the crown of righteous-

ness, which they have earned by doing well, all the tasks of laborious action cease. For who in that life would suffer martyrdom for the faith of Christ, where, with the adversaries expelled, all the elect rejoice in the presence of Christ (Rev. 7)? Who there would bury the dead, where the land consists only of the living? Who would console the mourner, where God wipes every tear from the eyes of the saints?

Who there would open a home to a wanderer and a guest, where all the elect together have a dwelling from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? Who would bring bread to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, where the Lord will feed me, and nothing will be lacking to me? Therefore, with the necessary molds of the vessels once broken, the vessels themselves now shine brightly in the house of the Lord, because, at the end of the world, with not only the persecutions, which they endure for righteousness' sake, but also the laborious works of righteousness, which they willingly toil for eternal blessedness, ceased, they will rejoice in the precepts of immortality in the vision of their Creator.

CHAPTER 22

On Both Altars. And Solomon made all the vessels in the house of the Lord, etc. The golden altar signifies the hearts of perfect righteous people, shining with the light of internal clarity and chastity, the loftiness of which even the location of the same altar appropriately signifies. For it stood before the door of the Holy of Holies, as we clearly read in the making of the tabernacle. On this altar, neither the blood of sacrifices nor libations, but only incense was burned, the smoke of which, rising to the higher regions, covered the ark and filled the oracle with the sweetness of its scent. In this it expressed a figure of the saints, who, neglecting temporal desires, seek heavenly things with full intention, as if they were placed close to the oracle inside, and are not far from the veil which separates the temple from the Holy of Holies. They inhabit the earth only in body, but according to the inner person, their whole conversation is in the heavens. And from this altar of such kind, the smoke of the incenses ascended within the Holy of Holies, where the ark is hidden, when the prayers of the saints, kindled by the flame of charity, reach as far as heaven, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

For on this altar, the blood of sacrifices was not offered, but only incenses were burned, because such men do not have works of the flesh and blood which they sacrifice on the altar of their heart to the Lord, but they only of-

fer vows of tears and prayers to Him for the desire of the heavenly kingdom. Yet, because no one immediately becomes perfect, but ascends to the desire of the heavenly through the anxious offering of carnal pleasures, Scripture did not omit to place in the mystical construction of the house of the Lord the figure of those who still struggle to burn the carnal desires within themselves that war against the soul with the flame of divine labor, so that having eradicated these from their heart or body, they may subsequently ascend to greater things and offer to God the spiritual incense of prayers and contrition. For indeed another altar was made to offer victims, much larger indeed, but as much as it excelled in size, so much was it inferior in the situation of its location and the appearance of its metal. For it was made of bronze and placed before the doors of the temple. On which surely those are figuratively expressed who serve the Lord with such devotion, that their flesh still lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh (Rom. VII), and who are accustomed to say: For with the mind we serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Those who strive to overcome the impulses of the flesh, to restrain the fleeting pleasures of luxury, by frequent fasting and prayers, vigils, and alms, and other fruits of the Spirit, worthily to approach the tranquility of chastity to God, what do they offer except the sacrifice of their devotion to Him, fulfilling that of the Apostle, who beseeches us through the mercy of God, to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God (Rom. XII)? Since they burn with the fervor of spiritual love, but have not yet achieved triumph over the conquest of carnal desire, the altar of burnt offering has indeed holy fire from heaven, but it presents the appearance of bronze, not of gold. But because there are more carnal than spiritual people in the holy Church, more who restrain themselves by curbing the enticements of vices than those who, having overcome and subdued the struggle with vices, rejoice in the obtained security of virtues, rightly the altar of burnt offering was asserted to be much larger than the altar of incense. For it is written about it in the book of Chronicles: "And he made the bronze altar twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in width, and ten cubits in height" (II Chron IV). And indeed, Moses made the altar of incense in the wilderness, having one cubit in length, and another in width, and two cubits in height.

However, Scripture does not say how great in size Solomon made this, but only that it is said to be a golden altar. However, it is clear that he could not

make it as large as the burnt offering altar, because if it was made twenty cubits in length, it would fill the entire width of the temple. Therefore, as much as the altar of burnt offering was placed further than the altar of incense, and as much as it was lowlier in the kind of offering and the baseness of the metal, it surpassed in the measure of quantity and the frequency of victims, since, surely, there are many more to whom it is said: "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments," than those who delight in hearing: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor" (Matt. XIX). Nevertheless, the measure of this altar is not without mystical reason and number. For it has twenty cubits in length, and as many cubits in width, and ten cubits in height, of which number, indeed, we have spoken in the exposition of the temple and its vestibule. But now also it must briefly be said that the altar of burnt offering holds the type of the chosen ones in the Church, who seek to consecrate their body and soul to God by the fire of that love;

the perseverance of these in good work is figured by the length of the altar, the breadth of the love of God and neighbor by the width, and hope in the expectation of the divine vision by the height. Furthermore, that the length and width of the altar were each twenty cubits denotes a great perfection of the same unwearied long-suffering and sincere love, which is granted to us by the observance of both Testaments. For four times five make up the number twenty. The five books of the Mosaic law and the four of the evangelical liberty add up to twenty. And when we reach the understanding and spiritual keeping of the law through the illuminating grace of the Gospel, we indeed fulfill the number twenty. Hence, the same number twenty is in the length and width of the altar when the hearts of the chosen, taught by both Testaments and aided by the one Author of both Testaments, maintain the perseverance of good work even in persecutions and exhibit the joy of love towards those who persecute. And by the number ten, hope of heavenly rewards is customarily designated, as the Lord affirms when He testifies that those working in the vineyard of the great householder shall be rewarded with a denarius (Matt. XX). And fittingly, by this number, the eternal reward is figured, in which our nature is eternally joined to the divine vision, because in that number both the divine and human nature are mystically designated simultaneously. For God is indeed a trinity.

Man, on the other hand, is comprehended by the number seven; in four-fold, because of the body which consists of the four elements; and by three-fold, because of the triple difference of the inner man which the holy Scripture shows to us when it commands us to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. Hence, in the Decalogue of the law, there are three commandments that stir us to the worship of divine love, and seven that commend the love of our neighbor. Those, therefore, who keep the Decalogue in the love of God and neighbor, rightly receive the reward of this observance in the vision of God and neighbor together. And those who in this life love both the neighbor whom they see, and God whom they do not see, these in the future life will see both God the king in His beauty, and the neighbor glorified and adorned. And therefore the altar, which was made in the figure of the elect, to signify their perpetual life, was ten cubits high. But when it was said that Solomon made the golden altar, it was immediately added: And the table on which the showbread was placed, golden. The golden table, however, is the sacred Scripture, fruitful in the clarity of spiritual understanding; of which the Psalmist says to the Lord: Thou hast prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies (Psalm 22).

For our Creator has prepared a table of heavenly knowledge for us, so that we may be strengthened in the faith of truth and not led into error by tribulating adversaries. The showbread are indeed the holy teachers, whose works or words of salvation, proposed as examples of life, whoever seeks well always finds in the divine pages. Hence, appropriately, the same bread was commanded to be twelve in number in Exodus, namely on account of the twelve apostles, through whose ministry both the Scripture of the New Testament was established and the mysteries of the Old Instrument were revealed, by the gift of the Lord (Exodus 25). By this number indeed, not only the same apostles but also all those are designated who minister the word as the food of life to the faithful by preaching, because they all certainly follow the same form of doctrine which the apostles received from the Lord. We read, moreover, about these breads in Exodus, that every Sabbath they should be changed and new ones placed on the Lord's table instead of the old, and always prepared with the same measure and like form commanded. From all these, the mystical sense of internal refreshment shines forth clearer than light. For old bread is taken away and new is restored, when, some of the

faithful teachers having been taken from this life, the holy Church ordains others in their place.

And this not except on the Sabbath day, because whoever has fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith, at the time of his dissolution will enter the blessed rest of eternity. One measure, and not different, always similar bread was made, because indeed there is one and the same form of truth and faith, which at first the apostles showed to their listeners, and afterwards their successors, and all the pious teachers in the churches of Christ throughout the world do not cease to preach.

CHAPTER 23

On the ten golden tables. What we read in the words of the days, that Solomon made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the right and five on the left, and also one hundred golden basins, it is believable that they were made not so much for the bread of the proposition as for the vessels of the Lord; namely the basins which the Scripture reports were made in like manner; censers, incense burners, and other things which are read in the following. For, a little later in the same volume of words, it is interjected: And he made all the vessels of the house of the Lord, and the bronze altar, and the tables, and upon them the bread of the proposition. Either he put the plural for the singular, the most usual custom in Scriptures; as in the Book of Joshua: But the children of Israel have transgressed the covenant, and have taken of the accursed thing (Joshua VII), since Achan alone, and not several of the children of Israel, did this; or certainly because the bread of the proposition used to be baked before the sabbath so that it might immediately be placed on the table of proposition on the sabbath; it might have happened that newly baked bread was immediately placed on those tables, and there kept covered that night until the old was removed in the early morning, to be placed warm on the table of proposition.

However, these ten tables do not differ in form from the figure of the one table of proposition. For just as the table, laden with twelve loaves, represents the unanimous harmony of all Scripture fortified by apostolic authority, so not without reason do the ten golden tables figuratively represent the words of divine law and the prophets, which offer us, as the bread of the proposition, the nourishment of the word of God, or propose to us the examples of the faithful, as it were the vessels set upon them, the clarity and miracles of the Lord. And rightly there are five tables on each side, not only because the

legislator wrote five volumes, but also because the entire series of the Old Testament embraces five ages of the world. Moreover, the number of tables is doubled, and five are placed on the right and five on the left when, after the Lord's Incarnation, the same Scripture is entrusted either to both peoples of God, namely the Jewish and the Gentile, or revealed full of evangelical figures, which formerly was thought to be understood solely according to the letter by the ancient people of God.

For when we read in the holy Scripture, for example, that Abel was crowned with martyrdom, Enoch was translated from the world, Noah was wondrously saved while the world perished, Lot was eminently rewarded with hospitality while the impious were exterminated, Abraham was made the father of all nations by merit of obedience, Joseph after being sold, by the merit of chastity and innocence, is taken as an example of virtue; what are the five golden tables or the vessels of the Lord, or yet the bread of proposition on the left side of the temple, if not that the divine letters, according to the historical sense, open to us the door to living rightly and hoping for eternal rewards from the Lord? But when we understand the same more deeply or see them to sound forth the dispensation of the Lord's Incarnation or any other sacraments of the holy Church, we find as it were another five tables bearing the vessels of election and the nourishment of spiritual life on the right side of the temple; because we recognize that these very words of sacred history reveal to us a wholly new light of heavenly wisdom, opening new senses from the old; and indeed in this figure five lampstands are made in the temple. For when the Scripture said that King Solomon made the table upon which the bread of proposition might be placed, golden, it subsequently added and said:

CHAPTER 24

On the ten candlesticks. And five golden candlesticks, etc. Indeed, these tables are rightly placed as representations of Holy Scripture, because they provide bread of the word for those who hunger for righteousness, and they carry the vessels of heavenly ministry, that is, they propose the actions of the just as examples to us; thus the same divine words are very aptly represented by candlesticks, evidently because they bring forth the light of wisdom for those who stray. Hence the Psalmist says: "Your word is a lamp to my feet" (Psalm 118), etc. Hence Solomon says: "For the commandment is a lamp and the law is light" (Proverbs 6). But why there are five candlesticks on the

right and five on the left side, is easily understood from what we discussed about the tables. And when he said: Five on the right and five on the left, it is fittingly added: In front of the oracle. For the oracle, where the ark was, as often said, designates the entrance to the heavenly homeland, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, undoubtedly aware of the secrets of the Father. Or the golden candlesticks of the temple are placed in front of the oracle because the divine words always look toward the dwelling place of the heavenly city, to infuse the recognition and desire of it into our hearts, and to kindle those who have their origin in the flesh from the earth to desire and obtain a seat of perpetual abode in the heavens.

However, there are those who think that what is said about the candlesticks, five on the right and five on the left, should be understood that five were on the right of that candlestick which Moses made in the desert, and five on the left, both nevertheless on the southern side, where the one candlestick that Moses made was commanded to stand. They understand the same order for the ten tables, which were all placed on the northern side, but five to the right and five to the left of that Mosaic table. But if you consider the words of sacred Scripture, which say: And five golden candlesticks on the right and five on the left, in front of the oracle, it is clear, I believe, that they were equally placed lengthwise on both sides of the temple. For if all the candlesticks were placed lengthwise on the southern side of the temple, it would not be said to be placed in front of the oracle, but rather in front of the north, or in front of the tables, or even among the tables where they stood; which is spoken of in Exodus, concerning that one candlestick in the tabernacle of testimony, opposite the table, on the southern side (Exodus 25); likewise in the book of Numbers: When you set up the seven lamps, they shall give light in front of the lampstand (Numbers 8).

Candlesticks were on both sides of the temple, and tables were on both sides, because divine Scripture was established for the illumination and refreshment of both peoples of God, which is accustomed to refresh us in both prosperous and adverse situations, in sad and joyful events, so that we do not falter, and to illuminate us so that we do not remain blind. The vessels of mercy placed upon it, that is, the writings of the just deeds, propose examples to both of us, through which we may be strengthened in the practice of justice. But if you ask what the typical difference is between candlesticks and lamps, we can rightly understand that the lamps are holy men, who, having

been infused with the oil of the Holy Spirit, also burn with the fire of love in their hearts, and bring the light of knowledge to their neighbors through speech. The candlesticks that elevate these lamps so that they can be seen far and wide in the Church are the Holy Scriptures, which show us the virtues and teachings of the saints through their reading; the interpretation of which is affirmed by the word of the Lord, where it is said of John: He was a burning and shining lamp (John V). We can also very fittingly say that the lamps are the divine words, according to that of the Psalmist, which we have also quoted above: Your word is a lamp to my feet (Psalm CXVIII).

The candlesticks of these lamps are all the saints, who, with humble intent, always subject their hearts and bodies to bearing the commands of the Lord. For whoever cares in no way to follow his own will, but attends to all that the Holy Scripture says, and strives to subject himself to its commands, to listen to its promises, bears the golden lamps of God's house like a golden candlestick, because he strives to submit the pure thoughts of his mind and the pure members of his body to doing what God commands. And this with such a fixed intention as a candlestick, firmly erected toward the heights, must keep the lamps placed upon it not only without falling but also without any change in its stance. When he said: And five golden candlesticks on the right hand and five on the left in front of the oracle, made of pure gold, and added: And like the flowers of lilies, and golden lamps above, it seems according to the letter that the upper part of the candlesticks is shaped in the form of an open lily, which we read was made in the candlestick of the tabernacle, whose middle stem and branches proceeding from it, with cups and knobs, are described as having many lilies. The flowers of the lily, as often said, represent the beauty of the ever-green land of the living. About which blessed Peter says, we are regenerated by the Lord to a living hope to an incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading inheritance, reserved in heaven.

And well the golden lily flowers are made in the candlestick of the house of the Lord, because the divine Scripture, having despised temporal joys, usually encourages us to seek the good of the heavenly homeland. And just as the candlestick erected in height has lily flowers and golden lamps at its head, so all the elect contained in the same sacred Scripture, with their minds raised to the heights, are proven to have sought and received heavenly goods from the Lord. We have said more fully of the table, the candlestick, and both altars, and the base of the house of the Lord, in the books which

we have written about the making of the tabernacle and the priestly vestments. Therefore, if anyone wishes to know about these things, according to the capacity of our sense, as born from the tradition of the fathers, let him seek it in that work. It follows:

CHAPTER 25

On the hinges of the doors and the perfection of the work of the house of the Lord. And the hinges of the doors of the house of the Lord, etc. If the doors of the inner house, the holy of holies, are the angelic mysteries, which, when we depart from the body, reveal to us the entrance to heavenly life, and the doors of the temple house are the holy teachers and priests, who, by instructing, baptizing, and communicating the mysteries of the Lord's body and blood, unfold for us the first lights of the present church, what are the hinges of both sets of doors if not the minds and hearts of the same angels or saints, which immovably adhere to the contemplation and love of their Creator, so that they may rightly fulfill the ministry divinely assigned to them, as they never turn their eyes away from the will of Him whom they serve. Therefore, the doors are opened and closed at the appropriate time, but they never leave their hinges at any time, because both angels and holy men, whether in this life of faith or in that of the vision, always hold their minds fixed in the root of internal love, whether they welcome the faithful and elect. Hence, rightly, these same hinges are said to be made of gold, on account of the merit of their own brightness.

And he completed all the work, etc. Solomon completes the work that he was doing in the house of the Lord when our peaceful king glorifies all the elect with the immortality of the resurrection on the last day. Otherwise, as long as the condition of this age is ongoing, Solomon indeed does the work of the house of the Lord, but he does not yet complete it, because the Lord inspires and helps the hearts of the elect to perform good works; however, He grants that none dwelling merely in this life is without sin, for He reserves this gift for the happiness of the future life. He completes all the work of His temple and makes it fit for dedication when He leads the elect, translated from this life, to the eternal kingdom. This is well signified even in that the temple was built in seven years, but was completed and dedicated in the eighth. For during the seven days all this time is turned. The eighth is the day of judgment and the future resurrection, about which the sixth and eleventh Psalms are titled; to this indeed it properly pertains what follows:

And he brought in what his father David had sacrificed, etc. The silver, indeed, to shine forth eloquence; the gold to radiate wisdom; vessels in general pertain to the rational creature. And David, the father of Solomon, sanctified the silver when God the Father strengthened the eloquent with the grace of the Holy Spirit to speak the word of the Gospel; he sanctified the gold when, filling those endowed with natural talent with His Spirit, He enlightened them to consider the wonders of His law; and he also sanctified the vessels when, granting to all generally the children of the Church the grace of the same Spirit, He inflamed them to love and seek the gifts of eternal salvation. But this silver, this gold, these sanctified vessels Solomon brings into the temple, when our Lord, having completed universal judgment, introduces all the elect, namely the teachers and the assembly of other faithful into the joy of the heavenly kingdom: and he places the vessels of various kinds, whether silver or gold, in the treasures of the house of the Lord, when He hides those who have deserved to enjoy His abundance of sweetness in the secret of His presence from the disturbance of men. And rightly, there are many treasures in which the vessels of election are stored, but one house of the Lord in which the same are made treasures because there is also one Church in which all the elect are contained, however much they may differ in merits:

and that one is the same and not another heavenly homeland, which is promised to all the elect, although, as one star differs from another in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead. Both of these the judge Himself and the distributor of rewards, the Lord, demonstrated in one sentence, when He said: In my Father's house, there are many mansions. Therefore, Solomon made one house of the Lord, but prepared many treasures in it to receive vessels of different kinds, all sanctified by one blessing; indeed, this house of the Father is however not made by hands, eternal in the heavens, but many mansions are within it to receive all who fear and love Him, whom the Lord has blessed, the small with the great. Amen.

PART FOUR

Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings

Bede's answers to the questions of Nothelm.

Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings

THE VENERABLE BEDE

AD 673–735

Nothelm, a priest of London who later became archbishop of Canterbury, sent Bede a list of hard questions on the books of Samuel and Kings. Bede answers thirty of them in this short book, taking up difficulties of numbers, of places and of the wording of the text.

LETTER TO NOTHELM

To the most beloved brother Nothelmus, Bede, greetings! Concerning the questions you sent, dearest brother, about the book of Kings to be elucidated, I have immediately endeavored, with the help of the Lord, to explain as best as I could. I did this with the distinction that I included thirty propositions, which seemed perhaps more grave, separated by brief chapters in this volume so that they might be found more easily. The other names or words you noted mixed together, which could be solved more easily and briefly, I sent separately compiled in other notes to your fraternity. Although I knew that there were many things in the same book much more obscure than those you judged fit to ask me. But I was also aware that it often happens that someone who has well understood some more obscure points, because they had evidently found them sufficiently explained in the treatises of great authors, might still remain uncertain and doubtful about some easier points, which perhaps those who dealt with deeper matters did not consider worthy of inquiry. It also happens that not everything written by the fathers can be possessed by everyone, and questions of Scripture may be unknown to readers; not because they were not explained by the teachers, but because the questions themselves are either not available or, if available, are not understood by those asking; as was the case with many of those whose responses you both requested and received from me. In these responses, because I endeavored to satisfy your petitions by following the steps of the fathers, I pray that you, returning the due service of our devotion, may remember to inter-

cede for the safety of our mind and body, together with the brothers who serve the Lord with you in those places. And if by chance you find elsewhere any of what I wrote more aptly explained, which can easily happen, do not hesitate to send it to us quickly. Farewell well, always most beloved in Christ brother.

QUESTION 1

"And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will act according to my heart, etc. [1 Samuel 2:35] What the prophet says, speaking to Eli in the person of God: And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will act according to my heart and my soul: and I will build him a faithful house, and he will walk before my Christ all days, must be understood under the figure of Samuel as referring to the Lord Savior, namely the highest and true high priest. For just as Samuel succeeded Eli in the priesthood after his death, chosen not from the lineage of Aaron, but from another family of Levi: For he was the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, the son of Tahath, the son of Asir, the son of Abiasaph, the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel (I Chronicles VI), as the words of the Chronicles narrate: so also the Mediator of God and men, to be our priest, took on flesh not from Levi but from another tribe, namely Judah; he offered another sacrifice than the legal one, that is, his own flesh to the Father for us;

he left others than those of the lineage of Aaron as heirs of his priesthood, namely the sons of grace of the new testament, gathered from the whole nation of the Gentiles. And God, as if speaking in a human manner, says: Who will act according to my heart and my soul; it can be rightly taken to refer to Samuel, who in all things obeyed his will as a man would obey God; but concerning the Lord Savior, it means that as the only begotten Son, he is aware of all the secrets of the Father, as he himself clearly testifies about himself, saying: And I do nothing of myself, but as the Father has taught me, so I speak. And he who sent me is with me; and he has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him (John VIII). To whom the Father builds a faithful house, which house we are, if we hold firmly to the confidence and the glory of hope until the end. And this house will walk before his Christ, that is, the highest priest himself, all days; for the holy

Church up to the end of the world will never cease to grow with the increase of its members. Otherwise, how can it be understood about Samuel, that a faithful house was built for him, which would walk before the Christ of the Lord, that is, Samuel himself, all the days; since we read later that his sons turned aside from his ways after greed, and perverted judgment?

Unless perhaps in this place we understand his house to mean the Israelite people, who served the Lord all the days of his priesthood. Concerning which it is written: And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. And shortly after: So the children of Israel put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served only the Lord (1 Samuel VII). But as for what follows: However, it shall come to pass, that whoever remains in your house, shall come to pray for him, and to offer a piece of silver, and a morsel of bread (1 Samuel II); this both in the present time is somewhat fulfilled, and in the end of the world will be completely fulfilled. For even if few, yet some daily from the Jews, not only of the common people, but also from the priestly lineage flee to the Church; and when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then all Israel shall be saved (Romans II). Whoever from these is to be saved is indeed the one who is said to remain in the house. With the priesthood of Eli perishing, it is necessary for him to offer to the Church for himself a piece of silver of devoted confession to God, which is contained in the creed; short in word, but significant in virtue. Silver represents the clarity of the heavenly word, as gold often represents the splendor of spiritual wisdom. He shall also offer the bread of the saving sacrifice, with the legal victim's flesh rejected, and shall say:

Grant me, I pray, one priestly portion (1 Samuel II), that is, to the same people splendid with Christ as priest, to whom Peter said: But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood (1 Peter II). And what he adds: That I may eat a morsel of bread (1 Samuel II), he also elegantly expressed the very type of sacrifice, concerning which the priest himself said: The bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world (John VI). For what he had said above, that he had given to the house of Aaron food from the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were the sacrifices of the Jews; therefore here he said that one should ask to eat a morsel of bread, which is in the New Testament the sacrifice of Christians.

QUESTION 2

"And none of his words fell to the ground." [1 Samuel 3:19] This was said of Samuel, after he had reported to Eli in the morning the divine oracle he had received during the night: "And none of his words fell to the ground," meaning that nothing of what he spoke was in vain, but all things he said came to pass. For the words that fall to the ground are the idle ones, which are to be regarded as nothing and trodden underfoot by everyone in disdain, just as the blessed Job said: "And the light of my face did not fall to the ground" (Job 29), because he had so habituated himself to bearing a countenance of such dignity that he was never resolved into contemptible joy; but whenever he presented himself with a more cheerful disposition to those present, he always did so for their benefit for a good reason.

QUESTION 3

"And he struck down from the people seventy men, and fifty thousand of the common people." [1 Samuel 6:19] This was said of those who dared to see the Ark of the Lord returned from the land of the Philistines, although they were not of the Levitical lineage: "And he struck down from the people seventy men, and fifty thousand of the common people." The terms "people" and "common people" are used interchangeably to signify the same thing. For both are commonly translated from the Greek term "laos." However, there seems to be a distinction here, as the word "men" is added in the first phrase of the verse. For what your Codex reads, "seventy-two," is entirely erroneous; for "men" refers to elders, implying that seventy of the dignitaries of the people were struck down, while fifty thousand were from the general crowd of common men; thus, to prevent this in Exodus, the people stood far off, and prayed, with only Moses ascending to the Lord (Exod. 20).

QUESTION 4

"From the day the ark of the Lord remained in Cariathiarim, the days were multiplied, etc. [1 Samuel 7:2] What is said, that from the day the ark remained in Cariathiarim, the days were multiplied, indeed it was already the twentieth year, and all the house of Israel rested after the Lord, should not be understood as if the twenty years in which the ark stayed in Cariathiarim until the eighth year of David's reign, when the gathering crowd of the people brought it to Jerusalem, ought to be counted. For it is found later that in Saul's times, it was taken out from this city and brought into the camp,

while he fought against the Philistines. Thus it is written: And Saul said to Achia: Bring the ark of the Lord, for the ark of God was there on that day with the children of Israel. And because it is certain that David brought it to Jerusalem, having taken it from the house of Abinadab, into which it is said to have been brought, it remains to understand that in the days of Saul, it was brought back from the camp and into the aforementioned city, from which it was brought again to Jerusalem, during David's reign. Therefore, the meaning of the aforementioned passage is that from the time the ark stayed in Cariathiarim, it was the twentieth year (Book of Antiquities VI, chap. 13), when it happened to be transferred from there during Saul's times because of the war.

Or certainly it was the twentieth year, when all the house of Israel still rested after the Lord, having cast away idols, serving Him alone. What it did during the entire time of Samuel's leadership, which, as testified by Josephus, was completed in twelve years; and in the first period of Saul's reign, which, according to the same historian, lasted for twenty years, no one curious about sacred history is ignorant of. For afterwards, when the spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit troubled him, especially in pursuing the innocent and just David, it was necessary that a part of his military or populace participated in his wrongdoing.

QUESTION 5

"If I live, you will show me the kindness of the Lord, etc. [1 Samuel 20:14] This, said by Jonathan to David, whom he lamented was being harassed by the unjust persecutions of his father: If I live, you will show me the kindness of the Lord; but if I die, you will not withdraw your kindness from my house forever, when the Lord has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the earth; when the Scripture added: Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, immediately adding, saying: And the Lord required it at the hand of David's enemies; by anticipation, indeed, he did it, first inserting into the history what happened much later, when Saul was killed and the kingdom was transferred to the house of David; and those who unjustly persecuted him without cause were justly punished by divine vengeance. For then the Lord required of the hand of the enemies why they had afflicted the holy man. Then they were compelled to give an account of their hatred, with which they had raged against him for so long. This can be understood in the case of Absalom, and Sheba son of Bichri, and the other enemies of David.

Otherwise, if you want to know what the Lord required of the hand of David's enemies, it can be understood, if I am not mistaken, from the previous sentence, where it is said that Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, that the Lord required this of the hand of David's enemies, that is, why they also did not want to enter into a covenant of peace with him, with whom they saw was the Lord. Therefore, it seems that the Scripture anticipates this sentence and interposes it, so that the testimony of Jonathan, which he said: When he has cut off the enemies of David, every one from the earth, would be proven true, because evidently the enemies of David were cut off from the earth, not by David himself avenging against the adversaries, but by the Lord judging for him. It is rightly added: And Jonathan made David swear again, because he loved him; for as he loved his own soul, so he loved him; so that he, who embraced David with such perfect love according to the law of God, would be shown to be immune from the destruction of his enemies. Although he was taken away by death and could not have the earthly kingdom with him, as he hoped, he nevertheless without any contradiction received the partnership of the heavenly kingdom with him, whom he loved for the glory of his virtues, as he too was full of virtues.

QUESTION 6

"For if a man ever rises to pursue you, etc. [1 Samuel 25:29] This Abigail, interceding on behalf of herself and her household, said to David, whom her husband had offended by his foolishness and drunkenness: "For if a man ever rises to pursue you and seek your life, the life of my lord will be bound up in the bundle of the living with the Lord your God. But the souls of your enemies will be whirled about, like in the circuit and sling's round; she beautifully distinguishes the state of the just from the lot of the reprobate with this comparison. For indeed she calls the souls of these living, so as to imply on the contrary that those are preoccupied with spiritual death, according to that saying of the prophet: The soul that sins shall die (Ezek. XVIII). She likens these to a bundle, and those to a stone of a sling; for a bundle is tied up, so that it may remain whole and be preserved; the stone is placed in the sling to be cast away. So indeed in this world the elect are compressed by the pressures of tribulations, so that being thus admonished, they may bind themselves more closely to each other with mutual love and be preserved forever in unity by the hand of their Redeemer.

But the reprobate, the more freely they are let loose to their own pleasures in this life, the further they are cast away from the glory of the divine vision in the future, so that it may rightly be said of them: And indeed they are expelled from your hand. However, it marvelously describes the omnipotent providence of the heavenly protector when it says the soul of the holy man is necessarily kept with Him like in a bundle of the living. For as it is very easy for anyone to preserve a bundle of grass or hay held in their hand, so the power of our Lord and Savior effortlessly protects all the elect throughout the world from the beginning to the end of the age, so that none of them may perish in any way. According to what He Himself speaks of them in the Gospel under the figure of sheep: "And they follow me," He says, "and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John X). Just as a single bundle is bound with any kinds of ties, so the whole assembly of saints is bound together by the one and the same faith, hope, and love, and surrounded by one divine protection. The meaning of the letter is clearly evident, because the soul of David, despite his enemies pursuing him, was always kept in the land of the living.

Moreover, his enemies, beset by adversities, were to be disturbed and driven out of their territories, like a stone whirled in a sling, or even taken away from human affairs.

QUESTION 7

"And he commanded that the children of Judah be taught the bow, etc. [2 Samuel 1:18] This was written about David when he was mourning the deaths of Saul and Jonathan: And he commanded that the children of Judah be taught the bow, he did this because he knew that the Philistines abounded in archers, and Saul had perished particularly by their arrows, so he wanted his soldiers to learn the same art of war to defeat them. As for the following: As it is written in the book of the just, they assert that the very book cannot be found anywhere today, not even among the Hebrews, just as the book of the wars of the Lord mentioned in the book of Numbers; nor the songs of Solomon, nor his wisest discussions on the nature of trees, all herbs, likewise beasts, birds, reptiles, and fish; or what is said in the book of the Chronicles: The rest of Solomon's deeds, former and later, are written in the words of Nathan the prophet, and in the books of Ahijah the Shilonite. In the vision of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam son of Nebat (II Chron. IX), and many such volumes which are proven to have existed in Scripture but are acknow-

ledged as no longer extant today. Judah was indeed ravaged by the Chaldeans, and even the library, formerly gathered, was consumed by enemy fire along with other provincial treasures.

From this, the few books that now remain in the holy Scriptures were later restored through the efforts of Ezra the priest and prophet. Hence it is written about him: Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses (I Esdras VII). Ready indeed, because he discovered quicker forms of letters than the Hebrews had up to that time. And in the letter of the king of Persia: Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the most learned scribe of the law of the God of heaven, greetings (Ibid.).

QUESTION 8

"And he struck down Moab, and measured them with a line, aligning them to the ground, etc. [2 Samuel 8:2] What is written about David: "And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, laying them on the ground," should be understood hyperbolically. For it was not possible that men living on the earth would be so humbled that, lying on the ground, they would appear equal with the ground itself, as confirmed by a line stretched over them; but the Scripture wanted to accumulate the immense humiliation of the captured and oppressed nation with this word, to say they were made equal to the ground, as if by God they were emasculated and despised, so that they living on earth no longer mattered more than the ground that had no people. You have many examples of this kind of expression in the Scriptures, such as that one from the Gospel: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did; if they were written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John XXI). For how could the world not contain the books that could have been written in the world? But to imply the greatness and multitude of the Lord's deeds, the Scripture wished to use such an expression. And in David's lament, "They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions" (II Samuel I). Which is similar to that secular expression: "Who would surpass the whiteness of snow, in their courses the winds.

That he said "measured them with a line," he put the line allegorically for destiny, because fields are usually measured by a line. Hence it is written: "And he divided the land to them by lot with a measuring line. It means that David would distribute the regions of the Moabites to the heirs according to his will, as freely as any possessor might divide his own fields at his whim by

stretching the line here and there. He measured two lines, one for putting to death, and one for keeping alive. And this is said allegorically, signifying that David had the power, with no one contradicting, to put to death those who were rebellious and to spare those who were submissive.

QUESTION 9

"He is like the most delicate worm of wood." [2 Samuel 23:8] This is said of the wisest leader of David's mighty men, whose name indeed is not mentioned in the Book of Kings, but in the Book of Chronicles he is called Jeshbaam and is noted to have been the son of Hachmoni (I Chron. XI). "He is like the most delicate worm of wood" (II Sam. XXIII, 8). This signifies both the man's martial strength and his modest civility, as he appeared, like a woodworm, indeed tender and fragile in his whole body, and even very small, yet nonetheless consumed and hollowed out the strongest wood, rendering it decayed. Hence, the woodworm takes its name from gnawing through wood. In the same way, he seemed to be affable to all at home, quiet and humble; yet in public battle, he showed himself to be a lion, strong and unbearable to his enemies.

QUESTION 10

"He went down and struck the lion in the middle of the cistern." [2 Samuel 23:20] As it is said of Benaiah: And he went down and struck the lion in the middle of the cistern on a snowy day (Book VII, Antiquities, ch. 12), how this was done, Josephus recounts more clearly, because the cistern was indeed very deep, which in the wintertime, when everything was filled with snow, it too was leveled with an excessive heap of snow. When the lion, unbeknownst to danger, happened upon it and fell in, and being trapped there roared greatly, people ran to see what it was. And when Benaiah came with others to such a spectacle, he immediately jumped into the cistern, and attacked and killed the lion in the midst of the snow.

QUESTION 11

Why is it said in the book of Kings [1 Kings 6:2] that the temple had a height of 30 cubits, while in the book of Chronicles [2 Chronicles 3:4] it is stated as 120 cubits? What is said regarding the construction of the temple in the book of Kings, that it had a height of 30 cubits, while in the books of Chronicles it is written: "Moreover, the height was 120 cubits" [2 Chronicles 3:4], is by no means contradictory, but both are to be understood as true.

For, as Josephus narrates in his History: there were 30 cubits from the floor to the middle chamber, another 30 from the middle to the third, up to where the height of the porticos, which were attached to the temple on the southern, western, and northern sides, extended—that is, together 60; then another 60 up to the roof of the house: thus, the total height of the temple was completed at 120 cubits (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book VIII, chapter 3).

QUESTION 12

"The door of the middle side was on the right side of the house. [1 Kings 6:8] When it is said: The door of the middle side was on the right side of the house, it does not indicate, as some think, that the door through which one would enter the temple was on the southern side, that is, on the middle side of the southern wall. Otherwise, Scripture would simply say: The door of the house was positioned towards the South. But now the door, through which one would enter for the everyday services of the temple, was to the East, as Josephus reports; and the portico before its face, also open to the East, so that the equinoctial rising sun would send its rays without any obstacle through the doors of the temple and the oracle into the ark itself, which was in the Holy of Holies. Furthermore, the ascent leading to the upper house, and from the upper to the third, was on the southern side of the temple (which is the right part of the house) made in a hidden manner, having a very small door below on the East in the very corner of the right wall. Hence it is consequently added: And through the winding stairs, they would ascend to the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third. The layout of this ascent commends to us a mystery much worth remembering;

for it is clear that this temple which Solomon made figuratively indicates the body of the peaceful king Christ, not only that which is His entire Church but also that which He received most sacredly from the Virgin, to be the head of the Church. Now, the door of the middle side was on the right side of the house, through which one would secretly ascend from the lower to the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third. Just as when our Lord suffered on the cross, one of the soldiers opened His right side with a lance, and immediately blood and water came out, which is the blood of our redemption, and the water of our cleansing, by whose sanctifying mysteries, cleansed and consecrated, from this life which we conduct on earth we aim towards the rest of the spirit in the future, as it were, to the upper house. And when we ascend to the rest of the spirit having been released from the flesh,

we also await the ascension of our flesh in the day of resurrection, as it were to the highest chamber.

QUESTION 13

"He also covered the house with cedar ceilings. [1 Kings 6:9] The term "He also covered the house with cedar ceilings" refers to the timber-frame ceilings that, when fastened with nails, display the wondrous beauty of their paintings to those who behold them. There were three ceilings in the temple. The first had thirty cubits from the floor; the second had sixty cubits, aligned with the height of the porticos; the third had one hundred and twenty cubits at the top of the entire house. For in Palestine, as in Egypt, roofs are not raised high but instead built flat, suitable for sitting or walking. Hence, the Lord says in the Gospel: "And what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops. Such a place is most appropriate for proclaiming the word—to those sitting with the speaker or to listeners below. As Solomon says in Proverbs: "It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a contentious woman" (Prov. XXI); for what is called "roof" in Latin is "doma" in Greek. Moreover, the porticos around the temple had three levels of ceilings. The first from the ground had twenty cubits, the second forty, and the third sixty. Their roofs were also flat. There were thirty porticos on the lower level, thirty in the middle, and thirty above, not separated by walls but by wooden planks, so each of the ninety porticos measured five cubits in width and length, and twenty in height. These porticos are frequently mentioned in the book of Chronicles.

Josephus explains their arrangement in more detail. "And he built a platform over the whole house five cubits high; this is what Moses commanded in Deuteronomy: "When you build a new house, make a parapet for your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from it" (Deut. XXII). This platform at the top of the temple walls acted as a parapet to prevent someone ascending to the roof from falling off carelessly. This is mentioned as the cause of King Ahaziah's death, as he fell through the lattice of his upper chamber and suffered fatal injuries. When these panels, walls, or parapets are placed for safety, the common people call them "lattices." And he covered the house with cedar wood; signifies the upper covering of the entire structure, that is, the panel added above those beams on which the uppermost ceilings we mentioned earlier were affixed.

QUESTION 14

"And when the poles protruded, and the ends of them appeared, etc. [1 Kings 8:8] As the ark was brought into the holy of holies, it is said: And when the poles protruded, and the ends of them appeared outside the sanctuary before the oracle, they no longer appeared outside; this is written more clearly in the volume of Chronicles. The ends of the poles, he says, with which they carried the ark, since they were a little longer, appeared before the oracle. But if anyone had been slightly outside, they could not see them (II Chron. V). Where it should be noted that even if the ends of the poles appeared to those who came closer and looked more carefully before the oracle, it was not possible for the very ends of them to protrude before the oracle, because it was indeed necessary, with the oracle closed and the veil hung before the doors, for the poles themselves also to be hidden entirely within along with the ark and the cherubim. This could not happen if the poles protruding further did not allow space for the doors to be shut. The positioning of the poles which Scripture has taken care to explain so diligently is not without reason, but rather with great consideration of a sacrament. For it is evident that the outer house of the temple designates the Church journeying on earth, while the holy of holies designates the internal happiness of the heavenly homeland.

Likewise, the ark brought into the holy of holies typifies the assumed humanity of Christ, brought within the veil of the heavenly kingdom; and the poles with which the same ark was carried typically denote the preachers of the word, through whom He was made known to the world. Now in the ark there was a golden urn holding manna, which in the man Christ all the fullness of divinity dwells bodily. There was Aaron's rod, which had blossomed again after being cut off, signifying that all the power of judgment belongs to Him, whose judgment in the humility of His passion seemed to be removed. There were also the tablets of the covenant, because in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Attached to it were the carrying poles, by which it was carried, signifying the teachers who formerly labored in the word of Christ, now rejoice in the present vision of the glory of Christ. For what one of them said of himself: "I desire to depart and be with Christ" (Philippians 2), he undoubtedly left to be understood of all the companions of his work. The ends of the poles appeared outside in front of the oracle not always, but when the doors of the same oracle happened to be

opened; and this not to everyone, but only to those who, approaching closer, diligently strive to behold the things inside.

But the ark itself, what it was like and how it was placed, was allowed to be seen only by those who had entered the oracle, because none of the saints still in this life, even if they are highly elevated in mind, but only the citizens of that homeland fully behold the glory of their Redeemer there. The poles and the ark are also stored together in the oracle, signifying that even now the perfect elect who have gone before us into the hidden presence of God, from the turmoil of men, are also hidden. Nevertheless, the ends of the poles are sometimes seen through the open oracle by those who approach, when divine grace grants to the more perfect and to those who purify the eye of their heart with all intention, some glimpse of the joy of the citizens above; which certainly is not granted to those who have retreated a little further, because as much as they remain outwardly empty of mind, so much less do they see the internal joys.

QUESTION 15

"Solomon held a great feast, etc. [1 Kings 8:65] It is said that Solomon held a great feast, and all Israel with him; a great multitude from the entrance of Hamath unto the brook of Egypt before the Lord; by the entrance of Hamath, it means the northern region of the promised land; by the brook or torrent of Egypt, as the Chronicles name it, it designates the southern. I think the reader will be pleased to quote some passages more extensively from the words of Saint Jerome. It is written in the book of Numbers, in which the entire promised land is divided in a brief speech by the four regions: The southern part shall begin from the wilderness of Sin, which is near Edom, and shall have its boundaries against the east at the Salt Sea, and shall circle the southern region by the ascent of Scorpions, so that they pass through Zin, and reach as far as the south to Kadesh-Barnea. From there the boundaries will proceed to the village called Adar, and extend to Azmon, and the border will go round from Azmon to the brook of Egypt and shall end at the Great Sea shore. Concerning which in the last vision of the prophet Ezekiel it is thus said: The southern boundary southward from Tamar unto the waters of Meribah (Ezek. 47), that is, of contradiction.

Also Kadesh, and the brook until the Great Sea, which means the broad wilderness of Sin, which is near Edom, and in the Red Sea to circle its boundary, and by the ascent of Scorpions, and by Zin, and Kadesh-Barnea,

and the courtyard or village of Adar, and from Azmon to reach up to the brook of Egypt, which flows into the sea near the city Rhinocorura. Here indeed, the boundary of the southern region begins at Thamar, which is a city in the wilderness, which Solomon built with remarkable works, and today is called Palmyra, and in the Hebrew language is called Thamar, which in our language sounds as "palm"; up to the waters of the dispute of Kadesh, which is undoubtedly in the desert. And the stream enters the Great Sea, which extends along the shores of Egypt and Palestine. It follows in the book of Numbers: But the western region will begin at the Great Sea, and will be closed by that end (Num. XXXIV): that is, from sea to sea, from the stream namely of Rhinocorure, which flows into the sea, up to the place where the city of Hemath of Syria is. Whose name Ezekiel puts in this region: And the border, he says, of the sea, the Great Sea from the boundary straight on, until you come to Hemath (Ezek. XLVII), which is now called Epiphania, with the name changed from the cruelest tyrant Antiochus; for he had the surname Epiphanes.

Moreover, to the northern part, he says, the boundaries will begin from the Great Sea, reaching to the highest mountain, from which they will come to Hemath up to the borders of Sedada, and the boundaries will go up to Zephron and the village of Enan. These will be the boundaries in the northern part (Num. XXXIV). The Hebrews say that the northern region begins from the Great Sea, which extends along the shores of Palestine, Phoenicia, and Syria, which is called Coele, and Cilicia, and through Egypt extends to Libya. But what he says, reaching the boundaries up to the highest mountain, the same Hebrews consider it to mean either Mount Amanus or Taurus, which seems more likely to us. And the boundaries will go, he says, up to Zephron, which city today is called Zephyrium, a town of Cilicia. What follows, and the village of Enan, for which in Hebrew is written Haser Enan, which means the atrium of the fountain, is the boundary of Damascus. Hence Ezekiel says: And the boundary will be from the sea to the atrium of Enan, or Haser Enan, the boundary of Damascus, and from the north to the north, the northern region (Ezek. XLVII). From there, he says, they will measure the boundaries toward the eastern region from the village of Enan to Sephama, and from Sephama the boundaries will descend to Rebla opposite the fountain.

From there they will reach toward the east to the sea of Chinnereth, and extend to Jordan, and finally end at the most salty sea (Num. XXXIV). Thus from the boundary of the northern region, that is, the atrium of Enan, the boundaries extend to Sephama, which the Hebrews name Apamea. And from Apamea the boundaries descend to Rebla, which is now called Antioch in Syrian. And so you may know that this Rebla signifies the city which now in Coele Syria is the most famous, it follows, opposite the fountain, which is clear to signify Daphne, from which the above-mentioned city enjoys abundant waters. From there, he says, the boundaries will reach toward the east to the sea of Chinnereth, that is, the lake of Tiberias. However, it is called a sea, though it has sweet waters, according to the idiom of Scripture, where gatherings of waters are called seas. And the boundaries will extend, he says, to the Jordan, and finally be closed by the sea, either the Dead Sea or (as some think) the tongue of the Red Sea, on whose shore Aila is situated.

QUESTION 16

"In his days, Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. [1 Kings 16:34] What is written about the times of Ahab's reign: 'In his days, Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundations with Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates with Segub his youngest,' the sense is clear: when the stated builder of the city began to lay its foundations, his firstborn, named Abiram, died; and when, with the city built, he tried to fortify its gates, he lost his youngest son named Segub. This was foretold by Joshua, who, when dedicating the destroyed and cursed city Jericho, predicted it with an imprecation: 'Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and rebuilds this city Jericho. He shall lay its foundation at the cost of his firstborn, and at the cost of his youngest he shall set up its gates' (Joshua 6). That Ahriel, living for God, interpreted as Bethel which means house of God, restores the walls of Jericho that were destroyed and cursed by Joshua, is evident when one among those who have assumed the habit of religion in the Church returns to commit the crimes that the Lord Jesus forgave him on the day of his baptism, and those pomps of the devil which he himself anathema-tized, he returns to by living luxuriously; when he prefers the dogmas of heretics or the fables of pagans to the churchly truth in which he was imbued, it is as if, departing from Bethel, he resurrects the ruins of Jericho.

And rightly is such a person cursed before the Lord, and loses both the first of his sons in the foundation of the wicked city and the youngest in the

setting up of its gates. Because he loses the foundations of faith with which he should have begun good buildings, and the house of good action with which he should have finished. These things I have expounded in an allegorical sense, to remind you how true is the word of the apostle, who says that all these things happened to them as examples, and were written down for our instruction (1 Corinthians 10).

QUESTION 17

"May the gods do so to me, and more also, etc. [1 Kings 20:10] What Ben-hadad king of Syria, besieging and beginning to assault Samaria said: 'May the gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria will be enough to fill the hands of all the people who follow me,' has this sense: Samaria, like other cities, had earth inside near the walls, almost equal to the walls, lest the walls standing without the support of the adjacent earth, should be frequently struck down by the assaulting hand with the battering ram. From the outside, the height of the walls far exceeded the surface of the ground, especially since, as Scripture relates, the city itself had been set on the summit of a mountain. Therefore, the haughty king, threatening the besieged city, said that he had such a multitude of troops with him that even if each of his soldiers brought only one stone, or clod, or log to construct a rampart against the city, such a high rampart could rise from it that the surface of the city itself, which was within the walls, would seem equal, so that they might fight on an equal footing against the city, sending missiles or torches. The king of Israel, restraining the king of Syria's arrogance with a modest utterance, said, "Say to him: Let not him who girds on his armor boast as he who takes it off.

There is a difference between a man who is girded, a man who is ungirded, and a man who is not girded. A man who is girded is one who walks about with a belt; an ungirded man is one who recently took off his belt, for example, to enter a bath, or to get into bed, or perhaps to put on another tunic; a man who is not girded is one who, having recently put on a tunic, has not yet fortified himself with the addition of a belt. Thus, one who is in a military expedition can rightly be called girded, that is, armed. One who has returned home victoriously from a battle, having laid down his arms, is rightly called ungirded, because he wields the repose of peace longed for. One who has not yet begun to fight, nor begun to prepare for the contest, is rightly called not girded. Therefore, the king of Israel said to the king of

Syria, boasting that he had already captured Samaria, which he had begun to besiege, "Let not him who girds on his armor boast as he who takes it off. As if to say plainly: Do not boast as if you were already the victor of war's peril, who, still set in the field, do not yet know whom victory will favor. And indeed he spoke the truth. For soon after the battle commenced, Benadab, not triumphing over the conquered adversaries, but with his army defeated, fled home.

QUESTION 18

"Let a third part of you come in on the Sabbath, etc. [2 Kings 11:5] This is what the high priest Jehoiada said to the priests and Levites when he brought forth Joash the son of Azariah, whom he had secretly nurtured in the temple for six years during Athaliah's reign: "Let a third part of you come in on the Sabbath and keep watch at the house of the king; let a third part be at the Gate of Seir, and a third part at the gate which is behind the habitat of the guards; you will keep watch at the house of Mesha. Let two parts of you, all going out on the Sabbath, keep watch at the house of the Lord around the king, and you shall surround him, having weapons in your hands," and the rest which is mentioned or done there. These things can be better understood if some things about the places in the temple where these events occurred are more broadly recalled. The temple itself, excluding the porticos which surrounded it on all sides, was sixty cubits long and twenty cubits wide within its walls (this is the initial measurement named in the Words of the Days). The entire circumference of the courtyard was surrounded by a wall three cubits high, having an entrance on the east side, of which Scripture in the Book of Kings thus makes mention: "And he built the inner court three rows of hewn stone and one row of cedar logs" (I Kings VI).

This court is called inner because there are other outer courts surrounding it. Furthermore, in the Words of the Days, it is thus written: "He made also the court of the priests and a great hall and doors in the hall which he covered with bronze" (II Chronicles IV). This court of the priests is so named because it was made to guard against the entrance of others into the temple, signifying that only the priests were permitted to enter. This same court was closer to the wall of the temple from the south, west, and north sides. Further to the east, where it also had an entrance through steps, it extended to a great length from the temple, as in that part it had the altar of burnt offerings, in that part ten lavers in which the offerings were washed, in that part

the bronze sea in which the priests who were about to enter for ministry washed, in that part the choirs of Levites for the sacrificing and chanting priests. This courtyard, however, was surrounded all around at a distance by a very large square building. Its inner wall, that is, the one facing the temple from the four parts of the world, was constructed entirely in arches below, but further up it was founded in solid firmness. And it had bronze doors, as we mentioned earlier. And doors in the basilica, which it covered with bronze; which was also provided with very large porticos and was separated by suitable upper rooms.

And again outside this building, another one was made in a similar scheme in a circle. But also a third one, nonetheless, made in the same order around those, surrounded all the interior at length and breadth in a circle, differing only from the previous buildings in that its Eastern and Northern wall did not have doors, for each of them pertained to the walls of the city. However, these are the courts sung about in the Psalms: "Who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God" (Psalms 113, 135). And since the house of the Lord itself was constructed in a higher place, it happened that the farther the courtyards were made, the higher their walls were, as they had foundations below; so much so that the outermost had walls in height up to four hundred cubits, yet they did not come close to matching the height of the temple. Of all these things there is a general mention in the book of Chronicles as follows: "And David gave Solomon his son the description of the porch and of the temple, and of the storerooms, and of the upper rooms, and of the innermost chambers, and of the place of atonement, and also of all that he had thought of the courts of the house of the Lord and of all the surrounding rooms and of the treasuries of the house of God and of the treasuries of the dedicated things" (1 Chronicles 28:11-12).

But the writing or painting of Joseph formed by the ancients distinguishes more fully how these were made in order. With these thus arranged, it was the prerogative of only the high priest to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year with the blood of sacrifices, into the sanctuary before the oracle, only purified priests entered, into the inner court all priests and Levites. Around this courtyard, under the open sky, or if weather prevented, in the surrounding buildings, Israelite men would gather to pray or hear the word. In the third order of courts, Israelite women stood to pray under the open sky, or if the weather did not allow it, they moved under the nearest roofs of

the surrounding buildings. Moreover, into the outermost order of courts, the Gentiles, who had perhaps come to pray, would enter. Where also, after times of dispersion, those who had recently come from among the Gentiles, purified for seven days, finally sought the inner sanctums. And the pavements between the courts or in the courts were all paved with various stones. The doors in the buildings were so positioned opposite to each other that even those standing in the outermost parts could see the temple. There were, moreover, twenty-four lots of priests and Levites and doorkeepers, who would succeed each other in as many weeks, with a new group entering for duty on the Sabbath and after the Sabbath, the group that had served for the previous week returning home.

But this high priest, because of the necessity of increasing the army around the new king, both welcomed those who were due to enter for the week and retained those who had already served their week of ministry so that they would not leave. He also gathered other Levites from all the cities of Judah, as well as the leaders of the families of Israel, having sent centurions for this purpose to Jerusalem, as the Chronicles recount (2 Chronicles 23). When bringing them out, he distinguished the king's son in such a way that all those who had completed the Sabbath, and were about to depart, divided into two parts, would surround the king armed in the inner parts of the court. But the remaining crowd, that is, those who were not of the tribe of Levi, would guard the outer gates of the courts against the queen's rage, in case she attempted anything adverse. Moreover, those priests, Levites, and doorkeepers who had recently come for the Sabbath, divided into three parts, would observe the house of the king, that is, the palace, so that the queen would not defend it against the king with a gathered army. They would also keep the gate of the shield-bearers' residence, through which one would descend from the temple to the palace, as is said below: And they led the king out of the house of the Lord, and came by the way of the gate of the shield-bearers to the palace, and he sat on the throne of the kings.

Here also the gate of Seir and the house of Millo, named with the gate of the shield-bearers, seem to be present. He calls the shield-bearers guardians of the king, as the book of Chronicles affirms; and when Rehoboam had made bronze shields in place of the golden ones, he added: And he handed them over to the leaders of the shield-bearers, who guarded the entrance of the palace (2 Chronicles 12). In which book, of course, all these things are

recounted more distinctly: A third part of you who come to the Sabbath, of priests, and Levites, and doorkeepers, shall be at the gates. A third part at the house of the king, and a third at the gate that is called the Foundation. And let all the remaining crowd be in the courts of the house of the Lord. And let no one else enter the house of the Lord, except the priests and those of the Levites who minister; they only shall enter who are sanctified, and let all the remaining crowd observe the watches of the Lord. But let the Levites surround the king, each having his weapon (2 Chronicles 23), etc.

QUESTION 19

"And he brought out the king's son, and put the diadem and the testimony upon him." [2 Kings 11:12] What follows about the same: He brought out the king's son, and put the diadem and the testimony upon him, signifies the kingly insignia on the head in the diadem, and the decrees of God's law, by which it is declared what the king should do and how he is commanded to live, in the testimony. Finally, more openly in the book of Chronicles: And they put the diadem on him, and gave him the law to hold in his hand (2 Chronicles 23); and it was indeed of great and salutary wisdom, that after the death of the tyrannical and impious queen, to the succeeding son of the legitimate king, simultaneously with the state of kingship, the discipline of God's law should also be entrusted, so that he who saw himself set over the people in rule should remember that he himself was to be subject to divine laws in rule.

QUESTION 20

"And no account was made with the men who received the money, etc." [2 Kings 12:15] This is said, about the restoration of the house of the Lord by the aforesaid king Jehoash: And no reckoning was made with the men who received the money to distribute it to the craftsmen, but they dealt with it in faith, showing their devotion, because they had so much fervor in religion that no one doubted but that they handled the Lord's money without suspicion of any fraud, and that they faithfully offered it, taken from the treasury, to the workmen for repairing the house, as each had need.

QUESTION 21

"He struck down ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, etc." [2 Kings 14:7] It is said of Amaziah, the king of Judah: He struck down ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Sela in war, and called its name Jok-

theel; the Valley of Salt was where they made salt, either from a spring of brine, as in many places, or by cutting, drying, and burning, or by boiling salty well waters until they solidified into salt, or by any other method by which salt is usually made. In that place, Joab is also recorded to have struck down twelve thousand Edomites. It must also not be overlooked that the old edition, for the Valley of Salt, placed Gemelach, as if it were the name of a region. Petra, however, is a noble city of Arabia, in the same land of Edom, which in the Book of Numbers is called Rekem, and by the Syrians today is still called thus (Num. 31). Joktheel, which Amaziah as victor gave it as a name, is interpreted as the assembly of God, or the help of God, acting faithfully so that it would be recorded for perpetual memory, because he took it either with the assembly of the people of God or with God's help.

QUESTION 22

"He restored the boundaries of Israel from the entrance of Hamath, etc." [2 Kings 14:25] It is said of Jeroboam, king of Israel: He restored the boundaries of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the sea of the Arabah. Hamath, which is now called Epiphania, was the northern boundary of Israel. However, the sea of the Arabah, which in Hebrew is called Araba, designates the Dead Sea, which in length extends for 580 stadia to Zoaras of Arabia, and in width for 150 stadia to the nearby Sodoms.

QUESTION 23

"And each nation made its own gods." [2 Kings 17:29] It is said of those nations brought into Samaria by the king of Assyria: And each nation made its own gods and placed them in the high places that the Samaritans had made, each nation in the cities in which they lived; for the men of Babylon made Socoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima; moreover, the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; indeed, in the Book of Places it is read that Benoth and Nergal were cities that the Samaritans who had come from Babylon built in the region of Judea. Asima also a town, which they who had come from Hemath built. For Nebaaz and Thartha are cities which the Hevites founded in the same land of Judea. But it seems, according to the logic of the speech, that the names of the idols which these peoples had previously worshipped in their own land can also be understood here. Because it was said: And each nation made its own god, it was added as if to complete the thought: For the men of Babylon made So-

coth Benoth, that is, tabernacles of Benoth. And better, if I am not mistaken, would the translator do, if he translated Socoth into tabernacles in Latin, and placed the name of the idol Benoth absolutely; and as is clearly said in what follows: But those who were from Sepharvaim burned their sons in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim; where it is shown that Adrammelech and Anammelech were idols of the city of Sepharvaim. Thus it seems consequent that Nergel of the Cutheans, Asima of the Hemathites, Nebaaz and Thartha were idols of the Hevites.

QUESTION 24

"Where is the god of Hemath and Arphad? Where is the god of Sepharvaim?" [2 Kings 18:34] Rabsheh said this among other things with which he blasphemed God, crying out against Jerusalem: Where is the god of Hemath and Arphad? Where is the god of Sepharvaim, Ana and Ava? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? He showed that the Samaritans served the gods of all these cities or nations, and that they were not gods but idols, rightly subverted as those who worshipped vanity deserved. Hemath is a city of Coele-Syria, which is now called Epiphania, near Emesa, as we previously noted; Arphad is a city of Damascus, which Jerome also writes was conquered by the king of Assyria (Jeremiah 40). Sepharvaim, in the plural, means books or letters, is the name of places from which the Assyrians who were moved settled in Samaria, as we find in the Books of Places. In Isaiah, however, this term also appears to be a city name, where it is clearly said: Where is the god of the city of Sepharvaim? (Isaiah 37). Although it is said in the plural, like Thebes or Athens. For Ana and Ava, the old edition placed the name An-eugava as if it were one city, and indeed it is written so in Hebrew; but since the syllable u in the middle of the name signifies a conjunction, it may also be distinguished as Ana and Gava, as Aquila translated; or Ana and Ava, as our translator rendered.

QUESTION 25

"Do you wish the shadow to go forward ten lines or to go back ten steps, etc.?" [2 Kings 20:9] What the prophet Isaiah said to King Hezekiah: Do you wish the shadow to go forward ten lines, or to go back ten steps? signifies the same thing by the name of steps as by lines, that is, the division of hours, which we usually mark twelve per day on a sundial; or, as Jerome says, the steps were constructed by mechanical art, so that the shadow descending each one

would mark the intervals of the hours. It was then the tenth hour of the day when the prophet spoke to the king: Do you wish, therefore, he said, that the shadow go forward ten lines, the sun proceeding above the earth through northern regions to the east, which it was about to do daily in the usual course: or that the shadow go back ten steps, the face of the sun being turned backward and returning through the southern region to the east? But the king said, It is easy, he said, for the shadow to grow by ten lines; I do not wish this to happen, but that it should go back ten steps. For he saw that it could be a greater miracle if the sun acted contrary to its usual course, than if it proceeded in the usual manner; although much higher, i.e., lifted above the earth to the east, as if flying to the morning of the second day without any intervening night.

For indeed those who live in the island of Thule, which is beyond Britain, or in the farthest boundaries of the Scythians, see this happen for several days during the whole summer, because the sun, having set for the rest of the world and placed under the earth, nonetheless appears above the earth to them the whole night; and it is visibly seen how it returns from the western part to the eastern lowly, until it is again given back to the whole world at the common rising, as both the histories of the ancients and the abundant evidence of our men of this age, who come from those parts, testify. However, those who inhabit the innermost parts of the south never see the sun return from the western to the eastern through the meridian regions.

QUESTION 26

"She who dwells in Jerusalem in the second district." [2 Kings 22:14] What is said about Huldah the prophetess: "She who dwells in Jerusalem in the second district"; what this means is explained in the book of Chronicles, where it is written about the aforesaid King Hezekiah: "He also built, with great earnestness, all the wall that had been broken down, and reared up towers on it, and another wall outside" (2 Chron. 32). Zephaniah mentions this place, saying: "A voice of crying from the Fish Gate, and a wailing from the Second Quarter" (Zeph. 1). For which the old edition translated it as a proper name of the place, in Masena. Masena indeed means Second Quarter. Therefore, what is said about the prophetess dwelling in the Second, understand it as part of the second wall.

QUESTION 27

"He also defiled Topheth, etc. [2 Kings 23:10] What is said about King Josiah: "He also defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, so that no man might consecrate his son or his daughter through the fire to Molech"; these places are frequently mentioned in Scripture, especially in the book of Kings and the prophet Jeremiah. Now the Valley of Hinnom, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, is near the wall of Jerusalem, toward the east, in which the beautiful grove of Siloam is watered by springs. But Topheth, or Tophet (both spellings are used), was a place in the same valley, near the fuller's pool, which is mentioned in Scripture, and near the field of Aeldama, which is shown to this day on the southern side of Mount Sion. In Topheth, which was a very pleasant place, altars were set up to sacrifice to demons, and to consecrate their children to a wicked fire, or to offer burnt offerings, as it is written in the book of Chronicles about King Ahaz: "He it was who burned incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire. Ben-Hinnom indeed means the son of Hinnom.

The Valley of Hinnom is called Gehinnom in Hebrew, from which in the New Testament, the name Gehenna is applied to the punishment of hell, because just as in the Valley of Hinnom, those who served idols in it perished, as testified by the prophets, so too will sinners be punished with eternal damnation for their sins. Therefore, when Jeremiah relates that the Lord commanded him and said, "Go out to the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Pottery Gate"; soon after he says: "And this place shall no longer be called Topheth, nor the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter: and I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword" (Jer. 19). Isaiah also most clearly calls Topheth hell; he, while describing the perpetual destruction of the devil under the name of Asshur, saying: "For through the voice of the Lord shall Asshur be beaten down, who smote with a rod. And the passage of the rod is prepared, which the Lord shall cause to rest upon him" (Isa. 30), forthwith added how and where he should perish, saying: "For Topheth is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; it is deep and large. Beautifully he says "And large," because Topheth means width. His nourishments, it is said, are fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of sulfur, sets it ablaze.

But Josiah defiled Tophet, either by scattering the bones of the dead there, as it is read that he did in other places of idols, or by dispersing any other unclean things, so that the place would appear to all who looked at it as more fitting for abomination than for delight.

QUESTION 28

"He also removed the horses that the kings of Judah had given, etc. [2 Kings 23:11] What follows about the same king Josiah, he also removed the horses which the kings of Judah had given to the sun at the entrance of the temple of the Lord; and shortly after: He burned the chariots of the sun with fire; this shows that the Jews at all times were devoted to all kinds of idolatry and superstition, so much so that in adoration of the sun, which they believed to be a god after the manner of the Gentiles, they attached his image which they had made to horses and chariots, and this in the courts of the temple of the Lord. For the Gentiles are accustomed to depict or make an image of the sun in this way, placing a young boy in a chariot, and attaching horses to him as if rushing towards the sky. They represent him as a boy because the sun, as if born anew each day with its rise, never falls into old age through the ages. But that they attribute chariots and horses to him is believed to have been taken from the miracle of the prophet Elijah, who was taken to heaven in a fiery chariot with fiery horses, as John, the bishop of Constantinople, estimates. For that which is called Helios in Greek means the sun (as even Sedulius shows, when he sang about Elijah's ascent, saying:

How well the fiery path of heaven suits Elijah, who glows rightly even by name. He was worthy of this aid: for if one letter of the Greek word is changed by accent, it means the sun. Hearing from the Israelites, reputed to have divine letters, that Elijah was transported to the heavens by a fiery chariot and fiery horses, or certainly seeing this depicted among other things on the wall, the Greeks, deceived by the similarity of the name, believed this to signify the sun's passage through the heavens, and transformed a divinely performed miracle into a testimony of error, conceived by human folly; the Jews themselves, imitating them, strove not to be less foolish than the most foolish of the Gentiles in any matter.

QUESTION 29

"Also the high places that were in Jerusalem, etc. [2 Kings 23:13] What is said shortly after about the same king: Also the high places that were in Jerus-

alem, to the right side of the Mount of Offense, etc., up to, The king defiled and crushed the statues; it is clear as daylight that Scripture usually names high places as locations set on leafy hills, in which they sacrificed either to demons or even to the Lord, drawn by the pleasantness of the locations, contrary to the prohibition of leaving the altar which was in the temple and offering sacrifices. Whence it is often said in this book about kings who were less perfectly just: Nevertheless he did not remove the high places. But the Mount of Offense, he calls the Mount of the idol, because it is customary in Scriptures to name idols as offense, because either God is offended in them, or they bring offense and ruin to their worshipers, as is indicated in this very sentence that follows, when it says: Which Solomon, the king of Israel, had built for Astaroth, the idol of the Sidonians, and for Chamos, an offense to Moab, and for Melchon, an abomination to the children of Ammon. Where this also, if I am not mistaken, is clearly shown, which I wish had not been shown: that evidently Solomon never perfectly repented of the crime of idolatry he had committed.

For if he had produced fruits worthy of repentance, he would have striven above all to remove the idols he had built from the holy city; and not, to the scandal of the foolish, would he have left what he, although once the wisest, had done erroneously, as if done wisely and rightly. Scripture mentions this above, saying: Then Solomon built a shrine for Chemosh, the idol of Moab, on the mountain opposite Jerusalem, and for Molech, the idol of the children of Ammon (1 Kings 11). Nor should it seem contradictory that the mountain where these idols were made is said to be against Jerusalem, here it is stated to be placed in Jerusalem; because undoubtedly it was situated so near the city, that it seemed to belong to it, and also to stain it with the filth gathered there.

QUESTION 30

"And he carried away all Jerusalem, etc. [2 Kings 24:14] Reporting this about Nebuchadnezzar, who carried away all Jerusalem, and all the leaders, and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, Scripture adds, saying: "And all the craftsmen and smiths. This is what was said above to have been done by the Philistines to the people of Israel when it was said: "Now no blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel. For the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears" (1 Samuel 13:19). Just as then, they took care that the Hebrews, having blacksmiths, might not make arms to resist,

so now the Chaldeans, having destroyed Jerusalem and laid waste the whole land of promise, make sure that no craftsman, no smith, remains in it, who either could repair the polluted walls of the city or restore the broken structures; on the contrary, whatever skill they found among the exterminated people, they transferred entirely to Babylon; so that it might either be useless or serve the interests of that city. Because this most lamentable history is so much in line with the negligence of our times, I do not think its allegory should be kept silent. It is known that Jerusalem and the land of Israel represent the city of Christ, that is, the holy Church; but Babylon and the Chaldeans or the Philistines signify the city of the devil, that is, all the multitude of either wicked men or angels.

And Israel serves the Philistines or Chaldeans, when any of the faithful, nominally existing in the Church, but otherwise deceived by unclean spirits or men, submit their minds to greed, luxury, or any other sin. Nebuchadnezzar carries away Israel and all the leaders, the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, when either the teachers of the people, those who seemed to serve the Lord with an invincible spirit and to faithfully observe the Decalogue in love of God and neighbor, either suddenly, overcome by the temptations of the world or adversities, or defile themselves with greater crimes, or certainly, by deviating into heresy, incur the mark of open apostasy. But the weapons with which, resisting the devil, we defend the freedom given to us by God, what else are they but the words of the Scriptures? In which, by the examples of the Lord Himself and His saints, we learn more clearly than daylight how the wars against vices ought to be overcome. But the Philistines deprive the sons of Israel of armor smiths, just as malicious spirits obstruct the souls of the faithful from the meditation of sacred reading by inserting secular affairs, so that they neither gain confidence from this exercise in resistance for themselves, nor approach others, possibly those who cannot read, by exhorting or correcting them to resist vices. They take away the weapons smiths when they oppress those knowledgeable in the sacred words with such crimes that they are utterly ashamed to speak the good they have learned.

They transfer every artisan and engraver to Babylon from Jerusalem, when they turn those who used to benefit many by various works of virtue and to fortify the city of God against the incursions of temptations away from their purpose; and compel them to use the talent, which should have

been devoted to the protection of the holy Church, instead to serve the will of the king of vices. However, if we wish to understand "engraver" here not as the maker of doors or walls, but rather of gold and gems, it certainly refers to the same spiritual exposition. It is indeed said of wisdom that it is gold and a multitude of gems (Prov. 20); and therefore, we can aptly understand the engravers of these as the teachers, who, as long as they live and teach rightly, devote their art to the adornment of the holy city. But if they happen to err, what else but that they are taken captive by the Chaldean people and transferred to Babylon? And since to transfer the artisan and the engraver from Jerusalem to Babylon is to bury the talent of the word received from heaven in the earth, that is, to convert spiritual knowledge to the works of sins. I beg you, reader, if I have said anything pleasing to you in these little explanations, refer it to the praise of the God who gives.

But if otherwise, may you grant forgiveness to my ignorance or presumption, so that you yourself, with all whom you can, apply to frequent meditation, continuous observance, fitting preaching of divine Scriptures; and let us strive with communal effort, so that we may be found faithful traders of the Lord's money, artisans and engravers of spiritual gems or walls, defenders of the holy city, and artificers of heavenly weapons; that on His return from the wedding, the supreme Householder may deign to say to us: "Because you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many; enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matt. 25). Amen.

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